Queensland

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THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 1976

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AURUKUN; STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries) (11.4 a.m.): During my absence from this Chamber yesterday the honourable member for Rockhampton claimed that I had misled Parliament. I want to absolutely refute such allegation and make it clear that if the honourable member had made the effort to read my ministerial statement of Tuesday, 9 March, a copy of which I made available to him, he would be more aware of the facts. They are a complete denial of his allegations.

It is rather tragic to hear him parroting the doctrines being disseminated throughout this country by certain people who have their own axe to grind and who have little, if any, regard for the Aurukun people, but who are using the Act as an avenue to promote their philosophies on the so-called land-rights issue. These people must be aware that their actions and activities are tearing apart the hearts and emotions of the Aurukun people, but they could not care two hoots for the people themselves. Surely this must weigh heavily on their conscience.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the facts have been made clear in this House; the terms and conditions are quite clear-cut and beneficial to the Aurukun people.

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 1976

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 Forestry Act 1959–1975.

Orders in Council under—

Workers' Compensation Act 1916–1974.

Forestry Act 1959–1975.

Regulations under—

Motor Vehicles Insurance Act 1936–1975.

Education Act 1964–1974.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

PAYMENT OF WAGES TO EMPLOYEES OF SUSPENDED BUILDING SOCIETIES

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.3 a.m.): I have this morning directed that the terms of the order suspending the operations of the building societies named by the Treasurer and me last night will not prevent the societies from continuing to pay the wages of all staff presently employed.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. CHARITY FUND-RAISING

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

(1) Is he aware of a report in "The Sunday Mail" of 14 March in which Mr. Compton, President of the Australasian Institute of Fundraising, Queensland Chapter, stated that many unscrupulous people were making excess profits on charity fund-raising, particularly by taking a share of the amount collected?

(2) What measures does he intend to take to prevent this practice becoming prevalent?

Answers:—

(1) I have read the article.

(2) Provision is made in both the Collections Regulations and the Art Union Regulation Act and regulations to restrict the amount of expenses to a percentage of the gross proceeds. This percentage varies from 10 per cent to 33⅓ per cent depending on the form of fund-raising conducted by the charity. Audited financial returns received from charities and in respect of art unions have not disclosed that these percentages are being exceeded. If any specific complaint is received, the matter will be investigated.

2. CONTROL OF SKATE-BOARD USE

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

In view of the increasing use in public places of that infernal machine the skate-board, is any action proposed to introduce regulations to control the use of skate-boards in order to protect the interests and welfare of the public and the riders of the boards?

Answer:—

I would refer the honourable member to a similar question asked by the honourable member for Lytton and to my reply of 11 November 1975. So far as my responsibilities under the Traffic Act are concerned, I am keeping the position under review. At this stage I am not in a position to indicate what additional action, if any, should be taken in this matter. However, I have referred this matter to the sub-committee of the Traffic Advisory Committee for consideration and to obtain information as to what action, if any, has been taken in other States with regard to the use of these skate-boards.

3. SCHOOLS STUDY OF FOOT AND POSTURE PROBLEMS; ARTHRITIS

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

(1) Have any plans been made by the Queensland Government to carry out investigations similar to those being carried out by a specialist team from the Sydney Technical College to examine the pupils in New South Wales for foot and posture problems?

(2) Might such a survey help to determine if any school-children face a future marred by the agony of arthritis?

(3) What steps have been taken or are planned in Queensland to find answers to this crippling disease or to provide new methods of handling it?

Answers:—

(1) No. School Health Services staff include feet and posture examinations as part of their routine examinations.

(2) A senior orthopaedic specialist has advised that there is no relation between disabilities which would be found in such a survey and the onset in adult life of arthritis, which is a "wearing-out" disease.

(3) New methods of handling the disease include joint-replacement operations, which have been used for some years now in Queensland.

4. TAIL-TAGGING OF CATTLE

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

(1) In order to progress towards a provisionally free status in respect of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, should Queensland adopt a tail-tag system to be used as an efficient trace-back and monitoring system?

(2) Would this involve all cattle over the age of six months being tail-tagged for sale in saleyards or directly to an abattoir for slaughter?

(3) What effect could this have on our future export meat market if a tail-tagging system is not adopted?

Answers:—

(1) Yes, it is essential to introduce an identification system for all cattle intended for slaughter to facilitate trace-back of all animals with lesions of tuberculosis and of breeding stock which react to tests for brucellosis. Without such a trace-back system, progress towards eradication of these two diseases will be slowed and Queensland would fall behind the other States which have now developed trace-back systems.

(2) All cattle other than young calves intended for slaughter or sale for slaughter should be identifiable with the property of origin. It is proposed to grant exemptions from tail-tagging for drafts of cattle proceeding direct to meatworks where an inspector is satisfied that the draft can be satisfactorily identified to the property or origin, for cattle permitted direct from property to property, and for cattle permitted to an approved store-cattle sale.

(3) If tail-tagging is not adopted, Queensland may be seriously disadvantaged in world markets in comparison with other States. There is every reason to believe that we can expect a tightening of import requirements in respect of freedom from disease by other countries as they make progress with their own eradication programmes.

5. BANANA MARKETING BY NORTH QUEENSLAND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

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

(1) As a recent report indicates that a North Queensland Aboriginal community is competing with the Northern Rivers District of New South Wales to market bananas in Sydney, will he explain the purpose of this project?

(2) Are such projects carried out on other Aboriginal communities in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) The Aboriginal Community concerned is Yarrabah, near Cairns, and I am pleased to say that the first consignment of Yarrabah bananas for this season left the North for Sydney markets last week. It consisted of 500 cartons of prime bananas—each carton containing 13 kilograms. Similar consignments will be sent each week for the next three months. The early North Queensland season enables Yarrabah bananas to bring top price in the South. Yarrabah banana plantation is part of a community farm which has been established over the past 2½ years. As well as bananas, the farm has experimental pineapples, citrus fruit, paw-paws, avocados, vegetables and exotic trees. The farm was established to provide employment, training, revenue and self-sufficiency.

(2) Similar goals are sought on all other communities with establishment of a variety of industries including grazing, farming, forestry, timber-milling, handcrafts, pottery, tourism, mining and, only recently, the nucleus of an Aboriginal commercial fishing industry on Mornington Island.

6. METRICATION

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

(1) Has he agreed to certain principles endorsed by the Metric Council Board at the meeting held in Adelaide in December 1975, which weights and measures representatives of all States and the Metric Conversion Board attended, and, if so, will he detail the principles?

(2) Did the meeting also discuss such matters as the initial verification of non-metric instruments, the reverification of non-metric instruments and the withdrawal of sole imperial markings, and, as metric conversion greatly affects the community at large and there appears to be certain confusion from both sides of the market, will he elaborate on these problems?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that there was a meeting held under the auspices of the Metric Conversion Board in Adelaide in December 1975. At this stage Cabinet has made no decisions in relation to the suggested principles, some of which are of a hypothetical nature, that emanated from that meeting. At the appropriate time I will make a statement.

As to the initial verification of non-metric instruments following recommendations of the Metric Conversion Board, the Weights and Measures Regulation was amended in December 1975 to preclude the verification of new weights, measures, weighing and measuring instruments which were not denominated and graduated solely in the metric system. Similar legislation has been introduced in other States.

Provision is included in the Queensland regulations for the granting of exemptions for the verification of instruments used for export trade and in remote areas where hardships may be encountered by complying with the specified date requirements.

Reverification or reinspection of non-metric units will be continued until 31 December 1977.

In recent amendments to the Weights and Measures Regulations and in accordance with previous agreement reached by all statutory authorities and the Metric Conversion Board all instruments submitted for reverification/reinspection after 1 January 1978 must be in the metric system.

To advise and publicise to the owners of existing imperial machines that such provision exists, an adhesive label will be attached to all machines by weights and measures inspectors, advising the owners of the date by which the instruments should be converted to metric.

In cases where the machine is inspected in November 1977, the conversion date to metric of the particular machine will be shown on the adhesive label as November 1978. To also assist in publicising this requirement, a circular letter will be distributed to the owners of all imperial machines.

The withdrawal of sole imperial markings on pre-packed articles has been in progress on a voluntary basis by most pre-packing organisations in Queensland since 1 January 1976 in accordance with agreement reached by the Standing Committee on Packaging and endorsed by the Metric Conversion Board.

These principles were published and circulated, to organisations packaging articles for sale, in February 1975. Action is at present being taken to amend the Weights and Measures Regulations to incorporate such provision.

For reasons outside their control many organisations have found that packaged material ordered with expectancy of being used by December 1975 is still on hand. To avoid any undue cost to industry and the consumer in the market-place, the use of such material still on hand has been accepted by the Weights and Measures Branch.

The proposed subordinate legislation will provide for the sole metric marking on certain prescribed articles. Imperial markings with metric equivalent will be accepted on other packaged articles until the final proposed cut-off date of 1 January 1978.

7. AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

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

(1) Has the Australian Permanent Building Society any issued shares under section 24 of the Act and, if so, what is their face value and what is the condition of pay-up?

(2) Has the society borrowed any money under section 26 of the Act and, if so, what is the amount and what are the conditions of the borrowing?

(3) Did the society have at its call any other money and, if so, how much, from what source and under what conditions?

(4) How many houses which have been financed by the society are (a) completed, (b) under construction or (c) awaiting construction?

(5) Over what period of time are the outstanding loans to borrowers to be paid?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) The information sought by the honourable member is not readily available from the records of the society. However, a thorough examination is currently being made of the affairs and records of the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett.

I am pleased to say that due to the efforts last night of the Treasurer (Sir Gordon Chalk) and me, I can assure this House and the public of Queensland that members of this society have no need to worry and that they will have their investments returned as outlined in the statement made by Sir Gordon Chalk and me last night.

Mr. Houston: With all respect I suggest that the Minister tell the House what that statement was so that we do not have to rely on what appeared in some newspapers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

8. T.A.B. BUILDING, ALBION

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

Further to his answer to my question of 16 March concerning the T.A.B. building at Albion, giving the total cost of the establishment as approximately $11,500,000, does his reply to the honourable member for Everton on 24 October 1975 still apply?

Answer:—

The question asked by the honourable member for Everton on 24 October 1975 related to the construction of the headquarters building alone, and the answer I gave then still applies.

The funds for this building have and will continue to come, in the main, from the board's own reserves, assisted by the prudent utilisation of the T.A.B. normal cash flow and from the Totalisator Investments Deduction Fund.

With regard to the balance owing on the computer installation, it is estimated that the payments will be made over the next three years from funding sources similar to those utilised for the building. However, it is not possible, at this time, to state definitely that no recourse to borrowed funds will be made for this equipment.

9. SINGLE-UNIT SLEEPING COMPARTMENTS ON TRAINS

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

Why is Queensland the only State which refuses to provide single-unit sleeping compartments on its trains?

Answer:—

The modification of existing sleeping cars to provide single-berth compartments would be quite impracticable. When the question of replacing existing carriage stock arises, consideration will be given to equipping them with single-berth compartments.

10. ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDERS COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE

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

(1) Is the Aboriginal and Islanders Community Health service operating in Townsville a corporate body under the relevant Act and, if so, in view of the grave discrepancies and many acts of apparent dishonesty disclosed in the statement of receipts and payments for the period 1 July to 30 September 1975 is any action contemplated against the persons responsible?

(2) Is any action proposed to be taken under the Act or in any other way to prevent such a deplorable state of affairs developing again?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The organisation named by the honourable member has no connection or affiliation whatsoever with my Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, but may quite possibly be a wholly sponsored Commonwealth Government corporation which now faces the same tragic consequences of mismanagement and economic waste as has been evident in so many schemes and projects devised

and encouraged towards corporate identity during those unfortunate years of Federal Labor administration. However, as any matters of company procedure and accountability would fall within the Companies Act, I suggest that the honourable member direct this question to my colleague the honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

Mr. Aikens: What's the use of asking him? Wait till we listen to the next one.

11. COMPETENCE OF SOLICITORS

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

(1) As he is aware, following my representations on the matter and his acknowledgment of the facts of the case, that an old Townsville man named Murphy was mulcted of $21.20, which he cannot recover because of the gross incompetence of a firm of Townsville solicitors, why and under what law or procedure was Murphy made the innocent victim of what amounted to legalised robbery?

(2) In view of the Minister's written acknowledgment of his inability to make the solicitors face up to their responsibilities on the matter and the unwillingness of the Law Society to take any action in the case, how can he justify his spending of thousands of dollars in advertisements extolling the honesty and reliability of solicitors and urging all Queenslanders to do nothing until they consult a solicitor?

Mr. KNOX: I hope the honourable member for Townsville South will listen to this one, because the information is very interesting.

Answers:—

(1) In acting as they did, the solicitors were obviously acting in their client's interest as they were legally obliged to him so to do. As events turned out, they acted mistakenly in respect of deducting this amount from the final settlement.

(2) The circumstances illustrate the desirability of having proper advice when settling transactions of this nature. Had Mr. Murphy been represented in respect of the settlement of the transfer, it would have been most unlikely that any deduction for rates, which in fact had been paid, would have been made.

12. PRE-SCHOOLS, REDLANDS ELECTORATE

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

(1) Is he aware of the extreme shortage of pre-school accommodation in the Redlands electorate?

(2) When will pre-schools be constructed at Springwood, Alexandra Hills, Cleveland, Victoria Point, Rochedale and Wellington Point?

(3) With the increase in numbers at the Springwood State School and the increasing numbers of young children in this community, will he consider the construction of a junior school in Dennis Road, Springwood, to overcome accommodation problems being experienced at Springwood, Rochedale and Slacks Creek State Schools?

Answers:—

(1) The need for additional pre-school centres in the Redlands area is appreciated.

(2) It is hoped, subject to the allocation of the necessary funds, to construct pre-schools at Alexandra Hills, Rochedale and Victoria Point in 1976-77. In addition, it is hoped to provide an additional facility at Springwood Road. As site acquisitions at both Cleveland and Wellington Point have not yet been completed, it is not yet possible to insert these in the provisional pre-school building programme.

(3) At this point of time I do not consider the construction of a junior school in Dennis Road, Springwood, is warranted. The State schools at Springwood Road, Rochedale and Slacks Creek will cope with enrolments in 1977. Future planning, however, anticipates the establishment of State schools (all grades) in the area between Springwood Road and Slacks Creek for 1978, and in the area between Springwood Road and Rochedale for 1979.

13. SAND-MINING

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

(1) How many employees are currently employed by sand-mining companies in Queensland?

(2) What is the total number of employees working on each of special mining leases 84 and 102 on Fraser Island?

(3) Will he outline other benefits, direct or indirect, resulting from sand-mining operations?

Answers:—

(1) The total number of persons employed by heavy mineral sand-mining companies in Queensland is 1148.

(2) The total number of persons employed on mining lease No. 102, Maryborough, is 126, and on mining lease No. 84, Maryborough, 113. (At Maryborough D. M. Minerals employs 72 persons; these are not included in the 126 employees on M.L. 102, Maryborough.)

(3) Direct benefits resulting from sand-mining are: employment opportunities; and taxes and payments to Government and public utilities, such as income taxes, both personal and company, sales taxes on purchases, import duties on purchases from overseas, royalties, lease rents, railway charges, ports and harbours charges, electricity charges, post office charges, telecommunications charges, and excise duties on petroleum products. Indirect benefits resulting from sand-mining are: employment in supporting facilities, for example, truck owners and operators and stevedores; further processing; wholesaling and retailing in the area generally; taxes and charges paid by these support industries; contribution of exports to the balance of payments; improvement of communications and access to remote areas for tourism, education, and land use control; remedial drainage and other public works undertaken to allow sand-mining to take place; and possible improvement for subsequent land use by rehabilitation.

14. DECLINING BIRTH-RATE

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

With regard to the scarcity of children available for adoption, while the number of children available for adoption has diminished because unmarried mothers wish to retain their children, has the number of married couples unable to have children dramatically increased as a result of permanent medical side-effects resulting from contraceptives, particularly the pill?

Answer:—

The Director, Department of Children's Services, confirms that the number of babies available for adoption has diminshed partly because of the availability of social service benefits to enable unmarried mothers who wish to retain their babies to do so. However, in relation to the question of the effect which contraceptives might have, the Department of Children's Services has no medical evidence to support the claim that the number of married couples unable to have children has dramatically increased because of permanent medical side-effects resulting from contraception, particularly with regard to the pill.

15. RADFORD EDUCATION SCHEME

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

(1) With regard to the so-called Radford scheme, is he aware of the policy statement of the Board of Secondary School Studies recently distributed to teachers, which states in part that standards are invariably derived from the observed performances of the students themselves and that assessments of students are therefore relative, based upon comparisons made within a particular group?

(2) Why has the Board of Secondary School Studies established a State-wide distribution curve which has to be adhered to generally?

(3) If assessment is relative in a particular group of students, why are teachers at moderation meetings expected to read a set of papers, assess their standard in a few minutes and then apply that standard to all the papers from schools in the particular district moderation area?

Answers:—

(1) The quotation came from the Board of Secondary School Studies policy statement "Procedures and Arrangements for the Assessment of Students for the Award of Senior Certificates", page 5.

(2) The "State-wide distribution curve" does not have "to be adhered to generally". The curve is a normal distribution curve into which the ratings of all students in a subject area for the State should fall. Considerable variations may and, in fact, do exist between subject groups in a school and between secondary schools throughout Queensland.

The normal distribution, as a curve, is bell-shaped with the majority being located between one standard deviation above and below the mean. Fewer are located towards each tail of the curve. It has been shown that this is the "normal distribution" when a very large number of ratings is involved. The normal distribution curve is one which should apply to the State results in each discipline. It is not mandatory. Schools are not instructed to change the distribution of ratings merely because it does not fit a "normal curve". Usually, the distribution of ratings in a particular subject for a school will be positively or negatively skewed. However, when all the distributions are grouped together, the positive and negative skewness should cancel to result in a normal or bell-shaped rating distribution curve. No student or group of students is disadvantaged.

(3) It is true that "standards are invariably derived from the observed performances of the students themselves. Assessments of students are therefore relative, based upon comparisons made within a particular group". "Observed performances" encompass the wide range of behavioural outcomes or competencies which a student may possess at the end of a semester unit of work or at the end of a particular course. Syllabuses provide a broad framework and objectives for the student stated in a very general manner.

From the syllabus, it is the responsibility of the school to compile work programmes with specifically stated objectives for the particular group of students, as well as suitable learning experiences and assessment techniques to suit the objectives. Work programmes are tabled at the beginning of semester one of each year at district moderation meetings to receive the comment and approval of the group. It is with this same group that the "observed performances" are discussed on completion of the semester period of study.

It is the school's responsibility to devise suitable assessment techniques to assess the student on the expected observable performances (or objectives). Obviously, not every student will perform with exactly the same competencies. Hence, comparisons may be made within the subject group. As stated, programmes of work are compiled from the same set of objectives in the same syllabus for the student. To say that at moderation meetings teachers must "read a set of papers, assess standards in a few minutes and then be expected to apply that standard to all the papers from schools in the particular district moderation area" is an oversimplification. A "set of papers" is only one of the indices teachers may use to report on the "observable performance" of students. The teacher must be able to be accountable to his students and show how he has arrived at the ranking of the students on the observable performances. Similarly, the teacher must be able to account to the group of teachers at his moderation meeting concerning the manner in which he has ranked his students.

Programmes of work, learning experiences and assessment techniques are discussed by the teachers early in the year. It is these same teachers who study the evidence supplied by the school on how well the students have performed on the predetermined observable outcomes and the ranking of these students on a 7 to 1 scale. As professionals, the teachers are able to establish which student or group of students has performed better, according to the stated objectives and assessment criteria.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. BIRD: The Leader of the Opposition should be listening to this with interest.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have advised all honourable members previously that there must be no exchange of interjections while a Minister is on his feet. I ask for the co-operation of the House in this matter; if I do not receive it, I shall have to deal with offenders.

Answers (contd.)—

Just as the teacher, as a professional, is able to rank the students in a subject group in a school according to predetermined performance standards, so, too, these professionals can make judgments and, if need be, rank performances between school groups in the subject.

Assessment accountability is to the student, the parent—and in this case to the other teachers in the particular moderation district. Standards definitely can be determined in a particular moderation area.

16. EFFECTIVENESS OF INSECTICIDES

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in "The Australian" of 15 March in which a senior research officer in entomology in South Australia has claimed that Australia's $2,000 million a year grain crop could be unsaleable in five years unless insect control changed drastically, as current insecticides in use are losing their effectiveness owing to insect tolerance?

(2) What are his department's views on this statement?

(3) What steps are being taken to find new insecticides?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The statement is sensational in nature. Grain insects have developed a resistance to one of the popular protectants. This has caused problems at terminals and for exporters. There is no evidence to suggest that the problem will not be solved.

(3) The Queensland Department of Primary Industries leads Australia in the evaluation of insecticides for pests of stored grain. The Assistant Director of Entomology in my department is convenor of a National Working Party on Grain Protectants. Testing of three new grain protectants is virtually completed and there should be a decision on their international acceptability in October 1976. Research work is also being carried out into alternative methods of control including hygiene, design, refrigerated aeration and nitrogen swamping. Queensland's entomologists are involved with aspects of this work.

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?

[*Originally asked on 17 March 1976*]

Dr. EDWARDS: Yesterday, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me a question without notice. I gave him some information and undertook to provide further details as soon as possible. I now have that information.

The policy of the South Brisbane Hospitals Board with relation to the use of television sets in hospital wards has been to invite tenders for the franchise to operate a television hire service to hospital patients. This arrangement applied to the intermediate wards from 1970 and extended to the public wards in July 1975.

The requirements laid down by the board in the tender specifications were that the sets had to be fitted with earphones and fitted to a mobile stand. A maximum size was also stipulated. Advantages of these qualifications are obvious. Privately owned sets, as a general principle, were not permitted to be brought into the wards, although the board has approved in very special circumstances, such as the rehabilitation ward patients, for private sets to be brought into the wards. Following recent events where privately owned sets were being brought into the public wards, action has been taken by hospital staff to advise owners of the private sets of the conditions under which television sets can be brought into the public wards.

I support the board's decisions in these matters. Privately owned sets have been noted not to have earphones attached and it needs little explanation from me to indicate the objection, the annoyance and indeed the discomfort of other hospital patients as a result of the noise factor associated with the operation of a normal television set. Privately owned sets have also been found to be a nuisance as they are not mounted on wheeled trolleys and because of the size of some units hinder the activities of nursing staff in their normal nursing duties. The hospitals board has no protection against damage to the privately owned set, caused either accidentally or maliciously.

The matter of permitting the taking of privately owned sets that meet the requirements of the board into wards will be considered by the South Brisbane Hospitals Board at its next meeting.

CONTINGENCY FUND, BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. BURNS: I direct a question without notice to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I preface my question by saying that I took the liberty of sending him a copy of it because I think it is very important to the people of this State.

Mr. Moore: A Dorothy-Dixer, eh?

Mr. BURNS: You could call it that. I think it is one that ought to be answered. To clear doubts in the minds of many Queenslanders concerning statements made today that the Government's proposed new contingency fund in relation to building societies will be back-dated to 1 January, I ask the Treasurer—

(1) Will it fully cover investors in all building societies, including the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett and the Great Australian Permanent Building Society?

(2) Are persons who have borrowed through building societies fully covered and will their loans continue without interruption?

(3) Do people with repayments still have to make them whilst societies are under suspension or in the hands of a liquidator or administrator?

(4) What period of delay can people who have deposited in societies expect to experience before receiving money from the Government's proposed contingency fund?

(5) Are some of the societies trying to call up mortgages? Do they have the authority to do this and what procedure should people follow in these circumstances?

(6) Is there any limit to the amount of investment that will be covered under the fund?

(7) What steps do depositors who have placed funds in the Australian Permanent Building Society, now in the hands of a liquidator, have to take to ensure they are fully covered?

Sir GORDON CHALK: In the first place, I assure the House that this is not a Dorothy-Dix question. I appreciate the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition in handing it to Mr. John Fisher—it was handed to me as I entered the Chamber—because the question is not only serious but one that would be difficult to answer without having a copy of it.

Part (1) of the question reads—

"Will it fully cover investors in all building societies including the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett and the Great Australian Permanent Building Society?"

My answer to that is, "Yes." It is unfortunate that on page 3 of "The Courier-Mail" this morning appeared the answer given by me to a question asked at 11 a.m. yesterday. At that time I replied indicating that the Australian Permanent Building Society, which was then under the control of a liquidator, would not come within the undertaking given by the Commonwealth Government so far as it is related to the bank associated with that company. Honourable members will recall that the undertaking given by the Commonwealth Government was that the Reserve Bank would provide funds for any society that was ably

and capably managed and had sufficient asset backing. That did not apply then to the company in liquidation. However, I have now answered the question in the affirmative because under the contingency fund, of which I shall have something to say in a moment, they will all be covered so that there will not be losses by investors in those societies.

Mr. Aikens: Would you tell us where the money will come from?

Sir GORDON CHALK: If the honourable member will listen for a moment, I shall explain the situation to the House.

Part (2) of the question reads—

> "Are persons who have borrowed through building societies fully covered and will their loans continue without interruption?"

The answer to that also is, "Yes." It is possible that there could be amalgamation of some of the smaller societies. If that happens, the societies taking over will buy the mortgages of the societies taken over, so that it will be a matter of the trading of mortgages to another society. That will not, however, in any way affect the continuation of the loans. Part 3 of the questions reads—

> "Do people with repayments still have to make them whilst societies are under suspension or in the hands of a liquidator or administrator?"

The answer to that is, "Yes". Where a society is suspended it will continue to receive payments in relation to mortgages, but on the other hand no funds will be received and no funds will go out other than as the Minister for Works and Housing indicated this morning, that is, to provide wages, etc., for the continued operation of those offices. The next part of the question reads—

> "(4) What period of delay can people who have deposited in societies expect to experience before receiving money from the Government's proposed contingency fund?"

In the statement I issued last night I indicated that I believed it was possible, in view of the manner in which the contingency fund would be drawn up, to ensure that at least in relation to all of the problems that we know of there would be complete return of the dollar within 12 months, although I would hope that it would be much quicker than that.

The next part of the question reads—

> "(5) Are some of the societies trying to call up mortgages? Do they have the authority to do this and what procedure should people follow in these circumstances?"

I do not know of any societies that are directly calling up mortgages. On the other hand, I do know that some societies are endeavouring to sell mortgages to another society so as to ensure that funds will be available to continue their operations. As far as the people involved in these mortgages are concerned, no action is necessary on their part at the present moment.

The next part of the question reads—

> "(6) Is there any limit to the amount of investment that will be covered under the fund?"

Yes. In the statement I made last night I limited the amount to $50,000, the reason being that that is the figure which embraces most of what we might call the little fellows. There might be a few people who have made larger investments than that; I believe that those people are investors in the true sense of the word and must take the same type of risk that they would with other investments. On the other hand, I hope that everybody will be absolutely covered.

The final part of the question reads—

> "(7) What steps do depositors who have placed funds in the Australian Permanent Building Society, now in the hands of a liquidator, have to take to ensure they are fully covered?"

They are fully covered by the fund and consequently no steps need be taken by them. I had intended to release the statement that was issued last night, but in view of the question handed to me by the Leader of the Opposition I thought that this would be the appropriate place to acquaint honourable members with what has been said by me and also what was said by the Federal Treasurer at 10 o'clock this morning. The statement that I issued last night reads as follows:—

> "After several hours of conference today presided over by the State Treasurer, Sir Gordon Chalk and the Minister for Works and Housing, Mr. Norm Lee, and involving the Under Treasurer, Mr. L. A. Hielscher and the Registrar of Building Societies, Mr. K. MacPherson, the following statement was issued by Sir Gordon.
>
> "Sir Gordon said that reports furnished by several building societies up to the close of business this afternoon revealed that there had been heavy withdrawals of funds from most Societies prior to noon but that such had tapered off during the afternoon.
>
> "The Treasurer said that a close scrutiny of Society operations since Friday last indicated that the problems confronting Building Societies in Queensland were twofold.
>
> "Firstly, liquidity to meet abnormal withdrawals and secondly identification of Societies that could be in financial difficulty.
>
> "The Treasurer said that where Societies were judged viable depositors could be assured that their total investments were secured. Not only had such Societies reasonable liquidity but they also had the

assurance of the Federal Government that providing the Societies' banks were satisfied with the management and asset backing of those Societies then funds would be available to meet any sudden demands.

"The Treasurer said that on Monday last all Societies in Queensland had liquid funds to the extent of $167 million out of a total investment of $823 million.

"The balance was invested in mortgages.

"The Treasurer said that the second problem was confined to the few Societies who at present were judged to be not viable and who under existing conditions would not be able to provide full repayments on every dollar invested if they were to be wound up immediately.

"Sir Gordon said that consequently action had been taken to immediately suspend trading operations of the following Societies"——

Mr. HARTWIG: I rise to a point of order. You called for ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker. I claim that the Treasurer is making a ministerial statement and not answering a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this is a most important matter, and I rule that the answer to the question should continue.

Sir GORDON CHALK: This is a serious statement, and I regret the interruption. The statement continues—

"(a) Trade Union Building Society (Permanent and Bowkett)

(b) Town and Country Permanent Building Society

(c) Family Permanent Building and Bowkett Society

(d) Commonwealth Public Service Permanent Building Society

(e) Tasman Building Society (Permanent and Bowkett)

"In addition there is the Australian Permanent Building Society and Bowkett and Great Australian Permanent Building Society who are presently under liquidation and administration respectively.

"Sir Gordon said that on receipt of reports from the special auditors the Government would either appoint an administrator or liquidator or announce release from suspension.

"The Treasurer said that the Government would introduce during the present Session of Parliament legislation to ensure that in the event of there proving to be a shortfall in the abovenamed Societies the depositors would be repaid their full dollar deposit within twelve months. Legislation would be made retrospective to the 1st January, 1976.

"Outlining the procedure Sir Gordon said that the legislation would create a Contingency Fund set up under the control of a Board of Trustees comprising mainly representatives of the Building Societies. Contributions to the Fund would be made compulsory and contributed to by all Societies.

"The Treasurer said that the legislation would ensure by specific decree that the first levies into the Fund and loan demands on other Societies would be sufficient to meet the shortfalls in the Societies named.

"Oulining the proposal Sir Gordon said that it would involve a special levy of .1 per cent of the total assets of the Societies to be applied immediately. There would be a further special levy of .1 per cent of assets to be applied as from 1-7-1976.

"A contingency levy of ¼ per cent per annum will be applied in the form of an insurance premium. To meet this levy the interest rate payable to depositors will be reduced from 9 per cent to 8¾ per cent but the rate to the borrower will remain at a maximum of 11 per cent as at present. Such a move will not increase the margin to the Society but will be one of the means of securing protection for the depositors.

"Further, said Sir Gordon, in the event of the contingency fund proving insufficient to meet demands made upon it the Trustees of the Fund would be authorised to make demands on registered Building Societies in Queensland for Loans moneys at a rate not exceeding the approved interest rate on deposits. Such loan moneys would be repaid out of future premiums.

"Sir Gordon said that after meeting present shortfalls, deposits of each Society would then have the backing of the Contingency Fund.

"It was intended that this backing would however, be limited to the first $50,000 of any deposit. The backing for deposits would apply to the actual deposit only and not extend to the interest thereon.

"The legislation would further ensure that moneys deposited with building societies in Queensland are advanced for no other purpose than for home ownership."

I have indicated the nature of that particular statement. I was concerned this morning that the principal media seemed to feature the fact that the operations of five building societies were suspended. I would have hoped that they would feature the fact that the contingency fund to which I have referred was a total safeguard in future and that never have building societies been placed in a more secure position than they have been this morning. Unfortunately, because of the heading in the newspapers there has continued to be a further drain on funds until at least 10.30. As a

result of that I have also been in communication this morning with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer. I have a statement which I believe would have been released in the Federal House by now. I have authority to read that statement in this Chamber, a statement which I believe will be given publicity throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia. The statement reads—

"The Treasurer, Mr. Lynch, said today that the Commonwealth Government applauded the firm steps taken by the Queensland Government to identify and deal with the problems that have emerged in a few isolated societies and to protect the interests of investors both in those societies and in Queensland societies generally.

"The decisive action taken by the Queensland Government should put at rest unfounded rumours and ensure a return to stable conditions in the Queensland building society movement.

"With regard to the permanent building societies movement generally, Mr. Lynch said that the Australian building society movement played a most important role in the provision of housing finance to the Australian community.

