

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH 1976

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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:—

Proclamation under the Prisons Act 1958–1974.

Order in Council under the Medical Act 1939–1973.

Regulations under—

Local Government Act 1936–1975.

The Nurses Act of 1964.

Rules under the Ambulance Services Act 1967–1975.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.2 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, in reply to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition on 12 March, I stated that the Registrar of Building Societies had also appointed an administrator to conduct the affairs of the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett. As this reply was prepared prior to other events that have since happened, I draw this to the attention of the House so that there will be no misunderstanding concerning my reply.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (11.3 a.m.), by leave: During question time in the House yesterday my name was mentioned in relation to a question without notice addressed by the honourable member for Merthyr to the Minister for Transport concerning a telephone conversation between the Minister and a person who alleged that he was a Mr. Dawson. I want to make it quite clear to the House that I was in no way associated with that call and that I have never had any conversation relative to the contents of the alleged telephone conversation either before this matter was raised in the House or since.

I am, however, very concerned at the comments of the Minister in his answer to the honourable member for Merthyr in which he said—

“I am amazed at the efficiency of the intelligence service of the honourable

member for Merthyr because I am unaware of how he knew of this phone call.”

I also draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to an article in this morning's “Courier-Mail” in which Alderman Dawson claims that she spoke to her husband—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has been granted permission to make a personal statement. I do not want to hear anything about what appeared in the newspaper this morning. He can refer only to what transpired in the House yesterday.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I ask then, Mr. Speaker, that you give an undertaking to investigate whether the telephones of Ministers and members of this House are being tapped.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1 and 2. AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY AND BOWKETT

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

(1) With reference to the statement by the Minister Assisting the Commonwealth Treasurer that trading banks would assist responsibly managed building societies, how soon will investors in the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett be informed if that society was responsibly managed or not and who will make the determination?

(2) If it is found to be properly managed, will he recommend to the Commonwealth Government that it guarantee the funds of investors in this society?

(3) If it is found to be not properly managed, what action to recover their savings can be taken by investors against those who managed the society?

Answers:—

(1) The Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett is in liquidation and accordingly cannot qualify for assistance under the criteria referred to by the Commonwealth Minister. Any such assistance could relate only to societies continuing in operation.

(2) There has been no suggestion that the Commonwealth Government will guarantee the funds of investors in any society. The proposal has been that the trading banks will advance funds to societies. This would give viable societies greater capacity to meet withdrawals of funds but should not be regarded as a guarantee in favour of investors.

(3) The society is now in the course of liquidation and investors will be repaid

to the extent possible as assets are realised and debts having higher priority have been met.

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

As it is rumoured that between \$300,000 and \$500,000 was invested by the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett in real estate development on the Darling Downs and that such an investment could not be insured under the H.L.I.C. scheme, what laws or rules have been or will be implemented to restrict building societies to lending only for private housing in accordance with the original reasons given by the Government when establishing the Building Societies Act?

Answer:—

Consideration is presently being given to introducing in this session amendments to the Building Societies Act in relation to this matter.

3. TEACHER ACCOMMODATION,
CHARLEVILLE

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

(1) Is he aware of an article which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 12 March signed by 47 school teachers at Charleville protesting at the lack of suitable and adequate departmental teacher accommodation there?

(2) What is the present situation in relation to this matter?

(3) What steps are being undertaken to correct this problem in Charleville and in other western areas?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. I am aware of the article that appeared in letters to the editor of "The Courier-Mail" of Friday, 12 March. The honourable member for Warrego had previously brought to my notice this same matter, which was receiving attention by officers of my department.

(2 and 3) I would advise honourable members that my department has provisionally allocated the amount of \$750,000 in the 1976-77 loan works programme for the provision of subordinate teacher housing throughout the State in that financial year. In conjunction with the construction programme, my department is currently engaged in a leasing programme to secure housing for teachers on a semi-permanent basis. This leasing programme will enable funds to be diverted to urgent housing projects at schools and centres throughout the State where suitable private housing is non-existent. Indeed, the Queensland Teachers' Union is well aware of these circumstances and has

been supportive of them. Charleville is considered to be a centre where leasing of housing can be more appropriate than construction. One house for single female teachers has already been secured, and a verbal agreement has been reached on the leasing of a second house, which is currently being renovated. When the renovation is completed, two single male teachers currently accommodated at a hotel will move into this house. My regional director is currently negotiating the lease of a third house, and would be interested to receive further offers from Charleville landlords. Furthermore, Executive Council approval for the construction of a three-bedroom residence was given on 22 January 1976. Allocation of this residence to married or single teachers will depend on accommodation circumstances at the time of its completion.

4. HOME BLOOD-PRESSURE TEST KITS

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Lane**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in the "Sunday Sun" of 14 March concerning advertisements offering home kits for testing blood pressure?

(2) What is the position of these machines in Queensland, are they reliable and can people take their own blood pressure successfully or are there risks?

(3) Will he make a statement to clarify the value of home testing machines?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) My attention was drawn to this subject by channel 9 television station reporter, Mr. R. Markland, and I am pleased that the honourable member has raised the matter. Some physicians instruct their patients in the use of the blood-pressure machine and the patients take their own blood pressure and keep their records for consultation with their medical adviser. It is only under this strict medical supervision that the use of blood-pressure machines by patients is acceptable. I consider that it could be highly dangerous for people to take their own blood pressure and interpret their own results and would strongly advise the public against this latter practice. I would add that any unauthorised person who displays a blood-pressure machine, stethoscope, hypodermic syringe, or an X-ray apparatus in the practice or attempted practice of medicine is committing an offence under the Medical Act.

5. FEES FOR REGISTRATION OF
DOCUMENTS, TITLES OFFICE

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

(1) With reference to the \$5 additional fee payable to the Titles Office on each

document sent by post to or left for lodgment at the Titles Office under cover for which a fee is payable for registration, is he aware that this penalty is an imposition on country people involved in legal transactions requiring registration at the Titles Office?

(2) Does he realise that in the sale and purchase of a house there are usually at least three documents to be registered, which involves an additional fee of at least \$15?

(3) Would it not be less trouble and expense to the Titles Office to receive documents in the mail or have them left at the office for registration, which could then in either case be processed as required, rather than deal with the registration over the counter?

(4) Will he investigate ways and means of eliminating this unfair penalty imposed on country people in regard to the registration of documents at the Titles Office?

Answers:—

(1) It is not considered that the postal fee referred to is an imposition on persons resident outside Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville. The alternative method of lodging documents through town agents is available but no doubt their charges would be considerably higher. It may be of interest to note that Queensland is one of the few States which have district registries and that postal lodgments are not permitted in New South Wales or Western Australia.

(2) Yes.

(3) No. There is considerably more work involved in handling documents being lodged through the post and in delivery through the post after registration than in handling those documents lodged over the counter.

(4) See answer to (1).

6. EMERALD AND BUNDABERG IRRIGATION PROJECTS

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

In view of the answer of the Minister for Water Resources to my question that \$28,000,000 had been spent on the Emerald Irrigation Project and that only 29 farms have resulted from it, will he hold further expenditure on the scheme until Stage I of the Bundaberg Irrigation Project has been completed, as this scheme will service hundreds of cane farms?

Answer:—

The State Government is committed to continuing expenditure on the Emerald Irrigation Project because of an undertaking given to the Commonwealth Government when it met the cost of Fairbairn Dam. This undertaking is contained

in section 6 of the relevant Commonwealth legislation, the Queensland Grant (Maraboon Dam) Act 1968. It is not considered that further work on the Emerald Irrigation Project should be delayed.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECRET MEETINGS

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

(1) Is it the usual practice in local government for city and shire councils to hold secret meetings on important matters which affect the citizens of the city or shire?

(2) If so, why is this done, when the first and second tiers of government, the Commonwealth and State Parliaments, do not meet in secret?

(3) If it is not normal practice, are there some issues such as tenders or personalities which necessitate such secret meetings?

Answers:—

(1) It is usual practice for meetings of council committees not to be open to the public. It is also not unusual for a council to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, which also would not be open to the public. These matters are at the discretion of the council. However, the actual decisions on important matters would require formal adoption by resolution at an open council meeting, except where specifically authorised by law.

(2) It should be understood that the local authority is an administrative as well as a legislative body, and, in the other spheres of government, meetings of bodies such as Cabinet are not open to the public.

(3) There will always be matters which a council feels it should not debate in public, and an obvious example would be discussion of a legal action in which the council might be engaged. The decision is one which the council must make, and the council members are in turn responsible to the electors. I think I understand the questions submitted by the honourable member for Bundaberg, and my own thought on the matter is simply to say to all local authorities that they should go into committee only as a last resort. Honourable members have seen what has happened in the Brisbane City Council over the last three years when it went into committee at every available opportunity. That is not good government. There has been far too much of it in the Brisbane City Council, and I hope that the practice is not copied by any other local authority in the State. I hope that local authorities will have their meetings in open session, as we do in this House, so that the public can see what is going on.

8, 9 and 10. BUREAU OF SUGAR
EXPERIMENT STATIONS

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

(1) When the administration of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations changed from the Public Service to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board in 1951, were staff assured in writing by the then director that all privileges enjoyed by staff as a result of being public servants would be preserved and that recreation, sick and long service leave benefits would be retained as for the Public Service?

(2) If this assurance was made, has it ever been countermanded?

(3) If the assurance was made and if in effect it is still in force, would staff of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations have reason to believe that decisions affecting recreation, sick and long service leave for the Public Service would be applied to them?

(4) If the assurance is still in force, why has the Sugar Experiment Stations Board refused to grant five weeks' annual leave to northern employees of the bureau on similar lines to the leave granted to northern public servants three years ago?

Answers:—

(1) On 1 July 1951 the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations was excised from the Public Service and, at the request of sugar industry organisations, control was placed in the hands of the Sugar Experiment Stations Board so that the conditions of employment could be varied from those applying to the Public Service. The 1951 staff, now a minority group, within the bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations were advised that the bureau conditions of employment would be no less favourable than those applying to the Public Service at the time of transfer from the Public Service.

(2) No assurance was given that the board would follow the Public Service in every detail, but, generally, decisions affecting leave have followed the Public Service, with the exception that, in January 1973, conditions relating to recreation leave were made consistent with the general conditions applying within the sugar industry.

(3) See answer to (2).

(4) See answer to (2).

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

(1) Is he aware of the rumoured uneasiness and low morale of staff of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations?

(2) Does he appreciate that this situation could, in part, be due to an apparently

planned programme of transfers and creation of new positions for which well-qualified staff members are not being given any opportunity of applying?

(3) Will he consider the immediate freezing of any planned transfers and new appointments until all staff have had an equal opportunity to compete for any such positions?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) I am assured that staff will be given the opportunity of applying for any new positions created as a result of any board planning.

(3) See answer to (2). I understand, however, that vacancies do exist and transfers are already in train.

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

What are the present salary ranges for the following classifications employed by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations: technologist 1, technologist 2, technologist 3, technical officer 1, technical officer 2, technical officer 3, extension officer 1, extension officer 2, extension officer 3, adviser, administration officer, scientist 1, scientist 2 and scientist 3?

Answer:—

The salaries of bureau staff are confidential to the board, but in respect of the classifications nominated, and where they are comparable, the salary ranges are no less than those paid within the Public Service.

11. FOOD SOLD IN TUCK-SHOPS

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) In view of the controversy surrounding school tuck-shops, which has been highlighted in the current nutrition campaign of the Queensland Health Education Council, is enough being done to ensure that children are properly fed?

(2) As Press reports have quoted him as being alarmed at the type of food sold in many school tuck-shops, can the Government increase its control in this sphere, perhaps to set special food standards, or are we prepared to sit back and watch a race of overweight and undernourished youngsters munch their way through mountains of potato chips and rubbishy snack foods?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I feel sure that the honourable member knows that school tuck-shops are conducted by members of the parents and

citizens' committee of the school. The principal is usually a member of the managing committee, and the work in the tuck-shops is carried out by a roster of parents, which is greatly appreciated by all concerned. The choice of the foodstuffs sold is in the hands of the parents and citizens' committee, and it must be remembered that these parents are at the same time determining the type of food that their own children will buy from the tuck-shop. Over the years, school health officers have inspected tuck-shops during their visits to schools and include comment in their report on the whole school. Their main concern relates to hygiene, sanitation, and food handling, although they would offer advice to parents in regard to the supply of more suitable foods. The hygiene of the tuck-shop is already subject to provisions laid down in the Food Hygiene Regulations. Most parents are prepared to accept good advice when it is properly given and is on a meaningful basis. It would seem that the current nutrition campaign of the Queensland Health Education Council is being accepted by a considerable number of parents in relation to their tuck-shop activities and, in fact, several parents have already phoned seeking guidance and assistance in the matter of better foods in tuck-shops. I feel that, providing the campaign of the Queensland Health Education Council is maintained and conducted with enthusiasm, the parents will respond adequately.

12. POLICE STATION AND RESIDENCE,
ALPHA

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

Will a new police station and residence be urgently built at Alpha, as the present one is in poor condition?

Answer:—

The need for the provision of new police buildings at Alpha is appreciated. Plans have been prepared, but funds for the project are not available. The allocation of finance will be kept under constant review.

13. COURT-HOUSE FOR MORANBAH

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

Will a court-house be programmed urgently for Moranbah, in view of the rapid rise in population and as Moranbah is three times bigger than some towns which have a court-house?

Answer:—

As indicated in my answer to a question by the honourable member on 14 October last, this matter is kept under continuing

consideration. There remain considerable doubts that there would be sufficient Magistrates Courts work to justify the appointment of a full-time Public Service clerk of the court. In addition, the amount of funds available for the erection of court-houses is not adequate to meet the requirements of other towns, including towns in the honourable member's electorate, with much greater claims.

14. SUBSIDIES FOR COMMUTER AIRLINES

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

As some commuter airlines have gone bankrupt, resulting in hardship for country people, could the Commonwealth Government be approached yet again to reintroduce subsidies which were discontinued by the previous Labor Government?

Answer:—

I think honourable members are aware that I protested vigorously to the Whitlam Government concerning its decision to phase out air service subsidies because I recognised the resultant distress and hardship such a decision could, and did, bring to people in country areas. But, of course, nothing was further from Mr. Whitlam's mind than the welfare of our country residents—and we all know how dearly he paid for his cavalier attitude in this regard on 13 December last. I am sure the honourable member will be pleased to learn that earlier this month I again raised the question with the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, and I am looking forward to receiving his decision in the near future.

15. TEACHERS AND CLASSROOMS

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

(1) To what extent is the Education Department pursuing a strategy of replacing traditional single-teacher classrooms with double or multiple-teacher classrooms?

(2) How many children does the department expect to be able to educate in open area situations by the beginning of 1977?

(3) How are teachers being selected to teach in these situations?

(4) Will teachers be given the choice of working in either an open-area situation or in a traditional single-classroom situation, or are some teachers going to be required to accept the new system even if it is against their will and better professional judgment?

(5) If teachers are to have this choice, does he foresee problems arising in staffing schools where only open-area classrooms are provided?

(6) If teachers are to be given a choice of working in an open-area situation or not, what effect will the offer of such a choice have with respect to transfers in general?

Answers:—

(1) Where alterations to schools are required, single classrooms adjoining each other are arranged so that the area will allow for two teachers to work in a more open space with withdrawal facilities. The teachers may work individually or in pairs since the furniture is designed to create walls for those who prefer to work alone.

(2) It is impossible to determine how many children will work in open areas. Each single classroom is an open area and teaching performance is not an outcome of building structure. Teaching performance is directly related to professional development and individual teacher skill at organising learning tasks for children.

(3) There is no selection that is based on the standard of school building.

(4) Teachers' wishes for teaching in a particular section of a school are usually considered carefully by the principal in his deployment of staff for the welfare of all, especially the children. There is no "new system" of teaching so such a non-concept does not enter into the allocation of teachers. Teaching strategies are undertaken to provide the best circumstances for the learner, and it is believed that the "better professional judgments" of all teachers will reflect the learner's frame of reference, not a like or dislike for the architectural surroundings.

(5) No.

(6) It is recognised that many people see a clear-cut dichotomy between "traditional" and "open" forms of teaching. The issue is clear, however, that each teacher should have a wide repertoire of teaching methods at his or her disposal. These have been developed as a result of study and exposure to the wealth of information on teaching and learning that is available. A good teacher will not have one method only or another, but will have quite a number to use for appropriate learning situations. Since each teacher should have this professional ability, each should be able to adjust to different school buildings, and the transfer system can continue to operate in the best interests of children.

16. RESULTS FROM EDUCATION FUND INCREASES

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

(1) In so far as there has been a major increase in funds for education during the past triennium and whilst further cries for more money for education are still being heard in many quarters, has any attempt

been made to determine whether or not the added expenditure is tending to assist in the improvement of the standard of education achieved by students?

(2) What attempts have been made to ensure that funds are being spent in the most effective area to achieve the above-stated goal?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) My department attempts continuously to monitor the operation of schools. Various methods of evaluation are used, both formal and informal, short-term and long-term. Within the schools, principals and teachers are responsible for the progress of students. Inspectors of schools visit schools regularly both in a supervisory and advisory capacity. At the secondary level, moderation procedures are designed to evaluate as well as compare performance. At five-year intervals, the research section of my department carries out carefully sampled surveys by which longitudinal comparisons may be made. The last survey was conducted in 1972 and confirmed a general maintenance of standards in basic subjects with a slight improvement in reading comprehension. The next survey will be conducted in 1977. Objective testing of students in year seven, the last year of primary school, is carried out every year for guidance purposes. Only minor fluctuations in test results have been discerned. There is a prima facie case to expect that the aims of education will be more readily achieved with recent and continuing improvements in adult/child ratios in schools. There are more teachers, teachers who are better trained, and more ancillary staff, as well as more specialist teachers. Slow-learning and handicapped children are receiving more assistance. My department is fully aware that better-equipped schools are not necessarily better schools. Every effort is made through supervision and in-service education of teachers to ensure that improved opportunities for learning are exploited. The aims of education are not narrowly conceived and should include the attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes. My officers and I are constantly alert to ensure that the funds available are being spent in the most effective areas to achieve the wider aims of education. In considering the expenditure of increases in funds we must remember that a very large proportion of recurrent funds (about 80 per cent) is applied to salaries, while other large amounts are spent on capital. Salary increases and inflation have to some extent eroded the real value of increased funding. The departmental planning committee, composed of my senior officers, monitors the effective allocation of increased funds. It has available to it the entire resources of the department, and actively seeks information and advice from other sources.

The programme for assisting disadvantaged schools, carried out by a specially appointed task force, is an example of the activities of the planning committee. Those people who see standards of education in the narrow sense of the three R's no doubt do so with a genuine sense of concern; but any evaluation which confines itself to this important but narrow area will ignore the wider aims upon which the quality of living depends.

17. CAMPBELL REPORT ON SECONDARY EDUCATION

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

(1) In so far as the Campbell Report on Secondary Education has been in limited circulation since before Christmas and recognising that the anticipated timing of the release of Professor Campbell's report could well place members in the situation whereby they have not had the chance to study it and possibly speak on it before this House is prorogued, will he recommend to the appropriate authorities that members of this House be not subject to the present embargo on that report?

(2) Will he do everything in his power to ensure that copies are made available to interested members as soon as possible, as at present the embargo excludes honourable members from access to it?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The Australian Advisory Committee for Research and Development in Education commissioned Professor W. J. Campbell to undertake a study of Some Consequences of the Radford Scheme for Schools, Teachers and Students in May 1974. The report was completed and forwarded to Professor Dunn as chairman of A.A.C.R.D.E. in November 1975. Latest advice from Professor Dunn is that the report will be ready for release during the month of April. I am writing to Professor Dunn to press for an earlier release of the report.

18. TRAFFIC BRIDGE OVER HERBERT RIVER, HALIFAX

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

(1) Will he ascertain the reasons for the obvious delay in the construction of the traffic bridge over the Herbert River at Halifax?

(2) What was the original estimated date of completion of the bridge and what is the present estimated date of completion?

(3) If the contractor is at fault, will appropriate action be taken by the Main Roads Department to have the work expedited?

Answers:—

(1) The delay has been caused by foundation problems and the abnormal wet season.

(2) Original date of completion was January 1976. Estimated date of completion is now October 1976.

(3) The Main Roads Department is keeping the work on close supervision to complete the work as soon as possible.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member for Rockhampton to question 19 on the Business Paper in his name. I am allowing only parts (1) and (2) of it, as parts (3) and (4) relate to an entirely different subject-matter. The honourable member has two other questions on notice for today. As he knows, he is allowed to ask only three questions, therefore I disallow parts (3) and (4) of the question. The honourable member will be able to put that question on notice for tomorrow.

19. CHARITY FUNDS AND FRAUDS

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

(1) Is he aware of a comment by a prominent corporate solicitor, as reported in "The Sunday Mail" of 14 March, that a southern syndicate was defrauding Queenslanders of millions of dollars?

(2) What action does he intend to take on this very serious allegation?