"The movement has the Government's full support in the performance of its role and in the overcoming of the problems that have arisen in Queensland.

"Mr. Lynch said that there was no reason why the events in Queensland should affect investors in building societies in other States.

"The assets backing of building societies generally was undoubted.

"Apart from their holding of liquid assets invested largely in trustee securities, the bulk of building society assets were invested in housing mortgages.

"The great majority of building society loans are insured by the Housing Loans Insurance Corporation, which is a statutory authority guaranteed against loss by the Commonwealth Government, or by private mortgage insurance companies.

"Mr. Lynch also reaffirmed the statement made last Sunday by the Minister Assisting the Treasurer, Mr. Robinson.

"Mr. Lynch said that the Reserve Bank had received assurances from the trading banks that they will consider sympathetically requests for finance received by them from building societies which are responsibly managed and have adequate asset backing.

"The firm attitude of the Commonwealth Government, and its full support of the Queensland Government's action, should provide reassurances to investors in building societies that their interests are being adequately safeguarded."

I conclude by saying that I would hope that the media throughout Queensland will now publish the full facts as they have been stated by me. As I said, with the establishment of the contingency fund building societies at this very moment have a greater security than they have ever had in their lifetime of operations in this State. On that basis I would hope that the run on their funds will stop.

Mr. BURNS: Before I ask a supplementary question, might I suggest to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer that, in the light of the statement made concerning the media, it might be worth while spending some money on Press advertisements. I now ask him: Will he have published in newspaper advertisements the text of the answer given by him so that the people of Queensland will have access to the information contained therein if the media do not publish his answer?

Sir GORDON CHALK: It is true that I was not happy about what appeared in the media this morning. However, Mr. Lionel Hogg of "The Telegraph" has been in touch with me this morning and I have had discussions with him. I now await the noon edition of "The Telegraph" and other editions that will follow. I hope that the point that has been raised will be cleared up by the media in the publication of the full facts of the case.

EFFECT OF BUILDING SOCIETY CRISIS ON BUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Since this morning's run on building societies, has he had sufficient time to estimate the effect upon the building industry? Further, when will he be in a position to make a statement on what action the Government can take to assist the building industry, which will be adversely affected as a result of this crisis?

Mr. LEE: It is only natural that the building industry will be affected by this crisis. In fact some effect was felt even before the Treasurer and I had made our statement. However, our statement should allow the building industry to feel safe. At least builders will know that they will receive their payments from people who have borrowed money from building societies, be they viable or suspended societies. Nobody can predict when the building industry will pick up again, but I am sure that the statement made by the Deputy Premier and me will restore confidence in the building industry. As I have said, prior to the statement, the building industry suffered some adverse effects, but I hope that they will not last for too long.

PREMIER'S TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER AND FEDERAL TREASURER ON BUILDING SOCIETY CRISIS

Mr. KATTER: I ask the Premier: Will he outline the result of the talks that he had in Canberra with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer on the present situation involving building societies?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The first thing I did last night when I arrived in Canberra was have a lengthy discussion with Mr. Fraser and Mr. Lynch on this whole matter. The discussion lasted for many hours, and during it I impressed upon them the seriousness of this situation. I requested most earnestly that they take some positive action to help stem the tide and restore confidence. In an earlier answer today the Deputy Premier and Treasurer outlined the text of Mr. Lynch's Press release circulated as a result of those talks.

SUSPENSION OF BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. JONES: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: In regard to the five societies that have had their trading suspended, can he indicate to the House how long in each instance trading will be suspended and when it can be expected that the usual business of the societies will be resumed?

Sir GORDON CHALK: I hope that the special auditors will get down to their work as quickly as possible. It is impossible for me to forecast whether it will be one day, three days or more. I can only give the House an assurance that immediately the special auditors have been appointed and make a report to me, the registrar, and the Minister for Works and Housing, a decision will be made. I hope that the period will be extremely short.

ESCAPE OF PRISONERS FROM ETNA CREEK PRISON

Mr. HARTWIG: I direct a question to the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport: Regarding the recent escape of prisoners from Etna Creek Prison and the serious consequences which followed, I received phone calls this morning from residents in the Etna Creek locality expressing concern for their personal safety and that of their families. Can the Minister assure Parliament that his department will implement greater security measures so that the possibility of prisoners escaping will be minimal and so that the residents in the area will not have to live in constant fear for their lives?

Mr. HERBERT: The record at Etna Creek speaks for itself. The number of escapes has been very low compared with statistics for other areas. Everyone, of course, would be concerned about the events that took place. How we can dissuade from escaping a man who has to serve only a few days before he is due for release, I do not know. The man is an absolute fool and he will pay for it. The normal prison procedure is that a man who is due for release is given opportunities outside the gaol so that his break from gaol life is not complete and sudden. This man would have been released from custody tomorrow if he had behaved himself. As a result of his escapade, possibly he faces years in a maximum security prison.

I do not know how we can control this sort of thing. I do not know how we can judge whether a man is going to be so stupid as to jeopardise his whole chance of freedom in this way. I certainly do not think that we should implement a system under which all prisoners are kept locked up totally until the last minute and then thrust out into the world; I think that the resultant problems would be greater than they are at the moment.

This is a constant problem. People who are due to be released within a few days from the open farm prisons walk out, well knowing that they face a minimum of one year's imprisonment under maximum security because of their walk-out. I cannot understand it; nor can anyone in the service.

All I can do is to assure the people of Central Queensland that every effort is made to protect them from this sort of incident. We regret that it happened. A report is coming down from Central Queensland on this particular escape. The reports I have had already indicate that there was no breach of the regulations. If the report that is coming down indicates that any amendment of the regulations is necessary, the appropriate steps will be taken.

PRICE OF ELECTRICITY

Mr. LANE: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: Is he aware of an article by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane (Alderman Walsh) published in a suburban newspaper yesterday in which Alderman Walsh claimed that the State Government has continually pushed up the price of electricity?

Mr. CAMM: This has been brought to my notice. It would appear that the longer the Lord Mayor is in office, the less he knows about the electricity industry. A few months ago, when we had an electricity crisis in South-east Queensland, he became an instant expert in electricity generation and in assessing the quantity of coal in our stockpiles. Now he says that the Queensland Government is pushing up the price of electricity.

The truth is that the price of electricity is governed by an agreement involving the Brisbane City Council, the Southern Electric Authority and the State Electricity Commission. The Brisbane City Council is a party to that agreement, which was endorsed by the Industrial Court only last year. It appears that Mr. Walsh will have to learn more about electricity if he is to become the spokesman for the Brisbane City Council.

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

PRIVILEGE

DIRECTION OF QUESTIONS TO PRIVATE MEMBERS

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.6 p.m.): I rise on a question of privilege. This is a very important matter. It affects every member of this House and I feel sure that all will concur with what I am about to say.

I should like you, Mr. Speaker, to give serious consideration to relaxing, if that is possible under the Standing Orders, the rigidity that now applies in the asking of questions of Ministers only. As a case in point, I should like to ask the Leader of the Opposition why up to the present he has confined his public criticism of the expenditure of large amounts of money to the Premier's expenditure on advertising the activities of his department and has not uttered a word of criticism about the thousands of dollars spent by the Minister for Justice to assist solicitors to fleece their clients. That is just one question that I should like to ask and I am sure that there are others that members would like to ask of other members. I should be grateful if you would confer with your officers on the matter to see if there cannot be some relaxation of the rules that now apply to the asking of questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must rule the request out of order. The honourable member knows that it is not the custom for private members to address questions to other private members. If a private member has a notice on the Business Paper, some consideration could perhaps then be given to what the honourable member for Townsville South asks. At present, however, there is no provision, nor has it been the custom, for a private member to ask a question of another private member. I must disallow the honourable member's request.

Mr. AIKENS: It will be a matter for the Standing Orders Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. I would be quite happy to bring the matter up before the Standing Orders Committee.

CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 16 March (see p. 2837) on Mr. Hinze's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Clean Air Act 1961-1972 in certain particulars."

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (12.9 p.m.): In rising to address myself to this debate I should like to point out that in this State, particularly in the city of Brisbane, the people are subject to a tremendous amount of air pollution. This has increased over the years because of the absence of a fully co-ordinated electric public transport system. We all know that transport is fully dependent upon engines that burn either petrol or oil. Diesel engines are particularly filthy and as we travel along the roads we all see diesel-powered trucks and buses spurting out vast clouds of black smoke. We train our children not to cough, breathe or spit on other people, yet when these filthy trucks pass cars with windows open they fill them with black smoke. It is not good enough that we have legislation on the Statute Book. I think the whole transport industry needs to be made acutely aware of its responsibilities to other people on the roads and to people who live near main roads. People can put up with the noise of these trucks; they can even insulate their homes against it, but when these fumes are blown onto houses and cars they are creating not only a nuisance but a definite hazard. Diesel fuel is not burnt as efficiently as we would like, and I feel that it is a matter of the transport industry facing up to its responsibilities and regularly cleaning, servicing and checking diesel engines so that their emissions are in fact clean. It is necessary to use engines that are adequate for the work required to be done, but I believe the transport industry owes it to the whole community to see that the emissions from these engines are in fact clean.

I would like to see some prosecutions launched in this direction and I would like the industry to be informed that it can no longer hold the public of this State, and in particular the public of Brisbane, in contempt by blowing these filthy fumes all over them. But if diesel fumes are bad for us, surely petrol fumes are worse. Petrol contains lead. I am told that the amount of lead released into the air above Brisbane each year amounts to 1,000,000 kg.

I believe it was a Labor Government years ago which introduced legislation concerning the lead content of paint to prevent our children contracting lead poisoning. Honourable members are all familiar with the stories of children contracting lead poisoning from licking dewdrops or raindrops off veranda rails and other painted surfaces, or of people contracting lead poisoning from lead paint applied to roofs which was washed off into tanks used to collect drinking water. We know that lead poisoning in fact causes permanent damage to people's bodies, particularly their kidneys and bones. But today, although we have stopped that particular lead contamination problem, we still find that every year 1,000,000 kg of lead is released into the filthy brown umbrella that lies above Brisbane. Lead concentration is particularly high along the highways and in the water which runs off the roads. It is far, far higher than it need be.

People are now vitally concerned with measuring the lead content in the bodies of little children—they are concerned that

children living in smog zones do contract lead poisoning—but I do not think the efforts of these people are good enough. We need a united effort to reduce the lead content in petrol and, especially in cities that are subject to smog, we need as quickly as possible to eliminate the use of the private motor-car in regular day-to-day tripping. Certainly I think it is time in Brisbane that an all-out effort was made to provide fully integrated public transport, as I believe our Government is going to do in the very near future.

It is well known that a great many respiratory diseases are caused by breathing air that is polluted by industry and, after alerts given by industrial medical officers or public health officers, industries themselves have gone to great pains to see that a particular pollutant used in a certain industry does not seriously affect the health of those persons who work in that industry. I must cite the great work done in the past in eliminating as far as possible the effects of coal dust, which causes anthracosis, silica quartz dust, which causes silicosis and, of course, asbestos fibres, which cause not only respiratory diseases and shortness of breath but, in the long run, cancer of the lungs. Other organic dusts that cause great problems are those of nickel, vanadium and tungsten. Authorities are well aware of the effect that they have on workers in factories that process and refine those metals.

Organic dusts are a problem. There are not many texts on the subject to which doctors can refer, because the information has not yet been included in textbooks. I have seen a man who was desperately ill after a welding job in an enclosed space that had been used for the storage of grain. The problem was to discover whether his illness was caused by the reaction of the welding gases with the inside lining of the storage space or whether he had stirred up a residue of insecticide in the metal grain bin.

All honourable members are becoming aware of the great importance of insecticides. As you know, Mr. Hewitt, in the case of some insecticides, one drop in the eye will kill a person. They certainly are not to be fooled with, and Governments have passed legislation for their control. Effective though the insecticides might be, their application is greatly restricted. However, when insecticides are discovered at the South Pole, where there are no insects, and in oysters in the sea, it is time they were seriously investigated.

The same can also be said of the use of all agricultural chemicals. These are now spread by crop dusters, and perhaps the problems arising from their use is not the concern of the Minister in charge of this Bill. My home is near an aerodrome, and I live in fear of a crop-dusting aircraft discharging poison into the air as it flies over my house. Those poisons might land on the roof, be accumulated in the water tank and eventually poison my family. Crop dusters use insecticides, defoliants and other materials that are discharged into the air.

There is a low-dose danger when people who have been exposed to some insecticides are given an anaesthetic; they are unable to reverse the effects of some of the relaxant drugs used in the anaesthetic. I have been associated with one such emergency. The lady in question, having been given all the usual antidotes, did not breathe again and had to be kept in a respirator for a great many hours. That was a result of air pollution.

A great many irritant gases also are discharged into the air. I mention hydrogen chloride as a free gas and formaldehyde gas as ammonia. All honourable members are aware of the great number of precautions that have to be taken when anhydrous ammonia is transported, to ensure that an emergency does not arise with the bulk carrier while it is on its way from Brisbane to farming areas.

Even animal products can pollute the air. Mammalian antigen is particularly associated with horses, and many people are allergic to horse dander and even to the smell of horses. People are also allergic to some parts of birds and to insect matter in the air; others are allergic to the insecticides used on wheat and to some of the things given off by wheat.

Perhaps one of the greatest causes of air pollution, both inside and outside the metropolitan area, is the breakdown of synthetic plastics by incineration. The very common polyvinyl chloride isomers are in this category. A substance called vinyl chloride comes from the reaction between acetylene gas, which is used for welding, and hydrogen chloride. When vinyl chloride is united with perhaps 30,000 to 60,000 similar molecules, it is referred to as a polyvinyl chloride isomer. Chlorine is a very poisonous gas in its free state and very innocuous when it is firmly bound to a strong metal such as sodium, when it becomes salt. Very soft polyvinyl chloride (PVC) contains 30 per cent chlorine; standard contains 40 per cent; hard contains 50 per cent and extra hard contains 60 per cent.

When these compounds are destroyed in low heat fires such as a back-yard incinerator, there is an early release of carbon monoxide gas. In itself this is a very dangerous gas. It is the most dangerous gas in exhaust fumes from motor-cars in confined places. If the back-yard incinerator is poorly ventilated, a large amount of hydrogen chloride is released as free gas. When it reaches available water it becomes hydrochloric acid. With a highly ventilated blast-furnace-type incinerator, there is a much better breakdown into carbon dioxide, which is innocuous. We all breathe out carbon dioxide with every

breath. We can well do with carbon dioxide. Plants can metabolise carbon dioxide and turn it into useful substances such as sugars.

When burnt, some of the foam plastics used in such things as kiddies' kick-boards, food chillers known as Eskys, and food-pack trays release one of the most powerful killers the world has ever known, namely, hydrogen cyanide or HCN. That gas will kill anyone in one deep breath or in one gulp if it is in solution.

Dr. Crawford: In seconds.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Yes. A person has about 20 seconds to think about his demise if he takes in some of that gas. There are recorded instances of people accidentally taking it in chemist shops. People met up with the cyanides in Hitler's ovens and others have been accidentally gassed while carrying out insecticide operations in premises. The cyanides are extremely deadly.

Various other gases are referred to as nitriles. There are whole groups of nitriles. These gases come off in a deadly yellow smoke when foam plastic is burnt. They are a great terror to firemen, which is another subject. However, they are just as dangerous when they are burnt in the back yard. Hydrochloric acid and hydrogen cyanide are extremely strong acids. They can cause corrosion to virtually any metal. They will corrode iron and all the brasses. If those gases are present in a back-yard concrete incinerator they will etch the outline of the steel framework as they send the framework rusty. They will rapidly eat out the mortar in a brick incinerator. Therefore I urge all people in the State not to incinerate any plastics that they want to get rid of, but to accumulate them and then hand them over to their local council for use as solid fill. Under no circumstances should they be burnt.

Let me indicate to the Committee what can happen when these gases are released accidentally in a house. We all know the common gallon ice-cream pails that are used by a great many people for storing household objects. In one house there was a pink gallon ice-cream pail which contained a number of clipped-together building blocks belonging to a child. They were made of hard plastic. In scurrying to the laundry one day the mother slid the pail onto a bench, as she thought, and ducked out of the house, shutting the door behind her. She came back two or three minutes later to find that the pail had not remained on the bench but had slid on to a stove hot-plate which was turned on very low. The dense yellow smoke from this melting plastic extensively ruined the interior of her home, in spite of the fact that the smoke was quite cold. It certainly did not burn any of the contents.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable gentleman is moving a little away from the Clean Air Act now.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: I was simply trying to round off this point, Mr. Hewitt, by illustrating that gases such as this are capable of killing a plant in a pot and causing it to wither back to its base. Gases of this type have serious effects not only on people but also on plant life. No plant can stand cyanide or hydrochloric acids.

It is possible to obtain clean combustion when burning plastics by using properly ventilated incinerators.

Dr. Crawford: Recycling.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: A recycling fire. Home owners cannot afford to construct the type of incinerator that is necessary to ensure that plastics can be burned without emitting these gases. It is difficult even for local authorities to incinerate plastics in their huge modern incinerators, which are fitted at the top with devices that trap gases. Fortunately, the gases are water soluble, and by passing them through water towers the operators can extract them before they have the opportunity of passing out into the air.

Another problem arising from the incineration of plastics is the early corrosion of the metal components of the incinerators. The metals are lasting for as little as one-sixth of their expected life as set out in design specifications. Even though stainless steel is used to a great extent, it is not totally resistant to hydrochloric acid or cyanide. I have seen a stainless-steel sink etched by cyanide.

Plastics should never be burned. Rather should they be collected by local authorities and used as filling. The same can be said of tyres. All of us know that a tyre that is burning emits a filthy foul smoke that, instead of rising like smoke from a grass fire, rolls. The burning of a large number of tyres results in rolling flames and a tremendous amount of visible pollution. I suggest that tyres be either buried or used in controlling erosion in gullies. Some local authorities tie several tyres together and dump them in the sea to form artificial reefs to attract fish.

Dr. Crawford: Powerhouses give off a lot of black smoke.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Powerhouses certainly contribute visibly to pollution. Their smoke is visible for miles. The situation has got worse over the past decade. Whereas 10 or 15 years ago the smoke, mainly from powerhouses, was light grey in colour, it is now a dirty dark brown and can be seen from as far away as the islands in Moreton Bay and Spring Mountain. It can be seen easily, of course, from Mt. Coot-tha. The residents of Brisbane are subjected to far more powerhouse smoke than is good for them.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (12.30 p.m.): In speaking to this Bill to amend the Clean Air Act 1963–1972, I must say at the outset how interested I was in the contribution made by the honourable member for Toowoomba North. Like his colleague the honourable member for Wavell, he speaks with a great deal of experience. No doubt both honourable members have gained an insight from patients who have been victims of our bad smog problem. What the honourable member for Toowoomba North said about Brisbane is true. One has only to travel from any suburban area into the city early in the morning to see a heavy smog cloud hanging over the city. People inhale the smog and suffer the consequences.

These amendments are timely, just as the original legislation was in 1963. I sincerely hope that the provisions will be enforced. It is all very well to increase penalties—we agree with that—but we want to be sure that the law will be enforced. However, it cannot be enforced without adequate staff.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North spoke of motor vehicle emissions. They are some of the worst pollutants in the city and certainly add greatly to our smog problem. Last month Professor Pitts, the Director of the Air Pollution Control Centre at the University of California, in addressing a conference at the Queensland Institute of Technology in Brisbane, said that Sydney had more than 100 days a year with an ozone content above World Health Organisation standards. Later, he said—

> "The trouble is that it is not smog (smoke and fog), it is the reaction of sunlight on motor car and industrial emissions.
>
> "These are then termed photochemical pollutants, containing toxic fumes that are bad for people.
>
> "Ozone is toxic on the lungs and causes premature ageing as well as other ill effects."

The report of his comments continued in these terms—

> "Professor Pitts said that Brisbane had the elements needed for air pollution—the meteorology, the topography and the people.
>
> "The city was growing and it was the people that caused pollution.
>
> "Industry could not be stifled so devices had to be applied to motor engines and stationary pollution sources."

How true that is, but unfortunately how slow we are in applying control devices to our motor vehicles. I have asked repeatedly for a device to be fitted to the exhaust or the manifold of my motor vehicle only to be told by a mechanic—I do not know if he had a good foundation for saying this—"It would be very costly. You would not be able to afford to run your motor-car."

Mr. Burns: It's an offence against the Traffic Act not to have an efficient muffler.

Mr. DEAN: That is so, but the difficulty lies in policing it.

Most motor-cycles have an effective exhaust system when they are presented for registration, but many young motor-cyclists—we were all young once—remove the baffles from the mufflers as soon as they get home to achieve an open exhaust for the extra loud note that they like to hear. There is no control of the emissions from the engine.

Back-yard fires are controlled by local authorities, but the lack of staff to carry out inspections has resulted in those fires being one of the greatest sources of air pollution in any community, especially in a densely developed area like Brisbane. Unfortunately, many people burn their household waste at night-time. This is a very bad procedure. From time to time I have received complaints from the sufferers of asthma and other bronchial troubles whose sleep has been disturbed by back-yard fires smouldering all night. In many instances 44-gallon drums with the tops cut out are used as incinerators by people who believe that they are adequate. They have not been told by the authorities that they should have an incinerator that takes the smoke well into the air. But most of what goes up comes down and, as a result of temperature inversion, the pollution settles in people's homes.

We must have enough people to police the Act—people who can be called upon at any hour of the day or night. By simply making a phone call, we ought to be able to ask that an inspector go out and have a back-yard fire extinguished.

People must be told how to get rid of their household rubbish. It is a problem. The rubbish has to be got rid of somewhere. People are inclined to take the line of least resistance and burn it, which is where the danger lies. The Minister must have adequate staff to police the provisions of this Bill. The increased penalties are necessary, but we must do something to provide more staff.

Some public authorities offend. From time to time, while I am driving along Lutwyche Road, I see smoke pouring out of the chimney at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. It has to get rid of its wastes. Surely the Government can set an example in its own buildings, especially hospitals, by obtaining the latest equipment or ideas from overseas to dispose of medical wastes without creating pollution.

Nearly every day we can look over over towards Kangaroo Point and see pouring into the sky, from the hospital or some other concern over there black smoke, which again must settle on the city and create a pollution problem and the unclean air that we are complaining about and trying to do something about by the introduction of this Bill.

The Minister has made statements in the Press about another nuisance. Those statements have been well received. Although it does not come within the ambit of this Bill, it is a form of pollution. I know that the Chairman would not like me to amplify the matter; I am speaking of noise nuisance! You know that in your own suburb, Mr. Hewitt, as well as in other suburbs, noise nuisance causes great distress to people and disturbs their comfort. I hope that it will not be long before the Minister introduces legislation to control noise pollution. However, I shall not develop that subject now. I know in my own heart that I should not do so at this stage.

Mr. Burns: You have the tannery at Kedron.

Mr. DEAN: That is also air pollution. Sometimes when driving along Lutwyche Road, I have found the smell unbearable.

Mr. Burns: In Webster Road, Stafford.

Mr. DEAN: But the smell sweeps right across from there to Lutwyche. It travels with the prevailing breeze, which carries it towards the cemetery and out to sea, or in some other direction. It is a dreadful nuisance which has been allowed, uncontrolled, for too long. Unfortunately, as is the case with a good deal of our legislation, there is too much division of control between the State Government and the local authority. Very little gets done, as one passes the buck to the other. But the people in the areas where this pollution is taking place are still suffering.

Mr. Gygar: When I get the call I shall explain it all to you.

Mr. DEAN: As a matter of fact, it is in the honourable member's area and he should have a very good knowledge of it. I have known about it and have been distressed by it.

We have to tackle the problem at the main source. As was said earlier by the honourable member for Toowoomba North, most of the pollution is caused by motor vehicle emissions and the diesel fuel emissions that pour out from buses. To start with, many motor vehicles are in bad condition, so that some emission must take place. Quite often, I have followed trucks and cars that are in very bad mechanical condition as I imagine every other honourable member has done. In addition, in these days, fuel wastage is a matter for concern.

Pollution is also caused by uncovered trucks which spill dust, sawdust and other matter onto the road. This adds to the uncleanness of the air.

I know that there are other speakers. But this is a very important and timely piece of legislation. I hope that it can be implemented and put into operation quickly.

I do hope that something can be done about back-yard fires. I can assure the Minister—although he does not need any assurance because he would know that it happens in his own suburb—that people complain about householders burning waste materials at night-time when no inspectors are about. I think that officers should be on call at all hours so that they can go immediately to any place where an offence is being committed and deal with the problem on the spot.

Mr. LAMOND (Wynnum) (12.41 p.m.): In rising to speak in the debate on the introduction of a Bill to amend the Clean Air Act, I find it interesting to reflect that the Minister has already introduced a Bill to amend the Clean Waters Act and has said that it is his intention in the foreseeable future to bring down a Bill to deal with noise pollution. There is no doubt that the Minister is taking his responsibilities seriously as these three forms of pollution affect each one of us. Indeed, I do not think that I would be making an overstatement if I said that, of all the Bills that we handle in this Chamber, this is one of the most important. After all, polluted air affects every man, woman and child in the community.

On many occasions it has been said, "There's plenty of free air." Unfortunately man's capacity to pollute has meant that in many cities throughout the world people are now finding it necessary to leave their places of residence and travel to outer areas to obtain the free air that should be their right. The air is still free, but unfortunately it has become somewhat polluted. Fortunately the situation in many parts of Queensland is not as bad as it is in overseas countries.

Today we are discussing legislation that concerns the present and future generations and, as has been ably mentioned by earlier speakers, polluted air has a definite effect upon the health of the people, particularly those who suffer from respiratory complaints. Previous speakers referred to the chemicals that are discharged into the air, and those who spoke in the debate on the introduction of the Clean Waters Act Amendment Bill mentioned the type and quantity of chemicals discharged into water. Because I feel that the Minister's departmental specialists would have all that information, it is not my intention to elaborate on that subject.

I note with interest that the penalties prescribed by the Act are to be increased from $400 to $10,000 for a first offence, and to $20,000 for a second offence. It is pleasing to see these increases because they will be a deterrent to those who see fit to pollute the air. However, writing increased penalties into a piece of legislation is not enough. There are other ways of controlling the problem, and two of them are co-operation and education. The Minister mentioned that he has received a certain measure of co-operation from industry. If co-operation and education fail, I feel that those who ignore this type of

legislation should most certainly have imposed upon them the heaviest penalty that the law can provide.

Co-operation and education are the means that I think should be employed because in the present complex period of industrial development very frequently insufficient time is spent on the research required to end this problem. In this respect, co-operation between the Minister and industry is very important.

The Minister commented on town-planning. This is a vital area because there is no doubt that much of the pollution experienced today in residential areas has been caused by a lack of foresight on the part of those people at local government level and perhaps in some Government departments who in the far distant past or, in some cases, the not too distant past have not given sufficient thought to the effects of industry in close proximity to residential areas.

We could almost say that there has been a form of patchwork development or patchwork zoning, in many cases brought about by a lack of foresight and, in others, possibily by necessity in that many small industries developed in backyards. I refer to the earlier days in our State's history when back yards were not the 32-perch or 40-perch allotments that we know today but paddocks. Out of necessity, industries were established in the heart of a town.

It is for this reason that we have this form of patchwork development of industry in many of our communities. We must look to town-planning to avoid it in the future. When town planners are planning the zoning of an industrial area, they should take into consideration the topography, the prevailing winds and many other factors that will have a very definite effect on nearby residential areas. There is no doubt that in many parts of the world industry and residential areas have learned to live in harmony.

The Minister made certain comments about buffer zones. I support the idea of buffer zones. While they are not the complete answer to air pollution, they do something to restrict the entry of industries into residential areas. Those honourable members who have had the pleasure of visiting the residential sections of Wynnum and Manly would most certainly agree with me that the area is one of the best residential districts in Brisbane. I am sure they would agree that areas such as that should be kept free of air pollution. At the moment the area is slightly affected because on the northernmost boundary of my electorate we have the industrial reaches of Lytton.

We know that it is intended that the new port of Brisbane will be developed at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Once again, we face the prospect of pollution because of this patchwork type of industrial planning. In fact, we have small industries along almost the entire boundary of the Wynnum-Manly area which are polluting the area to some small degree.

When we talk about pollution, let us not restrict ourselves to industrial pollution. There is no doubt that in his everyday activities man does a very thorough job in creating his share of pollution. He does it in many ways, through the car he drives to work, the public transport upon which he travels every day, the grass fires that he lights and the rubbish that he burns in an incinerator in his back yard. Other honourable members have commented on incinerators, so I do not propose to elaborate on that point.

I have mentioned pollution caused by transport, but I must mention the problems caused by the large aircraft which fly over many of our thickly populated areas. My electorate lies under the flight path of aircraft travelling between Sydney and Brisbane. One needs little imagination to realise that on take-off these large aircraft use maximum power which requires the burning of tons of fuel and results in a large volume of exhaust fumes. So let us not continue to say that industry is the main offender in this regard. I realise that I have spoken about matters which possibly concern local government and the Federal Government, and I would ask the Minister to use his considerable powers of persuasion with both bodies to see that they control those of their activities which affect the people of Queensland.

Other honourable members have mentioned various methods of detecting air pollution, and no doubt the Minister's department has very delicate detection instruments. However, in many instances one does not need anything other than one's nose to detect air pollution. One honourable member referred particularly to Doboy Creek, which is between my electorate and the city of Brisbane. One needs only to drive across the bridge over that creek to be aware of the foul smell coming from it; one does not need a detector of any type to know that air pollution is in evidence.

In many parts of the world air pollution is now so bad that in the early hours of the morning and late in the afternoon it is necessary for people driving to and from their place of work to use dimmed lights or fog lights, and I hope that stage will never be reached in Queensland. But those who have driven to the city from outlying areas or across the ranges, those who have flown into the city and those who have come to Brisbane in the early hours of the morning from Moreton Bay on a still morning have not had any problem in finding where the city lies, because there is an umbrella of smog over it. No-one could truthfully say that there is not now a certain degree of air pollution in Brisbane. This morning, as I drove to Parliament House, I looked across to Mt. Coot-tha and

saw the large number of chimneys and the amount of smoke they were discharging into the air. Similar air pollution is occurring in many other parts of the city.

I hope that the Minister will use his powers of persuasion and the power given to him under the legislation to control air pollution. As I said earlier, it affects every man, woman and child in the community; and it could also affect future generations. That must be taken into consideration when legislation is brought before honourable members, because this Assembly is legislating not only for today but also for the future.

I support the proposed amendments and commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (12.53 p.m.): I listened with great interest on Tuesday last to the Minister's introductory speech and, in common with every other honourable member, I look forward to some diminution in the problem of air pollution in this State. As I represent a highly industrialised electorate on the border of the western suburbs of Brisbane and the eastern suburbs of Ipswich, honourable members will understand that air pollution is a problem that comes under my notice quite regularly.

In 1963, Dr. Noble, who was then Minister for Health, introduced a Bill to provide for clean air in this State. However, it was not proclaimed until 1965, and from that year industry and other culprits were given seven years to place their house in order. I continually asked the former Minister for Health, under whose jurisdiction the legislation then came, when he could do something for the people of Queensland, and in particular for the people of the Wolston electorate. In reply to my questions, he told me that in May 1972, when the seven-year period terminated, something would be done if people had not put their house in order. Yet here we are in 1976—some 13 years after the first Bill was introduced into this Chamber—and the problem remains. I can be corrected if I am wrong but I believe that over those years only one prosecution was launched under that legislation. I do not want to go on a witch-hunt and say to industry, "Stop it or out you go", but I believe that industry should be made to put its house in order in this respect.

Mr. Gilpin was the first Director of Air Pollution Control. He was brought to Queensland from overseas and remained in that position for some considerable time. Why did he resign? He left the service because he could not get the support of those who should have supported him. He could not get staff. He complained that he was stuck away in a little office and could not attack the problem. I am not throwing this in the face of the present Minister—at that time air pollution control was not the responsibility of the Department of Local Government—but I am throwing it into the face of the Government because it has done little or nothing about the problem.

As I travelled to Parliament House this morning I saw a factory being burnt down in Redbank. The great volume of black smoke from that fire reminded me of what has been happening with a number of industries in my electorate. I have one particularly big problem in my electorate, and the Minister knows which one I am going to refer to. It occurs in the suburb of Darra. That suburb is one of the worst hit by air pollution.