Answers:—

(1) I have read the article.

(2) Mr. J. M. Macrossan, B.A., LL.B., B.C.L.(Oxon.), Q.C., has been appointed as a special investigator under the provisions of the Companies Act 1961-1975 to inquire into the affairs of several companies, some of which are presently in liquidation. I anticipate that the investigation will be commenced within the next week, and as soon as his report is finalised, his findings will be made known in the appropriate manner.

20. HOUSE OF FREEDOM

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport—

(1) With reference to the attack made by him on the House of Freedom in this Parliament on 28 November 1975 following a question by the member for Toowoomba North, has he now received letters of protest against his statements from the Anglican Dean of St. Johns Cathedral, the Very Rev. Ian George, and leaders of the House of Freedom, including Rev. Evan Jones, who has been working there with the full approval of the Methodist Conference Standing Committee?

(2) In view of his statement now recorded in "Hansard" that the House of Freedom is an organisation which has

associated with it quite a number of unusual people, is he aware that the Board of Reference of the House of Freedom includes such persons as Judge Allan Demack of Youth Inquiry fame, Mr. Harry Allsop, Lecturer at the Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education, Dr. L. G. Knott and the Rev. Ray Hunt?

(3) Is he also aware that the same organisation, which he accused of masquerading as a religious organisation while actually trying to reconcile Christianity with Communism, has received a total of over \$7,000 in financial assistance from both the previous Commonwealth Government and his own State Government since 1974?

(4) While I can understand his eagerness and desire to score off me politically by endeavouring to link me with some Communist-inspired plot just before an election, as was the case on 28 November 1975, does he now realise that his remarks were incorrect, uncalculated for and offensive to those associated with the House of Freedom?

(5) Will he also accept an invitation to personally attend the House of Freedom to judge for himself just how worth while this organisation is?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) I have received a letter from the Very Reverend Ian George, wherein he has made his radical theological views known. I have also received a letter signed jointly by the Reverend Evan Jones and Mr. David Murphy, a copy of which was obviously sent by the writers to the honourable member for Rockhampton. Apart from a denial of participation by members of the House of Freedom by Reverend Jones and Mr. Murphy in their letter and a statement by Dean George in his letter that he had been assured that to the knowledge of house leaders, no member of the House of Freedom was present in the streets of Brisbane on 2 November 1975, the incident referred to by the honourable member for Toowoomba North has not been explained. This incident has been objected to by a separate group working within the total framework of the Christian Church. I do not question the Christian motives of the members of the House of Freedom referred to by the honourable member. It would now appear obvious, however, that they should make themselves more aware of the activities of some other members of this organisation because on 2 November, a march organised by the Christian Mission to the Communist World was disrupted outside the meeting place of the House of Freedom in Charlotte Street by young people who were grouped on both the stairways of St. Luke's Hall and outside. As a result, there is no doubt in the minds of many who have a belief in Christian principles

as to where the sympathy of these young people lies. I am quite sure that a lot of the people connected with the House of Freedom are genuine in their beliefs; I am equally sure some of them are being misled.

21. APPRENTICESHIPS

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

(1) What new initiatives is his department taking to increase the number of apprenticeships available to young people in (a) the public sector of industry and (b) the private-enterprise sphere?

(2) Have any persons been forced to terminate their apprenticeships because of State Government retrenchments?

(3) How many such persons have been affected and what special assistance has been given by his department to find alternative employers willing to continue the apprenticeships?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The honourable member asks what new initiatives are being taken to increase the number of apprentices. The honourable member comes from Rockhampton, where highly skilled technicians play a key role in quality-testing Bowen Basin coal. If one assumes that the honourable member takes more than a cursory interest in mining in the Bowen Basin, he would know of the complete acceptance by mining companies of the importance of training tradesmen to create jobs, stem the drift from small towns and ensure skills for the future. I am most grateful for the whole-hearted support by mining companies of apprenticeship, of our training programmes and of occupational safety and I suggest the honourable member would serve the cause of apprenticeship better were he to spread the gospel among employers of taking up their full quotas rather than use the platform of Parliament to imply that the activities of dedicated officers are lacking or that departmental policies are inadequate. I would have thought the honourable member would have been familiar with the many statements I have made urging employers to ensure the skills Queensland needs are not lost; with many changes in apprenticeship legislation; with the appointment of apprenticeship promotion officers and training advisers; with the posting to selected areas of welfare officers; with the visits, on request, by officers from the Apprenticeship Office; with on-site and in-factory lectures and seminars; and with the circulation of a very fine apprenticeship booklet. Then, of course, there is the continuing expansion of the block-release system—all trades will be on block release by 1977—the introduction of new courses to meet technological change, Governmental concessions

for long-distance travel to college, the progressive establishment of a chain of hostels for apprentices attending technical colleges, continuing publicity on all media, and addresses to civic groups and service clubs. I should like to mention, too, the invaluable work of apprenticeship advisory and group committees which, as the honourable member would know, are drawn from, and are whole-heartedly backed by unions as well as employers and Government. Finally, on the aspect of initiatives, I should like to refer to the apprenticeship promotion campaigns, Apprenticeship Week displays and the blessing of tools of trade ceremony, which has been televised nationally. On an aspect more pertinent to the honourable member's area, a classical approach to apprentices has been the attitude of Mt. Morgan mines which has given all third and fourth-year apprentices the opportunity to complete their apprenticeships and has been instrumental in arranging the transfer of indentures of second-year apprentices. The story is the same throughout the coal-fields. What surprises me is that the honourable member should ask his question at all. He knows a promotions officer was in Rockhampton last month and was instrumental in helping place displaced apprentices. In fact, the promotions officer interviewed the honourable member, on request, and my office has it on record that the honourable member expressed appreciation to my department for arranging the officer's visit and that he also expressed gratitude for the help given him by the Rockhampton-based officers. In all these circumstances I feel it sufficient for me to assure the honourable member that every effort will continue to be made by the Government to place or retain its apprentices and to encourage employers to become apprenticeship conscious. As proof of governmental activity and concern, I should like to write into the record that State departments and instrumentalities have taken on, in a recent period, 126 apprentices over and above requirements. The Government has also absorbed into the Works Department and the Railway Department a considerable number of apprentices displaced from the private sector and included in this absorption into Government departments are displaced apprentices from Rockhampton.

22. COUNTRY EXTENSION LIBRARY SERVICE

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

(1) Is he aware that last year's increases in rail freights brought about a huge increase in charges for books sent to and from persons in country areas borrowing through the State Library's country extension library service?

(2) As the increases, if continued, will sound the death-knell of the country extension library service and deprive country residents of this great amenity, will he waive the new charges and revert to those which previously applied?

Answer:—

I ask the honourable member to repeat his question on Tuesday next.

23. SUBSIDY FOR SCHOOL TV SETS

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

(1) Is the subsidy available to parents and citizens' associations for the purchase of colour TV sets for schools still only \$80 maximum?

(2) As TV programmes are used extensively in school syllabuses and as colour TV is now a way of life in Australia, will he alter the subsidy on colour TV sets, which in many cases are costing parents and citizens' associations up to \$800?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) The subsidy paid by my department on the purchase of a television receiver is \$95 and a dollar-for-dollar subsidy is paid on reasonable installation costs. This applies whether the receiver be black and white or colour. The question of increasing the subsidy on the purchase of colour receivers has been examined, but my department has no immediate plans for such an increase.

24. DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH AUSTRALIA

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

(1) As the Fraser-Anthony Government has dropped the Ministry and Department of Northern Australia, does the Northern Development Council still exist and, if so, has it met since the December 1975 Commonwealth election and, if not, when was it scrapped and for what reason?

(2) With which Commonwealth department is the Co-ordinator-General's Department, which was handling the affairs of the Northern Development Council in Queensland, now negotiating regarding the schemes put to the council by Queensland, namely, development of the Burdekin and Bowen Basins, the Mt. Isa water supply scheme, development of the Port of Karumba and improvement of east-west road communication in the North of Australia?

Answers:—

(1) The Northern Development Council has not been disbanded. It has not met since December 1975.

(2) Inter-Governmental negotiations in recent times on the matters listed by the honourable member have been carried out on a Premier-Prime Minister basis.

25. QUERIES ON ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR SALE, BRISBANE

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

As the Auditor-General's report on the Brisbane City Council which was tabled last week expresses doubt as to the legality of certain actions by the Brisbane City Council and as my main interest is the acquisition and development of land for sale, shown on pages 11, 19 and 26 of the report, should I direct questions on this matter to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer or the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads?

Answer:—

The Minister administering the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1974 is the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

26. UNOCCUPIED HEALTH UNITS, NORMANTON

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

(1) Is he aware of unoccupied health units at Normanton?

(2) Why has it taken so long for Dr. Musgrave and his team to start using them and giving a most urgently needed service to the people of the area?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) It is extremely difficult to attract staff into remote areas of the State and available staff have already been fully occupied working in and around Mt. Isa, Burketown and Doomadgee. Every effort is being made continuously, however, to recruit more staff for the Aboriginal Health Service and it is the intention to provide a service in Normanton at the earliest possible date. It is the policy of the Aboriginal Health Programme to commence working a new area only when a continuity of service can be assured for the future. In the meantime it is intended to remove the existing demountable buildings to a more central site in Normanton with the view to providing more amenable conditions for the predominantly female staff of the Aboriginal Health Programme.

27. NORMANTON ABORIGINAL RESERVE

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

(1) Is he aware of the appalling conditions in which the Aboriginal families live at the Normanton reserve?

(2) How soon can his department provide better accommodation?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The Normanton housing situation has been under close and constant assessment and every possible action has been taken in relation to the total social and economic situation to improve accommodation standards. The local situation has been aggravated by the depressed pastoral industry causing further migration to the town. To date, 21 homes have been established and a further six are currently under contract. I understand further that the Commonwealth are developing an Aboriginal Housing Co-operative Society. The department's policy is directed towards the reserve and the buildings thereon being phased out as quickly as possible in favour of conventional housing within the town so that the Aboriginal people can enjoy all the amenities of urban living and my department will continue with its efforts to achieve this.

28. CHILDREN BY CHOICE ASSOCIATION

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

(1) Is he aware of an article appearing in "The Courier-Mail" of 11 March headed "Fifty a week go south for legal abortion", which comments upon the fourth annual report of the Children by Choice Association?

(2) What forms of advice does this organisation give to the people who consult it?

(3) Does it at all encourage the women who consult it to consider bearing the child, instead of aborting it, and then making it available to the State to have the child, through adoption, provided with a safe and secure home where it can grow and develop in the hands of those thousands of young couples desirous of rearing children, who themselves are for some reason unable to have children?