Mr. Hinze: They were there before the residential development.

Mr. MARGINSON: I am prepared to admit that. I am not suggesting that they should be pushed out of the suburb, but something should be done to alleviate the problem that does exist.

Mr. Hinze: What would you suggest?

Mr. MARGINSON: I am not going to read from the Minister's letter, although if he wants me to I will. I would suggest that the Minister carry out what is mentioned in the concluding paragraph of his letter dated 3 December, and do a little bit of prosecuting of those people.

Mr. Moore: Read it out and let's hear what he said.

Mr. MARGINSON: I am not going to do that.

Mr. Moore: We don't have secrets in this place.

Mr. MARGINSON: I don't want to hurt the Minister's feelings. He has asked me what should be done. I have been asking him to do something for a long time. Now he says, "What would you do?"

I have here statistics covering fall-out in that suburb from May 1973 to October 1975. The figures cover three gauges in that suburb.

Mr. Moore: What suburb is that?

Mr. MARGINSON: Darra—a very important suburb represented by me.

In 1973 the fall-out at the Irwin Terrace site was as low as 68, but in July 1975 it was as high as 304. There was no improvement; it was worse. At the Killarney Avenue site, on the eastern side of the Darra cement works, the fall-out was 110 in December 1973, but it was up to 1,078 in June last.

At the Bradford Street site the fall-out increased about fourfold from a minimum of 150 in October 1973 to 666 in July 1975.

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

Mr. MARGINSON: Mr. Hewitt,——

Mr. Hinze: Say something interesting for a change.

Mr. MARGINSON: I shall. I shall speak again about the fall-out at Darra. I have confidence in the Minister and his officers and believe they will do something to lessen the problem at Darra. I feel confident that the position will be improved.

I wish to draw attention to other areas, as I did a couple of nights ago, and talk about pollution in the Wacol area and also at Bundamba near the Warrego Highway. Another area that calls for attention is Stafford. On a recent visit there I found some very heavy odours. I was told that they emanated from Gibson's scour, I think it is, on Kedron Brook. I ask the departmental officers to examine that problem to see what can be done to alleviate it.

Mr. Gygar: You look after Darra; I'll look after Stafford.

Mr. MARGINSON: I had reserved these comments till this afternoon in the hope that the honourable member would be here. He was not in the Chamber when I was speaking before the luncheon recess.

My electorate also suffers from a dust problem caused by open-cut mining. The local people suffer great inconvenience from open-cut mining operations at Ebbw Vale and Dinmore. This matter should be thoroughly investigated with a view to lessening the air pollution that occurs there.

Some time ago I brought to the attention of the Minister the pollution caused by burning coal heaps in the Wolston electorate. One about which I wrote to the Minister has been burning for approximately 12 months. The fire is in a large heap of coal stone taken from mines that have now ceased operation. The burning coal heaps emit not only smoke, which causes discomfort to local residents as well as to travellers through the area, but also a most unpleasant odour.

At about the time the Air Pollution Council of Queensland was transferred from the control of the Minister for Health to the Minister for Local Government, I wrote to the Minister for Health about this matter and received a reply to the effect that he had forwarded the complaint to the Minister for Local Government. Subsequently from the Minister for Local Government I received a letter stating that I should refer the matter to the Coal Board. How on earth the Minister came to that decision, I do not know. I was referred, of all things, to the Coal Board, as if this were its problem. We will not get very far in combating the pollution problem if Government departments adopt that type of attitude.

The Government is guilty of procrastination. As I said on Tuesday night, I hope that the foreshadowed legislation to reduce noise pollution will have teeth and that the Government will take more action in that field than it has taken in the fight against air pollution.

I ask the Minister to examine the problem arising at Darra and also that caused by burning coal heaps not only in my electorate but in others as well. The Fassifern electorate, for example, has a number of burning coal heaps in it. I admit that such fires are difficult to extinguish; nevertheless I want to see some effort made to prevent them. Burning coal heaps give off air pollution and unpleasant odours, all of which cause nearby residents a good deal of inconvenience and discomfort.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER (Townsville West) (2.20 p.m.): I take pleasure in supporting the proposed amendments to the Act to increase licence fees and the penalties for infringement of the Act. I believe they are desirable. I hope that in the long run they will have a positive effect in helping to overcome some of the problems that exist in many of our provincial cities as well as the metropolitan area. It is indeed important that the provisions in the regulations should be properly policed and rigidly enforced. I support the remarks made by all previous speakers along those lines.

It would be hypocritical of any honourable member to suggest that the present provisions are being enforced. In the last five years only one prosecution has been launched, and it resulted in only a very minor fine. That prosecution related to a situation that has been causing quite a problem in a certain provincial city. I should be very interested if someone could ascertain what the Air Pollution Control Council really does, and tell me what benefit it achieves for society. Its activities appear to be of a very clandestine nature. It is extremely hard to get any information from the council. When I say that, I exonerate Dr. Cleary and his executive officers from any blame because I think it lies in the present legislation. I shall deal with that matter later.

The Government should take a good, hard look at the Clean Air Act, tighten up the regulations thereunder considerably, put more teeth into them and see that, in future, they are properly enforced.

Industrial plants were given an arbitrary period of seven years to comply with the standards set under the Clean Air Act. In recent years many companies have been trying extremely hard to improve standards to comply with those laid down under the present legislation. One such company in Townsville is the North Australian Cement Company. Anyone who knew what its operations were like 15 years ago knows what I am talking about. No-one could get within half a mile from the plant because of the noxious, sulphuretted hydrogen gases from the plant. Today it is almost odourless. The company has done excellent work in installing electrostatic precipitators. It is trying particularly hard to comply with all standards. Its results are not quite perfect but it is doing a great job to improve its performance.

On the other hand, some companies in Townsville do not comply. One of them, which causes problems for the residents of Pimlico and Currajong—areas which are in my electorate—is a sawmilling company known as Foxwoods Sawmilling Company. It has been operating on its present site for many years but in the past few years it has installed an incinerator. Residents complain continually to the council about the amount of black smoke and ash fall-out from the chimney stack. It falls on the neighbouring houses. A couple of times a year officers from the Air Pollution Control Council come to Townsville—I do not know if the people running the sawmilling company know that they are coming—and suddenly the smoke is not quite so dark and the fall-out is not so bad. Naturally the report is to the effect that the plant is functioning satisfactorily and no action is taken; but, believe me, the residents of the area know how bad the problem is. I know what they are suffering because I have made inspections with officers of the council health department. This plant certainly needs a lot of smartening up. I feel that the company would readily admit that its plant is not quite satisfactory—that it needs some improvement—but no action is being taken to force it to comply with the standards laid down.

The sawmilling company is not the only culprit. Quite a few industries that have been allowed to start in Townsville in the last five to 10 years are offending in a similar way.

I recommend to the Minister that officers of the Environmental Control Council be permanently stationed in Townsville to supervise industrial undertakings, not only in Townsville, but throughout the whole of North Queensland, especially in the cane-growing areas. They could police the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act in North Queensland.

At the moment, a particular problem that is causing a lot of concern to Townsville people and the Townsville City Council is an application by Queensland Phosphate Ltd. to construct and operate a drying kiln on the Townsville waterfront for the drying of the rock phosphate which comes from Duchess in small particles like small pieces of gravel. It has an alleged moisture content of something like 8 per cent. All of the overseas buyers of rock phosphate want no more than 2 to 3 per cent of moisture content. So while the rock phosphate project has been proceeding for 12 months and while we have been exporting rock phosphate, the proposal to construct a drying kiln is causing concern to Townsville people.

If the venture proceeds—and I think it should proceed as long as controls can be rigidly enforced from the outset—it will create a lot of revenue to the Queensland Railways in transporting the phosphate from Duchess to Townsville, an uplift in the revenue of the Townsville Harbour Board through the exportation of the phosphate, an increase in export earnings for Australia and a great number of extra employment opportunities in the Townsville area in other industries associated with it, such as a fertiliser plant or a chemical industry. The city will receive many benefits if the project can proceed, but it must proceed under strict environmental controls.

The development company did supply an environmental impact study which claimed that the effects on the environment resulting from (a) noise nuisance, (2) sulphur dioxide emissions from the chimney stack and (3) dust fall-out would be minimal to the adjacent community and well within the safety limits as recommended by the World Health Organisation. However, it is the experience of my council and of other councils generally that environmental impact studies in theory do not in practice conform to the design criteria in environmental matters.

Once an industry is established and is causing a nuisance in an area, it is extremely difficult for a local authority to flex its muscles and close down that industry. It is far better to investigate any possible design faults in advance and lay down conditions in the town planning permit to make sure that no detrimental effects on the environment will occur in the future.

With this in mind I personally approached the Air Pollution Council in Brisbane to obtain written advice as to the precautions that the Townsville City Council should take by imposing strict conditions on its development permit, if one is issued. The advice from the Director of Air Pollution Control was that officially his council could not consider the application until the development company had a town planning permit for the project from the Townsville City Council.

This is a very farcical situation and is putting the cart before the horse. How can a local authority of laymen consider such a contentious application as this one when a petition signed by 700 people has been presented to the council objecting to its location? The local authority is the custodian of the rights of the people. Is it supposed to grant a permit for a development of this nature when, if it is erected and allowed to operate with possible detrimental effects on the environment, the Air Pollution Council could come along in 12 months' time and say that we should have done this and that? How could we possibly make a decision in a matter such as this? It is time that the expertise in Government departments, such as the Air Pollution Council, should be made available to local authorities on request so that they could arrive at a more considered judgment in cases such as the one I have mentioned.

Last week I discussed this anomaly with the Minister in Townsville. He assured me that, if the facts were as I said they were, he would take the matter up with the department concerned and consider appropriate changes to the Clean Air Act. In the short

time available since, he has not been able to discuss this matter with his departmental heads but I hope that in the very near future he will take the appropriate steps and the appropriate action in this matter.

I believe that the officers in the department would welcome the opportunity to advise local authorities. The final decision as to whether and where an industry should be established in a local authority area rests with the local authority and it is for it to make the final judgment. With this area of co-operation between State Government departments and local authorities we would not have some of the problems in the future that we have today associated with the Clean Air Act.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (2.30 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I wish not only to applaud the Minister for his timely action in increasing penalties for offences under the Act but also to draw to his attention the fact that it is not enough merely to punish offenders. I think that positive incentives must be given to local authorities to adopt a responsible attitude to pollution of the air and pollution in every other aspect of daily life. We must be prepared to use some measure of force, if necessary, to make local authorities face up to their responsibilities in keeping the air clean.

There are many examples of gross incompetence and dereliction of duty by local authorities in this matter. I believe that the Government should be prepared to force them, if necessary, to accept their responsibility. I should like to cite one or two demonstrative issues that show exactly how local authorities can, and do, ignore the problem of clean air. The first example is provided by Gibsons' tannery in my electorate. No-one who lives within several miles of that establishment would doubt that a foul and sickening odour emanates from it. What has the Brisbane City Council done about it?

Mr. Doumany: Nothing.

Mr. GYGAR: The honourable member has picked it in one—absolutely nothing! This great polluter of the air of the northern suburbs continues on its merry way.

Behind this establishment is a history that is common to many other air-polluting establishments, at least in city areas. The tannery has been there for well over 50 years. It was established as a noxious industry, as the management recognises, in an area in which in those days there was nothing but pastures for miles and miles. There was no danger that the pollutants produced by the factory would disturb the health, well-being or comfort of any residents.

Mr. Goleby: They were there first.

Mr. GYGAR: Yes. The people moved in later, and they moved in because the Brisbane City Council saw fit to allow residential subdivisions not only in the near vicinity but right up to the very fences of the factory. Although the council well knew of the smell and pollutant coming from the factory, subdivision of that land was allowed.

The cause of the odour in the area is simple to find. Material scoured from the leather passes into settling tanks where the waste matter settles on the bottom and undergoes a process not unlike fermentation, which releases foul gases into the lake that is used as a storage tank. Technology has advanced, and there are now methods by which the smell can be prevented. In fact, it is a relatively simple mechanical operation. All that is needed is the fitting of aerators so that the water is constantly agitated and the residue is constantly subjected to fresh oxygen. This allows the oxygenation process to continue and the bubbles of hydrogen sulphide and similar gases are not allowed to build up and be released into the atmosphere to the great discomfort of local residents.

The problem can be solved but it cannot be solved by the management alone. The management, in good faith, built the factory miles from habitation and then watched in dismay as an incompetent council allowed people to build right up to the borders of the factory. The people who built and live there are themselves not without blame. I think most of the local residents will recognise that, as will those in the vicinity of most other noxious industries. When they came to the area they knew, or should have known if they had prudently made inquiries, that there was an air-pollution problem in the district.

Mr. Moore: It comes into my kitchen four miles away.

Mr. GYGAR: I remind the honourable member for Windsor that I live about 250 yards from this establishment and have done so for many years.

But the great scandal of this is that the council not only allowed this land to be subdivided and thrown open to people, but has been charging them rates amounting to millions upon millions of dollars in the 50 years or more that this factory has been operating.

In my perhaps naive way, I believe that councils and all other local authorities should provide people who pay rates with basic services to turn the area into a livable, habitable place. They should provide sewers, roads, drains and, I think, the sort of environment in which people can live and grow happily. Although millions of dollars have been collected by the council, not one cent has been spent on preventing the thing which most concerns the people of the area, which most detracts from the quality of life of the people of Stafford, and that is foul and sickening odour that wafts on the breeze every time the wind starts to blow; and it is even worse when it begins to rain.

Mr. Moore: It is worse when it does not rain.

Mr. GYGAR: The honourable member lives four miles away. I would be interested to know how he can smell it if there is no wind blowing.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. GYGAR: I think honourable members can gather from the sentiment expressed by the honourable member for Windsor that this is quite a problem, and the sentiments he expresses are shared by most people. But this council, which has collected millions upon millions of dollars to provide us with a livable environment, has spent not a cent on overcoming the problem. And does it acknowledge any duty owed to the industry which it allowed to operate or the people whom it allowed to move into the area? Of course not! Council members have washed their hands of the whole thing, and in fact last week came the most incredible statement of them all when the incumbent alderman, Bourke, came out in a fit of panic, thinking that he is about to be defeated, and said that it should be closed down. That is the one simple way to solve the problem, I suppose—closing the place down so that there is no more air pollution. That was a panic-stricken grasping at straws by a man who has done nothing about it for years; an absolute abdication of his responsibility and a smirch on his integrity.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Dereliction of duty!

Mr. GYGAR: I agree with the honourable member for Archerfield—a dereliction of duty on the party of the local A.L.P. alderman. The Australian Labor Party representative—the workers' party—has said, "I don't care, close it down, throw these working men out of a job. In times of unemployment toss them out in the streets." I would like to hear what the Leader of the Opposition has to say about that sort of approach—a complete disregard of the rights of the workers and of the management who came into this area in good faith and were given the opportunity to do so by an uncaring council.

The blame for this pollution falls squarely on the council and I suggest that we, as a Government must do something about it; the council obviously will not. Labor aldermen have failed to accept any measure of responsibility for their stupidity and arrogance over this issue. They have collected millions in rates, I must re-emphasise, and spent not one penny for the local people, and now when they are in political trouble they just want to pull out and leave the workers for dead.

Mr. Doumany: Shame!

Mr. GYGAR: Of course it is a shame, and this is the same sort of proposal and policy followed when Labor was in power federally—but that is a little bit away from the subject of air pollution. I suggest to the Minister that if the council—this applies to every local authority—allows this sort of problem to continue while still collecting rates from people in neighbouring areas and will not face its responsibilities, we are just going to have to force it to do so.

The owners of the factory—the air polluter—have rights, great rights. They were allowed to buy the land and establish their factory. They were even placed in a noxious industries area. They have been there for over 50 years. Incidentally, they have also donated hundreds of acres of park land for the use of the local people. They have rights, but the residents have a right to be able to put their heads out of their windows without gagging on the foul odours that permeate the whole area. They have rights; the council has the responsibility. I suggest to the Minister that if the Brisbane City Council will not face up to its responsibility, someone must whip it into line, and I cannot think of any more suitable candidate for the job than the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (2.41 p.m.) I was pleased to hear the Minister's introduction of the proposed amendments to the Clean Air Act 1963–1972.

Mr. Hinze: Speak up; we can't hear you. You're always mumbling down into your shirt.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that if the Minister contains himself we might all hear the honourable member for Cairns better.

Mr. JONES: He said that it was not designed as a money-spinner, but that the aim of the Bill was to monitor, control and counter air pollution.

The honourable member for Stafford obviously wants the local authority to accept the responsibility. The problem is not within its province; it cannot be blamed for it. Of course, the honourable member is one of those fellows who, when anything goes wrong, says, "Blame the council, and to the devil with the truth."

Mr. GYGAR: I rise to a point of order. I find the honourable member's remarks grossly offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will oblige by withdrawing those comments.

Mr. JONES: At your direction, Mr. Hewitt, I will do so. If the honourable member reads the proof of his speech tomorrow and then gives it to somebody who is not directly involved to read, I think that person will draw the same conclusion as I have from his remarks.

I hope that the administration of the Act will not fall on the shoulders of local authorities. It is far too big to be the responsibility of isolated local authorities. Over many years too much responsibility has fallen on the shoulders of local authorities. Bills that have passed through this Chamber have had to be administered by local authorities. I am sure that, in his present portfolio, the Minister can see that what I am saying is true, particularly in the case of the Litter Act. It is beyond the capabilities of local authorities to administer an Act such as that.

I think that the Minister said in his introductory remarks that the complete elimination of industrial pollution is recognised as an impossible exercise. He said also that it was the Government's duty only to minimise pollution in all its forms, and that this would be achieved.

Mr. Hinze: You were in Japan with me. What did you think about the problem of air pollution in Japan?

Mr. JONES: From the time I was a young fellow looking at school books and National Geographic magazines, I thought that when I went to Japan I would see Mt. Fuji. As the Minister knows, when we looked out of our hotel window in Tokyo we could not even see the tower, let alone Mt. Fuji. The problem is world-wide, and the very point I am making is that it is beyond the capabilities of local authorities to overcome it. We are all aware that there is a problem, and I intend to elaborate on that point as I proceed.

I hope that the Minister will achieve the desired effect, as I think he said, by co-operation, conciliation, consultation or confrontation. But I do not entirely agree that the correct way to bring about a clean environment is by means of punitive legislation. Perhaps prohibitions and laws forbidding the pollution of air, and so on, that degrades the environment are needed; but, even more, incentives are needed for the preservation of not only the air but also the environment as a whole. Punitive laws succeed only when the malefactors are few and the unlawful acts are comparatively rare.

We are all polluters. In our own daily living we pollute the air and the environment. It is not possible to enact punitive laws to cover that sort of pollution. Perhaps we should be looking more towards incentives. By all means let us legislate for control and compulsory requirement, but we should make it to everyone's advantage to reach particular environmental goals. For example, automobile manufacturers could be forced to install devices to control the emission of fumes, but how could we force every motorist to maintain that device on his vehicle? Perhaps there could be the incentive that, if he did, his registration fee would be reduced or, alternatively, he would have to pay a higher registration fee if he did not maintain the device. Probably that would be impracticable.

We need a determined and sustained effort. We need clear target dates, goals, dead-lines and concentration of effort. Our priorities should be drawn up in proper order. We should not merely fan the air with Press statements; we should be applying pressures. Clean air should head the list of our priorities.

As the Minister said, air pollution is not a problem peculiar to Queensland. It is as bad in Tokyo as it is in Moscow; it is as bad in Los Angeles as it is in Brisbane. Not all of the answers to the problem are yet known. A highfalutin theory was put forward in Los Angeles about providing a cold air draught above the city so that the smog would be drawn up above the clouds. God knows how much that would have cost or who would have underwritten the bill for it! That is the sort of proposal that is put forward.

I pose a series of questions. Have we the technological competence to handle most of the problems of foul air today? Are we simply recording them and looking at them? Can we really solve the problems and show a result for the effort we are putting into the legislation? Probably the hardest task confronting the Minister and his officers will be to educate the public to accept the choice.

We will have to face a rigorous analysis of ourselves as well as industry, and even that may not be enough. There is the cost burden I have touched on, including the additional cost of cleaning up the environment to provide clean air and clean water. Who pays? Who foots the bill? At whose expense is this going to be done? Will the cost in the cities be met at the expense of country areas? Will it be met by cutting the funds available for education, health, housing and welfare? Will actions be confined to certain elite suburbs at the expense of others? Any type of shift in this direction may not be popular with certain sections of the community if, as always, it is at the expense of the lower-income groups. That would hardly make the protection of the environment a popular cause with the lower-income earner. That aspect of the legislation will have to be looked at over a period of time.

The alternative is likely to mean no environmental or air pollution control or action at all. That is a harsh alternative. The Minister's problems are compounding. A rapid public turn against all concern for the environment must be avoided. We have to ensure that the law covered by Acts such as the one we are amending applies to all.

In his introductory remarks the Minister said that his officers would be stationed at Gladstone. I hope that the Minister will look farther north than Gladstone. I assure him that already air pollution problems arise in North Queensland and Far North Queensland. In fact the honourable member for Townsville has dealt with his area. The sugar mills in that part of the State, and perhaps in the Mackay area, too, have always

been faced with the problem of emission of bagasse dust. Furthermore, our local farming areas are plagued by the emission of pollutants from fertiliser works and other industries. We have heard of scheduled premises and been advised that the Clean Air Act will not apply in our area until 1977.

I do not say that this situation applies to sugar mills, but somewhere along the line the Minister will be confronted with what I would term the marginal plant—the one that has to be kept running because it provides employment in a rural or provincial area, in spite of the fact that it is established in an area adjoining one in which raw materials are produced. Will such a plant be closed down, thereby aggravating the already serious unemployment situation in a depressed rural area? Alternatively, will the plant be subsidised? If so, will the money come from the public purse or will one particular section of the community be called upon to bear the cost?

In such an instance as that, are our environmental standards to be disregarded, or is their application to be postponed if a genuine case of hardship is brought forward? If our concern for the environment is seen as an attack upon the livelihood of workers or upon a particular community, we immediately lose the sympathy of the public, and the political support for such an environmental cause is more likely to vanish under those circumstances than under any other. I wonder whether the Minister has considered this aspect. Certain industries in North Queensland immediately come to mind. They are ones of which all these questions could be asked.

This Bill should be implemented in conjunction with town planning. By that I mean that buffer zones should be created between residential zones and areas containing heavy or light industry. Unfortunately, however, town-planning is nearly as far behind as the control of air pollution, with the result that in most cities and towns residential zones are bang up against heavy industrial areas. I'll bet London to a brick that we will have many problems in the future simply because of bad town-planning.

I wish the Minister well in his policy of confrontation, co-operation and consultation in the future believing that the people deserve clean air to breathe. No-one is better able than I to discern the polluted air of Brisbane, coming as I do from the clean air in the tropical city of Cairns. Sad to say, over the years Cairns has become subject to bouts of pollution, and nuisances are being created. As industry evolves, that will always be a problem in our rural and provincial communities.

I trust that the new provisions in the Act will help to eliminate these problems and I hope that the Minister takes cognisance of some of the other problems I have raised before they compound to the extent that is apparent in Brisbane.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (2.56 p.m.): I record my support of the amendments to the Clean Air Act. Like the honourable member for Townsville West, I believe that they will give the Government more teeth to deal with air pollution in Queensland. I am sure that all honourable members agree that pollution is one of the major problems facing mankind today. Queenslanders should be grateful—indeed, they are lucky—to have a Minister who is so dedicated to this section of his portfolio. Even the honourable member for Lytton said that the Minister is dedicated to this part of his portfolio.

There is certainly room for improvement in our air polution control, and I am sure that the Minister will agree that we should try to improve certain sections of the Act. With that end in view I shall bring certain relevant points to the Minister's attention. When the Act was introduced it dealt mainly with two categories. The first was the health of the people and the second the need to preserve the flora and fauna of our State. In 1963 all of the discussion in this Assembly centred on the Brisbane-Ipswich area. Matters of concern were the Darra cement works, Tennyson Power House and the steam trains. The Act was designed to cover this area, but it was the intention to extend its provisions progressively to the rest of the State.

It should be noted that Dr. Noble, who was in charge of the Bill (as has been said, he was the honourable member for Yeronga), said in his second-reading speech on 26 November 1963—

> "It is proposed that this Council will be in large measure a scientific body.
>
> ". . .
>
> "It will be necessary at all times for the smooth running of this measure to have full co-operation between industry and the Council. The manufacturer has to meet the cost of control measures, and these can be high in closely-settled areas."

As an example of the expense that could be involved, he referred to a cost of £500,000.

He then said—

> "It was therefore thought wise that industry should be represented in the deliberations of this Council."

An examination of the present representation on the Air Pollution Council discloses that three members are nominated by the Minister and one each by the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner for Electricity Supply, the Director of Local Government, the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, the Queensland Chamber of Manufactures and the Queensland University Senate. I am sure my

parliamentary colleagues agree that the concept of the Act has broadened since 1963; it now takes in all of Queensland. Therefore it would be correct to suggest that we should possibly take a closer look at the composition of the council.

I seek leave to have recorded in "Hansard" a list of complaints received by the Air Pollution Council from 1970-71 to 1974-75 both inclusive.

(Leave granted.)

"*Complaints Received by Air Pollution Council as Disclosed in Annual Reports*

——	1970–71	1971–72	1972–73	1973–74	1974–75
Bakeries	..	5	2	1	1
Brickworks	18	58	24	15	23
Building Board	..	12	9	3	5
Car wreckers and scrap metal	..	..	9	5	29
Cement works	25	18	26	12	49
Chemical works and fertilisers	1	12	11	7	..
Concrete batching	..	21	4	7	3
Deposits on paintwork	..	6	9	10	13
Dust (various)	..	16	19	12	12
Flour mills and feed stock	..	..	..	3	..
Furniture manufacture	..	..	5	4	1
Glass works	..	..	5	6	7
Hospitals	1	6	5	3	3
Hot mix bitumen	..	..	..	3	5
Incineration (various)	..	83	51	36	33
Laundry and drycleaning	..	..	4	11	6
Metallurgical	30	20	20	10	8
Motor vehicles	..	..	4	4	2
Odours (various)	..	36	106	89	130
Oil refineries	6	3	6	9	10
Open burning (various)	..	31	34	45	45
Power stations	7	4	7	2	7
Railways	5	..	..	..	..
Sand blasting	..	11	20	3	9
Sand and gravel	..	..	..	1	5
Shipping	..	..	2	10	2
Spray painting	..	..	..	3	5
Sugar mills	2	2	..	..	..
Timber mills and wood processing	69	42	27	20	31
Transport	5	5	..	..	..
Boiler plant (other than above)	41	42	13	14	25
General pollution	..	6	9	4	4
Others	162	21	9	11	16
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	3	1
Totals	372	460	440	366	490 "

Looking at the list of complaints, I think it is significant that the council has no representative from any of the four highest listed areas of complaint. The figures for last year are: brickworks with 23 complaints; cement works with 49 complaints; metallurgical problems with 8 and timber mills and wood processers with 31. Some of the major industries in the State that are most affected by this Act have no representative on the council. Therefore it is only fair that we rearrange the composition of the council to allow those industries most affected to have representation.

The present representation includes two accountants, two university representatives and two local government representatives. I firmly believe that if we removed two or three of those representatives, the performance and the knowledge of this council would not be affected.

As an example I shall deal with the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures. When the legislation was introduced in 1963, Mr. Duggan queried why two representatives came from those particular areas. I am sure that the Chamber of Manufactures could look after the interests of the Chamber of Commerce and act on its behalf. That position on the council could be filled by a member from the companies affected by this Act.

A representative from the Railways Department was put onto the council because of the problems with steam trains in that era. Although there are now very few complaints concerning the operations of the Railways Department, it might be a good idea to let its representative remain.

I should like to see a return to union representation on the council. In 1963, Mr. Edgar Williams was the union representative.

He walked out of the council and was replaced by a local government representative. By and large local government is not involved in direct negotiations between representatives of those affected industries and the Air Pollution Council. If we implemented these changes, they would receive widespread support from all areas of the State and would no doubt make the council far more successful.

I should like to touch briefly on the common-sense public approach to many of our major pollution problems. The sugar industry relies heavily on the burning of cane prior to harvesting. My colleagues in this Chamber who represent the sugar-cane areas are no doubt well aware of the inconvenience and sometimes discomfort suffered by a local community during burning time. Any woman who has had washing on the line when cane has been burnt knows what I am talking about. Local residents take a common-sense approach to pollution. They realise that burning is necessary in the harvesting process. We sincerely hope that this common-sense approach is made to all other areas of community activity.

I draw the Minister's attention to the rights of industry in appeals against the council's decision. The Minister said in his introductory remarks that he believes in consultation and co-operation with industries. Under the Act as it stands, industry has no direct communication with the council on decisions that the council hands down. If an industry does not agree with a ruling by the council it has only two avenues of recourse—it can appeal to a District Court judge, or it can appeal to the Minister. I believe that an industry or company should have the opportunity to make direct submissions to the council in a hearing similar to a hearing before the Industrial Commission. The opportunity to have a discussion and to gain an understanding of each other's viewpoint and the reasoning behind a ruling would no doubt lead to far better communication between the industry concerned and the Air Pollution Council than exists at the present time.

This system operates very efficiently in the United States. I am led to believe that in Texas an industry can communicate with the appropriate authority and discuss matters with it so that each side knows what is going on before a decision is handed down. If an industry disagrees with the decision, it still has the option of going to the courts.

As I mentioned earlier, when the Act was brought down it dealt mainly with conditions in the Brisbane and Ipswich areas. Its implementation was then extended to cover the whole of Queensland. I am sure that my colleagues would agree that the situation throughout the State changes remarkably depending on the geography and topography of different areas. The Act in its present form is too restricted. It is, in the main, designed to control air pollution in urban areas where there are multiple sources of emission. I believe that consideration should be given to different standards in areas, as in some there is a single source of emission and in others multiple sources. I think it would be possible to cite a closely settled area in Brisbane in which there are 100 emitters and compare it with an area in the country where there are one or two emitters of particles into the atmosphere and where they rain down over a vast distance.

It is certainly important to have control of the air but it is equally important to consider ambient rather than emission conditions. By that I mean that it is important to measure the fall-out at ground level in a defined area rather than the emission from an emitter. I believe that the legislation should give latitude for the easing or tightening of the set standard regulations so that the fall-out at ground level is acceptable. This is done in many countries, including England. In a publication, "Prevention of Air Pollution in the Non-ferrous Metals Industries," E. C. Mantle said in August 1974—

> "In contrast, many countries are now fixing emission standards or so-called Air Quality Standards. Such standards lay down the ground level concentrations of various pollutants which should not be exceeded . . .
>
> "There are some countries where pollution is controlled by permanent monitoring stations, though this applies mainly to sulphur dioxide."

When we read of permanent monitoring stations, we think of Mt. Isa where this system is in operation. All who have been to that area and toured the mine and seen the method used to control air pollution must have been amazed at the dedication of this company to the job. It has spent millions of dollars in the installation of closed circuit monitoring systems to monitor the area 24 hours a day. This system consists of a central station on a hill overlooking the city and the mines. People operate monitoring stations around the city and report back to the central station. If a monitoring system records a high level of gas concentration in the area, these operators have the automatic go-ahead to shut down the plant until conditions are alleviated. This has worked very successfully, and points to the fact that the company is concerned and has done something positive to alleviate any problems which do occur. I think if anybody goes there and talks to the populace at large, he will find that they are quite satisfied with the system in operation.

If the implementation of the Clean Air Act is to be successful, we should keep four things in mind: firstly, the health of the people; secondly, the environment; thirdly, economics; and, fourthly, the growth of the nation. If we can get an equal balance between those four things, I think we will be able to successfully implement the Act. I hope that the Minister will continue to actively concern himself with pollution in this State and that in his future deliberations

on this legislation he will consider the points I have mentioned: firstly, rearrange the composition of the Air Pollution Council; secondly, allow direct communication between industry and the council, and, thirdly, allow for different standards depending upon the geography and topography of the area. I commend the amendments to the Committee.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (3.11 p.m.): I rise to speak on this Bill with much the same feelings I had when I spoke the other night on the Clean Waters Act Amenment Bill. I believe this Minister is one who is in fact trying to give us better standards with regard to air, water and, ultimately, noise levels as well. I sincerely believe, as I stated the other night, that his party and mine find themselves in the peculiar position where they stand in favour of conservation, and certainly against pollution of our water and air, and yet some of the strongest industrial and commercial backers of both our parties are potentially if not in fact among the greatest polluters, and therefore I think it is particularly courageous of the Minister, belonging to the party he does, to be moving so strongly against the interests of such companies.