(4) Does it recommend consultation with the State's family-planning clinics?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) I have no exact knowledge of the type of advice that this organisation gives to people who consult it. I understand that it has issued invitations for members of Parliament to visit the centre and perhaps the honourable member would like to do so if he wishes to know the details of such advice. I would emphasise again that I cannot condone abortion on demand and I do not intend to recommend any alteration to the present legislation. As the honourable member knows, the State Health Department subsidises the Family Planning Association and the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau.

29. GROUNDSEL ON COUNCIL LAND AT
CARINA

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

(1) Do council authorities possess the same responsibility to eliminate noxious weeds as the public, or are they exempted from such requirements?

(2) If local authorities are not exempted, will he make inquiries in order to ascertain why council land bordered by Wood Avenue, Fursden Road, Bulimba Creek and the new Fursden Road rubbish tip, Carina, has been allowed to become a virtual groundsel forest?

(3) Will he take such action as rests within his power to see that this situation is remedied in order to prevent the already serious proliferation of this weed in the surrounding areas?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Under the Local Government Act 1936–1975 and the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944–1967, local authorities, including the Brisbane City Council, have certain obligations to destroy noxious weeds or plants growing upon roads or lands under their control. I will take steps to refer to the Brisbane City Council the question of weeds that the honourable member states are growing on the council-owned lands he mentions and will inform him of the council's representations.

30. REPRINTING OF ACTS

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

(1) How long have copies of the Magistrates Courts Act, the Justices Act and the Supreme Court Act been out of print?

(2) In view of their importance to legal and student groups as well as to the community generally, when will copies of these Acts be reprinted and made available for the public to purchase?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Copies of the Magistrates Courts Act have been available for public sale up to 15 March 1976 and further copies will be available in a few days. Copies of the Justices Act have been available for purchase up to 9 March 1976 and further copies will be available next week. The Supreme Court Acts are not out of print and as a matter of fact there have been no sales of these Acts for some years.

31. PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE AT GARBUTT

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Has his department taken steps to acquire land for a pre-school centre at the Garbutt State School, the site for which I believe has been agreed upon by the Education and Works Departments?

(2) If the land is in the process of being purchased, when will the pre-school be built, bearing in mind the greater priority which now exists in the area since the closure earlier this year of the Catholic convent nearby?

Answers:—

(1) Approval has been given for acquisition of land for a State pre-school centre at Garbutt.

(2) Pre-school facilities for Garbutt cannot be included in a building programme until negotiations with the present landowner have been satisfactorily concluded. A little time was wasted on one piece of land. We have now switched over to another.

32. REQUIREMENT TO JOIN STUDENTS'
UNION, QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

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

(1) Is he aware that part-time students at the Queensland Institute of Technology are being forced to join the students' union at a cost of \$11, under threats of expulsion if they refuse?

(2) Will he take steps to prevent this undemocratic situation from continuing, thereby preserving the rights and freedoms of the individual?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of section 62AD of the Education Act which requires that all students of a college of advanced education shall be members of the students' union of that college. This follows the normal practice in tertiary education institutions throughout Australia.

(2) I do not propose to take any steps to amend this section of the Act, for the following reasons:—Student unions are in the nature of self-governing student associations responsible for providing various student amenities and for organising student social, recreational, sporting, cultural and other extracurricular activities. They represent the student body as a whole and as such play an essential role in the internal government of colleges. Students' unions in colleges of advanced education are not trade unions.

33. PRE-SCHOOL, CABOOLTURE

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

- (1) Has a pre-school in Caboolture been postponed indefinitely as is rumoured?
- (2) Has the purchase of land from the Caboolture Shire Council been finalised and, if not, what is holding up the transaction?
- (3) When does he expect the pre-school to be built in Caboolture?

Answers:—

- (1) No.
- (2) Agreement in principle has been reached with the Caboolture Shire Council. It is expected that final terms of settlement will be agreed to in the near future once the valuation of the land in question has been finalised.
- (3) It is anticipated that tenders will be called for this project within the next three to four months.

34. EXTENSION OF ELIMBAH STATE SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD

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

- (1) Is he aware of the condition of the land purchased to increase the area of the Elimbah State School playing fields?
- (2) Will he give an assurance that something will be done to place this area in a reasonable condition, as the school parents and citizens' association could not possibly afford to spend the money required to fill or grade the land?

Answers:—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Following completion of a contour survey, approval was given for the land recently acquired for the Elimbah State School to be graded and improved to place it in a usable condition for ordinary play purposes. The cost of this work will be met by my Department of Works and the district office will invite quotations at an early date.

35. TRAFFIC CONTROL, ALBION FIVEWAYS

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

- (1) Has his attention been drawn to a Press announcement that no action will be taken to control traffic at Albion Fiveways for at least five years, when freeway work may commence?
- (2) As he is well aware that the accident rate at this intersection is as bad as that at any other intersection in the

metropolitan area, is he prepared to allow the present state of affairs to continue for five years or will he arrange for at least some form of temporary lights to be installed?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The Albion Fiveways is part of the Brisbane City Council street system. It is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council to carry out any necessary improvements. However, as everyone in Queensland knows, the Albion Fiveways is one of the greatest traffic hazards in the city of Brisbane. The same position applies to the Hornibrook Highway in the electorate of my colleague the Honourable the Speaker and out on the South East Freeway. It is necessary that shortly everybody in the Commonwealth gets to understand that we are entitled to more funds for our roads. Honourable members will recall that I tried to convince Mr. Jones of this last year—of course, unsuccessfully. But now everybody in this Chamber will be pleased to know that in the latest report of the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads a recommendation is made that Queensland receive \$123,000,000 next year for road construction. Now, I know it is going to be pretty tough to get that through the thick skulls of our southern counterparts and to get them to understand that we are entitled to this amount of money. But, of course, we are going to get only \$80,000,000-odd or 50 per cent less than the amount to which we are entitled. My reason for saying this is simply that if I can get the Commonwealth to agree to give us the funds we are entitled to I will accept responsibility for the Albion Fiveways after the review of our State traffic problems. I will also try to solve the problem facing my colleague and friend Mr. Speaker regarding the new Houghton Highway.

Dr. Crawford: May I also ask the Minister: What about some lights in the meantime?

Mr. HINZE: "Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom." "Let there be light and there was light."

36. BRISBANE DRAINAGE SYSTEM

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

- (1) Has his department been informed of any new areas in metropolitan Brisbane which have been flooded in recent rains?
- (2) What is his department's opinion on the influence of local drainage on such flooded areas and is it necessary for his department to survey the drainage system in Brisbane to ascertain whether the system needs maintenance, repair or replacement?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. This is most likely due to the extraordinary wet period we are at present experiencing.

(2) On the subject of local drainage, developed areas tend to produce larger peak flows than undeveloped areas, and as land is developed in the higher parts of a catchment area, flood heights tend to increase downstream unless the drainage system has been increased to cope with it. I do not see that it is necessary to have a departmental survey carried out as suggested by the honourable member. Local drainage is a local authority responsibility, and the amount spent upon drainage improvement each year is dependent upon funds allotted by the local authority in its budget each year for such works. Local drainage works in the city of Brisbane are the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council, and the council is carrying out a number of flood mitigation and drainage works. The question of such works is a matter for determination by the council and is dependent on its budgetary allocations.

37. ABOLITION OF DEATH DUTIES

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) If State death duties are abolished in Queensland, as I firmly believe they should be, what effect will this have on Commonwealth probate and succession duties?

(2) As a sovereign State, can Queensland either reduce or modify Commonwealth duty in this area?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Commonwealth estate duty is levied under legislation of the Commonwealth Parliament and the Queensland Parliament cannot legislate to reduce or modify Commonwealth duty in this area. However, I intend to take up with the Right Honourable the Prime Minister the fact that it will be necessary for the Commonwealth Government to take appropriate action to ensure that, when Queensland residents are exempted from the payment of State death duties, they are not penalised by the provisions of certain Commonwealth legislation.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PRIVATE TELEVISION SETS AT PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL

Mr. MELLOY: I ask the Minister for Health: Is he aware that patients at the Princess Alexandra Hospital have been advised that all private television sets must be removed by tomorrow morning? Can he give a reason for this action?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am not aware of this. It would be a matter for determination by the local hospitals board. I shall have inquiries made and give the information to the honourable member.

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF AURUKUN COUNCIL

Mr. WARNER: I ask the Premier: Has the Aurukun Council advised the Government in writing that Mr. Frank Purcell is its duly appointed legal representative?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No.

SCHOOL CROSSINGS

Mr. LAMOND: I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. In doing so I am accepting the advice of the Minister responsible for road safety, who, when replying to a question asked by me in the House on Wednesday 10 March, indicated that although he shares my concern that school crossings represent a danger to students, the matter should be referred to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. It is a very real fact that, particularly in the metropolitan area, the lives of students using these crossings are at stake and that the Brisbane City Council and others involved have done little to overcome the problem. I therefore ask the Minister—

(1) Will he, as a matter of urgency, in his capacity as Minister for Main Roads and Local Government, have school crossings looked at in a different light from the formula used for ordinary pedestrian crossings?

(2) Where these crossings do not reach the requirements for the installation of pedestrian-controlled traffic lights, will he augment or enforce the Act to permit the surface of the roads on the approaches to these crossings to be clearly marked with white zig-zag lines to alert drivers that there is a school crossing ahead?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that he is ostensibly seeking information. I thought he was asking his question in the first couple of lines, but it was only a preface to the question. I seek the co-operation of all honourable members in making their questions specific and short.

Mr. LAMOND: I have nearly finished, Mr. Speaker.

(3) Will he investigate the possibility of supplying affected schools with a portable battery-operated flashing yellow light that could be erected at the roadside on the approaches to crossings for use morning and afternoon at the times of heaviest student pedestrian traffic flow?

Mr. HINZE: In my own inimitable style I suppose I will have to answer the honourable member's question off the cuff.

(1) School crossings whether on major roads or not are looked at in a different light to other pedestrian crossings and particular warrants and arrangements are applied to them.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HINZE: I am trying to give the honourable member a reasonable answer.

(2) Queensland uses devices prescribed by the Standards Association of Australia to cover traffic situations, whenever possible. These devices are prescribed in the Queensland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. I have written to the honourable member giving him details on why we do not use zig-zag lines on the approaches to pedestrian crossings.

(3) No. See answer to (2). If, however, the member is concerned with a particular location and he lets me have the details of it, I will arrange for this to be inspected by the appropriate authority.

USE OF ARAB MONEY BY TOWNSVILLE BRANCH OF A.L.P.

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the Premier: Is he aware of the fact that emphatic statements are being circulated freely in Townsville to the effect that, if the \$500,000 loan from the Arabs had been successfully arranged, a sum of \$50,000 of that money was to have been made available to the A.L.P. in Townsville for use in the forthcoming council election campaign? If so, will he have inquiries made at the highest possible level to establish the truth or otherwise of these widely circulating statements and take any action that may be appropriate to expose the matter publicly?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: First of all, I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that the \$500,000 was to be made available not by way of a loan but as a gift. We have to get that straight. There was no mention of a loan; it was to have been a straight-out gift. The question asked by many people is, "What was the money to be used for? What was the purpose in making the gift?" No-one gives \$500,000 away for nothing, and that is another point that we should keep in mind.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that they will not interject while a Minister is on his feet. If they do, I shall deal with them.

Mr. Marginson interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston that I will deal with him if he does not behave himself.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am grateful to the honourable member for Townsville South for having asked this question. It is

good to draw attention to the matter again. I do not think many members would be aware of the fact that \$50,000 was to be given to the Townsville Branch of the A.L.P. Obviously, if the Australian Labor Party had succeeded in obtaining the \$500,000, it would have to do something with the money, and perhaps one of the arrangements was that \$50,000 would be made available to the Townsville Branch of the A.L.P.; I would not be sure.

ROAD BETWEEN DUNWICH AND POINT LOOKOUT

Mr. GOLEBY: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads:

(1) Is he aware of the very poor condition of the missing link in the east coast road on Stradbroke Island between Dunwich and Point Lookout?

(2) What plans has the Main Roads Department in hand for the completion of this section of road?

(3) Would he consider making additional funds available to be spent in conjunction with the present allocation so that construction could be undertaken this year?

Mr. HINZE: Thanks to the representations made by the honourable member for Redlands, I am pleased to be able to say that, in addition to the \$170,000 that the department is using at present, it will allocate a further \$50,000, making a total of \$220,000, to construction work on the road between Dunwich and Point Lookout. The construction will be undertaken to Beehive Road, which is obviously known to local residents.

As to missing links—12 months ago missing links were something new to me. However, everywhere throughout the State I now find what are referred to as missing links. If ever I own another racehorse I shall name him "Missing Link"—but that is by the way. The point I want to make to the honourable member so that he can tell his constituents is that it is the intention of the department to try to complete the five-mile stretch referred to within four years. If the funds are available to us, we will do it sooner.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR MULVIHILL ON KANGAROO HARVESTING

Mr. NEAL: I ask the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service: Has he seen an article in today's "Courier-Mail" in which Senator Mulvihill accused him of being a sadistic Minister relative to kangaroo harvesting? Will the Minister comment on the use of the word "sadistic"? Will he outline to the House the facts about kangaroo conservation, management programmes and harvesting quotas in this State? Is the Minister aware of any qualifications held by the senator which would enable him to speak with authority on these subjects and make such scurrilous accusations?

Mr. TOMKINS: I saw the article referred to by the honourable member. To answer the last part of the honourable member's question first, Senator Mulvihill is the A.L.P. spokesman on the environment. Because I wanted to know if the senator knew what he was talking about, I checked on his background. Unfortunately he knows nothing about the job. I am no sadist. If I let the position continue as it is, I could be so accused. Simply put, the kangaroo population has been building up in Queensland for the past few years—and it still is—as a result of the Federal Government's policy restricting exports. Queensland did not get into the export field until last August. In the intervening period kangaroo numbers built up. If it is not a payable proposition for commercial shooters, the increase in numbers will continue and primary producers, whether they be engaged in grain-growing, or sheep and cattle-raising, will be forced to engage in kangaroo drives. In the past, I have seen plenty of kangaroo drives in which outside people with shotguns and other firearms have taken part. They are deplorable spectacles. I would be a sadist if I did not try to stop them. Our control programme is working quite well. Because of the high cost of ammunition, commercial shooters shoot to kill, and that is the only humane way to do the job. On advice from my officers and from what I have seen in country areas, I repeat that I am satisfied that Queensland can stand the harvesting of 1,000,000 kangaroos a year.

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

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier): 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 Constitution Act Amendment Act 1896-1971 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

ELECTIONS 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 Elections Act 1915-1973 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

ALLEGED MALPRACTICES IN REDCLIFFE CITY COUNCIL

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (12.5 p.m.): Today I intend to speak on the malpractices that have gone on in the Redcliffe City Council over the past few years. To show how concerned some people are—desperate attempts are being made to keep the present administration intact, because if a new man becomes mayor of Redcliffe many of the rackets will cease. In fact, two land deals worth \$500,000 possibly hinge on the result of the next council election.

My brother, Alderman Ray Frawley, has been set up on an assault charge for protecting the virtue of his young teenage daughter against a young lout. This young man's father was bribed with a sum of money to sign a complaint against my brother three months after the alleged offence occurred. This was done to offset any chance that he may have had of becoming mayor of Redcliffe. The person alleged to have paid the bribe, although not a real estate agent, has been engaged in many land deals in Redcliffe, acting on inside information. After the matter comes before the court on 4 May I intend to expose the people concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this matter is sub judice; it is already before the court. I ask him to get onto another subject.

Mr. FRAWLEY: It is interesting to note that two of the people concerned in the setting up of my brother have something to hide themselves. One of them should have been up on a drug charge many years ago but got out of it and let an innocent party take the blame. The other one misappropriated about \$600 from a person on whose behalf he was collecting rents and, owing to a technicality, he was never charged. I do not intend to reveal the names of these two people today because of the pain and suffering that could be caused to their families; but they did not think of the pain and suffering caused last week to my brother's family. I remind them that it is a long lane that has no turning and if they keep up their dirty work I will name them and their names will be a revelation.

When my brother becomes mayor of Redcliffe he intends to stop many of the rackets that have gone on and are going on at present. One racket concerns the disposal of council motor vehicles and equipment by tender. Certain people, including some of the council staff, receive undue consideration and they always manage to submit a tender which gives them the cream of the crop.

Rezoning of land to suit favoured people has occurred on many occasions in Redcliffe. I have been reliably informed that

an attempt is to be made shortly to rezone land for a person who has a vested interest in retaining the present administration and, in fact, this person is the one who organised the setting up of my brother.

On 8 March 1971, when I was an alderman on the Redcliffe City Council, Esso Oil Company was granted a permit to build a service station on the corner of Beaconsfield Street and Oxley Avenue, Margate. That application was refused by the council on 1 March but, after a representative of Esso Oil Company interviewed the mayor of Redcliffe, one alderman stayed away from the next council meeting and the company was given permission to do it—on the mayor's vote.

In 1962 two other oil companies—BP and Caltex—made application to build a service station on this same site. They were refused and the reason given was that it would be prejudicial to the amenities of the area. In 1965 another application was made to build a service station on the opposite corner. Again this was refused and the reason given was again that it would interfere with the amenities of the area. People must wonder just what inducement was offered to obtain the permit in 1971 to which I and three other aldermen objected strongly.

On 31 May 1971, when I was an alderman on the council, a contract worth \$33,000 was awarded unanimously by the full council to Caltex Oil Company; yet the very next morning—1 June—when all of the oil companies that had submitted tenders rang the council to find out the result, they were told that no decision had been made. No council officer would take it upon himself to make that information available without instructions from someone higher up.

BP, who had held the contract for many years, were tipped off that their tender was unsuccessful. They delivered a letter to the council stating that their oil was superior to that of Caltex and that, even though their tender for the supply of petrol was the same and their tender for oil was slightly higher, the council should give them the contract. The full council had already made a decision to give the contract to Caltex. Representatives of oil companies rang me on 1 June and I told them that the council had made a decision. The matter was then delayed for 16 days to give someone a change to work out how the contract could be taken from Caltex. Of course, it was too red hot for aldermen to accept and they again voted unanimously to award the contract to Caltex.

I brought the matter up at a full council meeting on 14 July. I received support from one alderman only. Again on 4 August everyone concerned was white-washed. After this I received calls from many oil companies congratulating me on the stand that I had taken and saying that it had been one of the first cases of honest tendering that they had

been associated with in Redcliffe. At that time I owned a service station in Redcliffe and the company whose products I sold, namely, Mobil, purposely did not submit a tender for fear there would be a claim of collusion between the company and me.

At the present time there is another shady land deal going on in Redcliffe. There is an area of 80 acres in the Rothwell area. The council have talked about this land and they feel that they may in the future turn it into a recreation reserve. The owner has been offered \$66,000 which, it is claimed, is the Valuer-General's valuation. But at least one Brisbane real estate agent has said that the land is worth \$300,000 and he is interested in purchasing it. Every prospective purchaser who approaches the Redcliffe City Council is told that this land could be resumed. Someone on the council who is famous for making land deals has gone to the owner of the land and offered him a price in the vicinity of \$100,000. Why would he offer this amount when its value is supposed to be \$66,000? Other prospective buyers are told that the land could be resumed. Would he want to buy it unless he knew that it would not be resumed? I believe that the valuation of \$66,000 is false. The land is not going to be resumed and another person will be legally robbed because he will be selling his land for a third of its price as he thinks it may be resumed by the council.

Matters such as this should be investigated by the Department of Local Government. No alderman of any council should be allowed to engage in land dealing whilst he is on the council. Aldermen have too much access to information and they can use their position to make a good deal of money. I do not mind the legitimate purchase of a block of land or a house but wholesale dealing in land should be discouraged. In fact, one alderman in Redcliffe has bought a considerable area of land since he became an alderman. This practice has to stop and I intend to ask the Minister for Local Government to amend the Act to prevent aldermen from dealing in land.

In 1971 or thereabouts, the honourable member for Redcliffe, now Speaker of this House, was booked for a parking offence and fined; but when a member of another council came to Redcliffe and was booked for illegal parking, the council illegally paid his fine out of general funds of ratepayers' money. One of the aldermen promised that he would get him off. I have with me now a photostat of a letter from the town clerk in which it is stated that the council never provided any monetary assistance to any person who breached any regulation. Yet the Auditor-General, whose report I have with me, noticed that a payment was made to redeem parking ticket A1357 issued for a breach of parking regulations and that such payment was authorised by the full council. That is not true. I was a member of the council and that matter never came before it. I saw the letter that came to the council from this other person. One wonders how much money has

been paid out over the years by the Redcliffe City Council without the knowledge of aldermen, which shows lack of supervision.