Mr. Houston: That will only be proved when he prosecutes them. Up till now he hasn't.

Mr. LAMONT: I will certainly come to that. I partly agree with the honourable member's comment. I have every confidence that, if we find that people are not responding to negotiation the Minister will move even more strongly against air pollution just as soon as he sees his way clear; not just clear through the smog but clear through the smoke of the battlefield with those who are in favour of being permitted to pollute to the maximum.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. LAMONT: I am not defending the polluters at all, and I have much to say about the Act itself in addition to the proposed amendments, as I am sure honourable members would anticipate.

I have already spoken this week about the outstanding increase in synthetic compounds that are churned out by chemical laboratories these days. I have already said that these chemicals end up as toxins in our body tissues, and if I might remind honourable members of what I said the other night, 500,000 new chemical compounds have been concocted in our laboratories in the past 25 years. There are 500 new chemical compounds being concocted every year, and many of these are so potent that minute quantities of them can bring about vast changes to the body. I would like to quote from that famous book by Rachel Carson where she says—

> "In animal experiments, 3 parts per million has been found to inhibit an essential enzyme in heart muscle; only 5 parts per million has brought about necrosis or disintegration of liver cells; only 2.5 parts per million of the closely related chemicals dieldrin and chlordane did the same."

So we have to wonder whether in fact by allowing these polluters to pollute to the maximum, which is certainly the emphasis in many sections of the Act, we are in fact allowing them to destroy much of life.

Rachel Carson points out that because these small amounts of toxins (pesticides in particular) are cumulatively stored and only slowly excreted, the threat of chronic poisoning and degenerative changes to the liver and other organs is very real.

We have already discussed, Mr. Hewitt, how water supplies have been used as vehicles for carrying toxicants. Now we look at examples of how in the air similar lethal and hazardous substances poison life by equally various and subtle means. They range from industrial projects to the use of the garden lawnmower and the kitchen insect spray.

As I look at the report of the Air Pollution Council of Queensland for 1974-75, I see that the Council received 490 complaints during the year about bakeries and brickworks, car wreckers and cement works, domestic incineration and dust from quarries, fall-out from insects and furniture manufacturers, glass works, hospitals, oil refineries, incineration at school premises, shipping—the list is almost endless. The danger is that so many of these are familiar things in our community. As I emphasised on the last occasion on which I spoke about pollution, it is the danger of the familiar that I fear most, because too often the public only complains when a new form of pollution comes into the community in which they live, often not realising that the major forms of pollution are from already-established industries.

I was disturbed when I looked at the section of the report dealing with air pollution and planning to see under the heading "Fallout deposit" that the mean metropolitan fallout level for the year remained virtually unchanged—as if that is something to be proud of! Obviously it should not remain unchanged; it should be reduced, and reduced significantly. At the end of the section, the report said—

> "These results are most disappointing, more particularly in the light of the 1973-74 Annual Report, which noted a continuing decrease in fallout levels in the area."

So at least the Air Pollution Council, too, would agree with that, even if the Government does not.

Under the heading "Sulphur Dioxide", one finds this statement—

> "The mean for all city stations was 29 micrograms per metre^3, compared to 23 micrograms per metre^3 for the year 1972-73."

Again that shows an increase, and the fact that it is well below the World Health Organisation's long-term goals does not really interest me. It means that we are fast getting to the maximum allowable.

When one looks at the section headed "Smoke", one sees that the mean from all stations showed an increase from 10 micrograms per metre^3 to 12 micrograms per metre^3. It might be said that that is not very much, but it is an increase of 20 per cent on the base.

Mr. Houston: Over what period was that increase?

Mr. LAMONT: This is the last report that has been tabled in Parliament. It is the report for the year 1974-75.

Mr. Houston: It showed that increase over the previous year?

Mr. LAMONT: Yes, that is right, on the previous year.

Mr. Houston: So it is in 12 months.

Mr. LAMONT: The danger lies in a false sense of security from industries being so familiar in the community that we tend to accept them and complain only when new industries are developed. All these industries, all these means of pollution, provide a means of ingestion of dangerous chemicals into the human body. One of the little-known dimensions is the effect of car exhausts, and this, too, is admitted on page 2 of the report.

Here the problem is with a chemical group known as photochemical oxidants, the properties of which you, Mr. Hewitt, I am sure, are completely familiar with. The report says that it is a little-known pollutant because very little has been done about monitoring it. The report says—

> "It is not possible, short of a major pollution inventory in the Brisbane area, to determine the relative extent of mobile and stationary sources, but, on the basis of such data elsewhere, it is likely that motor vehicle emissions will account for something like 70 per cent of the total."

A disturbing feature is that the levels recorded have exceeded the World Health Organisation's recommended long-term goals for oxidants on a number of occasions. Surely that should give honourable members cause for concern.

I was astounded to hear one of my colleagues in the joint Government parties, the honourable member for Callide, speaking recently and rejecting the seriousness of pollution and saying that nature provides a way of clearing the atmosphere and clearing the rivers of pollution. He spoke about the rain washing pollutants from the slopes. Where do they go? Where does the water go? It goes into the sea or evaporates into the air and again comes down as rain and gets into crops and eventually into our bellies. I would not have thought it was necessary to spell it out in quite such causational detail. Surely no-one would seriously think that the wind is going to blow away the pollutants in the air or that water is going to wash away pollutants and not bring them back in some other form. One of the remarkable things about nature is that it is cyclical. People who speak in that way are either ignoring evidence or (I hope not in my colleague's case) speaking from ignorance; they have the same ignorance as those who believe that the smog problem can be solved by providing high chimneys. We have a policy in this State about the height of chimneys. The Air Pollution Council makes that recommendation. I cannot believe that it is through a lack of understanding; really I cannot believe that it is because of an unwillingness to mount a real attack. Therefore I can only presume that when the Air Pollution Council talks about chimney heights it must in fact be revealing the very real limitations of that council caused by its lack of teeth.

Mr. Jones: The department responsible for air safety might have something to say about the height of chimneys.

Mr. LAMONT: That could be a dangerous form of air pollution!

High chimneys merely disperse waste gases and other effluent away from the immediate environment of that specific polluter. The other night a member of the council said, "It is commonly said that dilution is no solution to pollution." I think we should all take that into account. High chimneys simply disperse the smoke or the gases elsewhere, to be brought back again by either winds or rainfall.

It is not much good the Health Department prescribing suitable menus for schoolchildren and others if the steak, salad, cheese and milk are eventually going to carry dangerous levels of chemical compounds which are toxic. So many parts per million of those toxicants can get into our system and lodge there so that we could end up, as I said the other day, with the situation where Queenslanders, by health standards, are unfit to eat.

Mr. Houston: What about the nuclear testing in the Pacific?

Mr. LAMONT: The honourable member entices me into the field of foreign affairs.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not going into foreign affairs. Even Queensland Acts do not go as far as that.

Mr. LAMONT: I'm tempted, as you know, Mr. Hewitt, but I certainly accept your ruling.

Air pollution is particularly serious in Brisbane. I quote from "The Air Report" which under the heading of "Brisbane's Special Susceptibility" states—

> "Topographically, the Brisbane area, where most of the State's industry is centralized, is in a similar position to Los Angeles which is well known for its air

pollution problems. Both cities are situated with the sea on one side and mountains on the other. This, combined with the effects of air inversion currents, often results in concentrated fallout in the metropolitan area."

In other words, this is potentially the most dangerous area in Australia from the point of view of air pollution, and it is the area in which we live.

When I look at the report of the Air Pollution Council I see some of the faults I found when I looked at the report of the Water Quality Council. The composition of the council is set out on the first page. I went through the list with my pencil and noted beside each name whether the person named was a Government nominee, a representative of the industry or what. I found that there were two academics in the list, one of whom I decided was an independent, while the other taught chemical engineers; I therefore put the latter on the side of the polluters. I found I had to write "G" against six names as being representatives of the Government, and therefore they must obviously represent a Government view. All the others represented commerce and industry, and I should think they, too, must be regarded as representatives of the polluters. Unfortunately I found that I could not put "Pu" against anyone to indicate that he or she was a public representative. Until we have a public representative on the council, we are not going to get public views aired in that area. Furthermore, I believe the membership of the council should include a local town-planning expert. I believe there is someone with town-planning qualifications but he is not a Government nominee. I should like to see an independent town planner.

Page 2 of the report contains a significant section under the heading of "Odours". It states—

> "A suitable buffer zone between these premises and residential areas is considered to be good practice and would considerably reduce the problem."

Surely that is town-planning. Further, under the heading of "Air Pollution and Planning" the report states—

> "It has been the expressed view of the Council that it should have greater involvement in the siting of new large industrial undertakings, industrial estates and in urban planning generally and there has been a move in this direction by the Division in its participation with the Town Planning Branch of the Department of Local Government."

Again I feel it calls for an independent town planner on the council. Of course, there used to be a union representative. But that was touch and go. He could be a representative from a union that is concerned about the environment or a representative from a union that is more concerned about employment in industry and therefore again on the side of the polluter. We find also that local government did have a say on this council, but I am afraid that I would put local authorities down as polluters, because in a section on page 2 headed "Open Burns" we read that all kinds of opening burning contributed to the pollutants visible in the air above the Brisbane valley, particularly during winter morning inversions, and in addition during the year the division received 27 complaints of air pollution from fires at council rubbish tips. So I could not regard the representative of local government as being on the side of the anti-polluters, either; I put him on the side of the polluters.

It is extraordinarily expensive for local government to go into anti-pollution measures. First of all, local authorities have to sharpen up and modernise their own disposal methods, and then, of course, they have to go into the discouraging of back-yard burning by citizens. This they can only do by providing better disposal services to the citizenry, and that, of course, means putting up the rates as well. We couldn't possibly regard city council representatives as being on the side of the conservationists.

As I said, there is no clear representative of the anti-polluters—the general public. I believe this is a serious deficiency in the Act.

Furthermore, the Act lacks autonomy, and as it lacks autonomy it lacks efficacy. Section 15 of the Act points out the powers of the Governor in Council to rescind the decisions of the Air Pollution Council, thus making council decisions void if it wishes. In fact, that occurred in a Townsville case at about the time this report was being drawn up. So, if the Air Pollution Council wants to make an order against a particular industry the Governor in Council can in its wisdom, for the sake of industry, employment, economy and (that wonderful word!) "progress" decide that it will overrule and rescind the decision of the Air Pollution Council. So here again the council lacks teeth. There is no real appeals system for the council. If the Governor in Council overrules the Air Pollution Council, there ought to be some means whereby the Air Pollution Council can appeal to the court. But can it? No!

I look further down the list of the staff employed by the Air Pollution Council and find that there are two inspectors for the whole of Queensland. I believe there is one more coming. There should be far more than this. There are something like 37 such gentlemen on the Air Pollution Council of New South Wales. I cannot believe that the people of New South Wales are to that extent greater polluters than we Queenslanders are.

The operations of the Air Pollution Council can only be expanded with more engineers and more inspectors as well as the implementation of training programmes in tertiary

institutions. I believe that the chemical engineering section of the university has such a training programme on anti-pollution, and as far as I know it is the only one in this State. I might add that I found out about it only in conversation two nights ago. A gentleman from the chemical engineering department of the university was unable to advise me of such a programme, but a member of the Air Pollution Council was able to point out that that course now exists.

I return to the notion I spoke about the other night: the right to pollute is definitely a concept in the Act, because it talks only about maximum levels. I claim the emphasis should be clearly on minimum levels or in other words the right to clean air.

The Government has wide powers to tighten up this Act by regulation—by delegated legislation. In the past the Government has never been backward in doing what it wanted to do with delegated legislation, and I cannot believe that it is backward about this if it really wants to act by regulation.

There should be a public right not only to raise complaints but also to sue those who pollute air and water. When I began this speech, the honourable member for Bulimba mentioned that prosecutions are rare. That is true. On the other hand, the Minister says that the Air Pollution Council and the Government would rather do these things by negotiation. That's fine, as long as we are assured that, if these people are not susceptible to negotiation, they will be prosecuted. If we cannot at least get that assurance, what's the use of putting up the penalty to $10,000? If we cannot get that assurance, there ought to be a section allowing you and me, as individuals, to sue polluters in industry.

I know time is running out, but I do want to say one other thing about public knowledge because public knowledge is what good government is all about.

Section 45 of the Act talks about "unjustified disclosure of information". Too often industry can hide behind that section, saying, "It is a trade secret how we make this chemical compound or what chemical compounds we put into our goods. We don't want to let this out; that would be unjustified disclosure of information." Too often industry can avail itself of that loophole to avoid exposure as to the manner and the amount by which it is polluting our system.

I return to the proposition that I referred to the other night: clean air is a right just as clear water is a right. A knowledge of the methods of pollution and how to combat pollution is an equal right. The public should know what type of pollution is going on and to what extent it is going on, and we should have a greater knowledge through education of how to combat this type of pollution.

I come finally to the concept of progress. It if is progress we want, let us make sure that we understand what we mean by "progress". Standing knee deep in foam and standing nostril high in smog is not progress even though it may mean a greater boost to the economy in the short term. Progress is not what the Government sometimes seems to think. It is certainly not what industry obviously believes. Progress must be concerned with the conservation of nature as well as the reasonable development of the economy.

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (3.31 p.m.): I shall speak briefly in support of the amendments to the Act. I listened with great interest to some of the preceding speeches, particularly that made by the honourable member for South Brisbane. While the increase in fees and penalties provided for in the amendment will serve to sharpen the teeth of the Act, the whole question of control of air pollution lies in the hands of the community—in the hands of every citizen in the community.

At this moment, if any honourable member would care to step out of the Chamber into the Parliamentary Library he would find the most noxious fumes floating up from the parliamentary garden where our good gardener is busy spraying with a hydrocarbon mixture. Fortunately for us it is not coming through the air-conditioning system; we must have a very good filter in our air-conditioning plant. In the library the smell is very intense, yet it comes from what is probably a very mild dose of what is being applied. Although the garden is fairly big compared with a small residential allotment, the gardener is using a small piece of equipment with a low output.

Let us realise that all of us, in some way, are contributors to the problem, not only by spraying DDT for lawn grubs but also in more insidious ways that perhaps we do not fully recognise. For instance, many conservation-minded people who are preaching in the community today and wanting to be on different councils and control bodies, smoke, drive a car that is insufficiently maintained and so emits enormous amounts of noxious fumes and burn rubbish in their incinerators without thought of the products emitted into the atmosphere. Not only do they burn ordinary household refuse but, in many instances, they burn items made of polyvinyl chloride, which are a particularly dangerous source of emission. These people will preach readily but cannot see their own role in contributing to the problem. And it is a very real role! They may be shareholders in a company which is a major contributor to air pollution. If they are not direct shareholders, they are probably members of a superannuation or pension fund which owns large blocks of shares in such companies. Yet those people preach in a holier-than-thou fashion saying that this is a terrible thing and the Government must do something about it.

Governments in many countries throughout the world and in many States of this nation are striving to do something about this problem. The Queensland Government has had an Act in force for some years. There is no question that the progress that will be achieved will, in the final analysis, depend on individuals, their consciousness of their own contribution to the problem and, more particularly, on the consciousness of the cost involved in controlling all forms of pollution; in fact, the cost that is involved in all forms of conservation of natural resources is a great cost.

The community should realise that it is not enough to call on the Federal Government, the State Government or local government to perform but, instead, realise that every additional measure, criterion or decimal point adds to the cost to the community and thereby to the individual; somebody has to pay for it. So it is vital that we bring these facts home to the people and do not simply put the blame and the onus on our administrators.

We should allow the fair share of blame, responsibility and accountability in this whole question to rest on the community at large. I will not pander to my electorate in this matter and I trust that all other honourable members will not pander to the general electorate in this matter, because every person in this State has a commitment to this problem in one way or another.

The problem of air pollution covers a very wide range of issues. The very obvious and emotionally charged issue is that of industrial pollution. The larger the industry the more flak it will attract. That is only natural because the larger the industry, the more obvious and evident is the air pollution that it creates.

I hasten to point out that all of us quite readily share the largess of productivity, output and growth that large-scale industry provides. All of us want to vote for appropriations of money into areas of welfare and to assist the needy. There must be a source of such wealth and national product for us to make those appropriations.

So I believe that we must recognise that it is a gradual programme; it is a sort of programme that must be done incrementally. There is no magic wand that can be waved which in one instant will enable the Minister to say, "I have solved the problem. Today it is here; tomorrow it is not." For instance, for some of our large-scale chemical plants to effect an immediate major reduction in their air pollution would probably put them right out of business.

Clearly something must be done if, as a community, we are prepared to accept that and say, "Let the G.N.P. drop. We will put up with it. We will put up with lower standards of living in terms of the obvious things that we have become accustomed to. We don't care if several thousand jobs disappear and if a whole host of contributions to technical progress disappear." I do not believe that the community at large wants to pay as high a price as that. The community expects us to move in increments.

I expect that the community understands and should understand that, whilst every individual is contributing to this problem and living within its framework, and whilst industrial concerns cannot afford to make one large lump investment to overcome it, we all have to be sufficiently patient to see a gradual programme brought into effect.

I am confident that in the long term—in fact, in the medium term—a very significant reduction of air pollution will be effected under our legislation in Queensland. It will, however, not be the result of legislation only, because education and knowledge of this problem are definitely on the increase. There is no question that children now in their teens are very much better equipped to understand this problem than we were at a comparable stage of our lives. Their children will be even better equipped. I predict that certainly within a decade there will be a massive reduction of air pollution.

But it has to be an economic proposition for the community. People have to realise that the costs created by a large-scale attack on this problem must finally come back to roost on every person's table in one way or another. The cost may be cuts in welfare, pay or some other factor in the standard of living. We will have to pay for it; it cannot come out of thin air.

There is one other area that I should like to mention briefly. I believe that at the moment industrial pollution is exceeded by individual pollution. The emission from motor-cars and motor-cycles is a massive problem and there is no question that something has to be done about it very quickly. This is an area in which I believe that rapid action can be taken. We need to conserve energy and we certainly need to stop the very obvious signs of pollution seen throughout the community such as trucks, obviously with poorly maintained engines, pouring out smoke all along the roads. We see motor-cycles roaring along expressways spewing fumes in all directions.

Mr. Moore: Motor-mowers.

Mr. DOUMANY: We see motor-mowers, too, as the honourable member for Windsor adds.

All these things can, I believe, be corrected quickly with fairly simple technology. Certainly this should not be allowed to continue undiminished.

Mr. Lamont: The worst vehicles are those attached to commerce and industry.

Mr. DOUMANY: That may be so if each vehicle is taken separately, but in the aggregate private vehicles are enormous contributors to pollution.

Household incinerators, too, present a very great problem. I urge industry that is innovative to work hard on the development of a household incinerator that has some form of filtration or improvement of the level of combustion. I believe that can be done, but it calls for innovation and enterprise. The one who is able to develop such an incinerator will receive a very large reward for his enterprise.

Those who smoke cigarettes are also individual contributors to pollution. The smoke from cigarettes in a confined area is just as bad for the non-smoker as is the inhaled smoke for the smoker. If that is not air pollution, I do not know what it is.

I now come to aerosol sprays. We all use them, so in this respect we are all guilty. Aerosol sprays based on some chemicals and reagents are definitely affecting the ozone layer of the atmosphere. That is well known. There are alternative reagents that can be used in aerosol spray packs, reagents that are safe. Some months ago I asked the Minister for Health a question on this matter. I hope that the manufacturers of aerosol packs are forced to use safe reagents as soon as possible.

Finally, I would just like to add a few words about nature. All honourable members know that green vegetation produces oxygen after it converts carbon dioxide through the photosynthetic process. There is no better contributor to clean air than trees, grass and vegetation in parks and gardens and on our roadways. If we really want to make an impact on air pollution in our urban areas, I believe that, as one of the key measures, we must encourage the planting of trees, the cultivation of gardens, the growing of good lawns and the proper development of public parks and recreation areas. I hope that in our long-term approach to air pollution control we do not ignore the capabilities of nature.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (3.46 p.m.): As the honourable member for Kurilpa said, air pollution control is a community responsibility, but it also affects human and civil rights. Air pollution, like noise pollution, is somewhat different from water pollution. Water pollution is not a specific infringement upon the individual rights of a person in his own home. That is why I did not speak in the debate on the Clean Waters Act Amendment Bill. It does not necessarily affect the comfort of a person, but noise and air pollution infringe upon the right of a person to a comfortable living, and therefore these developments, which have evolved in modern society, are things which we must try to remedy.

It is true that man has the capacity to physically alter his threshold. In fact, the man working in the sewers of Paris gets to the stage, after working there for a while, where the smell makes no difference to him. Because he has raised his threshold, he is no longer able to experience the objectionableness of that odour. In modern society we also raise our threshold. To give an instance, we might be in the country for two or three days and then return to the city. As we come through Ipswich and down past Darra, or come in through the northern suburbs of Brisbane, we notice the difference. We can tell the difference because our physical capacities have started to alter back to the cleaner air, and when we enter the city we notice the difference. But if one is here all the time one does not notice it, and just because one does not notice it—just because one's threshold is raised—is no reason for one to conclude that it is not having a bad effect upon one's health. Indeed, it is having a bad effect on the health of the entire community.

It is a community responsibility, and one of the major areas of community responsibility rests with the motor vehicle. Before I go on to that point, I want to refer to two specific matters. One is the Darra Cement works. If people drive up Ipswich Road at 1, 2, 3 or 4 in the morning—as I have on many occasions in the past few years—they will find that there appears to be an enormous smoke pall covering the roadway and the surrounding countryside. Most people are in bed and do not notice it.

Mr. Marginson: They let it all go then.

Mr. BYRNE: I can only conclude, as the honourable member for Wolston concludes, that that is when it is all let out. Perhaps it is done then because it is disseminated through the atmosphere and by morning cannot be seen, but if that is the idea it does not work. Although one cannot see it, one can still smell it in those areas in the morning. Perhaps the breeze wafts it right across the Brisbane area and it is caught at the foot of Mt. Coot-tha and then builds up over the city of Brisbane. That specific smell is not noticed once it spreads, but it is there in the atmosphere and people are breathing it in with all the other pollutants.

Another specific problem that needs attention is that associated with sewerage treatment works. Many sewerage treatment plants —I mention specifically the one in Wecker Road, Mansfield—work beyond their capacity. On one occasion at Wecker Road the dry sewerage was being burnt on the grass by the Brisbane City Council because the plant was working beyond its capacity. That caused enormous irritation to the people whose houses bordered that plant.

It is mainly at night and in the late afternoon in the summer that people experience these obnoxious odours. As the Leader of the Opposition said (and I agreed with almost everything he said in his speech in this debate on Tuesday night), no concern is expressed in many areas for the people who have to suffer these odours—the people who live along Bulimba Creek or who live near sewerage treatment plants. If the council believes that sewerage treatment plants are

going to create difficulties, it should not allow the land around them to be zoned for Residential A purposes. People should not buy the land when the odour is not there and be told, "No odour from there is going to worry you." In good faith, they buy the land next to the sewerage treatment plant and the council gives approval for houses to be built there. After a house has been built and people stay there for a few days, particularly in the summer, they discover the obnoxious odours and smells that come from the plant. The council falls down on its responsibility by not refusing to allow such areas to be zoned Residential A.

I have mentioned two main areas of infringement on the rights of others. A third area is where there are back-yard fires. Why should people have to put up with their neighbours having incinerators right on their fence line, burning at all times of the day and night all sorts of noxious materials—paint rags, oily rags, plastics, and so on—that can only have a deleterious effect on the surrounding environment and cause discomfort. These are things that need to be taken into consideration but are not.

However, I wish to direct my attention specifically to motor vehicles and point out the rather unfortunate fact that in the Act very little attention is paid to that area. Indeed, a definition of "vehicle" is incorporated and it covers things such as motor vehicles, omnibuses, coaches, bicycles and the like. But what more does the Act say about it? Section 13 (b) says that one of the functions of the council shall be—

> "to make recommendations to the Minister as to abating the pollution of the air by power stations and by railway locomotives, ships, aircraft and vehicles propelled by the combustion of fuel."

In addition to that reference and the reference in the definitions, there is an implied reference in section 50 (1) (viii), which says—

> "prescribing standards of concentration or rates of emission of air impurities and prohibiting the emission from prescribed fuel burning equipment and industrial plant of all or prescribed air impurities; the points at which such standards of concentration or rates of emission are to be determined; the method of making tests for the purposes of ascertaining whether any of the provisions of this Act or any conditions attached to a license or to an exemption are being or have been complied with; and providing that any such test shall only be made in accordance with the prescribed method;".

Further to that, the amendments numbered (ix) and (x) in the amending Act of 1970 are a little more specific. Apart from that there is virtually nothing in the Act dealing with the problem arising from the use of vehicles in the community.

If honourable members walk from one end of George Street to the other and back again, no matter how high their threshold is, they surely cannot help noticing how pungent the odour of motor-vehicle exhaust is in George Street at almost any hour of the day. Trucks and buses contribute greatly to that odour. Although many of them run on diesel fuel and, therefore, do not produce the more noxious gases, they still add appreciably to the odour by trundling along the major arterial roads such as Queen Street and Ann Street, especially during peak hours. This necessarily increases pollution in areas in which people do their day's work. It must have an effect on the health of the people who are inhaling this polluted air.

When I was in Port Hedland in Western Australia recently, I came to the conclusion that people went to Port Hedland not to live but to work. If the situation there is allowed to prevail in a country or a city because of lack of action against air pollution, then, indeed, we are not taking into account the fact that noise and air pollution infringe the rights of a man to live in his own comfortable manner in his own home.

We have laws of trespass against those who trespass on a man's land. Although these are things that have not been serious in the past, smells, odours and noise do trespass. They trespass upon the private environment of a man in his own home. Indeed there must be specific laws of trespass to limit the possibility of pollution. Such laws should be just as strictly adhered to as are the ordinary laws of trespass, because with air pollution there is a trespassing upon the private comfort of the ordinary individual.

Because of pollution, a person at one end of the main street in Tokyo cannot see the other end. I noticed that myself when I was there recently.

Mr. Hinze: You can't see your hand in front of you.

Mr. BYRNE: That may be because of other reasons. Maybe it is night-time. The Minister's statement is still a very relevant one. A person can barely see his hand in front of him. In places one cannot see the other side of the road clearly. The situation is very different in Kyoto because there they have different laws, rules and regulations. Osaka is even worse. The problems there are caused by industrial and commercial pollution. As to the smells in Tokyo, let me say that my threshold in Brisbane had not been raised to the level where I was able to accept the pungent odours of the fumes and pollution in Tokyo. I found it difficult to walk along the streets of Tokyo or to wait in the long traffic jams without putting a handkerchief to my nose. I was all the time trying to find some fresh air to breathe. It is important that we look at those considerations. To back that up I refer to the 1974-75 report of the Air Pollution Council. Under the heading of "Photochemical Oxidants", the report states—

> "Very limited results from one site have confirmed what was strongly suspected for

some time, namely that photochemical oxidants are now present in significant quantities in Brisbane. These pollutants are not emitted directly into the atmosphere as most pollutants are, but are the result of the chemical combination of reactive hydrocarbons with nitrogen oxides in the sunlight, producing ozone, peroxyacyl nitrates, aldehydes and other complex chemical compounds.

"It is recognised that the chief source of the precursor is the motor vehicle, with industrial sources, such as oil refineries, contributing to a lesser extent. It is not possible, short of a major pollution inventory in the Brisbane area, to determine the relative extent of mobile and stationary sources, but, on the basis of such data elsewhere, it is likely that motor vehicle emissions will account for something like 70 per cent of the total."

That establishes quite clearly the necessity for the Air Pollution Council to have this as one of its specific directives—as one of the areas it must investigate and one of the areas of greatest priority. Later the same section of the report states—

"A disturbing feature is that the levels recorded have exceeded the World Health Organization recommended long term goals for oxidants on a number of occasions."

As the report says that we are exceeding the goals set down by the World Health Organization, this is one specific area where we must be falling down to a very great extent. The honourable member for South Brisbane stated that in other places the levels are below those recommendations, although they are moving up towards them. The fact that we are beyond the recommended levels must establish a very high priority. The fitting of catalytic convertors to further reduce emissions creates other problems, but these problems must surely be taken into account in relation to the rights of the individual to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

To recapitulate on the major points that I raised—the first deals with the capacity of the Darra cement works to let out enormous billows of fumes early in the morning when people do not notice, although they still spread through the community; the second deals with the emission of fumes from sewage treatment plants and the difficulty of controlling them in closely settled residential areas; the third is the community responsibility as we ignore the slowly increasing pollution and allow our thresholds to rise. But whilst our thresholds rise we are not in any healthier community.

The situation is one where the Air Pollution Council and this Government must in legislation accept a very great responsibility in relation to motor vehicles and the fumes they emit. Until we do this and until it is seen publicly that we are improving in the area of emissions from motor vehicles and taking such problems by the hand and trying to solve them, the public can rightly conclude, the public can rightly see and the public can rightly say that this Government is not endeavouring to achieve advances in the abolition of the problem of pollution.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (4.1 p.m.), in reply: A couple of minutes ago someone said that perhaps we should have called this the "hot air" Bill! Probably such a title would have been more appropriate. However, I think all members appreciate the fact that this and the preceding Bill have been well and truly debated by responsible members from both sides of the Chamber—indicating, of course, the great interest in pollution problems confronting the State.

I wish to take a few minutes to reply to some of the statements made by some members. I thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate. They bear out that the Government is on the right track with its air pollution control policies. This debate has shown clearly that Opposition and Government policies and approaches to air pollution control are parallel in many respects. We are essentially on the same wave length.

Several of the measures suggested or supported by Opposition speakers, such as the policing of discharges, action over exhaust emissions from trucks and cars and a firmer line against blatant or stubborn polluters, already are part of Government policy. They are already being undertaken. There is no instant cure or magic solution to pollution. It can't be solved overnight. But definite strides are being made in pollution control.

It's simply not true, as some of our political grandstanding critics would have the public believe, that the Government and industry have done nothing about minimising and solving pollution problems. This Bill expressly makes provision for fines up to $10,000 for serious initial offences, and $20,000 for subsequent offences, and it reflects the attitude of the Government to the air pollution problem and its clear desire to get its teeth into it.

Through provisions in the Clean Air Act and Clean Waters Act industry in several areas has spent and is spending heavily on pollution controls.

This morning I received the following letter from a company in the Tingalpa-Hemmant area—

"In the last two years we have seen our expense in running them rise from $600 per month to $1,800 just for natural gas alone. Our initial expense was in the vicinity of $3,000 per burner. May we point out that taking an average of $1,200 per month over two years for gas, an initial outlay of $9,000 for three burners, we have spent almost $40,000 on air pollution control."

That is the point I wanted to get across earlier—that we are working in co-operation with industry. This is the type of thing we find the industrialists are prepared to do.

Mount Isa Mines, the sugar industry in Bundaberg, Maryborough and Nambour, the mining companies at Gladstone and Townsville and several major Brisbane industries have spent large sums of money in recent times on pollution control measures. This has been largely at the initiative of the Government and in co-operation with the Air Pollution Control Division of the Local Government Department.

We acknowledge that there are still some very obvious problems, such as those in the electorate represented by the Leader of the Opposition. He has referred to one or two. It is significant that in the debate on this Bill he has adopted an approach to the air pollution problem very close to the policy pursued by the Air Pollution Control Division.

The Opposition Leader made the point that industry and residential areas are too close together under proposals of the new Brisbane Town Plan and this could lead to pollution problems in the future. It has always been my contention, as the Opposition Leader would acknowledge, that this sort of haphazard planning in the past has either directly caused or aggravated many of the pollution problems we find today in parts of Brisbane. I refer especially to areas such as Hemmant, Murarrie and Tingalpa, and the area represented by the honourable member for Bulimba. This will be one of the several aspects of the proposed Brisbane Town Plan which the city council will be asked to pay particular attention to in its review of the town plan when the plan is referred back to the council. The council's final views on this, and submissions from other groups as well, will be taken closely into account in the department's reconsideration of the plan before final decisions on it are made.

In respect of controls over exhaust emissions from heavy trucks, cars and other vehicles, I advise the Leader of the Opposition that I am having discussions with my colleague the Minister for Transport on more direct control through the Clean Air Act. The Opposition Leader made the point that it is time to prosecute industries which continue to pollute. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the Government will press for fines up to the new maximum limits for detected breaches which are serious enough to warrant that. We are not pussyfooting about any longer on this issue. We mean business. At the same time, we are not hell-bent on confrontation with industries if pollution controls can be achieved through negotiation and co-operation such as happened with the industry that I have just refered to the Chamber. It is significant, I think, that we have been able to achieve this to a large extent up to now. We do not have to show a string of prosecutions to prove that the controls are working. The lack of prosecutions could be regarded as proof itself. As for blatant and persistent offenders, however, if we cannot achieve their co-operation by negotiation and direction they will have to face the music through the courts.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North raised the matter of the problem created by diesel and petrol fumes. I have already indicated that I agree that action is necessary in this direction. I have already written to the Minister for Transport seeking discussions on any necessary legislative action that should be taken.

The amendments proposed by this Bill deal with maximum licence fees and increased penalties. A review of the technical provisions of the Principal Act is being caried out at present to bring them up to date and deal with other aspects of air pollution that are not dealt with in the present Act. When the review is completed I will be making recommendations to Cabinet on any amendments considered necessary.

Several speakers in this debate have raised the question of air pollution created by back-yard incinerators. The Clean Air Act was designed essentially to deal with industrial and commercial air pollution, not domestic back-yard burning. It is considered that local authorities have power to make by-laws controlling domestic, back-yard incineration so that nuisances do not occur and, in fact, a number of local authorities have made such by-laws. The matter is considered to be principally a local one, with local authorities in the best position to deal with it. They have staff on the spot who can make inspections quickly. It is considered that this is a better method of approach than attempting to use the resources of the Air Pollution Division of the department to deal with the situation.

The honourable member for Townsville West referred to approvals required under the Clean Air Act for the installation of modifications to plant that are likely to cause air pollution. This matter also is subject to the town-planning powers of local authorities under the Local Government Act. Under these powers the establishment of industries is subject to requirements of town plans. Under the Local Government Act a local authority has the power to require a developer to supply an environmental impact study in relation to a particular development such as the one that we know has been requested in the Townsville area at this particular time. If this study deals with air pollution or water pollution, I am prepared to permit the Director of Air Pollution Control and the Director of Water Quality to give professional advice to local authorities to enable them to evaluate these environmental impact studies. I must point out, however, that the decision on a town-planning application must be made by the local authority.

It will be appreciated that, as well as air and water pollution considerations, matters such as traffic generation, proximity to residential development, etc., must be considered.

When a local authority gives approval under its town plan for the establishment of an industry that proposes to instal fuel-burning equipment, the approval of the Air Pollution Council has to be obtained before the equipment can be installed. Application for such approval has to be made after the local authority is granted town-planning approval.

Honourable members will appreciate that it would be premature for the Air Pollution Council to have to consider such an application before local authority approval is given. For example, a local authority may refuse the application for the establishment of the industry on many grounds other than air and water pollution. There is no need to amend the Act. As I said before, I am prepared to let the Director of Water Quality and the Director of Air Pollution Control advise local authorities on a professional basis to help them to deal with the town-planning applications that involve air and water pollution problems.

The honourable member for Stafford hit the nail on the head with respect to housing development being allowed adjacent to noxious industries. My department and local authorities are taking steps to see that these situations are not allowed to recur in the future.

The honourable member for South Brisbane referred to certain statements in the last annual report of the Air Pollution Council that the monthly mean concentrations of daily smoke in the Brisbane area was around 12 micrograms per cubic metre, and this was much the same as the reading for the previous year. The member referred to the long-term goals of the World Health Organisation. The relative annual mean for suspended particulate matter is 40 micrograms per cubic metre. These long-term goals have been referred to as suggested "no effect" levels. If 40 micrograms cause no effect, how much better off are we in Brisbane with a reading of only 12 micrograms per cubic metre!

The honourable member for South Brisbane also complained about chimney stacks. Dispersion from chimney stacks relies on atmospheric diffusion phenomena to dilute the contaminant to the extent that ground level concentrations——

Mr. MELLOY: Mr. Hewitt, I draw your attention to the state of the Committee.

(Quorum formed.)

Mr. HINZE: As I look around the Chamber I could count the honourable members who represent the Opposition in this Parliament. Most of the day there have been two of them and on some occasions three. But they are coming out of their little funk-holes now. Six of them have come back into the Chamber. They will soon have their full complement. However, as I continue with my reply to the debate let me say that they have not taken sufficient interest in the debate——

Mr. WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to what the Minister has said. I have been attending a National Fitness State Council meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister named no specific members of the Opposition. I cannot sustain the honourable member's point of order.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! A quorum was called for, the bells were rung and a quorum has now been formed. The Minister will now direct his comments to the Bill under discussion.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is within my power to soon reduce the number present and I shall exercise that right if I have to.

Mr. HINZE: I conclude by saying that the reason for using dispersion in modern plant is usually economic, namely, because technology has not advanced to the stage that the pollutant in the volume emitted can be controlled economically. The tall chimney stacks on modern power stations are an example of this.

I wish to thank my officers including the Director of Air Pollution Control (Dr. Graham Cleary) for attending while this debate has been going on and also my own director (Harold Jacobs) for assisting me to prepare my reply to the many points made by interested members on air pollution control and the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (4.16 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1896–1971 in a certain particular."

The purpose of this Bill is simply to include the position of Government Deputy Whip in the list of those parliamentary offices whose occupants receive an additional salary for their services, as set out in section 3 of the principal Act. As honourable members know, the positions presently recognised in

this regard are those of Speaker, Chairman of Committees, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Leader of another party with not fewer than 10 members, the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip.

Since December 1974, when the people of Queensland gave the coalition parties such an overwhelming political mandate, my Government has worked hard and assiduously for the advancement and prosperity of all Queenslanders. In the parliamentary sphere this has meant that some 69 members of this Assembly have many and varied responsibilities and that the very size of the Government parties in the Parliament has imposed a burden on the Government Whip not envisaged in previous Parliaments. The extent of the annihilation of the Labor Party was unheard of.

To assist the Whip in the discharge of his duties, the Government parties have elected the honourable member for Windsor, Mr. R. E. Moore, as Government Deputy Whip. Of course, there would be nothing to stop the Government side of the House or the Opposition side electing as many Whips as they desired, but in the Queensland scheme of things the question of any financial acknowledgement of the duties they might undertake is a matter for legislation and obviously the Parliament could only recognise in that manner the Whip or Whips whose duties and responsibilities qualified them for any such emolument.

I do not think honourable members opposite will argue with the proposal. With a Whip to look after only nine other members, I am sure they would regard the responsibilities of that office as being very considerably less than those of the Government Whip who looks after more than seven times that number of members on this side of the House. The Opposition Whip receives exactly the same additional salary as the Government Whip—presently $1,160 per annum.

It is certainly not out of place for a Government Deputy Whip, whose duty it will be to assist a Whip responsible for nearly 70 Government members in a Parliament of 82, to receive an additional salary of $750 per annum for his services in that capacity. I would say the honourable member is worth much more. This will be less than three-quarters of the additional salary paid to the Whip of what is presently a ten-member Opposition.

Mr. Houston: Where is he? He's not here.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In his temporary absence, I congratulate the honourable member for Windsor on his appointment. I know he will carry out his duties efficiently and conscientiously. I am sure there will be no objection to his receiving some small pecuniary recognition of his services and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Before calling on the honourable member for Bulimba I point out to the Committee the use of the words "in a certain particular", a singular expression. While I am prepared to allow a wide debate on that provision, nevertheless I will not allow a debate upon the broader provisions of the Act.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.21 p.m.): Just to keep the position in perspective, I have no intention of getting away from the words, "in a certain particular", although you readily agreed, Mr. Hewitt, that if I wanted to do so the Opposition has the right to speak on other provisions. Anyway, I do not intend to do that at this time.

An Honourable Member: You wouldn't do that.

Mr. HOUSTON: No, I would not do that. The Premier said that this Bill was to amend the Constitution Act. As one of my colleagues rightly said, it looks like a Bill to give "more for Moore". After all, we have no fight with the honourable member for Windsor being appointed to that position.

An Opposition Member: More for Bob.

Mr. HOUSTON: More for Bob, if you like. I think that the Premier has come up with the idea that, because there happen to be 69 Government members and unfortunately, now only 10 in the Opposition—that is excluding the two Independent members—there is a lot more work for the Government Whip. Of course, in a Government with 69 members where there are renegades who will not stick to the normal party rules and want to speak when the Leader of the House requests that they do not—although I understand that as a Parliament we have to operate efficiently—then perhaps the Government does need two whips to be cracked to make sure someone does the job. But as far as work is concerned, let me put the Premier right about the Opposition. Although there are only 10 of us we still accept our obligations as Her Majesty's Opposition very conscientiously, and I believe that since this Government was elected in 1974 we have played a significant part in debates. In fact, every day we find that members of the Opposition do not get a chance to ask questions——

Honourable Members: Rubbish!

Mr. HOUSTON: Wait a minute. The position is that the Standing Orders state that question time shall be one hour. I am not in any way challenging Mr. Speaker on the way he gives the call to members to ask questions. It is true that in this Parliament the Opposition has always had more people available to ask questions than time will allow, but——

Mr. Lowes: If your members would not get up here and make speeches in question time, you would be right.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am talking to men, not to boys who are only here for a short time. Bearing that in mind—therefore our whip has the job of seeing that every member of our party gets his due, and I maintain that our Whip, rather than having a lesser job than the Government Whip, has a far harder job. I can recall the Opposition numbering from the present 10 up to, I think, 33 on one occasion.

Mr. Young: It will be a long time before you have that many again.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is only a boy. He is only here because of the vagaries of public opinion, not through any great ability of his own. Again, his stay here will no doubt be a very short one.

It is necessary for the Opposition to study the various Bills that come before honourable members so that it may play its part in the debates. The Opposition Whip has the responsibility of making sure that the Bills are studied and that preparation is carried out before the introductory debate takes place in this Chamber. I am sure you will agree, Mr. Hewitt, that the Opposition has played its part in debates in this Assembly. So I cannot accept that the Opposition Whip does less work because there are now only 10 members of the Opposition instead of the 33 members in the last Parliament.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Premier indicated that he now did less work, and I refute that statement.

Let me turn now to the Government. The National Party has 10 of the 18 Ministers, which leaves 29 back-bench members of that party, and the number is reduced further if one takes out temporary chairmen, and so on. Excluding Ministers, the Liberal Party has 22 members, and 21 without the Chairman of Committees. I cannot imagine any Whip telling a Minister when he will or will not speak. Since this Parliament began in December 1974, there has also been a Minister responsible for the business of the House. Surely that should have improved the smooth running of this Assembly and facilitated the passage of legislation. So as I see it—and I am sure that other members of the Opposition agree with me—this Parliament does not need another paid official.

I think that the honourable member for Windsor is a personal friend of members of all parties, and I regret that the Premier saw fit to say to the Committee, "The man who has the job is Mr. Moore, the honourable member for Windsor." I would have much preferred to debate the issue on the basis of whether or not Parliament needs a Government Deputy Whip, a paid officer of Parliament.

I remind honourable members that once it goes into the Statute Book, it is there for all time, because no-one can convince me that it will be eliminated if there is a change of Government or a reduction in Government numbers. It will stay there.

Dr. Crawford: It is permanent.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it is, and that is the point I am making. I assure the honourable member for Windsor that I am not attacking him personally. As a matter of fact, if he were elected to the position of Whip or Cabinet Minister I would be the first to congratulate him on his appointment. However, I believe that the provision being made in the Bill is completely wrong.

The Federal Prime Minister (Mr. Fraser) is talking about restraint and saving money; yet since 1974 the Government of Queensland has increased payments to people within Parliament. It was not satisfied with the number of Cabinet Ministers it had. It increased the number to 18—10 National Party Ministers and 8 Liberal Party Ministers. I said then—I say it again now—that it looks as if the Government is setting out to get not jobs for the boys but money for the boys. If additional money is paid to members of Parliament, it comes out of the public purse.

Mr. Porter: It will go back into the public purse, too, won't it?

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not think that the honourable member for Windsor or anyone else will hand it back if he gets it. He will keep it.

Mr. Knox: How much of it will go back to the Government in tax?

Mr. HOUSTON: Some of it will go back in tax.

Mr. Knox: How much? You can work it out.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Premier is making the case on behalf of the Government. He did not tell the Committee that some of it would be going back. Of course some of it will be going back. The honourable member for Windsor might become a father overnight. If he did, his tax would decrease. Let us not argue the toss about taxation. I have stated the position clearly.

Mr. Knox: It's not the allowance you got when you were Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. HOUSTON: When I was Leader of the Opposition I worked hard for the allowance I received. I accepted the allowance. I know the present Leader of the Opposition works very hard, and he is entitled to the money he is getting. We are questioning the need for a Deputy Whip. There is only one reason why the Government has come up with the idea of a Deputy Whip. It is a coalition Government and it desires to get another paid position for the Liberal section of that coalition.

Mr. Goleby: Rubbish!

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the truth. Why wasn't it done when Cabinet was enlarged? It was not done then but it is being done now because of the internal dissension between the Liberal and National Parties about various positions.

Mr. Young: You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, I do. No other reason has been given for the allowance. We do not accept that the extra paid position is necessary. I am sure that the job of the Government Whip is very similar to that of the Opposition Whip. The Government Whip would consider the coalition as a united Government party. The Government is saying that the Government Whip is not capable of doing the job on his own because he has 51 back-bench members to look after.

The name of the honourable member for Windsor has been mentioned. If he wants to do the job in this place when the Government Whip is away, I have no objection to his receiving the remuneration attaching to that office, but I cannot see any reason at all why we should permanently include in the Statute Book provision for a Government Deputy Whip. What will happen after the next election when the Labor Party comes back with a majority of seats? We will have a Whip and a Deputy Whip. If the numbers are fairly close, as they could be, there will be more back-benchers on the Opposition side than on the Government side, taking into account the ministry. Will it then be suggested that the Opposition Whip should have a paid deputy? If that is the principle the Government is trying to establish, let us know where it is going. But that is not what it is after at all. According to the Premier, this move is being made because of the numbers on the Government side. The only reason the Government has those numbers is the political situation at the time of the election, plus the great gerrymander that allowed the National Party to get so many seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for that party.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (4.34 p.m.): It is a great shame that when a matter relating to the ancient and honourable role of Whip in the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy is raised, we find the speaker leading for the Opposition taking a miserable, squalid, pettifogging attitude towards it. He talks about it in terms of the expenditure of $750. I could take the honourable member to operations around Brisbane being conducted by such agencies as A.A.P. where hundreds of thousands of dollars are being wasted on projects set up by the defeated Federal Government of his colour, but we hear nothing from honourable members on that side about the enormous waste of public money on schemes which are totally party political. But when this matter is raised in an attempt to put this Parliament on the same basis as most other Parliaments in Australia, what does he do? He adopts the miserable attitude, "How dare we spend $750!" As he well knows, the Deputy Whip will not retain the great bulk of that sum, anyhow. Perhaps he would retain a little more if we could alter that pernicious system of taxation that Mr. Hayden introduced when he was Federal Treasurer.

The role of the Whip in our style of Parliament is a very old, very honoured and very important one. The Whip has an onerous role to play in our type of Parliament. He has to organise numbers; he has to arrange the order of speakers; he has to make sure that debate is sustained; he has to act in the place of the chief Whip when he is not present, and of course he has the task of facilitating and arranging pairs. In this Parliament, perhaps, we should talk about arranging triples or even quadruples or something like that. The Whip is the party's watchdog in Parliament and his role in organising and facilitating the business of the House is a vital one. The fact that there is a Leader of the House in no way diminishes the role that a Whip has to play. Indeed it only makes more important the dovetailing of the two roles.

The honourable member for Bulimba has suggested that the need for the additional role of Deputy Whip arose from the fact that we are a coalition and that members on this side of the Chamber are rebellious and so on. He will never in his lifetime understand how we on this side of politics work, and because he will never understand it he will languish for ever as one of a band of 11 sorry survivors. In the Federal scene his side of politics is outnumbered by more than two to one, nearly three to one.

That there is a need for the creation of this position and an amendment to the Constitution Act is clear. In the previous Parliament there were 47 Government members and the rest numbered 35, if I remember rightly.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Thirty-three.

Mr. PORTER: There were 35 in the rest—33 in the A.L.P. In this Parliament there are 69 Government members and 13 in the remainder of the Parliament. So I would say that that obviously means the Whip has a far more demanding role than previously. Unless someone is politically biased—I would hate to suggest that honourable gentlemen opposite are politically biased—he could not deny that there is room in this Parliament, on this side of the Chamber, for more assistance to the Whip and indeed for the creation of this role of Deputy Whip.

Mr. Frawley: They could do without a Whip on their side, anyway.

Mr. PORTER: Indeed they could. The honourable member for Bulimba suggested that there was no extra work here and that the Opposition consisted of 11 members, all of whom did a lot of work. I presume he is suggesting that we should count each member

of the Opposition three or four times. As a matter of fact we could count each of them six times and they still would not have a majority in the Parliament.

The honourable member for Bulimba made a squalid little political piece out of trying to attack this proposal. What we are doing here is totally in line with what is being done in other Parliaments of Australia and it will enable this side of the Assembly, the Government, with its massive numbers—provided by the electorate, incidentally, so don't let anybody talk about gerrymanders; it was purely the number of voters, most of whom were people who previously voted for the Labor Party—to carry out its work more efficiently. With such great numbers there is need for an assistant to the Whip.

In mentioning the honourable member for Windsor, the Premier has paid the Parliament a compliment. The honourable member for Windsor has been acting as an assistant Whip and now he is officially recognised in the right way. He will continue to do an excellent job. He is a man of energy, of probity and of great dedication to his task and a silent worker. We never hear much from him! He goes about his task, and I am confident that he will continue to fill the role in the manner in which he has commenced to play it. I commend the amendment.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (4.40 p.m.): I congratulate the honourable member for Windsor on becoming Government Deputy Whip, because that is the position to which he will be appointed when this measure is passed. However, I point out that I do not agree with the Bill in any way. Like the honourable member for Bulimba I believe that this position has been created because Queensland has a coalition Government.

Mr. Frawley: Rubbish!

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member may say "Rubbish", but the Government needs a Deputy Whip like the honourable member for Windsor because the present Whip cannot do his job. He can never hold a quorum in the Chamber. Every day of the week—anytime we are discussing anything—the Opposition has a greater proportion of its members present than either of the Government parties.

Mr. Wright: Where is the Whip now?

Mr. JENSEN: I don't know where he is.

While the honourable member for Landsborough has been Whip we could have called a quorum many times. We could have done so half a dozen times today if we had wanted to. But we do not do that sort of thing other than on rare occasions when a Minister is making an important speech in reply to Government members who have contributed to a debate. The Minister was replying to Government members who did not have the courtesy to sit in the Chamber and listen to him. On this occasion there was not a quorum to listen to the Minister. That was a disgrace. I note that the honourable member for Windsor had the Liberal members in, but the National Party was lacking in numbers.

Mr. Wright: Half of them have gone home.

Mr. JENSEN: I know that, but I do not mind; I do it sometimes myself.

This position was created because the Liberal Party has about the same number of back-benchers as the National Party, and the honourable member for Landsborough could not control the Liberal members; he could not get them into the Chamber. That is why the Premier had to appoint a member like the honourable member for Windsor to do the job. While the honourable member for Windsor has been acting or Deputy Whip, I have seen him run out frequently to get honourable members back into the Chamber because the Whip has not been doing his job; he has been lying back in his chair in his room while the Chamber is almost empty.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. In the absence of the Whip I object to that.

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

Mr. JENSEN: Mr. Hewitt, let him go; he loves getting his name into the paper every now and again. Don't let him worry you.

I do not wish to delay the Committee. I only wish to put forward the true facts on the introduction of this Bill because they were not stated truthfully by the Premier. All I can do is congratulate the honourable member for Windsor because he has been doing the Whip's job. He should have been given half the Whip's pay, but he did not get it. A new figure has to be set for the Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Frawley: Rot!

Mr. JENSEN: The honourable member for Murrumba may say that, but we know what goes on. We know how many members are here; we have them checked up; we can tell at any time what National Party and Liberal Party members are here. We know that the honourable member for Windsor goes outside to get the Liberal members in, but the National Party members, who are greater in number, take no notice of their Whip. That is why the Government Deputy Whip had to be appointed.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (4.44 p.m.): I find myself agreeing with the honourable member for Bulimba and that should be a matter of grave concern to me. Having heard him speak in opposition to the appointment of the Government Deputy Whip I understand that he is explaining or demonstrating the defeatist attitude of the Labor Party towards

ever having a sufficient number in this Assembly to warrant having a deputy Whip. I agree entirely with that defeatist attitude; the honourable member's prognostication is indeed correct. I heard him say that the Government Deputy Whip was needed because we form a coalition Government. Of course we form a coalition Government. But why is it a coalition Government. It is because the people of Queensland voted for a coalition Government. He is doing exactly what his leader did in the Federal scene; he is disagreeing with the decision of the umpire. He does not agree with the wishes of the people of Queensland as demonstrated through the ballot-box. So much for the wishes and the opposition of the honourable member for Bulimba. He would abolish all democratic rights, as would all other members of his party. It is part of their philosophy. Democracy is doomed if it ever gets into the hands of the Opposition.

The purpose of creating this position is well founded. The jobs done by the Government Whip and the Government Deputy Whip are well known. There is a well-supported move for the creation of standing select committees.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. LOWES: The honourable member for Bulimba claims that that does not affect the Whip. Some of the reasons for having a Whip and a Deputy Whip are to supply lists of the members who serve on such committees, to assist in the arranging of the programme of the business of this Parliament and to provide for the smooth running of the Parliament.

It has already been forecast that this sitting will have a particularly busy programme. With the volume of work coming forward, the duties of the Whip will be onerous—certainly too onerous for a single Whip. It has therefore been necessary to create the extra position of Government Deputy Whip, a job that has been done for the past 12 months on an honorary basis. It is quite proper that this job should now be made a statutory position.

There are many new members in this Parliament. All of them have worth-while contributions to make. Anybody who wants to study some of the worth-while legislation passed already in this sittings has only to read the debates dealing with clean air and clean water, which are matters of interest to the whole electorate. In the past, these matters have only raised a certain amount of comment. They have now been brought in as legislation. The Opposition's contribution has been noticeably poor whereas member after member on the Government side took part in the debates.

The functions of the Government Deputy Whip are well justified and I support the measure.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (4.47 p.m.): To think that I have had to sit and listen to such absolute tripe and rubbish from some members of the Opposition over a lousy $750! Why, the Leader of the Opposition spends more than that in petrol which is paid by the Government to run his mates around. What do they want to cry about $750 for?

This Parliament, with 69 Government members against 13 Opposition members, needs a Government Deputy Whip. I take great offence at the statement of the honourable member for Bundaberg that the Government Whip is never in the Chamber and that he is always lying down in his room. That is a deliberate untruth and I throw the lie back in his teeth. The honourable member for Landsborough has been a good Whip. He is equal to any Whip in any Parliament.

I could well say that because of the scarcity of its numbers the A.L.P. does not need a Whip. Why can't their deputy leader carry out those duties and do away with the Opposition Whip? However, Opposition members would deny this Government, with many new members, a Government Deputy Whip to help the Government Whip in his tasks.

Mr. Houston: He can do the job.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Of course he can, but he needs a deputy to assist him with the 69 Government members.

Mr. Houston: If your fellows are so undisciplined that you need——

Mr. FRAWLEY: We are not undisciplined at all. Allegations have been made about Government members not being in the Chamber.

Mr. Houston: You weren't in the Chamber and we had to call for a quorum.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I was out of the Chamber because I had a meeting with a deputation. How can I be in two places at once?

Mr. Houston: You are here now.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Of course I'm here now, because I have finished with the deputation. At least I meet deputations of people in my electorate. I am not like the honourable member for Bulimba, who refuses to receive deputations.

Mr. Houston: That is very nasty.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Nasty, yet he threw a meat pie to the last dog I backed and it ran dead.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will continue with his speech.

Mr. FRAWLEY: As usual, I have been provoked. I can understand why the A.L.P. members always try to get me off the track.

It is not before time. The Government Deputy Whip has carried out that task since 1972. He has done it in an honorary capacity. He has done a very good job and I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), for Hon. J. Bjelke-Petersen (Barambah—Premier) (4.50 p.m.), in reply: I am a little disappointed at the debate. I am sure that members who are interested in the proceedings of Parliament are disappointed that honourable members did not take more time to examine the special role that Whips play in the efficient running of Parliament. It is true that the position of Whip is not recognised by Mr. Speaker and we never hear Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees refer to that office. Yet, but for the Whips, this Parliament, and all others that support the Westminster system, would not function.

I pay a tribute to the work done by Whips on both sides of the Chamber over the years in making sure that the business of Parliament flows freely. It would be impossible for Ministers and others who are responsible for the carriage of legislation to do so efficiently but for the role played by Whips. I think that it is a pity that that is not more often recognised. It is, however, recognised in this Act, as it is a copy of the arrangements made in the House of Commons to ensure the security of Parliament by having members known as Whips paid from Consolidated Revenue. Those people are not only Whips in the sense that that word is used parliamentarily but also secretaries of Parliament. They are the ones who do the leg work of Parliament to ensure the continuity of business and to see that every member has the right to be heard. The Whip's list, with which we are all familiar, is the guarantee that a private member is in due course heard. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the guillotine, or gag, is applied to exclude members who may be on the list. The role of Whip is absolutely vital in the functioning of Parliament.

When it comes to the appointment of a Deputy Whip, which requires the approval of Parliament, I think that due note should be taken of the role that he will play. Regardless of the electorate, personality or name of the person selected, it is quite obvious that there is a special role for him in this Parliament. I say to the honourable member for Bulimba, a former Leader of the Opposition, that if he had 70 members to worry about he would, regardless of the size of Parliament, want to have such a person on his side to look after the affairs of so many members. In the House of Commons, of course, there are approximately 20 Whips on both sides. Without them it would be quite impossible for the Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition to manage effectively the affairs of the Parliament. Ministers are busy with affairs of State, deputations and a host of problems and we are not necessarily familiar with the proceedings of the House unless there is someone who is specifically attending to them.

Mr. Speaker is in a similar position. He has no intimate contact with members, and the Whips are a clearing-house, as it were, between him and the members. If there were many parties in this Parliament, their leaders would rely very heavily not only on their own Whips but on the Whips of other parties in order to know what the proceedings of the day were likely to be. This responsibility of the Whips leads to the orderly conduct of the business of the Assembly. It ensures continuity of the parliamentary system.

I think that that ought to be said and noted. It is not merely a question of remuneration or personalities. I hope honourable members will support the measure in the interests of ensuring that Parliament works effectively.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (4.56 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to amend the Elections Act 1915–1973 in certain particulars."

The Bill proposes to amend the Elections Act in a number of areas which will further streamline its operation and bring it into accord with changing administrative procedures. Under the Act the conduct of elections is the responsibility of the Under Secretary, Department of Justice and the preparation and maintenance of rolls is the responsibility of the Principal Electoral Officer and other functionaries. These functions overlap to some extent and following a Public Service inspection of the Electoral Office it was recommended that the conduct of elections be vested in the Principal Electoral Officer. This will concentrate all election activity at one point.

In 1971 computer processing of enrolments and compilation of electoral rolls was introduced. Subsequently a new type of electoral enrolment card was designed as a source document to the computer. As a result of this, administrative procedures of electoral registrars were changed. The Act in this respect requires amendment to accord with actual practice. In addition the Principal Electoral Officer is now able to assist

registrars with bulk objections such as occur following roll canvasses. It is proposed to extend his powers to permit him to do so. Prior to the introduction of computerisation, all electoral rolls were printed by the Government Printer. Any errors or mistakes made by him or any of his employees are defined as "official" mistakes or errors and can be corrected by the Principal Electoral Officer. Now that the computer facilities of the Treasury Department are used and contracts for printing rolls let to private contractors, the Bill proposes to extend the definition "official" so that the Principal Electoral Officer can correct any mistake or error occurring in a roll due to circumstances not already covered by the Act. The definition is also to include the Public Curator and his officers who in future will be required to advise the Principal Electoral Officer of certain mentally ill persons who are unable to manage their own affairs.

In certain circumstances a presiding officer or an electoral visitor may question any person claiming to be an elector as to his entitlement to vote. In each case, after answering questions to the satisfaction of the officials, the person may be permitted to vote and place his ballot-paper in the ballot-box. If he makes a false answer in any material particular, his vote may be disallowed by the Elections Tribunal. This, of course, creates an impossible situation as the vote cannot be identified. A similar provision of the Act enables a presiding officer to require a person claiming to vote to answer prescribed questions where it appears that he has already voted. In such a case, where the claimant is permitted to vote, his vote is set aside for separate custody and is not allowed or counted at the scrutiny except by order of the Elections Tribunal.

It is considered desirable that these situations be dealt with in a uniform manner. Accordingly, the Bill amends the present provisions so that in each case the vote may be set aside in separate custody and be counted at the scrutiny if the returning officer is satisfied that the person is entitled to vote.

The Act provides that an elector who expects to be out of the State or travelling on polling day may vote prior to polling day. If he votes before an electoral registrar he may only post his vote to the returning officer. This gives rise to complaints and, accordingly, the Bill will give him the opportunity to deliver his vote to the returning officer.

Many complaints also have been received from persons who claim that during the hours of polling on polling day they have been unable to attend at a polling booth to vote because of their work or duty. This is a most undesirable situation and provision is made in the Bill for such person to cast a vote prior to election day. It is also proposed to simplify pre-election voting by eliminating the necessity to complete an application as well as fill in the same particulars that appear on the envelope in which the ballot-paper is enclosed after the elector has voted.

At the 1972 and 1974 elections, voting was permitted in London. This was authorised by regulation. The Bill provides for the adoption of these provisions in the Act. It further provides that these facilities may be extended to other overseas cities as the occasion demands.

Provision is also made in the Bill for a ballot-paper not to be affected by the misnomer of a candidate and for absent-voting facilities to be available to electors in a district where a writ is deemed to be vacated due to the death of a candidate.

The remaining proposals amend the procedures for serving and publishing election petitions, permit the Minister to determine and notify in the gazette the date to which rolls are to be prepared, increase deposits by candidates and penalties for breaches of the Act and effect some machinery amendments.

Honourable members will agree that the Bill will update procedures in the computer age, improve and increase facilities available to electors and ensure that no elector is disfranchised through no fault of his own.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (5.3 p.m.): I welcome the proposed legislation, as I think all honourable members will. As those who are most affected, we realise the number of complaints that we receive after voting day. People come to us and complain about the things that have happened to them. They give us reasons why they were not allowed to vote and tell us of the many other problems that arise. I am pleased that the Minister intends to streamline the procedures to overcome difficulties that have come to his attention.

I welcome, too, the idea of removing the overlapping of departmental administrative procedures. That shows a responsible approach, and it will be necessary not only in these two departments but in many other departments as the cleaners are put through existing procedures, if I may use that expression.

Honourable members also must accept the idea of overcoming errors in computerisation, because errors do occur. Although the Act gave the electoral officer certain controls, he now must also cover that area.

I was not quite sure what the Minister intended to do relative to the Public Curator and mentally-ill people—whether or not he made some recommendation himself. No doubt there is very little reason for keeping such people on the roll. I know that distress and discomfort is often experienced by relatives when they have to try to get postal voting and have the electoral visitors arrive. I can see some problems, but I think that aspect needs greater clarification.

I must admit that I am very pleased with the amendments that the Minister is bringing forward relative to pre-election voting, because I think that the work situation is so changed today that one cannot expect people to vote between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Although it is obvious that the Minister has gone through the Act very carefully and has worth-while amendments forthcoming, I am sure that he has not overcome all the problems. I think first of the lack of uniformity between municipal, State and Federal elections and the problems that arise from it. Firstly, there are different polling places. In this democratic country of ours we are continually beset by elections, and Australia is also a country in which many people move from one place to another. I think there is merit in having the same polling places, if possible, for every election. I realise that there would be times when a place used at one election would not be available. A church hall, for example, might be in use for a fete on election day.

In the last Federal election there were changes of polling places in my electorate and throughout the Capricornia electorate. Some of those changes were brought about because the Federal Government saw fit to close down certain polling places. People were going to a certain hall believing that that was where they were to vote. The church in question was aware of the problem, and had someone there most of the day to say, "No, the polling place is not here now. It is down the road some 600 or 700 yards." That sort of thing should not be necessary. There is some merit in having uniformity here. It would certainly help the aged and the newly enrolled. We know that polling places are advertised in the "Public Notices" sections of newspapers by various officers of the Electoral Office throughout the State, but those advertisements are not always seen.