Every time I wanted to examine the parking register in Redcliffe, my request was refused. Four aldermen voted to the effect that I was not permitted to inspect any council records. I brought this matter before the full council. An alderman elected by the people to represent them on any council should be allowed to examine any council documents. These aldermen even obtained a legal ruling to prevent me from looking at these documents. The ruling was that all documents were not the business of a local authority until they came before a committee and that no alderman should be permitted to examine them before that time. I always felt that that ruling was incorrect.

It must be a shock to the people of Redcliffe and all other local authority areas to know that any letters that they write to their council cannot be examined by aldermen unless they have first gone before a committee. If letters are not first placed before a committee, nothing can be done about them. That probably explains why many people complain to me that they do not receive answers to their letters.

(Time expired.)

RELEASE OF PRISONERS TO ATTEND NEIL DIAMOND CONCERT

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (12.15 p.m.): The matter of public interest I wish to raise this morning is one that has been causing great public concern for weeks now. I refer to the release of two long-term prisoners from Boggo Road gaol in February to attend the Neil Diamond concert in the city. I say without hesitation that I have received many, many telephone calls and letters expressing fear and disgust that such an incident occurred. I refer to Donald John Maher, serving a life sentence for murder, manslaughter or whatever it was, and Barry John Cassidy who is serving a nine-year sentence. Maher is now serving the fourth year of a life sentence for the brutal National Hotel murder. There is no need for me to go into the details of that; every honourable member knows the method he employed on that occasion to kill an innocent man early one morning. The other man is in gaol for armed robbery. He received a nine-year sentence for armed robbery.

I have no quarrel with the rehabilitation of prisoners, but I do join with those members of the community who have expressed grave concern about the Government's action in this regard because somewhere along the line its priorities are out of order. I have no qualms about the gaoling of a drink-driver; he is a potential killer on our highways; but when we compare a murderer who is allowed out after serving only four years of a life term, or a highway robber, with a man, perhaps a truck driver, on a

drink-driving charge, the gap is very wide indeed. I often wonder why people show such great concern for murderers and why they do not make some comparison between them and drink-drivers. The Government, and the Minister in particular, should show some concern about the problem and do something about rectifying it. We express so much concern for murderers yet very little concern is shown for a man who drives his car whilst drunk and wants to use it between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. so that he can go to work and provide a living for his family but is refused permission. It is time he was given consideration for rehabilitation. I feel that there should be some restriction—

Mr. K. W. Hooper: Not all of them.

Mr. DEAN: The Minister for Transport rightly interjects, "Not all of them." But most of them are greatly inconvenienced because they are deprived of their livelihood. As I say, I do not hold any brief for the drink-driver. But the most serious concern expressed in the community about gaol sentences comes from the Australian Bank Officials' Association. That association has contended for a long time that the sentences for bank robbers are too light. I know that the prisoner I referred to was not a bank robber, but he is in practically the same category. The Australian Bank Officials' Association and the parents of young people working in banks hold the view that banks are not secure these days and that at any moment a bank might be held up, even in daylight hours in peak business periods. At one time parents felt that a position in a bank was a very secure one. On the vocational side, it still is, but the prospect of a hold-up is causing great concern to many parents and to older bank staff. The association has from time to time published advertisements appealing for the law to be enforced more strictly and for examples to be set which will deter people from any ideas of holding up banks. We read in the newspaper only recently—

Mr. Moore: You suggest we chop their hands off?

Mr. DEAN: I do not want to go back to the Dark Ages, but we have to face up to reality. The newspaper I am referring to features a headline, "Bandit: I'll blow your head off." The article reads—

"A young bandit yesterday robbed an Alderley bank of \$6,000 cash.

" . . .
"He walked up to teller John Cabe, pointed a revolver at his head and said: 'Fill the bag or I'll blow your head off.'"

It is bad enough when it happens, but you know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, as an ex-bank officer, that the feeling of fear does not finish there; the consternation that is caused in the bank lasts for weeks. The nervous trauma suffered by staff after an attack like that sometimes lasts for months.

It is of very little comfort to people to discover that a man serving a life sentence has been given permission to attend a concert or some other function.

In my opinion, the system of parole needs investigation. Judges and the courts generally carry out their duties to the best of their ability under the existing statutes, but I believe that very careful consideration should be given to the provision of easy parole. As I said earlier in answer to an interjection, I do not wish to go back to the dark ages—the use of thumbscrews and putting convicted people on display—but I think that far too much leniency is shown to people who deliberately set out to injure others, sometimes even to destroy them.

The Australian Bank Officials' Association has said—

“Our Association is concerned that greater utilisation is not being made of the penalties provided in State Criminal Codes.”

It is not. Although I am not attacking the judges, I join with the Bank Officials' Association in saying that maximum penalties should be imposed more frequently for highway robbery or armed robbery, particularly in cases involving bank officials. The association also said—

“The leniency demonstrated by certain sections of the judiciary in a number of States, when dealing with persons apprehended and convicted for armed attacks against bank officers, has appalled our members, who have called upon us to register the strongest possible protest.”

That is what I am doing here this morning. I support their protest and their appeal for far stronger measures to be taken than have been taken in the past.

The danger is not confined to banks. Garages are frequently the target. One near my home was robbed not very long ago. Fortunately, the owner was not there when the robbery took place. If he had been, it is probable that he would have suffered a fate similar to that suffered by some bank officers, or perhaps even a worse fate. Crimes of that type should receive far more attention that they are receiving now.

Mr. Moore: I think that the biggest problem lies in catching them.

Mr. DEAN: Many people would agree with me that it would be a very strong deterrent if an appropriate example were made of the ones who are caught.

Mr. Moore: It would not be.

Mr. DEAN: I believe it would be if very heavy sentences and penalties were imposed. I do not suggest that there should be a return to the Mosaic law, but it may be necessary to come close to it in order to curb the activities of potential killers in

the community and people who molest innocent and good citizens while they are performing their daily work.

The Australian Bank Officials' Association also submitted that steps should be taken to ensure that sentences, and in particular minimum sentences, are appropriate to serious crime, particularly armed holdups. The association, naturally, is very concerned about hold-ups of bank tellers. It said that armed hold-ups involve extreme violence and the risk of innocent people being killed or maimed. It also said—

“We draw particular attention to the case of I. H. Jakobi, convicted of six armed robberies in Victoria, and released on a \$100 five-year good behaviour bond.”

There have been similar incidents in other States, and those involved move from other States to Queensland. If penalties such as that are not an encouragement to people to engage in activities of that type, I do not know what is.

(Time expired.)

CRISIS IN EDUCATION

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (12.24 p.m.): I wish to speak in this debate about reports I have read recently—they have come from several sources—about the problem of illiteracy in schools.

Last year, remedial classes in English expression were begun at Macquarie University. It is not the first university to introduce remedial reading classes for university students, and it will not be the last.

Concern for literacy is widespread, and it is not confined to Australia. Education in this State is compulsory to the age of 15 years; yet one finds the paradox that although 80 per cent of the population is literate—and even highly literate by world standards—a large proportion of the remainder of the population is illiterate. Many educationists believe that growing illiteracy is one of the greatest problems facing Australian schools. Our education system is failing to equip many students with the minimum skills necessary to handle the growing complexities of life in our modern society. It is all the more alarming when we review the amount of money that is going into education. It is about time we had a cost-benefit analysis throughout Australia of education and education expenditure.

I know and most teachers know (and some teachers will even admit it) that we do not need to reduce class size to below 10, we do not need carpeted floors, we do not need individual furniture for each pupil, we do not need individual headphones or a range of sound and video tapes or a gaggle of other ingenious but expensive educational aids simply to teach children to read, write and count. The same proposition holds for education in secondary schools,

also. A good teacher can be effective under 1950 or 1940 conditions with class levels of 40 or over. They have been in the past and they can be still. That is the proposition I put. That is not a desirable standard and I do not advocate a return to it, but let's recognise that teachers can educate to a reasonable level without all the histrionics of the modern extremists in education.

Mr. Jensen: I was educated in classes of over 40.

Mr. LAMONT: Quite, and while I say that that would not be a desirable situation, it is not an impossible situation. It is curious to me that numeracy and literacy skills seem often to be in inverse proportion to the number of revolutionary new programmes available to teachers and the rate of their coming onto the market. The emphasis on self-discovery is now fashionable in education. Self-discovery is marvellous but surely a person needs to have some basic data at his disposal before he can run around discovering new things in education.

These days teachers often scoff at the idea of learning tables by rote. If we were to say to the same teachers, "Of course, all you are doing there is data processing the human computer so that they can go on to self-discovery", they would probably accept that because data processing of the human computer is something they understand, whereas schooling people in basics is something that many teachers do not understand or accept as a legitimate educational project.

Contrary to the Plowden report in the United Kingdom, which held that learning by self-discovery gave a greater benefit in education and led to improved reading standards, it is now revealed that most of the claims of the Plowden report were based on figures which could not be substantiated, and which have been disputed, and substantially disputed, since. It was widely held in the United Kingdom at the time the Plowden report came out—which was the height of progressive euphoria—that many of the findings were based on invalid statistics and unsubstantiated assumptions. There is no evidence that these often expressed experiments lead to better achievement in education.

I ask again, as I asked last night when we were talking about environment and pollution: what is "progress"? Progressive people in education could equally be called experimentalists. They are experimenting with other people's children; they are experimenting with the most valuable raw resources in Australia—our national brain-power.

Let us look briefly at secondary education. The chief criticism of the Radford scheme that was introduced in this State recently is that it creates too much stress for the student. There seems to be a school of

thought among educationists in Australia—it also resides at the top of the Queensland Teachers' Union—that the educative process ought to be without effort, certainly without painful effort, without stress, and that knowledge ought to be acquired pleasantly and without rigorous discipline and without rigorous self-discipline. Of course, students—18-year-old men—can be down in the football field or out on the Brisbane River training themselves into the ground, rowing their guts out, and reducing themselves to quivering blobs of tears and sweat to get into the school's sporting teams, but they must not receive stress in the classroom because their poor little personalities might be damaged! The experimentalists seem to contend that a teacher might damage a person's psyche if he marked him down for an essay and told him where he ought to be corrected. He might be damaged psychologically for life, but the teacher might also accidentally prepare him for a tough competitive society and his integration into it. The assumption that a person can be educated without stress is wrong. The assumption that the Radford innovations have brought in more stress is also wrong.

I will deal first with the former proposition. The so-called progressives seem determined to have us adopt the notion that schools are for social engineering and not for schooling. I do not agree with that. I believe schools are for schooling. But let us assume for a moment that they might be right, that we accept the concept of social engineering. Let us look at that concept alongside the concept of the education process without considerable pressure and effort. Are they really preparing students in a so-called social engineering system to expect achievement and success without considerable effort, pressure and stress? If they are doing that, they are wrong-headed.