We lack uniformity in voting hours. That has been mentioned many times before in this Chamber. I believe that we have proved the worth of the 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. voting period. To my mind the present 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. period for Federal elections is unnecessary. Difficulties are created, not so much because it is an extra cost on Government to have people working longer hours, but because voters are never quite sure whether it is the State election that goes from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. or the Federal election that spans that time. Many people have said to me, "I honestly thought I had plenty of time. We decided to go to vote after we had tea. We had tea and went to vote but found that the doors were closed."

I realise that Queensland is not responsible for the voting hours in Federal elections, but I believe the Minister would do well to take up the matter at the Attorneys-General Conference or make personal representations to the Commonwealth Attorney-General to see if we could get uniformity. To my mind it is ridiculous to have the extra two hours. The number of voters in those last two hours simply are not worth mentioning. Very few people vote at that time. On the other hand, at a State election there is always a rush at about 6 p.m. People suddenly realise that the voting closes at 6 p.m. If we had uniformity, people would know that, regardless of the election, voting hours were from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Again there is lack of uniformity in the availability of roving booths. Under our Act every room of an "Eventide" home or a hospital is in fact a polling booth. Therefore we have a roving booth that goes from one room to the next. But that is not so in a Commonwealth election. Great problems arise because people think that there will be a booth coming around. Suddenly they find out that they should have made application for a postal vote. We have to come to some agreement with the Commonwealth Government to set aside "Eventide" homes, hospitals and geriatric homes where it is believed roving booths should be available.

I come to the unnecessary restriction about the distance that persons working for a political party must keep from the entrance to a booth. I could be corrected on it, but I think it is 20 ft. I wonder how many political parties stick by that. Most of us forget about political brawls on the day and work in together, even though the police might say, "Look, the A.L.P. is the first one on the left-hand side as you go in; the D.L.P. is next; the National Party is on the other side", or whatever it might be. There is a fair amount of agreement and very little trouble. But the very keen and efficient person comes along and says, "Come on, back you go. Get right back." This is unnecessary. If we are not going to enforce that provision, why have it?

I also wonder why there is the restriction that there cannot be a sign outside a booth with "Vote 1" on it. Apparently a booth can have a sign with "Vote for Dan Malone", or whoever it might be, as long as the figure "1" is not shown.

Mr. Lane: Is he your candidate in Gladstone?

Mr. WRIGHT: Actually he is a Liberal fellow in Rockhampton. I thought the honourable member would have known because he speaks highly of the honourable member.

Mr. Lane: I know him very well. You seem to be worried about him.

Mr. WRIGHT: I don't think so. He is a north-sider so the honourable member is way out there.

These restrictions are rarely adhered to, and whilst I accept the need to provide voters with clear access to the entrance of polling booths, I suggest that this system needs to be revised.

I come back to a very important issue, namely, the system of striking people off the roll. We have had cases where someone has lived in a certain place for 30 years and on going along on polling day is told, "Your name is not on the roll." This comes back to some inefficiency and to the need for a back-up for those who compile the electoral rolls.

I know that a person has the right to lodge a sectional vote under section 35A, but there is no way of checking how many such votes are allowed. I have not been able to find out. I have been told that there are very few, so I wonder whether we need to make this a lot easier. If a person claims that he has lived at the one address, say, for 30 years and his claim can be backed up, surely he should automatically be given the right to vote without having to go through the rigmarole of filling in questionnaires and prescribed forms.

It comes back to the checking of the electoral rolls. It seems to me that some of the people who do this go to a house only once. While they are required to go back again if the person is not at home, surely they should check with neighbours and find out if Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Jones still lives there. The present situation is ridiculous. If they go back the second time and the person is not home, they send in some type of sheet, being unable to mark off that person as having been there, and the Electoral Office therefore takes it that the person was not there. This does not seem to be logical to me.

Mr. Chinchen: I wonder whether they are paid according to the number of persons they contact.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not know. That is a valid point, and perhaps the Minister might enlighten all of us. I know that there is a problem in that the work is not being carried out properly.

Another difficulty arises when postal votes are sent in and the dates are smudged. Some concern has been expressed about this, because the envelope has to be clearly marked as having been posted prior to 6 p.m. on election day. Surely this is not the fault of the voter, yet he is disadvantaged because some person working in the post office smudges the envelope.

Another point I raise is the need for a more sensible approach to the actual voting process. At present, if there are four candidates the voter is required to vote for at least three of them. He is allowed to leave out number 4. If, however, he puts only a "1" and a "2", his vote is not counted. Surely this is unreasonable. Very few elections go to the third and fourth preferences. The honourable member for Townsville West, of course, is here because his election went to the fifth preference. He was right on the bottom and gradually came up to win. However, I have checked through the statistics of the last election and found that there were not a lot that went to the third preference. So I start to question whether this is really necessary. Even if there were a number going to the third preference, surely a person, by voting "1" for a certain person and "2" for another, is indicating his preference. It is not right that a person who simply leaves out two figures should lose his vote. We need to adopt a more sensible approach to this and I would ask the Minister to consider it.

The present system certainly puts aged persons at a disadvantage. The old people are the ones who do not fully understand. Again I raise the matter of the disadvantage suffered by old people because of the sometimes rigid interpretation of the Act in relation to putting figures in the squares on the ballot-papers. Many returning officers are quite open about this and say, for example, "It is obvious that this voter intended to vote for the Liberal candidate," or whoever it might be. But this is not always so. A person is not allowed to have a vote counted if he fails to stick to the rules that he shall put the numbers in or near the little squares. We need to adopt a more sensible approach to this.

Finally I come back to a matter that is old hat, but is nevertheless one that I shall continue to raise in this Chamber. I refer again to the need for showing on the ballot-paper the political party of a candidate. At a time when there is so much worry about the wastage of paper in publishing how-to-vote cards and at this time of the paper war, I do not know why we can't come to some sensible arrangement for the 1970s and 80s—we are supposed to be living in a modern era—to allow us to do away with the ridiculous system under which thousands and thousands of voting papers are produced. When voters make their way to the polling booths they are pounced upon by party supporters who shove how-to-vote cards into their hands.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: I know that it happens in the honourable member's electorate. I have been told about it. It's a pity they don't get on to him about it.

It is a matter of being sensible. Most honourable members would agree that, in the main, people have a good idea who they want to vote for. They would be assisted if, when they walked into the polling booth and got their ballot-paper, it clearly stated that a candidate is a Liberal, a member of the National Party, an Independent or a member of the A.L.P. We could help voters even more by putting a large how-to-vote card in every booth. Surely there is nothing wrong or sinister with having a large how-to-vote card for the old people. Again, we come back to those people who want to know who is who in an election. It is their right to know. In the old days of private members and faction groups—the pre-Twentieth Century days—political

parties played no part, but today we depend on our political parties for campaign funds and for the work-force that gets us there. While they may not be recognised constitutionally, political parties play a vital part in the election of any honourable member to the Chamber. It is important to take a more realistic approach. I ask the Minister to consider doing so. Perhaps he and other honourable members have already done so; but it is time that we started thinking of improving the system to suit the voters.

Mr. Chinchen: Do you suggest drawing for positions rather than having them listed alphabetically?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes. That matter has been raised before. I forgot about it when I was putting some notes together quickly. Personally I do not mind the alphabetical method. I am always on the bottom and it suits me politically. I also know that, in Rockhampton, Mayor Pilbeam found a person whose name started with A just to get him at the top of the ballot-paper to beat our candidate, whose name started with A. That is old hat. People have changed their name by deed poll—to Asmith instead of Smith. All sorts of devices are used to get the advantage of being first on the ballot-paper. Surely it is unfair that, simply because a person's name is Alberts or Brown he should have an advantage over a person whose name is Zamick. The honourable member raised a very good point.

Mr. Chinchen: If you have the party on the paper, you must do it by ballot.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept that point. I have not raised that matter, but I agree completely with the honourable member.

I have raised some points which I believe the Minister should look into. I welcome the amendments brought forward and I hope that the Minister will consider the other suggestions.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (5.18 p.m.): I am happy to join in this debate to support the amendments to the Elections Act outlined by the Minister. The proposed amendments will facilitate the better conduct of elections in Queensland. They will clean up the Act substantially. Most of them are administrative and, hopefully, they will not take up much time in debate today.

I was interested to hear the comments of the honourable member for Rockhampton. He seemed to be determined to talk about Commonwealth election machinery which he could criticise rather than make valid comments in praise of the State legislation. He seemed to have an obligation to avoid saying anything good about the State legislation so he pointed out anomalies in the Federal legislation.

Probably a facility that works best in Queensland elections and which does not exist in the Commonwealth sphere is the procedure by which people who are seriously ill, infirm or approaching maternity may vote before an electoral visitor. That procedure has eliminated a lot of nonsense by ruthless political candidates. It has stopped a lot of snide tactics.

Over the years I have been stuck with the burden of having a couple of postmen in my electorate who are members of the A.L.P. They hold high office within that party. When a Federal election is under way, I have the problem of a local postman delivering ballot-papers to the homes of old ladies on his normal run. He does not put the ballot-paper into the letter-box; he takes it up the front stairs and, of course, helps the old lady to vote. She has confidence in the integrity of what she sees as a proper Government official—a postman. I know—and no doubt Opposition members know—that, although many of them are quite decent fellows, at least a couple of these gentlemen who operate in my area are quite ruthless party functionaries who have spent their time misusing their official positions to gain advantage for the series of lame Labor candidates who have been put up in this area over the years.

Fortunately, under its legislation Queensland has an electoral visitor system. A person properly appointed takes ballot-papers with him so that people are able to vote as they would do at a normal polling booth, without the undue influence of these ruthless people, and are able to deposit the ballot-papers in a portable ballot-box taken there by the electoral visitor. The electoral visitor system should be praised. It results from the initiative of this Government in recent years.

Mr. Casey: They tell me you have a couple of blokes out there making dummy phone calls for you.

Mr. LANE: I do not know why the honourable member for Mackay does not get back into the Labor Party and wear his true colours instead of having two bob each way as he does and trying to have the best of both worlds. He is not fooling anyone in this Parliament and I am sure that he is not fooling anyone in his electorate.

Political candidates place great emphasis on the practice of distributing how-to-vote cards on election day. I personally believe that it is a very important and essential function of political parties. I would not like to see it go by the board. We have some people involved in all parties in the political arena who are lazy about such things and are not prepared to do them. I do not happen to agree with them.

It would be an improvement—and no doubt in due course we will have it—to have the system of voting adopted in the more sophisticated countries overseas where people use a voting machine to register their vote. The machine can give out a progressive total at any given time and there

is not the long and tedious scrutiny that there has been in the past. Also, it takes quite a lot of the trauma out of elections.

I was a scrutineer for the re-count for the Federal seat of Lilley in the 1972 elections when, by mistake, the sitting member (Mr. Kevin Cairns) was defeated by 35 votes. He needed only 18 of the votes to go his way to remain a Federal member. The scrutiny went on for some days. I sat there with a housewife on each side of me and a young clerk from the Liberal Party headquarters as the Liberal Party scrutineers and had to look across the table into the eyes of three Labor senators, the vice mayor of this city and four trade union officials and bully boys from up the hill, who were carrying out the scrutiny on that occasion for the Labor Party. That is typical of what goes on.

Mr. Jensen: They thought you had a couple up your sleeve.

Mr. LANE: I don't know about that. We lost that seat by 18 votes out of 64,000. I don't know who had any up his sleeve. The scrutiny took weeks. Each individual ballot-paper out of the 64,000 was examined minutely by me or by one of the good souls from the Liberal Party who were helping, or was put under the microscope by one of these heavies from the Trades Hall who were sitting on the other side of the room. The scrutiny was interrupted from time to time while Senator Georges ran from the room to report, on the hour, to the man who was to be Prime Minister for a short time—a gentleman named Whitlam—on the fate of Mr. Kevin Cairns.

Mr. Knox: Senator Georges is not doing too well at the moment.

Mr. LANE: No, he is not. He will have to do a lot more scrutineering and carry out a lot more party functionary work to crawl back on side with the bosses within his party machine. He will probably be dumped next time. The Labor Party has a history of dumping people. However, although it is fairly obvious, I will not name today those of the Labor Party who will be dumped next election. There are only a few sitting on the Labor benches but their numbers will be even further depleted when the hatchet falls ruthlessly at the hand of the Q.C.E. and probably the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wright: What do you know that we don't know?

Mr. LANE: The honourable member would be surprised at what I know that he does not know.

In any case, I personally favour the current system of handing out how-to-vote cards. I must say that I enjoy the atmosphere of an election. There is a certain amount of blood and fire on election days and I would not be without it. I am quite happy to have it. In fact, the Labor Party can wheel out all the Trades Hall officials they like down my way at any time and we will match them at every turn.

I also believe that there should be a draw for positions on the ballot-paper. I doubt whether Mr. Aikens and Mr. Burns would agree with me. Across the board, however, I think that would be the fairest method. I sit in a fairly comfortable position in the middle of the alphabet and no matter what happens I fare reasonably well. In any event, I think a draw for positions would be fairest.

I noticed an item in the Press today relating to an election to be conducted under this Act for the local authority in Redlands. One of the candidates for the position of chairman of that shire, a Mr. Markwell, wishes to withdraw his nomination so it will be a simple two-way contest between that great gentleman from that area, Councillor Wood, and the mad Russian "Red Ted" Baldwin. In his reply the Minister may care to say if there is some way in which Mr. Markwell can withdraw from the ticket so that Councillor Wood once again can win over Mr. Baldwin by an outstanding majority in a simple two-way contest. This, I think, reflects the great benefit of the preferential voting system, which my party supports and will continue to support at all levels.

In conclusion—I should like to compliment the Minister on the provision of the Bill that gives the opportunity to vote to a person who, because of his work or duty, is unable to attend a polling booth on election day. He will be able to join those who will be at a distance of more than five miles from a polling booth, are seriously ill, infirm or approaching maternity, or have religious beliefs that preclude them from voting on a Saturday. Those who are unable to attend a polling booth on polling day without interference to their work or profession, or without losing income, will now be able to join those whom I have just listed in casting a vote before election day.

Mr. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (5.28 p.m.): The specific aspect to which I wish to refer is that part of the Minister's speech in which he referred to the Public Curator and his officers being required to advise the Principal Electoral Officer about mentally ill persons who are unable to manage their own affairs. The honourable member for Rockhampton dealt with this point briefly when he mentioned the way in which many patients are stressed and upset when they are obliged to cast their votes. The honourable member agreed that this should be avoided and asked for some clarification.

Government members are glad to provide that clarification. However, I must say that, whilst we agree that it is desirable to avoid upset and distress to mentally ill people, we of the Liberal and National Parties will scrutinise very closely any measure that deprives anyone of the right to vote. That careful scrutiny has been made in this case.

At present the Act disfranchises people of unsound mind, and at first impression the Minister's proposal to disfranchise mentally-ill persons might seem to widen the class of people not entitled to vote. I say "at first impression" because I submit that at least since 1938 people who are mentally ill and incapable of managing their own affairs have come within the definition in the Act relating to those of unsound mind who are not entitled to vote. Section 11 of the Elections Act—I will omit the irrelevant parts—says—

> "No person who is of unsound mind . . . shall be qualified to be enrolled upon any electoral roll or entitled to vote at any election of Members of the Assembly."

The Elections Act does not define what is meant by people of unsound mind, but the Mental Hygiene Act of 1938 related this notion of persons of unsound mind to the expression "a mentally sick person as defined in the Act", and in that 1938 Act a mentally sick person was defined as—

> "A person who owing to mental sickness requires care, treatment, and/or control for his own good or in the public interest, and is for the time being incapable of managing himself or his affairs;".

So there are the two ideas side by side. He has to be incapable of managing himself and his affairs and also he has to be so mentally sick as to require care, treatment or control for his own good. So we can argue that in 1938 the expression "a person of unsound mind" meant much the same as it will mean when these modernising amendments come into force. But an even stronger argument can be made from the 1974 legislation, because section 4 (1) of the Mental Health Act 1974 says—

> "(f) where in any other Act or law or rule—
>
> (i) reference is made to a 'person of unsound mind', or to an 'insane person', or to a 'person not of sound mind', or to a 'lunatic', or to a 'mentally ill person', or to any like term or expression, such reference shall where necessary for the purpose of applying this Act be read as a reference to a patient within the meaning of this Act;".

So the 1974 Mental Health Act says that, wherever we have this expression, we use the concepts in the Act. Section 5 (1) of the 1974 Act went on to define "patient". That definition reads—

> "'patient' means a person suffering or appearing to be suffering from mental illness;".

The Act goes on in the Fifth Schedule to provide on even more comprehensive definition of "patient" because it states—

> "In this Schedule . . . 'patient' means a person—
>
> (a) who is declared by the Court to be mentally ill and incapable of managing his estate;
>
> (b) who is notified to the Public Curator pursuant to the provisions of section 55 of this Act by the responsible medical practitioner as being, in the medical practitioner's opinion, mentally ill and incapable of managing his estate;
>
> (c) who is notified to the Public Curator by the superintendent or person charged with the control of a prison where the person is detained as being, in the opinion of a psychiatrist, mentally ill and incapable of managing his estate; or
>
> (d) (without limiting the provisions of paragraphs (b) and (c)), who is notified to the Public Curator by or on behalf of the superintendent or person charged with the control of a hospital or other place in which the person, having been admitted and being for the time being therein, is receiving treatment for mental illness as being, in the opinion of a psychiatrist, mentally ill and incapable of managing his estate;".

So throughout there are these two ideas. It is not enough that he be mentally ill; it has to go further than that. He has also to be incapable of managing his estate. It is only when these two conditions are fulfilled that he comes within that category of people whose right to vote is taken away from them under section 11 of the Elections Act.

That does seem to be the position. But if that is the position, it seems to clarify it so that people do not have to read the expression "unsound mind" in the Elections Act, find that there is no definition and then have to hunt through half a dozen other Acts to find out what is meant by "person of unsound mind". As I understand the Minister's preliminary comments, that is what he is endeavouring to do in the proposed legislation. The honourable member for Rockhampton has asked for clarification. I hope that has given it to him.

I support the motion.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (5.37 p.m.): There are only a couple of points on which I wish to comment. Any amendments to improve the Elections Act are always welcomed by the Opposition.

The honourable member for Rockhampton has drawn the Minister's attention to the need to show on ballot-papers the name of the party for which a candidate is standing. On election day, people who ask for how-to-vote cards want them for only one reason—to find out the party to which a person belongs. They have made up their minds to vote for the Labor Party, the National Party or the Liberal Party but do not know the name of the candidate representing that party. Sometimes there might be two candidates named Anderson, or there might be a Jenkins against a Jensen, and people do not know which is which. I am not saying that is true of all people.

Mr. Knox: Do you think that we ought to print a photograph of the candidate's face, too?

Mr. JENSEN: Not necessarily. That might assist the other candidates in Bundaberg, but my face is so well known that it would not be of much advantage to me.

To be fair, it must be admitted that how-to-vote cards are there for a purpose. One hands them out to one's own people and says, "That is our card." I cannot see any reason why it is not possible to save all the messing about with how-to-vote cards. Printing costs are very high and it costs hundreds of dollars to have the cards printed. In many instances people will not take how-to-vote cards and they are wasted. At the end of the day I have seen big bundles of cards put into bins at the Civic Centre at Bundaberg. If a voter goes to the booth and finds alongside the candidate's name "Labor Party", "Liberal Party" or "National Party", that is all he wants to know.

When the honourable member for Rockhampton was speaking, the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt said by interjection that the names should be drawn from a hat to determine positions on the ballot-paper. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Moore: You could not use a Labor hat.

Mr. Wright: If a Liberal hat were used, I reckon dandruff would come out first a few times.

Mr. JENSEN: That is true, but if we allowed Bob Moore to draw it——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: He has put me off the track.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the honourable member get back onto it very quickly.

Mr. Moore: You were putting the names into a hat.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, I was putting them into a hat. There is a draw for places on the Senate ballot-paper. Why cannot something similar be done for State elections? It would not be difficult for the returning officer in each area to do it. The returning officer at, say, Bundaberg, Rockhampton or Maryborough could draw out the names at 12 o'clock on the day on which nominations closed and establish the candidate's position on the ballot-paper. The ballot-papers could then be printed, showing the names and the party that each candidate represents. Surely that could be done in this modern age. The whole business of handing out how-to-vote cards is a racket. It is getting more costly every election. The greater the number of candidates, the worse it gets. In today's conditions, the Minister should consider that.

Mr. Lester: They would still print how-to-vote cards.

Mr. JENSEN: If they want to waste money printing how-to-vote cards, let them print them. In the booth there would be a big sign that old people could see. There is nothing wrong with having that big one on the wall to let voters see the names and the parties. I cannot see why the Minister should not do something about it.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (5.41 p.m.): The Minister must be congratulated on introducing the Bill. What he has outlined should be well accepted by all in the community.

I was very pleased at the moderate attitude adopted by the shadow Minister for Justice (Mr. Wright). He supported many of the good points the Minister raised. However, I wish to comment on one particular point he made. He sneaked it in very cleverly and disguised it very well. He virtually said that with a multitude of candidates it should not be necessary to number every square. He suggested that with, say half a dozen candidates the voter who numbered only two squares should have his vote counted as valid. That is a very thinly disguised way of eventually bringing in first-past-the-post voting. That was the honourable member's real intention.

I alert the people of Queensland to the danger of what the honourable member is trying to do. Take an electorate with 10,000 voters. There might be an occasion when 3,000 of those voters were silly enough to vote for a Fascist or a Communist. With a multitude of candidates, it could well be that no other candidate received 3,000 votes. With first-past-the-post voting either a Fascist or a Communist candidate would be elected, depending on whichever extremist the 3,000 people chose to vote for.

That is not the sort of thing the people of Australia would want to see happen in this country. It did happen in Chile. We were told all about the democratically elected Government of Chile. That is precisely what happened there. Seventy per cent of the people would not have had a bar of Communism, but because they did not have the system of voting we have in Queensland, the wishes of a very small minority were thrust upon that country. We all know what happened. Unfortunately the people were forced to rebel against a Communist Government.

The need for uniformity in State and Federal elections was mentioned. I would go along with much of what the honourable member for Rockhampton said. However, I should point out one reason why the State does have different polling places from the Commonwealth. The previous Labor Government tried to save money—or so it said—by cutting out various Commonwealth booths.

Mr. Wright: I didn't ask that they be cut down but that they be made the same.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is so, but I am giving one of the reasons why they were not the same. The Commonwealth cut out some booths which we, as the State, think are essential.

I am sure that one of the reasons why it chose to eliminate those booths was that it knew that by doing so it would disfranchise some voters. This did happen in the Maranoa electorate when it rained during the last Federal election. It should be recorded in "Hansard" that no price is too high to pay for democracy. I hope that this State Government never chooses to penny-pinch with election costs. People who live out in the bush away from the major areas of population might account for only 10 or 15 voters in an electorate, but if it rains and some polling booths are eliminated they are disfranchised.

Mr. Wright: Would you say there should be full postal voting, as there is in shire elections?

Mr. McKECHNIE: The time that passes between receiving a postal vote and returning it very often makes it impracticable for western people to record a valid postal vote. Some places in the Gregory electorate, for example, have a mail service only once every two weeks.

Mr. Wright: It works all right in local authority elections.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I don't know that it does. I would dispute that claim. In any case local authority elections are not sprung on people without notice, which does happen sometimes in the hurly-burly of State and Federal politics, no matter which political party is in power. On some occasions the time given to electoral officers to prepare for elections is very short. This does not happen, however, to the same degree in local authority elections, in which people know six months beforehand that an election is coming up and they can think about how they will get a postal vote when the time comes.

I say again that people in the Maranoa electorate were disfranchised as the result of the actions of the previous Labor Government. I hope this does not happen again.

Another problem at election-time—it is not one that needs to be legislated for, but it should be brought to the attention of the Minister and his officers—arises from the use of certain places as polling booths. In the recent Federal election the Stanthorpe State School was chosen as a polling booth. It has very high steps. In State elections, too, schools with high steps are used as polling booths. This is a great imposition on elderly people and those of doubtful health. It should be possible to use places that are easily accessible to elderly people.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also mentioned——

Mr. Wright: You must be glad I made a speech.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I usually like to reply to the honourable member's comments. The Minister has so many members to reply to that he cannot reply to all of them in detail. I would not like to see the honourable member for Rockhampton get away with even the slightest little thing.

He mentioned that large how-to-vote cards should be displayed in polling booths. In the Constitution there is no mention of political parties, and it is not right for political parties to display their names on ballot-papers, nor is it right for them to exhibit how-to-vote cards. It is, of course, necessary for people to take their own how-to-vote cards with them into the polling booth, but a Government should not put how-to-vote cards on display.

Mr. Wright: What is the difference really?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I doubt whether this situation would be legal under the Constitution. It is a grey area. The difference between those in the A.L.P. and those on our side of politics is that we like to stick strictly to the Constitution. I am not saying that the suggestion is not a good idea. It is a grey area, but if we want to do this, perhaps other measures should be taken to make it definite within the Constitution.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (5.51 p.m.): The corner-stone of our democracy is the secret ballot. The amendments to the Elections Act outlined by the Minister are certainly very important. This is a very touchy area of administration. Many people are putting forward all sorts of academic proposals that they think will improve the Elections Act, the running of elections and, probably, in another way, their chances of being elected.

I have a number of matters to discuss. The first concerns the electoral visitor. The concept is an excellent one. Having watched it put into practice on a number of occasions, I believe it should be used by the Federal authorities in the Federal elections. It gives a person an opportunity to vote without any hanky-panky going on. A person who is aged or infirm can cast his vote without any trouble and not have to leave his home. I want to see the State continue this very fine system.

Mr. Wright: It works only in the closely populated areas.

Mr. POWELL: It works quite well in sparsely settled areas, too. It may be a little more costly, but it certainly works. We should not take the cost into account. It is a far safer method than the postal ballot.

When an electoral visitor calls, a person may be sure that his vote will be counted, whereas with a postal vote there is room for doubt because letters often get lost in the mail, and there could be some doubt about validity and so on.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. POWELL: It does not matter who is in power. It is important that the secrecy of the ballot be maintained.

It was said that our State elections should come into line with Federal elections. I believe that the Federal elections should come into line with ours. Voting hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. are surely long enough for anybody. I cannot understand why the Federal authorities stick to the antiquated polling hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Mr. Casey: There are two reasons—Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. POWELL: We are not perturbed particularly about Victoria or New South Wales in this Chamber.

The 10-hour period that we have is surely long enough for anybody who conscientiously wants to cast a vote. In that time any person can get to a polling place or organise a vote. I should hate to see polling hours extended in Queensland. The Federal authorities should fall in line with our ideas.

The number of polling places is looked at regularly. Administrators look at the number of votes cast at a polling place and think that it is not worth while having a polling place for a mere 20 or 25 people, and they then summarily strike it off. I disagree entirely with such an approach. The person doing the striking off understandably wants to run the poll as economically as possible, but before he makes a decision he should look carefully at where the polling place is situated and the connecting roads between it and the next polling place. It is important that elections be held and that the majority of voters—by that I mean between 95 per cent and 100 per cent—get to a polling place; if they do not, we will not get an accurate understanding of the will of the people.

I hope that when the department is considering the closing down of small polling places, it will take into consideration the lines of communication between that polling place and the closest polling place. In good weather, the road might be perfectly all right, but we have the unhappy knack of striking storms the day or the week before polling day and then we are in real trouble.

I shall now deal with the receiving of nominations. I intended asking a question of the Minister in the House this morning on this point. I raise it now and if he can answer it for me I shall be very pleased. I am wondering when a nominee should be ruled out of order or ineligible to stand for election. In the case I am thinking of—admittedly it concerned a local government election—the returning officer ruled two nominations out of order after the closing date because the nominees were ineligible to stand for election. Had the returning officer ruled these people out of the race before the closing date for nominations for the election, more than likely others would have nominated in their place. In this case the two people nominated in all good faith thinking that their nominations were valid under the Act. It was found by the returning officer after the date for nominations closed that they were ineligible to stand.

Surely if the returning officer attended to his duties diligently and examined all nomination forms when they were presented to him, he could ascertain whether in all reasonable circumstances the nominee was eligible to stand for election. If a person is insane, the returning officer might have some difficulty in obtaining a certificate to that effect in a very short time. Anyhow, it is usually possible to tell that a person is insane by looking at him. I wonder how some people in this place were elected. It is most important that when the returning officer receives the nomination he examine it and ascertain—the guide-lines are pretty simple—whether the person is eligible to stand or not. If the returning officer believes that the nominee is ineligible, he should tell him so and rule his nomination out of order. This would leave it open for a potential candidate to question the returning officer's decision. In the case I am speaking of, the returning officer received the nominations and let the people believe that they would be candidates in the election. After the date for nominations closed, the returning officer ruled them out of order. He made the right decision, because they should not have been candidates, but two other people could have taken their places and had an opportunity to be elected.

It is important that the returning officer be competent. In most cases in State elections, the returning officer is either a clerk of the court or a magistrate and, generally speaking, there is no degree of doubt about their competence. But people who are given the job of running polling places perhaps have some doubt and difficulty in interpreting the Act concerning, for example, the people who are handing out how-to-vote cards. I believe that the Act provides that these people should not stand closer than 20 ft. from the entrance of the polling place. It is my experience, especially in provincial cities, that a regular argument ensues about this 20 ft. from the entrance of the polling place. Is the entrance the actual door of the building or is it the fence through which people walk to enter the building? This argument rages on and on. I should like a ruling made on whether it is the doorway or the fence. I do not care which it is but it should be consistent. Different poll clerks interpret the provision differently. Polling places are situated at a

number of schools in our areas. In one case the gateway is a considerable distance from the entrance to the building. The poll clerk there refuses permission to hand out how-to-vote cards within 20 ft. of the entrance to the property.

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

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (7.15 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of the Bill, which will clear up some of the problems that have arisen over the last few years. In general, one of the best features of the Bill is that it will make voting easier for people who have to work, or who will be away, on polling day, and it gets over many of the problems associated with postal voting.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke about not requiring voters to fill in all the spaces on a ballot-paper. That, of course, is optional preferential voting, which is Labor Party policy. This would be the thin edge of the wedge towards the complete adoption of that system, and it is one that would not work.

Mr. Gunn: No system would help them now.

Mr. GIBBS: That is right.

Another difficulty has arisen over voters who have been struck off the roll. This has become a real problem. I know of one person who lived and voted in an area for 35 years and who was denied a vote at the last State election. We will have to look very closely at the system under which the names of people are placed on, and struck off, the electoral roll. They can, of course, demand a vote under section 35A, but in many cases I have found that poll clerks are not fully trained in dealing with such claims and quite often they try to dissuade the applicant from voting. Quite a lot of trouble has arisen in this way. I know that it is not done purposely; it is simply because poll clerks do not know exactly what to do in such circumstances. After all, many of the poll clerks are filling this position for the first time, with no previous experience.

Mr. Jones: Like politicians.

Mr. GIBBS: Yes.

I believe also that voting hours should be from 8 a.m. till 6 p.m. for both State and Federal elections, instead of the present 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for Federal elections. There should also be alignment between the filling in of cards for the entry of names on both the State and Federal electoral rolls. Many people who come to Queensland from the southern States fill in a card to have their names entered on the Federal roll in the belief that their names will then automatically be placed on the State roll. There are hundreds of people who come from places in the South where, I am told, the filling in of only one card ensures that their names are placed on both rolls. Perhaps this is a matter we should consider.

Reference was made to election cards. Some will argue that these cards should be cut out and a large card displayed inside the polling booth. At the last Albert Shire election Labor Party members were giving out cards with "A.L.P." printed across the top. They found that they were not very popular, so they went round the corner with a pair of scissors and cut "A.L.P." off the top. I do not know which provision that comes under! We might have to bring down legislation to prevent that type of conduct.

Election campaigns are being conducted at present in the Albert Shire and on the Gold Coast, just as they are elsewhere throughout Queensland. Quite recently in the Albert Shire an endorsed A.L.P. candidate has been doing the rounds. When asked his party he said, "I'm Liberal." That shows a lack of honesty all along the line. I think that the use of electoral cards could well be given some consideration. Moreover, when we are allocating the location of booths there should be fewer multiple booths, to make it easier for people to find out where they should go. We have a typical example in the Woodridge area where the Redlands, Salisbury, Albert and Fassifern shires all meet and one has almost to be a Philadelphia lawyer to guide the people to where they should vote. It is very hard to work out and very confusing for most people. It has been mentioned that in the Redlands shire one candidate for the position of chairman of the shire has withdrawn from the election——

Mr. Wright: Is he splitting the Tory vote?

Mr. GIBBS: I'm not sure——

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt. They are a bit restless tonight. Red Ted, who is known to us all, is also running down there. But this does bring out the point when we have first-past-the-post voting that when a person does withdraw, irrespective of party, it wastes votes. Even though the gentleman who nominated has now decided not to run it is obvious that some votes will be cast for him and they are wasted votes. That is something we have to look at because it is a quite serious situation. But the main thing is that many of the problems in the Elections Act will be cleaned up by these amendments and I congratulate the Minister for bringing them forward.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (7.22 p.m.): I always shudder when I hear the words I heard uttered earlier in the day about computerisation in order to bring about modernisation because usually what we finish up with, to use another term, is bastardisation. That is what happens with computerisation these days. The Minister went on at great lengths

during his introductory remarks to inform us of the great benefits we will receive from computerisation of enrolments in Queensland and what a difference it will make. It has made a big difference because already we are getting more people disfranchised than ever before. If any honourable member doubts me, what he should do is have a look at the 1976 rolls which have just been issued and compare them with the rolls for the previous two years. It is amazing to find that in some electorates where there are increasing populations there are declining enrolments. What happens is that the computer seems to go through all the forms that come back after an election relating to people who have cast a vote and those who have missed out on a vote for various reasons, and all of a sudden they find themselves struck off the roll.

I do not go along with a lot of the comments that have been made here this evening about electors. I do not think the average voter is the mug many people make him out to be. He is quite sound, quite sensible and knows what he is about when he enters a polling booth. Any honourable member who has acted as a scrutineer at elections over a long period would know, for instance, that informal votes vary very little from booth to booth from election to election and in most cases informal votes are deliberately informal. It is quite a simple matter for anyone who is interested to make a study of election figures and he will find, as I mentioned earlier, that the average voter is not the mug people think he is.

There is still with us on every occasion when a ballot is held a tremendous amount of confusion at polling booths about people who are entitled to vote, and the biggest problem a voter faces with computerisation and other things is staying on the roll. At the electoral office we have a centralised system and very few records are being kept in the various offices of the clerks of the court throughout the State as they previously were. Certainly I accept that under the old system we did have some duplication to an extent, but nonetheless when someone had put an enrolment card into the office of a clerk of the court in Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Mt. Isa, Ipswich or anywhere else outside the Brisbane area and away from the State Electoral Office and waited and waited for the little white card to come back telling him that he was on the roll and it did not arrive he could go to the clerk of the court. He, of course, would have no record of the previous enrolment and would suggest that he fill out another card, which he will send down for him. That is additional work. It seems to me that it also creates additional confusion. Many people have had to fill out several enrolment cards in the last year. Perhaps a fiasco occurred in the 1974 election, when they went to vote and found that they were not on the roll. Things such as that have happened over a considerable period.

I should mention particularly one thing that does occur. If a person is disfranchised at a polling booth, he does not know and recognise that he is disfranchised, because the system allows him to cast a declared vote. What he does not know is that 95 per cent of the votes cast in that way are not accepted by the returning officer and are put in the rubbish bin.

Mr. Wright: Under section 35A.

Mr. CASEY: That is right, under section 35A of the Act. That is what happens. People walk away from the polling booth and say, "That bloke in there tried to take us off the roll. It is his fault." They seem to blame him. However, they are satisfied because they have been able to cast a vote. They do not know that it is not counted, that it is simply tossed out.

Eventually many people receive a form from the State Electoral Office stating that they have to show cause why they did not vote. They might still be enrolled for some other electorate; they might have been struck off the roll previously but their name has been used; or they might have to show cause why they cast a vote under section 35A. The enrolment card is sent to them and they are asked to fill it out or give details of a change of address or something such as that. The reaction of the ordinary person is, "Well, how silly can you be! I have been living at this address for 35 years. I haven't changed my address. Now the Electoral Office wants to know my change of address." What does he do? He throws it into the rubbish bin and completely disregards it. I think this brings about a tremendous amount of confusion in the voting system, and I believe that the position must be considered carefully.

In my opinion, the type of forms that are being sent out and the information that is given on the forms are too legalistic for the persons receiving them.

As to showing cause—the honourable member for Windsor said that he had many problems in his area. It may be that the persons who line up to vote in his electorate are properly enrolled for the Everton Electorate or some other electorate. They do not get a vote in Windsor, where they are living, and they are struck off the Everton roll and become drifters. If one totted up the number of people on the roll in Queensland and compared that number with the number of adult persons in the community after a census, one would find a very big variation indeed.

There is one point that I wish to mention particularly. Earlier in the debate the Committee heard about the differences in voting hours between Commonwealth and State elections. What I think is needed more than anything is a combined enrolment card for both Commonwealth and State rolls. Surely if a computer system is being used for

enrolments, the information required by Commonwealth and State is virtually the same, except that the Commonwealth Electoral Office requires an additional electorate name for Federal enrolment, and if there were another little square box on the computer card, the one card could be used.

Most members would give out through their electorate offices each year hundreds of enrolment cards, both Commonwealth and State, for people to fill out. When people are told that they have to fill out two cards, they always say, "What, two?" they are told, "Yes, that is what you have to do in Queensland." It is not so in some other States, where the one card is used. In my opinion, a similar system is required urgently in Queensland. With a successful computerised system, it would be much easier to do that.

I mentioned earlier country lodgment of enrolment cards. Another problem that arises with country enrolments that are sent to the State Electoral Office is the delay in their return. Sometimes they are returned because of simple technicalities. Just before the last State election a certain gentleman moved to Queensland from Victoria, after spending a short time in New South Wales and Victoria. He was an Englishman by birth, and when he filled in an enrolment card in Queensland, he merely showed "England" as his place of birth. I doubt very much whether the Electoral Office would be concerned about his exact address in England or in what electorate he had been enrolled in that country prior to coming to Australia. But the card was returned to him because it was said insufficient information had been given. By the time he filled out another card and it went through the system, it was too late for him to be correctly enrolled before the election. We have to look very closely at the forms covered by the Act being amended.

I refer now to the postal vote certificate card under section 71 of the Act. The various blank parts of the card seem to provide sufficient room. The space after "I certify I am satisfied that" seems to be sufficient, and there is ample room for an address. For the vote to be valid, this card has to be properly and completely filled out and witnessed by a qualified person. There seems to be plenty of room for the signature of the witness and the address of the witness, but there is only a space of 1 or 2 cm between the lines. After "Qualification of Authorized Witness" there is again only a space of 1 or 2 cm. Many people miss out on completing that part or do not fill it in completely because there is insufficient room. As a result an elector is disfranchised; his vote is not counted. It might take a little bit more paper and a slightly bigger envelope, but that form certainly requires attention.

Mention has been made of Commonwealth and State polling booths and the different hours of polling in Commonwealth and State elections. One of the real reasons why the Commonwealth has to have a different type of booth is the night-time polling. We have a lousy State Government that will not put electric light in all State schools. Because State schools are not properly lit outside daylight hours, booths for State elections have to be located in other places. If State schools are used as Commonwealth booths, ballot-boxes have to be taken somewhere else so that the votes can be counted. Sometimes the returning officer can call on a mate with a portable lighting plant. In some of the areas represented by the National Party, people are there half the night working under light from hurricane lamps. Some of those areas are fairly close to Brisbane, too. However, that is beyond the scope of the Bill.

It is in the interests of the Minister for Justice to ensure that the buildings used as polling places are properly equipped and set up. When a State election is held in May, night-time counting is necessary in many parts of the State. It is not good enough to have to shift the ballot-boxes from one room to another. In most instances the Government provides lighting only in one room in a school so that night meetings can be held. On election night it means that everybody congregates in that one room. Perhaps the Minister could use this in Cabinet as an excuse to get approval for the provision of better lighting in old school buildings.

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (7.35 p.m.): I rise firstly to thank the Minister and his committee for their efforts in trying to streamline voting procedures and make them easier for everybody. Since the last election our electoral council has made a number of submissions to the Minister with a view to trying to make voting simpler for everybody. I cannot understand why more things in life are not made simpler for people. Some of the most successful persons in life have posessed the very important virtue of simplicity. A great example of that in recent times was the late Pope John. No-one could have been simpler yet more aggressive and interesting than he was. Some of the most successful business ventures have had "simplicity" as their keyword. One of the greatest organisers in Australia, Sir Usher Joell, is noted for his simplicity. It is his theme.

Having made that point about simplicity, I turn to the Bill.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. LESTER: Pipe down.

Mr. Casey interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt. I was just trying to make a point for the benefit of Opposition members, who obviously are not interested in country people. They are only trying to distract me. Thank you for your help.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I intend to hear the member for Belyando. The Committee will come to order.

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt.

The efforts of the Minister in trying to make the voting procedures easier for everybody will be greatly appreciated by the people of Queensland. In country areas many of the people who are affected by voting difficulties are travellers. The Minister has arranged for anyone voting before an electoral registrar to return his vote in person to the returning officer. If a person wants to do this, he should have the right to do so and have the knowledge that at least his vote has gone through, been received by the returning officer and been counted. This aspect is of great importance to a lot of voters.

The elimination of the need for postal voters to repeat the full details on the envelope is a step in the right direction and one that will be welcomed. In the past a large number of votes were declared invalid as a result of the lack of understanding on the part of persons who filled in the details on the front of the envelopes containing their postal votes. So many things had to be done and so many specific details had to be supplied that a large number of people could not be bothered supplying all the necessary information, with the result that their postal votes were declared invalid.

Surely to God people in the country have the same right as anybody else to have their votes counted. Quite often they have to put up with travelling over rough roads and in wet weather to cast their votes. Quite frequently in their everyday lives they are without the amenities enjoyed by city dwellers. Anything that can be done to simplify voting for country people should be done. So I commend the Minister on his efforts to help country people cast postal votes easily, thereby reducing the chance of having their votes declared invalid.

I agree with those members who have said that it would be a good idea if the same voting cards could be used for both State and Federal elections. This is another aspect of my theme of simplicity. Everybody would appreciate such a move.

We have heard the suggestion put forward that a candidate should have the name of his political party inserted after his name on the ballot-paper. This could lead to some abuse. It sounds good in principle, but I should not like to see it introduced. People could adopt party names and put them after their own names, which could lead to many complications. We could find many names such as "Big Labor", "Little Liberal" and so on.

Mr. Houston: You tell people you are a Labor Party man.

Mr. LESTER: I am not telling people I am a Labor Party man. What is the honourable member talking about? I thought he was a man of intelligence who would know that I had sufficient intelligence not to be a member of the Labor Party. He should wake up to himself. Doesn't he know that I am a member of the National Party? Doesn't he know I beat my Labor Party opponent? What's wrong with him? No wonder he lost the leadership of the Opposition. He does not even know what party the other candidates belonged to, yet he has the cheek to interject and tell me that I am a member of the Labor Party. He should wake up to himself; he doesn't know what he's talking about.

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt.

It is quite obvious that the people on my right, who are on the left of most people, are completely unintelligent. They have admitted that they do not want the country people to have decent facilities for voting when the State elections are held. Yet they will have the hide before the next State election is held to go to the country areas and say that they will look after country people. We see and hear them talking about redistribution and many other things, but it is obvious that they are not fair dinkum. They are interested only in big city voters.

My main idea tonight was to get Opposition members to admit that they do not like country people. They have done that. We have had a win. If my speech tonight has meant that Labor has had to capitulate and say that it does not like the country people, we have had a great win, and there is no need for me to say any more. I think I have made my point.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (7.42 p.m.): When we are dealing with amendments to the Elections Act there is no dearth of speakers. Elections are matters in which we are all expert, in varying degrees. After all, in order to get into this place, to unlock the barred door that permits us to enter Parliament, we have had to survive an election. That is the key which opens the door and gets us in. Therefore we are all experts in this field, or we think we are.

Although, as I say, we can speak very eloquently on the subject, it is quite possible that people in the outside world looking at our speeches might think that they should be very careful when politicians try to equate public good with private advantage.

Mr. Jones: No wonder John Murray gave up in disgust.

Mr. PORTER: I am not sure what Mr. Murray has to do with the Elections Bill, but I will say that he was a very good member, who deserves the respect and affection of everyone here including members of the Opposition.

Mr. Jones: He looked around the Chamber and said, "What the hell am I doing here?"

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will tell the honourable member for Cairns what I will be doing here soon.

Mr. PORTER: In all that has been said, nobody has questioned the fact that the machinery of elections today is above suspicion. This legislation suggests various changes to facilitate the act of voting and, after all, that is what elections are all about—to facilitate voting for various categories of people. It also moves to ease the administrative strain on the Department of Justice to the Electoral Office (which is very sensible) and it recognises the changes that come with computerisation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. Honourable members will come to order.

Mr. PORTER: In looking at these changes it is interesting to reflect that not one person has suggested other than that the electoral machinery of Queensland is conducted with the utmost impartiality, integrity and honesty. I remember when that was not always so. I can remember, for instance, when one Chief Electoral Officer of the State was tried on three occasions for replacing valid ballot-papers with forged ballot-papers and, by a strange coincidence, on each of those three occasions, the jury failed to come to an agreement; it was a hung jury.

Mr. Houston: He wasn't guilty.

Mr. PORTER: The honourable member says that he was not guilty. At the very best, it would be the Scottish verdict of "Not proven" because of the hung jury. We seldom get hung juries in Queensland but we had three of them in a row. The fact is that in those years between 1957 and 1976——

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. PORTER: I remember it very well. I amassed the evidence for the case; I got the evidence together for the case.

In the intervening years the machinery of elections held has been, as I say, beyond cavil. Nobody has questioned it in any shape or form, and it is very good that that should be so because the basis of democracy is machinery for conducting elections which is beyond reproach.

What we mainly have here is not debate on what is in the Bill but debate on what various members feel should be in the Bill but is not. All of us have our pet hobby-horses on electoral matters. We all think that we know what should be changed, what should be added, and what should be taken out.

Everybody contends that there should be much conformity between Federal and State election procedures. Well, of course, there should be. It is easy to say but very difficult to achieve. In the other area of politics in which I was involved before I came into Parliament I was one of the several who were trying to secure this change for many years but it was always strongly resisted by our southern colleagues. I do not think it matters a toss which side of politics is in power in Canberra; while the southern States want 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., we will have 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. voting. Of course it should be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. voting in this day and age but unfortunately we are not going to get it.

It was also suggested that we should have the one application card for both rolls. I think that this is eminently sensible. In fact, I think that we should go further; I do not see any real reason why there should be two sets of compiling machinery. In this age of computerisation, it seems to me that both State and Federal rolls should be compiled from the one agreed source. This would result in a great saving of money and these days we are looking for avenues of saving money.

It is also suggested that we should have the same polling booths for both State and Federal elections. I think that this is a point on which most people would agree. Here is an area where I cannot see why there should not be agreement. I do know, of course, that while we are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the Federal is 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., there are some polling booths that are available for State purposes but not for Federal because they are required for night engagements on polling days. So this is a physical reason why we cannot have the same booths. But the desirability of having the same booths so that people get into the habit of going to the same place to vote and so make it easy for them is obvious.

I think that it was the honourable member for Rockhampton who spoke about mobile and roving booths. We, of course, began the system of the mobile booth in the public hospitals in this State more than a decade ago. We now have the electoral visitor system—an improvement—and as in so many other areas we have made innovations which have since been copied by most other States, and this particular one by the Federal Electoral Act also.

Mr. Marginson: A great gerrymander also.

Mr. PORTER: My experience goes back a long way and I can say to the honourable gentleman that anything he has now that he thinks is a gerrymander is a pale, anaemic shadow, compared with what existed when I began in politics in the 1930s and 1940s. In any case it should be salutory for honourable members opposite to remember that they are now 11 in a Parliament of 82 members, and if they think that that is the result of a gerrymander I pray to heaven

that they go on thinking it because after the next election they will be lucky if there are three or four of them.

The other point mentioned was the suggestion that preference should be curtailed. I think it was the honourable member for Rockhampton who pointed out that, at the present time, if a person numbers his ballot-paper one less than the total number of candidates it is not a valid vote. If there are four candidates and a voter numbers his ballot-paper 1 to 3, it is obvious that the fourth preference is the unnumbered candidate. The honourable member suggested that numbering should perhaps stop at 2. I suppose there is merit in that, but I think that if there were not the requirement for a full exercise of preferences it would not be very long before people, instead of voting 1 and 2, would vote 1 only. In other words, there would be not a compulsory preferential voting system but a voluntary system which would very rapidly become a first-pass-the-post system. I am one of those who believe that while there is compulsory voting there must be compulsory preferential voting. I do not want to labour the point now, although I think that mathematically it can be quite easily and absolutely demonstrated why that is so.

The question of identification of candidates on ballot papers has been raised. I am not too sure that I am sold on that idea. I see no reason why there should not be a sheet or poster in each polling booth showing the party or other identification of the candidates. I see nothing against that whatever. By the same token, I am not one of those who would like to see identification so complete as to require a prohibition on party workers on polling day. I believe that working on polling day is a very useful way in which enthusiasts for a political philosophy can demonstrate their dedication, enthusiasm and commitment. I believe that people should be allowed—indeed, encouraged—to become involved in the business of government, or to become adherents of one political party or another. It is infinitely better for people to be concerned than to have no interest at all. I believe that if people did not take part in the operations of the machinery on polling day, there would be a very considerable falling off in the current membership of political parties. The current membership of all political parties is abysmally low for the number of voters who vote for them. I therefore do not want to see party supporters cut out of what so many of them currently regard as a meaningful role.

I am a little surprised that nobody has mentioned the increase in the nominating fee from $40 to $100. I thought that there would be some outraged complaints and suggestions following that jump.

Mr. Casey: The Minister did not mention the figure.

Mr. PORTER: I am sorry about that.

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Houston: How did you know that?

Mr. PORTER: Of course, there is democracy in our party.

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Wright: Special information to Government members?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have now called on three occasions for order. I do not intend to call three times; I shall call once and that wish will be respected.

Mr. PORTER: Honourable members of the Labor Party would indeed be scathing in their criticism if they found that Government members did not know about legislation that was being brought forward. I remind them that this is the introductory stage of the debate and it may well be that the Minister did not regard this as sufficiently important to mention. So I mention it now. The Minister can correct me if I am wrong in doing so.

Mr. Houston: He should have told us.

Mr. PORTER: Why? Is it a major provision? All that it does is keep up with the change in money values. If there had not been this disastrous inflation induced by the Labor Government in Canberra, I have no doubt that the nominating fee would have remained at its present figure. It is being brought to $100 in order to make it, I think, still a modest sum but the modestly meaningful sum that it was when it was $40. I do not think that there will be any complaints about that.

Over all, the amendments are designed to make the voting process just that much more efficient in this day and age. They aim to make quite sure that the electorate will prevail as the people are sovereign and, after all, this is surely what we all want. I think it is timely to remember that our system of elective participatory parliamentary democracy is, with all its faults and weaknesses, still the best system in the world. There are many, many countries that would give their eye-teeth to have the system of parliamentary democracy that we have in this country. It came under very severe threat during the last three years, and we must thank our lucky stars that we survived that period and that the process remains intact. Any Bill, any piece of legislation, passing through this Chamber which helps to sustain the parliamentary and the elective democratic process should, I think, have the support of every member of the Committee and it most certainly has mine.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (7.55 p.m.): This amendment to the Elections Act is certainly not before time because many improvements are required in voting procedures. In the 1972 State elections many people, especially in the electorate of Murrumba, found that they were not on the roll. If they had been, I would have won by a hell of a lot more than I did.

Mr. Wright: That's supposition, isn't it?

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is true because I received 4,760 more votes than the Labor candidate last time, and that is not a bad effort. Many people who found they were not on the roll complained to me that the reason for this was that notices of objection had been issued by people who went round checking the rolls.

Mr. Wright: Appointed by you.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not know who appointed them, but a lot of them were absolute nincompoops. They did not do the job properly. I will cite a case in point. I happened to be sitting on my house at 375 Elizabeth Avenue, Kippa-Ring——

Mr. Casey: On your house or on the ground?

Mr. FRAWLEY: On the steps, as a matter of fact. Occasionally, I sit on the roof.

Mr. Casey: You are silly enough.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have warned the honourable member for Mackay on previous occasions about frivolous interjections.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I was sitting on the steps of my home and I saw this fellow walking along and I thought, "He must be checking on the rolls." He went next door and spoke to one of the children, but did not come to my place. After he left I said to this young fellow, who was about 13 years of age, "What did he want?" He said, "Well, he asked me who lived next door and asked me my mother and my father's name." That fellow was not doing his job properly. If that child did not know who lived next door, and it is possible that some children would not know who lived next door to them, he would not have known I was on the roll and my wife and I could have been left off the roll.

Mr. Casey: Your brother is standing again for the Redcliffe Council.

Mr. FRAWLEY: He certainly is, and he will win the mayoralty after I put the record straight, especially after the rort they tried to put over him last Wednesday.

These people who receive notices of objection often get their backs up. One woman who lived in Susan Avenue, Kippa-Ring, for 10 years found that she had been taken off the roll. She received a notice of objection and she said to me, "I'm not going to fill in another enrolment card. Why should I? I have lived here for 10 years. Why should they take me off the roll?" I agree with her. Why the devil should people be taken off the roll just because people who go round checking are not doing their jobs properly? This has to be stopped. I will say that the police constables did the job efficiently when they went round checking the rolls.

Mr. Houston: Why was it changed?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I frankly do not know. Again in 1972 a married couple living in the same house in McDonald Road, Redcliffe, found that one was on the Murrumba roll and the other was on the Redcliffe roll. How the devil could that happen? That shows inefficiency on the part of the people checking the rolls.

Mr. Houston: The boundary went through the middle of the house.

Mr. FRAWLEY: What rubbish! I do agree with some of the previous speakers that how-to-vote cards could well be abolished. They certainly contribute to the litter problem and there is a lot of confusion when a number of candidates are standing for the one seat. I will cite a case in point. In the local authority elections on the 27th of this month there are 26 aldermanic candidates for the Redcliffe City Council and only eight aldermen to be selected. How are people going to like arriving at a polling booth to vote for these 26 candidates and having people hand them 26 how-to-vote cards? A voter will walk in and get 26 how-to-vote cards from the helpers of the aldermanic candidates —which they are perfectly entitled to hand out—and two how-to-vote cards from the helpers of the mayoral candidates. A person could find himself saddled with 28 how-to-vote cards. I advise people to keep them and write their shopping lists on the back. They are handy for that. I think that is a ridiculous situation and the sooner we do something about it, the better. People must get sick of having these how-to-vote cards poked under their noses. For many years I have advocated that the mayoral candidates in the council elections at Redcliffe be listed on a separate ballot-paper from that listing the aldermanic candidates.

Mr. Houston: This is a State Act.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Never mind; this can refer to local authority elections also.

Mr. Houston: It covers the State elections.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Chair for a ruling on this. Am I on the subject or not?

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRAWLEY: Some of these smart alecs here——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member asked for a ruling and I will give him a ruling. The Bill we are presently

debating covers State elections and it also covers elections for the city of Brisbane. Elections in areas outside Brisbane for municipal purposes are covered by the Local Government Act.

Mr. FRAWLEY: At the Brisbane City Council election on the 27th of this month a hell of a lot of how-to-vote cards are going to be handed out—a stack of them.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: More than one candidate can stand in a ward. The honourable member is trying to distract me. He did not even know that Senator Field was chairman of his campaign committee in Bulimba.

Mr. Houston: He was not.

Mr. FRAWLEY: He was so.

Mr. Houston: Never at any time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRAWLEY: He did not even know when Percy Tucker was all set to knife him in the back. He was so silly that he did not know they were putting him out as leader.

We heard the honourable member for Wolston, when the honourable member for Toowong was speaking, make an interjection about a gerrymander. Anybody who knows the political history of this State——

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am going to tell the honourable member about it. The greatest gerrymander in the history of Queensland was in 1949, when the A.L.P. juggled the boundaries. They even went up railway lines to get a decent voting area. They took a strip of land, then went up the railway line, and then opened it out again. They won nine out of 10 western seats by using A.W.U. organisers to carry the Labor message.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: A boa constrictor could not get up the boundaries; this is how crooked they were. It was the greatest racket ever. Talk about gerrymanders! In 1949 the A.L.P. put over the greatest gerrymander there has ever been.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: We have honest boundaries now.

Mr. Houston interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRAWLEY: It is very important that these amendments be made.

Mr. Marginson interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Wolston is also becoming tedious. He had better begin restraining himself.

Mr. FRAWLEY: He should be sacked as the Labor Whip. He is not worth a tray-bit. As I said before, he is as useless as a teat on a bull.

Mr. Casey: Tell us about kicking the dog.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am not going to listen to some of these inane interjections. I thought that the honourable member for Mackay had more sense than to make stupid interjections. Everyone knows that I did not kick the dog. I will have to make an explanation about this, Mr. Hewitt. I was wrongly accused of kicking a dog because a person similar to me was seen running down the street—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member cannot deal with that on the motion now before the Committee, and he knows it.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I crave your indulgence for one moment, Mr. Hewitt. I was in Canada when the dog was kicked, and I can prove it.

Mr. Jones: We will amend the Dog Act tomorrow.

Mr. FRAWLEY: The honourable member for Cairns was the dog-catcher for the Cairns City Council before he was elected to Parliament, so he would know all about dogs.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask for the honourable gentleman's co-operation in coming back to the motion before the Committee.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am sorry, Mr. Hewitt. He is a pipsqueak and he has upset me tonight.

As to the nomination fee of $100—I must admit that I did not know about that, but I am not going to object if it is increased from $40 to $100.

Mr. Houston: Is it right?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not know.

Mr. Houston: The Minister didn't say it.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I didn't hear it.

Mr. Houston: Why did the honourable member for Toowong say it?

Mr. FRAWLEY: He might think it is $100; I don't know. It could well be $100.

An Honourable Member: If he said it, it would be right.

Mr. FRAWLEY: It could be right. If it is $100, I am not going to object, because I think $100 is a reasonable fee in these days of inflation. In Caboolture, which is in the electorate of Murrumba, if a person wishes to put up election signs he has to pay a $100 security fee to the council as a guarantee of good faith that he will take down his signs

afterwards. It is only a deposit; it is repaid. If it is reasonable to pay $100 as a security deposit, I think $100 would be a reasonable nomination fee. One always gets it back.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: There is a good chance that the bloke who stands against me will not get it back, but I will get it back for sure; there is no worry about that. As I said, I am not objecting to a nomination fee of $100.

In my opinion, there should have been some mention of electoral signs in the Elections Act. In the city of Redcliffe——

Mr. Knox: It is in the Local Government Act.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Signs at State elections come under the Local Government Act?

Mr. Knox: Yes.

Mr. FRAWLEY: They might, but they should not. They should come under the State Elections Act; they should not come under the Local Government Act. Each local government area can change its rules. Each one can say that signs will be allowed in one area and not in another.

Mr. Knox: That is why they have got the power.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That places some people at a disadvantage. I am in favour of not having signs at all. I believe a member can win his seat by personal representation. He does not need signs if he does his job in here. In his first term here he should do enough work to win his seat at the next election.

An Opposition Member: What about a new candidate?

Mr. FRAWLEY: If a new candidate does his job he goes around on a door-knock and becomes known from attending various functions.

I congratulate the Minister for introducing the Bill. Whenever he introduces a Bill he makes a very sensible contribution.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (8.5 p.m.): The Minister's introductory remarks have brought out many and diverse opinions from the experts in this Chamber—honourable members who have been involved in one or more State elections. The Minister said that all election activity should be within the province of the Principal Electoral Officer. I agree with that, but I would be in conflict with him because the Bill obviously does not include provision for a universal roll in these days of computers. One has to be resident three months in Queensland before being eligible for enrolment, but in the Federal sphere only one month's residence in an electorate is necessary. We should evolve a universal system. I can see no reason why that could not be done.

Mention has been made of small polling places. I realise the difficulties of an all-day boring vigil at a small polling place waiting to receive a handful of votes. In these days of motor-cars, there should be a review of the distance between polling booths. Some of the small ones are only three or four miles apart.

Mr. Casey: It is very costly paying for poll clerks, too.

Mr. JONES: Poll clerks and presiding officers are the ones who complain about having to sit there all day to receive 20 or 30 votes. That is one aspect of polling we should be trying to make more efficient.

The different polling boundaries are confusing. The subdivisions in the Federal electorates, State electorates and local authority wards are very confusing. I am sure there could be a more efficient method. For example, there is duplication in the names of subdivisions in the Federal, State and local authority spheres. We should be trying to avoid confusion.

Mobile booths are an innovation under the State Elections Act, but they do not always encompass all the institutions within an electorate. Why should a mobile polling booth be made available at, say, the Cairns Base Hospital, but not at the Calvary Hospital? Why should a mobile polling booth be made available with a presiding officer at one aged persons' home but not another? If we include one we should encompass all. A difficulty arises with the patient coming in on either the Thursday or the Friday or going home on Friday night. He is disfranchised because he cannot cast a vote and does not have time to cast a postal vote. This aspect should be looked at.

I am sickened by the way in which on election day children of tender age hand out how-to-vote cards. Perhaps the Minister is not able to do anything about this under the Act, but I do not believe that children should be recruited for this type of work.

Mr. Moore: They're not.

Mr. JONES: They are. We have seen photographs in the Press of kids doing that. I realise that all political parties are guilty, but I won't have children working near polling booths. If a person is not of voting age he should not be canvassing for votes near polling booths. Kids of tender age certainly should not be used in this way. I take a very strong stand on this matter, and won't have it. It is flogging the kids to death.

Mr. Lamont: If they are handing out Liberal cards, it's a sign of their intellectual maturity.

Mr. JONES: Perhaps the honourable member for South Brisbane adopts that attitude, but it certainly is not mine, nor is it the attitude of the general public. It is wrong

to resort to the use of child labour to do that type of work. I feel very strongly about this.

One of the previous speakers referred to section 35A (2) votes and said that a person recording such a vote does not realise that it is not counted. It is recorded but not counted. A person who has been incorrectly erased from the roll and takes the trouble to record his vote should have his name automatically recorded on the State electoral roll. We are never able to find out how many people have been wrongly erased from the roll or how many votes are left off. I still have not found out whether people who record votes in that manner are entitled to be enrolled. It is a form of enrolment and one that should be taken cognisance of.

Mr. Houston: Those whose votes had been rejected should be given an enrolment card shortly afterwards at least.

Mr. JONES: I whole-heartedly agree.

At election-time we seem to get a spurt on and ask people whether or not they are enrolled. I would suggest that between elections periodic advertisements could be inserted in the Press to remind people that it is their duty to enrol. The Minister for Justice is a great one for advertising, so perhaps he could initiate an advertising campaign to remind people of their responsibility to enrol.

I do not want to be accused of tedious repetition, but I refer now to the method of getting people on the roll and crossing them off the roll. In these days, with wives working and nobody at home, the names are immediately crossed off the roll. A person whose name is crossed off the roll is disfranchised and naturally feels aggrieved.

Mr. Knox: No, he isn't.

Mr. JONES: I cite the case of my mother-in-law, a pensioner who went on a holiday trip and came back to find that her name had been erased from the roll.

Mr. Knox: You said they were disfranchised. They may be crossed off the roll but they are not disfranchised.

Mr. JONES: I agree with the Minister, but how many people other than those with a son-in-law who happens to be a politician and can give them advice know that under section 35A they are entitled to vote provided they go to the presiding officer and say, "My name has been incorrectly erased from the roll. I demand a vote."?

Mr. Knox: There are thousands.

Mr. JONES: Yes, and another 3,000, 4,000 or 10,000 don't know their entitlements.

We advertise this fact in my electorate on a party basis and gradually we are educating electors to make sure that they claim a vote. But quite a number of electors do not know. If their number were counted, I wonder if it would equal the number of informal votes recorded in an election. I expect that it would.

A large number of flat-dwellers change their addresses from time to time. We do not seem to be able to get the message across to them and they default on most occasions. They are the people who are frequently crossed off the roll.