Life is not like that. Life is competitive. People do not have to get into the politician's business to find out the stress that has to be gone through to achieve something. Whether someone is going into medicine, law or engineering, a white-collar job, or even a blue-collar job where he wants to be "foreman material"—where he wants to make something of his life and put a decent roof over his head—he encounters stress. If the social engineers of our classrooms are trying to get students to accept that they will achieve something without stress, without pressure, and without effort and self-discipline they are doing us a great disservice. No wonder there are people who seem to think the world owes them a living when they leave school! Life is full of stress, and if our classrooms are for social engineering, the emphasis of the experimentalists is wrong-headed.

I favour removing stress where that is feasible. I do not believe that we can remove stress altogether, because jobs are competitive. But by all means remove stress so long as we don't remove standards. The

Radford scheme accommodates both these aims. It got rid of the external examination but it did retain the goal of external standards. At the present time the Queensland Teachers' Union is making an attack on external standards.

The concept of external standards raises major difficulties. This morning the honourable member for Everton asked questions relating to that type of difficulty and I am in sympathy with the points raised. But even though there are difficulties inherent in the system, it is better to have external standards than it is to have either of the alternatives, that is, either a return to the old system or a total removal of moderation for external standards.

The problems of moderation may be great. But most of the problems are associated with professional standards and general quality of teachers, and that is really the crux of it. That is where the Radford system encounters its greatest difficulty—in the professional standards and professional attitude of teachers and in the quality of teachers who are turned out of colleges. These faults should be placed under scrutiny with a view to helping make the Radford scheme work.

Finally, I would deplore the Queensland Teachers' Union suggestion that moderation should be removed from Grade 11, for that is only the thin end of the wedge so far as the union is concerned. The removal of moderation would yield the obvious result of educational anarchy and further decline in standards. The result of that would be that the university would then put its back up and say, "All right, there are 1,500 different standards, one for each school in the State, so what we will do to sort out the intake is set up an objective outside examination for entry to university." The minute that is done there will be pressure from employers in commerce and industry who will say, "We want the results of that objective examination before you get a job." So we would be forced to go back to the old system.

The experimentalists in the Queensland Teachers' Union and the so-called progressives elsewhere may well be doing themselves a very bad turn by talking about removing moderation and external standards. The day we remove external standards, we will find that somebody will demand a test for people applying to enter the universities, and that test will then be adopted unanimously by other institutions and by commerce and industry. We would be back to square one.

I am looking here at an annual report from a school at which I taught. Would we wish to go back to the system under which in one year 176 hours were spent in examining students in 11 subjects, whereas under the Radford system only 62 hours were spent in written testing? Other forms of skills can now be tested. Under the old system the student went away on August vacation and

swotted, knowing that he was coming back to school to sit for a trial Senior or a trial Junior in September or October, which would give him an indication of how he might do in Senior or Junior. Then he went through two months of rigorously revising all the old material already covered—this was at best boring and at worst valueless. Next the student went into "swot-vac", that funny ritual of putting himself through a real stew and deciding whether or not he would cram enough into his system and memory bank to be able to go into combat with a completely unknown adversary. He spent over 30 hours in those final three weeks (because he usually got about 10 three-hour examinations) and if slogging it out in that form was not greater stress than that now exerted with internal assessment, albeit with some pressure from moderation, I don't know what was.

I support Radford, and I support the external standard. I believe that any attack on this external standard will lead to educational anarchy. That could well be what Mr. Costello wants. Let us get back to schooling students.

AURUKUN ASSOCIATES AGREEMENT ACT

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.35 p.m.): The Aurukun Associates Agreement Act has become one of the great debates of 1976. To some it is a vital land-rights issue, to others it is more a matter of civil rights, while to many it is really a question of the Government and the bureaucracy riding roughshod over the Aurukun Aboriginal people. However, irrespective of how one sees the Aurukun issue—whether one supports or opposes the State Government's action—one would have to agree that it has crossed the racial, political and religious boundaries and has stirred to action people from all walks of life.

Public rallies have been held, petitions circulated and presented to this Parliament, and motions of condemnation have been passed by differing political parties and by numerous church and community bodies. The Labor Party has naturally been outspoken against the Government's decision but so, too, have the Young Liberals and members of the Liberal Party. I read in today's "Telegraph" that Mr. Johnson, the member for Brisbane, has called for the repeal of the Act.

The Aurukun issue has been spotlighted by the media. Numerous Press releases and wide T.V. coverage have been devoted to it. Even the Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Viner) considered the issue so important that he took it upon himself, in company with Senator Bonner, to visit Aurukun on 21 and 22 January. Prime Minister Fraser has insisted that the Premier confer with him today, and reference was made to that in today's "Courier-Mail".

Outside the political arena, the Aborigines and Islander Catholic Conference held at Yeppoon in January this year devoted considerable time to the Aurukun Associates Agreement Act of 1975. It called on the Conference of Bishops in these terms—

“To support the granting to the Aboriginal people of rights to land and allow them to live with dignity and security and to support the campaign to persuade Governments of the crying need for these rights to land.”

The conference was addressed by Mr. F. G. Brennan, Q.C., who gave a critical analysis of the Aurukun Act.

This address was given major prominence in the public opinion forum section of the Catholic newspaper “The Leader”. Mr. Brennan made a biting attack on the Aurukun mining agreements and on the circumstances leading up to its sanction by the Government in this Assembly. He said—

“You can’t have consultation with Aboriginal people by someone sitting down in November 1975 and saying to them, ‘Do you agree the Neely letters will be the basis of our future arrangements?’”

He claimed—and rightly, too—that Aboriginal consultation is not something that lasts for a day or an hour, but something that goes on over a period of months, where there is talk and more talk among the people. He stated that, beyond all doubt, that had never happened at Aurukun. He also attacked the Act as it relates to the profit-sharing arrangements, pointing out that nobody can check on how a company’s profit is calculated and that the agreement makes sure that nobody can check. His critical comments on the provisions for the employment of Aborigines are also worth noting, as is his summation of the issue in these words—

“This is a sad and sorry chapter in Queensland’s history in its relationship with the Aboriginal people.”

The full address is worth reading; but the main point is that, following Mr. Brennan’s contribution, the conference, by resolution, supported the Aurukun people in their opposition to mining as authorised by the Act and requested the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments to take appropriate steps to prevent the commencement of mining. It also requested the Queensland Government and the relevant mining companies to enter into consultation with the Aurukun people and their appointed legal advisers, leading to an agreement with the Aurukun people concerning any mining which may occur on the Aurukun reserve.

This was not an isolated instance of support. Letters, telegrams and petitions in support of the people’s rights have been written, sent and circulated by members of the Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches. Only a few days ago—on 14 March—the Roman Catholic National Commission for Justice and Peace met

in Sydney and, after considering all the facts, called on the Prime Minister (Mr. Fraser) and the Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister (Mr. Viner) to protect the tribal lands of the Aurukun people on Cape York Peninsula. Likewise, after a meeting in Adelaide, the Methodist Church Federal Citizenship Committee called on the Federal Government to ensure that the Aboriginal people of Aurukun are involved directly in negotiations over bauxite mining in their area.

It is worth noting, too, that the Roman Catholic Commission said that it supported the Aurukun community in its protests against the granting of mining rights over bauxite deposits “without adequate consultations which respect their traditional decision-making processes.”

This attitude to “consultations” was backed up by the Secretary-General of the Methodist Church (Rev. M. G. Wilmshurst) when he said that the Queensland Government had granted mining rights to the mining consortium Aurukun Associates without “real and meaningful discussions with the Aboriginal people involved.” It is also interesting to note that the Methodist Federal Committee supported the stand of the Presbyterian Church in its opposition to the way the Queensland Government had acted on this issue.

Earlier this year the Plenary Session of the Mission Boards of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist Churches passed a resolution in which it attacked the unjust legislation brought down by this Parliament; it urged the Commonwealth to initiate an environmental impact study to assess the consequences of mining on the Aurukun community; and it also urged the Government not to allow export licences.

Regardless of these expressions of concern and condemnation, this Government—and in particular the Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries (Mr. Wharton)—persist in maintaining their rigid and uncompromising stand on the issue. The Minister has even gone so far as to attack the Presbyterian Church and individual leaders. He has tried to draw red herrings across the real facts by blaming the growing opposition to the mining project on—and I quote again—“Activists and militants operating under the mantle of the Presbyterian or other church organisations, but designed to promote personal ideologies associated with the so-called ‘land rights’ issue.”

He has done his darndest to destroy the public standing and credibility of certain ministers of religion who have voiced their disapproval, and he has even tried to make out that the people of Aurukun want the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement to take over the administration of the Aurukun reserve. In this way he has made an implication of maladministration. This is just as twisted and misconstrued

as his comments about—and I quote again—“Radicals descending on the Aurukun community like a plague.”

It is my personal belief that the Minister has unknowingly or unintentionally misled this Parliament—just as he has misled the Aurukun Council and the community. He has not necessarily told lies—I will not accuse him of that—but he has certainly not told the whole truth, and it is time that he admitted it.

The Aurukun Associates Agreement is no longer an isolated issue against which a few Opposition members spoke when it came before this Assembly in the dying stages of the earlier part of this session. It is now a national question which has raised the opposing voices of people throughout the country to whom this Government must now listen. Church leaders, political leaders, prominent lawyers and judges have voiced their concern and their disapproval so surely that, if this is truly a democratic Government, these views cannot go unheeded any longer.

The Minister's actions are somewhat understandable. He finds himself caught on the ropes and like a desperate, groggy pugilist, he is swinging wildly, hoping to K.O. his attackers and refusing to throw in the towel—regardless of the fact that he has been out-glassed, outpointed and badly mauled.

This may be splendid entertainment for those who do not really care what happens, and it may seem to be the only defence in the eyes of those who advised him so badly in the first instance. But when all the political ballyhoo dies down, it does not do much for the people whose lives and futures are affected.

The Aurukun issue must be resolved, and it can be if the Minister listens to reason. We have had calls for inquiries and we have had calls for the repeal of the Act. One solution is for the Premier and the Minister to agree to an independent person—a retired judge, for that matter—going to Aurukun with a representative of the Government and one from the Presbyterian Church to assess the situation as to what the people really want. I believe that the churches would accept the findings of such a person. And if the Minister is so sure of his case he should have nothing to fear. It would resolve the impasse that has been reached and it would ensure that the people of Aurukun receive the justice that they deserve.

The issue has got out of hand; elements in Government circles have centred their attack on personalities rather than on the facts, and the old “radical” bogey has now been introduced. Claims and counter-claims have been made and will continue to be made. Criticism will continue to grow and the rift between Church and State on this issue must widen unless the Minister and the Premier change their unnecessarily rigid and uncompromising stand.