In postal voting, the qualification written by a witness sometimes disfranchises an elector. The postal-voting procedure is too complicated. It should be simplified. Envelopes for local government elections have been simplified. I compliment the people who were responsible for that. Many people filling in "qualification of elector" insert on the roll a description such as "railway employee" or "guard". The qualification, of course, is that he is an elector, but how many people know that? Simplification would mean that fewer people would be disfranchised. The Minister should look into this matter.

I know that lighting of booths, which has been referred to, is a local matter and is probably left to the returning officer or the presiding officer in charge of a booth. Times without number, towards the end of polling, the light in polling booths is negligible. Aged people have complained to me about the light, blunt pencils, and many other problems that confront voters in the polling booth. When old people cast their vote they have to make their own decision. We should be sure that the lighting in polling booths is adequate. We cannot legislate on this matter, but I feel that the introductory stage of the measure is the time to raise it. Like the old Chinaman's horse, "He no lookee too good." The horse was blind, but his description was open to other interpretations.

I do not think voting at any school in Cairns takes place upstairs. North Queensland is renowned for its practical, down-to-earth approach, and we do not ask old people to climb stairs, but I have been in electorates where booths are upstairs. That is another imposition on aged and infirm people and is probably another local problem that should be looked at.

The honourable member for Toowong, of course, parades himself as a great State-righter. It amused me to hear him joining with members of the Opposition in advocating the need to have electoral rolls on a centralised basis. I do not often agree with him, but I do on this occasion. With the computerised system, we could have uniform rolls which would make enrolment easier.

The honourable member for Toowong said that his concern was that optional preference voting would evolve into first-past-the-post voting. If that is what the people want, surely that is their right. Why not? If that is what will evolve, why not give the people the option or choice? If they want to vote

preferential, why not give them the right to do so? If they want to vote first-past-the-post, why not give them the option to do so? They may not choose to vote for somebody whom they do not like, even at No. 5 on the ballot-paper. There is the alphabetical problem, too.

The honourable member for Toowong foreshadowed an increase in the nomination fee from $40 to $100. Technically he has let the cat out of the bag. I do not accuse the Minister of withholding information, but he did not outline this proposal in his introduction and perhaps he should have enlightened us on that aspect of the Bill.

Mr. Lowes: Would you give them the option not to vote at all?

Mr. JONES: If a man wants that option, he can exercise it. Anybody who has been a scrutineer over a long period knows that the fellow who turns up and does not want to vote usually writes rude remarks across the ballot-paper, turns in a blank ballot-paper, or puts crosses all the way down the paper. I have been scrutineering for nearly 30 years and I am considered to be a reasonable and fair scrutineer and not a bad assessor of numbers. If a man chooses not to vote, it is on his shoulders. I do not agree with that approach, but it is the right of every individual to choose how he should vote, when he should vote, why he should vote and if he should vote.

Mr. Neal: Do you believe in preferential voting?

Mr. JONES: The honourable member is not sitting in his correct place but I will accept his interjection. He should know only too well that the A.L.P. policy is first past the post with optional preferential voting, which gives the individual and not politicians, Governments or anybody else the right to make the choice. The person in the polling booth has the right to decide how he will allocate his vote—whether it be preferential, first past the post, or optional preferential. That is the way it should be. That is the way democracy should operate. That is what the A.L.P. and I believe to be the right way to do it.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (8.25 p.m.): First of all I congratulate the Minister on introducing these proposals. They make a great improvement on the old system. I also congratulate those honourable members who have managed to stay here this long to listen to what has been a sometimes erudite, sometimes brittle, but more often irrelevant and dull debate.

One matter that attracts my attention in the Minister's introductory speech is the question of the electoral officer being able to interrogate voters to ensure that a voter is indeed the person he says he is. Extension of the franchise was the democratic struggle of the 19th Century; the universal franchise was the triumph of the 20th Century. But I believe that it was never intended that the franchise should be extended to both the quick and the dead.

I am concerned because I have heard certain boasts around my electorate and friends and supporters of mine have reported to me that they have been appalled at the boasts of some people that they voted several times on election day. One woman was overheard saying that she had voted 30 times. It seems that these people go through obituary columns and funeral notices checking who has passed away between the time when the electoral roll was finally drawn up and polling day. On an electoral roll of some 14,000, 15,000 or 20,000 people there would be many who unfortunately departed the electorate in that period of time.

Mr. Houston: The electoral officer has a list of those who pass away.

Mr. LAMONT: Not always, unfortunately.

Mr. Houston: If that did happen, the returning officer slipped up on his job.

Mr. LAMONT: His list is not completely up to date. I am concerned that some people seem to think that it is possible to vote on behalf of deceased persons.

I think that this is something that has to be tightened up. It is quite easy to vote on behalf of the deceased. I am interested in the families of my electorate and I keep a very close watch on bereavement notices in order that I can extend my condolences and the services of my office to the relatives of people who have passed away. As a result I can, if necessary, advise a returning officer of the necessary amendments to the electoral roll that are occasioned from time to time. I would then hope that if anybody did turn up to vote in South Brisbane on behalf of a deceased person, he would be clapped in irons immediately.

It is all very well for Labor members to tell me that it does not happen. My colleagues who have cemeteries in their electorates tell me that there are earth tremors there every polling day. They are caused by people who have never voted Labor in their lives turning over in their graves when a vote for Labor has been recorded for them. I hope that that practice can be completely eradicated.

There is only one other thing that I want to say. I think everything else has been covered. The honourable member for Toowong said that as long as there is compulsory voting there ought to be compulsory preferential voting. He said that he would not go into the reasons for that view. Unfortunately the honourable member for Cairns was not prepared to learn the lesson that there was in that; he had to bring it out into the open and discuss it further. I therefore feel compelled to say just one or two things about it.

I have always been amused—curiously amused, because I am always amused by

curiosities—that the Labor Party uses preferential voting within its own organisation. They realise, of course, that it is the best system. It gets the best results and ensures that the leader of the party has the support of at least 50 per cent of the party. But they do not want to give it to the people of Queensland; it does not suit them in their electorates. No other party would be silly enough to give its preferences to Labor so they don't want it for general elections, but they use the system in their own organisation.

Mr. Jones: Exhaustive ballot.

Mr. LAMONT: Exactly. I take the interjection. I am quite well aware that it is exhaustive. Luckily my patience is not!

Mr. Jones: Are you going to have two election days?

Mr. LAMONT: That is just the point. The preferential exhaustive system which the A.L.P. uses is probably the most equitable system that can be devised, and in any small group—a very small group, such as the A.L.P.—it can be used. But in a State and nation the size of Queensland and Australia respectively the preferential exhaustive system cannot be used because, as the honourable member for Cairns in his wisdom has already worked out, the people would have to return on different days. So I accept his point. In fact, it was a proposition I learned 15 years ago when I studied first year political science while doing my first degree. But I am glad the honourable member worked it out, too. There is nothing like self-discovery, as I said yesterday in a debate on education.

In a small group like the A.L.P. it would be possible to use the preferential exhaustive system, but we cannot say to the people of Queensland, "There are five candidates in this electorate, so come along on Saturday and vote and the one who gets the least votes will be struck off. Come along next Saturday and vote and the one who gets the least votes is struck off again and so on till we narrow it down to an election between two and then we ensure that one of them has the support of at least 50 per cent of the people who are prepared to turn up and vote." That would be an ideally equitable system if it were not terribly inconvenient for the voters. But what we have done is say, "We are going to put all the names on the ballot paper; you vote preferentially and that is compulsory." There are no options about it. The result is a system very little different in its nature from the ideal system which the A.L.P. has in its own organisation, but it accommodates the physical problem I have described. We are prepared to depart just far enough from the ideal form to save people coming to the polling booths on more than one weekend, but we are not prepared to go any further and Opposition members are quite hypocritical if they suggest that it is worth our while to go any further. I am sick to death of going around and having to listen to A.L.P. people telling me, "First past the post is the only way. Any other way you have two votes. Why should you blokes have two votes?" It has simply stuck in their craw that no other respectable political party will ever give them a preference so they would not give to the people of Australia or the people of Queensland what they give to their own organisation, which is a preference to ensure that whoever gets there has got 50 per cent support. Good Lord, Mr. Hewitt, most of their leaders are very lucky to get 50 per cent support. Tom Burns has six of his cricket XI—if we include the honourable member for Mackay—and the devil knows what Gough Whitlam has. Half of them are putting in dummy-run votes anyway, even with their preferential exhaustive system. They barely scrape together a 50 per cent vote for their own leader, but at least they do recognise it is the best system. So let us agree to give the people preferential voting and put an end to this hypocrisy.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.32 p.m.): I had not intended to speak in this debate, but after hearing the tripe spoken by the honourable member for South Brisbane I thought I had better rise and put him right. Only a fool would assume that the exhaustive ballot system and the preferential voting system are in any way similar. There is no similarity between the two systems at all. For instance, with the preferential system one is compelled to vote for people one does not want to vote for.

Mr. Powell: They are exhaustive ballots, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: No. One votes for only one person in the exhaustive ballot and when it comes to the final vote, if there are two left and one does not want either candidate, one does not vote for either, whereas with the preferential system, if there are three people on the ballot-paper and there are two one does not want, one still has to vote for the three of them. So let us cast aside any ideas like that. As far as the honourable member for South Brisbane is concerned, if he goes as far in his party and remains as long in Parliament as my colleagues have, then he will have something to boast about. But he is a one-timer. He is here through a freak of parliamentary democracy and I can assure him that he had better start looking for another job very shortly.

Mr. Casey: He talked about the dead. They tell me that they reckon over in South Brisbane that he is dead from the neck up.

Mr. HOUSTON: He is. That is true. As a matter of fact, if I did not have an office over there, nothing would be done in

the area at all. I get more callers than he does. People in his electorate ask me to help them.

Let me move to another subject. I know the Minister wishes to reply——

Mr. Lamont: Will you answer a question for me?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: Let us have a look at the question of returning officers.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: I have had a lot to do with them over the years and I would say that they are a dedicated lot of men and women, mainly men. They are dedicated to their job and do it as honestly and sincerely as they can. If the honourable member knows anything about voting and what goes on—I suggest he should check it out—he will find that the returning officer receives a list of deceased people from the Chief Electoral Officer which is not compiled until the last possible moment. If that is not right the Minister will indicate the position to the Committee. He is nodding his head. That is right, is it not?

Mr. Knox: Yes.

Mr. HOUSTON: As a result, the Chief Electoral Officer passes it on to the returning officer in the electorate, who passes it on to his poll clerks. If one had a look at a roll used by the poll clerks, one will find that names are crossed out. I am not going to say that there could not be an occasional slip-up, but that would not be more than one in any electorate. So the suggestion that people are going round voting for someone who is deceased is complete nonsense. Some things could be improved, and they become obvious in all elections.

When a person applies for an absentee vote or a postal vote, or an electoral visitor vote as it is now commonly called, I do not believe that anyone should question his right to have such a vote if he believes that he is not in good health. The only reservation I would have would be the case where someone questions whether the person applying for such a vote is in fact in ill health. I am not a doctor. If a person rings me and says he would like an absentee vote because he does not feel well or because he thinks that on election day he may not be well enough to go down to the polling booth in bad weather or heat, or something like that, I believe that he should be given such a vote without any argument. The important thing is to ensure that he gets only one vote.

Mr. Moore: You could not do it for half a million voters.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course not. There would not be half a million people wanting to do it. Occasionally one finds an instance in which one member of the family has suffered a stroke and the partner in the marriage does not like leaving that person alone. If one person is bedridden and the other person is technically physically healthy, I do not see any reason why that person should not be given an absentee vote or an electoral visitor vote under those circumstances. I do not think they should be questioned about it. If they have a vote under the electoral visitor system, I have no evidence to suggest to me that any force is applied to them as to who they should vote for or anything else. I stress again that they must be given only one vote. If the Minister can introduce a scheme that makes it more convenient for such people to vote, I will not have an quarrel with it. The main thing is to let them have a vote.

I made a point when the honourable member for Cairns was speaking, and I thank him for accepting it. At that stage I did not expect that I would be taking part in the debate. When people find that they are not on the roll—and I have seen this happen at a number of elections—they go to the poll clerk and he says, "I am sorry, you are not on the roll." That is the end of the matter. The people go away. They are not told that they are entitled to vote under section 35A. There may be many reasons for that. People are lined up and the poll clerk is busy. He has no time to tell people all the things they can do. Some people go outside and speak to the supporters of the political party for which they wish to vote, and invariably several of them come back inside and see the chief poll clerk or the presiding officer and are given a vote under section 35A.

Mr. Lamont: Service to the people!

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. I have no quarrel with that. But the point is that they have to go outside and be told what their rights are and then go back and ask for a vote. Quite often people who have been there for a while become rather upset because they know they should be on the roll. When they are told that they are not on the roll, they have a bit of a blue with the returning officer or the poll clerk and come outside very unhappy about the whole situation. They go away and the member concerned does not hear about it until they have cooled down, and usually it is then too late to do anything about it.

In cases in which people are given a vote under section 35A and that vote is counted, their name should be put on the back on the roll automatically. But quite a number of votes under section 35A are not counted, as anyone who has acted as a scrutineer would know. If a vote is not counted, the person concerned should be written to immediately by the electoral officer at the address that he has given. He should be sent an

enrolment form and told in polite language that it is regretted that he is not on the roll, so that he does not feel that he has been simply wiped off. His name should then be put onto the roll for the electorate in which he is entitled to vote.

One of the weaknesses of the electoral system is that those who are on the roll and who fail to vote are fined, but those who have never been on the roll go scot-free. I remember an occasion on which it was suggested to me before an election—it was not a State election, and I am going back years—that I might try to get people on the roll. I remember going to a place in a country area and suggesting to a few people that they should enrol, but I was very quickly told that on no account did they want to enrol. They didn't want to enrol because they didn't want their wives or someone else to know where they were living. People like that do not vote at all. To me they are not accepting their democratic right as citizens to vote in an election. But that is their choice. To my knowledge no-one has ever been prosecuted for not becoming enrolled. On the other hand people who are on the roll, but who for some reason which is legitimate to them do not vote, may have action taken against them. I cannot see any justice in fining such a person when action is not take against persons who do not enrol.

I rose mainly to put the honourable member for South Brisbane right about the difference between preferential and exhaustive voting.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (8.41 p.m.): I have one point to raise about the concept of preferential voting. With preferential voting as it exists today, there can be some anomalies. I will give an example. Suppose there are three parties—party A, party B and party C. Let us assume that party A polls 25 per cent of the vote, party B 26 per cent of the vote and party C 49 per cent of the vote. This is indeed a theoretical situation. On first-past-the-post voting, party C would win. Let us further assume that party A gives its preferences to party B, party B gives its preferences to party A, and party C also gives its preferences to party A. Because of the way preferences are distributed between party A and party B, 51 per cent of the people prefer party B to party C and 76 per cent prefer party A to party B. However, because party A polled only 25 per cent of the vote, and party B polled 26 per cent of the vote, party A's preferences are distributed first. They go to party B, and party B with 51 per cent of the vote wins, even though 74 per cent of the electorate would rather have had party A than party B.

Mr. Lamont: Would you agree that that would still be the anomalous result under the A.L.P. preferential exhaustive system?

Mr. BYRNE: That would still be the same result. For instance with an optional preferential vote there would still be the same situation.

The only way it could possibly be overcome—I have not seen any idea put forward yet—would be to accord to position 1, position 2 or position 3 on the ballot-papers individual values, they being given to each preferential position and added to the total. Thus the candidate who would eventually win, if there was not a person who won on first preferences, would be the candidate who was preferred by the majority of the voters.

That is an anomaly in the present voting system. It is an anomalous situation which exists in the voting systems throughout the world. If we had a proper democratic and fair system the person elected would be the person whom the majority desires—not the party that just 51 per cent want but the party that 74 per cent desire to have. I do not mention any specific parties in this case, only party A, party B and party C. It would be a valuable exercise if we could overcome this problem so that the candidate elected is the one that the majority of the people would rather have.

Mr. Casey: What you are saying is that under the three systems all No. 2 should be counted.

Mr. BYRNE: What I am saying is that the No. 2 vote is valuable when we take into account that 49 per cent of No. 1 votes are disregarded.

Mr. Casey: If you had 70 candidates, as they did in New South Wales, you would still be voting at the time of the next election.

Mr. BYRNE: That is a different system. We do not have 70 candidates in the other elections of which I am speaking. I mention these points because I think they are valuable to the full implementation of a democratic system under the Elections Act in Queensland.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.46 p.m.), in reply: Introducing an Elections Act Amendment Bill into this Parliament is like feeding——

Mr. Moore: Strawberries to pigs.

Mr. KNOX: I would not dare refer to honourable members in those terms. Perhaps it is like feeding meat to hungry lions. We are dealing with a subject that is close to our hearts and in which we are all experts. I am quite sure that the debate has been of value to the officers who have the responsibility of administering the Act.

Very little of the debate, of course, related to the legislation; but I suppose that doesn't matter. It is inevitable that members would want to speak about the administration of the Elections Act. It would probably be a more appropriate debate under the Estimates, but I found it valuable and I know that my

officers, too, found it valuable to hear what the members—the practical people—feel about the implementation of the Act. For that reason I thank honourable members for their contributions to this valuable debate to that extent.

Mr. Casey: It deteriorated towards the end.

Mr. KNOX: I think a debate on this Bill could be regarded as a sort of grievance debate by the consumers, who live with it very closely.

The sort or problems that members have raised are not new. It is seldom that we have an opportunity of debating them. I want to correct some of the statements that have been made, and I hope that members will pardon me if I do not single them out. We have had too many speakers for me to reply to them one by one, so I shall deal with their comments in general terms.

A statement made by several members was that the system prejudiced old people. My experience has been that people of senior years know what they want to do and why they want to do it and know more about it than any other group of people in the electorate. They have voted many times; most of them have lived in the one locality for many years; many have had time to study the form of the candidates; they know their names and their parties, and they have made up their minds what they want to do.

Mr. Moore: They have generally got enough spare time.

Mr. KNOX: I mentioned that.

This aspect is rather important. It is not the experience of electoral registrars, returning officers and poll clerks that people of senior years are inhibited or in any way disadvantaged by the system. With the exception of those persons who, for various reasons, are no longer competent to look after their interests—one class of those is mentioned in the Bill—and the proviso that a person can get off the roll by application to the office supported by a medical certificate and so on, people of senior years exercise their vote deliberately and with a great deal of study and understanding of what the issues are at election-time. That should be understood clearly. If voting were not compulsory, most people of senior years in the community would front up first to vote because of their long interest in the system and in the welfare of their community. I hope I have put that one to rest.

The taking of the names of people off the rolls was raised by a number of speakers. I realise that human errors will occur—and indeed they do—and the system provides for a check and balance of the possibility of human errors occuring. Some of the amendments proposed are designed to reduce the chance of disfranchising electors by human error. A number of errors have caused me great concern, particularly those that are discovered after the issue of writs. Some of the amendments in the Bill relate to the responsibilities of the Principal Electoral Officer and the registrars after the issue of writs. The most difficult circumstances arise after the issue of writs. That is not because something has happened subsequent to the writs being issued, but because something has been discovered after the writ has been issued. At the present time it is extremely difficult to correct. There is always a number of distressed people who have been disfranchised for various reasons—sometimes through their own fault and sometimes that of an officer. It has not been possible to correct the human error after the issue of writs. We are taking care of that in these amendments.

The number of people taken off the roll is quite considerable. It runs into many tens of thousands. The number of people who lose their right to vote is very small. Names taken off rolls very often occur in other rolls. I am sure that if honourable members inquire of their returning officers they will discover that while a great number of their constituents or apparent constituents have been taken off the roll between the close of rolls at the end of December and election day, their names are on other rolls. Their names have been taken off because very often they have failed when enrolling somewhere else to tell the office that they are enrolled elsewhere. That is discovered only by canvasses and so on.

As some honourable members said, errors are made by canvassers. Sometimes they are not supervised as strictly as they ought to be. Again, we have to accept that that will happen even under the best-regulated systems. We should provide an opportunity to correct it, and that is what it is all about. When over a million people are enrolled, as they are in Queensland, with a compulsory voting and enrolment system, it is inevitable that tens of thousands of people will be in a fringe area requiring special attention. Most of the work of the Electoral Office is devoted to looking after the problem areas, not the areas easy to solve.

On the matter of 35A votes, which flows from this, there are about 10,000 to 14,000 of these every election. Believe it or not, somebody said that he did not know about it. It is amazing to find the number of people who appear to know of their right to vote. Every election there is that sort of a figure for people who actually exercise their rights under section 35A.

Mr. Wright: How many of those are counted in the long run?

Mr. KNOX: A very small number, but only after a very thorough investigation of every claim. They are not, as somebody tried to suggest, casually put aside. Every claim is investigated first by the returning officer and, if he cannot find any reason that satisfies him that those people are entitled to

vote, the matter goes to the registrars or to the electoral office, where further investigations are carried out.

Mr. Wright: Doesn't it come back to what we mean by being struck off in error?

Mr. KNOX: If they are struck off in error, have claimed a vote, are enrolled and the cards exist in the office, they are discovered, and the returning officer is advised that the votes of these people are to be counted. This is done promptly; within a few days of election day. I do not know what rapport the honourable member has with his returning officer but my returning officer has always shown me those lists to satisfy me—because I receive a number of complaints and I am sure that other honourable members do—that a thorough investigation has been made of each claim. I am quite satisfied that in every election in which I have been a candidate—and I have stood nine times now—the electoral office and the returning officers and other officials investigate these claims thoroughly. So the system works.

I think we ought to be very grateful to the great body of officials who work on election day. I know that they get paid for it and that they do not regard it as a sacrifice of time; they are interested in what they are doing. They work on election day, prior to it and after it to ensure that democracy is maintained in our community. In the main, they do it because they accept the principles that are involved in a democratic system.

It is rare indeed that there is any suggestion of corruption by any of these officials in their office. On the rare occasions that that has occurred in my political limetime, the remedy has been available to those who wished to take action.

I mention these matters because I would hate the public or anybody else to think that merely because there is criticism the system is inadequate. The system can cope, and copes very well. I understand that only three countries in the world have compulsory universal adult franchise, and we are one of them.

An enormous burden is placed on the officials and on the system to make sure that it works without riots in the streets and unnecessary pressure being put on these people. We are all indebted to them and should be very grateful that it works the way it does or we would end up like some of the South American republics where people have to go into exile because they do not get around to holding elections as nobody can conduct them.

Other suggestions were made concerning how-to-vote cards and signs. Signs are principally a matter for local authorities. Quite a number of local authorities prohibit signs and candidates manage to get along quite well without them. It used to be the rule in Brisbane that signs could not be put on telephone posts. When the A.L.P. became the ruling body, everybody was allowed to put signs on telephone posts—without a permit. When I first got into Parliament I had to have a permit but I was never allowed to put signs on telephone posts or in parks. Since the A.L.P. gained office, they can be put anywhere at all without a permit.

Mr. Jones: You still do.

Mr. KNOX: What?

Mr. Jones: Put signs on telephone posts.

Mr. KNOX: I do it now because the A.L.P. allows it. Originally I was not allowed to do it. I put them up one day and they were pulled down the next. It is a funny sort of system.

Mr. Wright: They announced recently that they want to stop it. There was a scream about it.

Mr. KNOX: I do not know that the system is enhanced by having a proliferation of signs. I know that the honourable member for Nudgee had about 800 signs in his electorate during the last election, and I am sure that he would be grateful for a rule prohibiting them because he would save that cost.

Mr. Jones: How many did you have?

Mr. KNOX: I have not the faintest idea.

Mr. Melloy: You and Kevin Cairns knocked mine down.

Mr. KNOX: That is not true.

Concerning how-to-vote cards, sitting members might see good reason for their abolition. But how does a new candidate let people know his position? After all, we still recognise that any person is entitled to run for Parliament even if he is not a member of a political party. If minorities are to be heard, the position of how-to-vote cards has to be recognised. If there were no such cards, candidates would have no vehicle by which to let the people know their position in the political spectrum. I think it is important for the people to have this information in order to judge the candidates.

I am pleased that the electoral visitor system is working extremely well. Incidentally, one member said that it was not available in remote areas. It is in fact available in every electorate. In some parts of Queensland it costs the State $12 for each vote cast under the electoral visitor system.

Mr. Jones: I think you should ban candidates from going with them.

Mr. KNOX: Candidates are not allowed to go with them; they are banned now. If the honourable member has been going with them, will he please desist?

Mr. Jones: You want to tell your Liberal mates in Cairns not to go with them.

Mr. KNOX: A candidate is allowed to have his scrutineers go with the electoral visitor, and some do this. I make arrangements with my opponents not to do this because I think it is an intrusion on people's privacy to have a number of people entering their homes. If the electoral visitors are persons of standing, as indeed they are, there is no reason on any side to doubt their integrity. I hope that candidates will, if possible, make arrangements between themselves not to send scrutineers with the electoral visitor because I think it is an imposition on a private citizen to have up to four or five people marching into his home because he wants to exercise his right to vote.

Mr. Wright: In country areas concern is expressed about the delay between the time of applying for such a vote and the visit by the electoral visitor. I know that distance is the criterion, but even so there are sometimes long delays.

Mr. KNOX: There could be delays in some areas because of the distances involved. However, I do not think that that is a serious criticism because as long as the vote is cast before election day there is no real cause for dissatisfaction.

Mr. Wright: Except that they think they have been forgotten.

Mr. KNOX: They might, but I am sure that those who vote regularly by this method will understand the system after a few years and there will be less criticism. There will, of course, be delays but I am not greatly worried about them.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

ASSOCIATIONS (NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF) BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. D. HERBERT (Sherwood—Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport) (9.5 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In the introduction of this Bill, I indicated in broad terms the provisions of the Bill and the proposed method of distribution of finance to those organisations that are eligible.

Honourable members no doubt have now examined the contents of this Bill and it will be seen that the provisions under the Sporting Bodies (Natural Disaster Relief) Act 1974 have been re-enacted, with appropriate amendments to enable financial assistance to be given to church and charitable organisations as well as sporting clubs and associations.

I am sure that honourable members, having read the Bill, will agree that this is a desirable measure and I commend it to the House.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (9.6 p.m.): The Opposition has had the opportunity of looking at the Bill and generally considers that it contains desirable provisions. We did feel, however, that it could in some circumstances perhaps be extended to other than charitable bodies and churches because there are many people who are affected by natural disasters, particularly people living on flood plains, and they suffer great financial loss as a result of floods and other natural disasters. Even if they did not receive a grant, I feel that they, too, would welcome a loan—an amount of $10,000 or $12,000 was mentioned—at an interest rate of 5 per cent.

In many cases charitable bodies and church organisations would be covered by insurance, although I understand that the intention of the measure is to make up the leeway between the amount received through insurance and the total cost of repairs. I believe this Bill should be extended to cover people in necessitous circumstances. I do not say they should receive grants, but they should receive loans at a reasonable rate of interest. I do not know whether the Minister will be inclined to consider this point, but that is the only point I wish to make. Perhaps the Bill could be extended to cover these people.

Hon. J. D. HERBERT (Sherwood—Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport) (9.9 p.m.), in reply: The speech made by the honourable member does not bear any relation to this Bill. There are other ways to assist individuals. This Bill deals with churches and charitable organisations which were previously excluded. They could not be included earlier because we did not have the agreement of the Commonwealth Government to include them. That agreement has now been received and so we have introduced this legislation. Individuals who suffer losses are covered in other and far better ways. After the 1974 flood many householders who were affected received far more than sporting clubs could ever receive under this Bill, and it was not by way of loan either; it was a direct grant. There is a degree of urgency about this, because since the introduction of the Bill there have been quite a number of inquiries and it is obvious that there will be organisations which will be greatly helped by the passing of this Bill.

Motion (Mr. Herbert) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Application for relief—

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.11 p.m.): I raise a point that really goes to line 29 which says, "An association of persons that (a) is a sporting body or a non-profit organization;". I should like some clarification of exactly what is meant by "a non-profit organization". I take it that that would cover church and charitable groups as well as sporting organisations.

However, I bring to the attention of the Committee the fact that there has been a great deal of conflict about the definition of an approved association within the Justice Department. Most people thought that an approved association was simply an association recognized by the Justice Department. However, it is in fact the name given to an association that applies and which has a satisfactory constitution and aims and objects that are worth while, and it thereby gets special privileges.

I should like the Minister to advise the Committee whether the constitution of the association matters. Would the W.E.L. organisation be covered by this clause, or would it have to fit into some other category? You will note, Mr. Hewitt, that there is no definition of what is meant by a non-profit organisation. Perhaps the simplest way would be for the Minister to explain what organisations are not covered.

I wish to make one other point. I should like to know whether, when applications are being made, an application is made by the local body affected. Take the scouting organisation, for example. The land is vested in the Queensland Scouts Association and then to the Australian Scouts Association. It would seem to me that it would create unnecessary work-loads if an application has to go from the Rockhampton Scouts Association to the Queensland body and then to the national body, which would then make application for some assistance. Irrespective of whether the land or property is vested in a local group or a national body, has the local body the right to apply for assistance?

Hon. J. D. HERBERT (Sherwood—Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport) (9.13 p.m.): Applications by the Scouts Association are made on a State basis. All claims to my department are made through the State organisation because that is where all land matters are dealt with, and all property in Queensland is held in trust by the State organisation. "Non-profit organization" was suggested by the Crown Law Office as the term to include churches.

If the honourable member checks the Act —and this is one of the reasons why it was necessary to amend it—he will see that this is the difference between the original Bill, which included only sporting bodies, and the present Bill, which includes churches and charitable organisations. There are other ways in which it could be done, of course, but the objective is to make certain that those who receive it are in fact non-profit organisations.

Mr. Wright: Does it go back to their constitution?

Mr. HERBERT: When an association makes application to me, it has to set out full details of the loss suffered, reason for the application, the type of financial assistance sought, the nature and extent of the damage to or loss of the facilities, the nature and extent of the restoration, replacement or repair work considered necessary, and proof that the association concerned has the capacity to meet the repayments on the loan, together with the interest payments thereon, and that security is available for the purpose of obtaining the advance. Every application made under the repealed Act that is not disposed of will still be covered by the Bill. The important part about it is that the organisations or churches have no other way of meeting the commitment, and in many cases the evidence is provided by their bank that there is no other avenue available to them. The bank certificate in that direction is accepted.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 15, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

ABORIGINAL RELICS PRESERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries) (9.16 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

At the conclusion of the introductory debate I stated that during the second-reading stage I would reply to all honourable members who made comment. I also intend to elaborate on the nature of the amendments and the reasons for them.

I was indeed gratified that the honourable members displayed such a keen interest and awareness of the nature of Aboriginal relics throughout this State and were also aware of the need to protect and preserve them for posterity. As they will now be aware, it was foremost in the minds of those who designed the legislation that Aboriginal people and interested laymen have ample opportunity to participate in the work to be done.

I would like to pay tribute to the excellent service given voluntarily by the members of the advisory committee established under the Act. The legal chairman is the director with his nominee, Mr. John Burless. Other members include the Director of the Queensland Museum (Dr. A. Bartholomai), the

Professor of Anthropology at the Queensland University (Professor B. Rigsby), Dr. Malcolm Calley and Mr. J. O'Chin of Cherbourg. The committee is currently being expanded to include Professor Barrie Reynolds of James Cook University, Mr. L. Stewart, Chairman of the Aboriginal Advisory Council, and Dr. P. Lauer of the Queensland University.

All the members are eminent in their fields, and the opinions of the Aboriginal people of this State are well represented. The committee has drawn praise from other State and Federal authorities with regard to its composition and responsible advice on all matters pertaining to the legislation.

The honourable member for Cairns hoped that, among the honorary wardens appointed, a number would be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait descent, and I am pleased to advise that, apart from the Aboriginal rangers employed as public servants, at least 20 Aboriginal people have been appointed as honorary wardens. However, we do not identify by race in this area.

Through the ranger service, Aboriginal people have full opportunity to participate in policy-making and activities undertaken to protect and preserve the traces and remains of their culture. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook mentioned that he was aware that one of the rangers is likely to be the first fully-qualified Aboriginal archaeologist in Australia. My administration certainly encourages the rangers to undertake courses to enable them to be qualified as surveyors, photographers or archaeologists. The training of the rangers is a continuing programme under the supervision of the professional staff.

Honourable members also commented upon the three months' training course that is undertaken by rangers immediately after their appointment. The training course provides them with expertise in archaeological recording, and they receive training from the Q.I.T., Kedron Park Teachers College, professional photographers and officers of the Queensland