It is not too late, however, to remedy the situation. I therefore ask the Minister to demonstrate the substance that he is made of and take the initiative now—belated though it might be—to appoint a retired judge to inquire into the full ramifications of the Aurukun agreement and to report back to this Parliament.

RETIREMENT OF FORMER MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Mr. CHINCHEN (Mt. Gravatt) (12.44 p.m.): I am of the opinion that, when a member of this Assembly leaves Parliament after 13 years' service, it is surely a matter of public interest. I was extremely disappointed—and I am quite sure that many other honourable members were also—when Mr. John Murray, the former member for Clayfield, left this Chamber last Wednesday without one leader of Parliament at least saying, “We hope that you will enjoy your retirement.” But not a single word! This could be due to the forms of this Parliament; I do not know. If it is so, I think we should look at our procedures. On the previous day we spent some time extolling the virtues of deceased former members—and rightly so. There have been many occasions when members of the House staff have been leaving on which we have got together and some person of importance has said a few appropriate words. But when John Murray left not a word was said.

Mr. Porter: He should have fallen over and broken his neck.

Mr. CHINCHEN: Undoubtedly when a person dies all the best things are said about him.

I think that this is a matter that we should consider, because what happened disappointed me. I feel that when a member leaves in such circumstances, the impression is given to the public that he may perhaps be leaving under a cloud. That certainly was not the case with John Murray. He said in his letter of resignation, I understand, that he resigned as of “this day”. When the Premier put a motion to the House, the words were, I think, “leaving forthwith” or something to that effect. This is something that should not happen again.

One thing that interests me about this place is the diversity of members and their backgrounds. I remember a great speech made by the late Ted Walsh on this very matter at a time when some academics were saying that parliamentarians should have to pass certain examinations or should be required to have a certain standard of education. Mr. Walsh mentioned his humble background, and he pointed out the importance in a democratic system of government of having a wide range of people from various backgrounds. I think all will agree that that is important.

I should like to spend a moment or two saying what I know of Mr. John Murray. He is not a man who speaks about himself. I am proud to have been a personal friend of his. We travelled together, and we sat together in this Chamber for 13 years. To me, he is a remarkable man. His father died when he was three years of age, which shows that he did not have an easy life and that he must have had a remarkable mother. He left school at the age of 14 years in 1930 in the middle of the depression. At that tender age he went to a sheep station in the far west of New South Wales and worked there for five years until he was 19 years of age.

He then decided to do something for himself. This shows the independence of the man and his individuality. He went professional kangaroo shooting. He did fencing, shearing and droving and for 2½ years he worked underground in the mine at Broken Hill. This, of course, is where he learned something of unionism—possibly the harshest type of unionism in this country. Here again he showed his self-reliance and independence.

This narrative gives an indication of his background. Backgrounds, of course, make people, because we are all products of what we have experienced, seen and heard, the home life that we have had, the schools that we attended and the jobs that we have done.

It was only natural that, when the war broke out, John Murray would join up. He joined the A.I.F. in May 1940 and left Australia in October of that year with the 9th Division. He is one of a small number who saw out the complete siege of Tobruk. The reason was that the ship on which he was to leave was sunk. He was obviously an extremely good soldier. He joined up as a private and rose to the rank of captain. He saw the battle of Alamein and was twice mentioned in dispatches. He became an intelligence officer in the 13th Battalion, and then joined Brigade intelligence for one year. He was demobilised in December 1945.

All of that indicates a fairly hard life up to that time for this young man. What did he do then? All he had was his deferred pay of £300. He decided to get out on his own. He leased a property in the far west of New South Wales. Before long he had made a little money and he then purchased a property. Eventually he had three properties under his control. He then went to North Queensland. He liked this area, and there he set up "The Orient" outside Ingham in 1951. There he did a considerable amount of unique work. He studied new pastures and he tried to find some way of raising cattle in the wet tropics. In this he succeeded. He went to America and imported from that country Brahman and Santa Gertrudis cattle before the import ban was applied.

He was a man of great drive and energy. He found he could interest many people in the development of the wet tropics, so he

decided to enter Parliament. In 1958 he stood for the Federal seat of Herbert. It is interesting to know that he was endorsed as a joint-party candidate. The Liberal and Country Parties formed a committee of equal membership to approve a candidate. The terms of the candidature were that if the candidate were successful at the polls he would have the right to choose the party to which he would belong. I know it disappointed John Murray that various people said he let down this party or that. He did not do this. After the election he had the right to decide whether he would be a member of the Country Party or the Liberal Party, and he decided to be a Liberal. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook was a member of the selection committee, and he could confirm exactly what I am saying.

John Murray was interested in national development, agriculture and the development of North Queensland, and he did an excellent job in his three years in the Federal House. He was defeated in 1961. Then in 1963, under the influence of Mr. Ken Morris and the honourable member for Toowong, he stood for the State seat of Clayfield. He won that seat and entered the House.

He was a man who had various strengths—and perhaps some weaknesses. I know he is not a man for detail; but he sees things very clearly in the broad. He did not deviate. He had his principles. He knew the art of compromise—as all politicians must—but on major matters of conscience or principle he did not deviate. He would not deflect for expediency. Although this is expected of some people at some times, he would not allow it to happen; he would not bend the knee. Perhaps he suffered because of this, but I would say that he served here in a very useful capacity.

He was a most eloquent speaker, with a delightful sense of humour, and in his early days here he made some wonderful contributions to debates. But it was in the joint-party room where he showed his true strength. He had a great respect for Parliament as an institution and was an advocate of parliamentary reform. Having been in Canberra, he saw the necessity for reform in this place. He was the man who, when he initially entered this Chamber, fought so hard for questions without notice. Actually, to start with, he fought for the right to ask questions. It may surprise the younger members to know that, when he entered this Chamber, if a Government member wanted to ask a question he had to get the permission of the Minister first and then inform Mr. Speaker. We did a survey over a period of 12 months and found that the Opposition asked 49 questions for every one asked by a Government member. That is the way it was. If one was a Government member one did not ask questions. Eventually we received that concession, and in addition we were allowed to ask questions without notice.

John Murray was very critical too, of our committee system. He wanted standing committees. He was one who fought for committees on public works, public accounts, privileges and subordinate legislation. To John Murray these things were of great importance and he brought his persuasive nature to bear in these in these areas. To him daily "Hansard" was a very important thing. He pointed out to us how important this was and how easily it could be arranged. He pointed out, that after the "Hansard" reporters had typed out their copy it could come to our desks and be checked within half an hour of its being typed. It could then go to the Government Printing Office as a corrected copy to be printed—not an uncorrected copy—for distribution to all departments and to all members the next day. We do not have all these things yet, but John Murray tried for 13 years to get them. I confidently assert that this place has been made a better place because of John Murray's membership.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHINCHEN: I hope those "Hear, hears" will be recorded in "Hansard", so that people will know that it is not just me speaking as a friend of John Murray, but that most people here feel that he played his part and played it well.

Mr. Porter: There is something wrong with a system that leaves a man like that to languish.

Mr. CHINCHEN: Although his talents were not adequately used in this Chamber, he served a very useful purpose indeed. I was very proud to be a colleague of John Murray's in this Chamber, and I trust that he and his wife, Ruth, have very many happy years in retirement with their family.

COMET RIVER BRIDGE; TOURISM, CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (12.55 p.m.): Before dealing with the subject that I wish to bring to the attention of the House, I think I ought to mention that the former member for Clayfield, Mr. Murray, helped me considerably when I entered this Assembly. I greatly appreciated his assistance, and I should like my thanks to be recorded in "Hansard".

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Is there any truth in the suggestion that—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member for Archerfield should be in his usual seat if he wishes to interject.

Mr. LESTER: I wish to deal principally with the Comet River Bridge, which links coastal areas of Central Queensland with western areas and serves about 25,000 people in the West. All sorts of problems have arisen because of the flooding of that bridge. It was flooded for seven weeks the

Christmas before last and nine weeks last Christmas, and it has been flooded on many other occasions. Its closure has caused a great deal of inconvenience to many people.

I make it clear to the House that I appreciate the wonderful work now being done on the Capricorn Highway. Not only is it being widened; more bridges are being built on it. However, I stress the urgent need for a start to be made on the construction of a new bridge over the Comet River, and I hope that an announcement to that effect will be made within the next 15 months.

In the meantime, I suggest that a shuttle service should be provided over the rail bridge so that travellers will not be unduly inconvenienced in times of flood. It would be necessary to build a ramp on the western side of the bridge; the Comet River railway station could be used on the other side. A crew could be provided for a small train composed of flat-top wagons and a carriage, which could shuttle backwards and forwards across the rail bridge. People could be charged, say, \$10 to cross the bridge. Such a service would assist greatly to overcome problems existing in time of flood. Even if a start were made tomorrow on the construction of a new bridge, it would probably take two to three years to complete because it is a major bridge.

I point out to the House that the flooding of the Comet River bridge has prevented many tourists from visiting the Central Highlands and seeing such attractions as the Fairbairn Dam. There is also an old traction engine in Clermont that was resurrected by the Rotary Club in 1969. It was used to virtually shift the town of Clermont to higher ground in 1916 when a major flood occurred in which about 67 people lost their lives. I understand that only one other town in inland Queensland has experienced a flood of more disastrous proportions.

After being used for work of various types round the town, that traction engine was left in an old gold battery. A few of us found it there and gradually restored it. We brought it to Clermont under its own steam, with a steam certificate. Photographs show how that traction engine was used to shift hotels and other buildings in Clermont to higher ground during the big flood. Other photographs are available—one of them was published in "The Courier-Mail"—showing it being brought to Clermont under its own steam after it had been restored.

If any honourable member visits Clermont, I suggest that he make a point of seeing that traction engine, which is an historic relic. Whenever a tourist bus comes to Clermont, if I have time available I meet the passengers and take them to see the traction engine. Unfortunately, not many people know about it, which is why I am mentioning it in this debate.

The gem-fields are also in the Central Highlands. Although controversy surrounds them at times, they are a wonderful tourist attraction. Many people now live there, trying to make a living and also offering a service to the community. The gem-fields are now developing a character of their own. Not long ago a school bus was provided for the area. Electricity is now being installed; roads are being improved; houses of a more substantial nature are being built and all sorts of accommodation is being provided. Arts and craft shops in which people can buy gems and souvenirs of the area are being opened.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! Under the provisions of the sessional order previously agreed to by the House, the time allowed for the Matters of Public Interest debate has now expired.

The House adjourned at 1.1 p.m.
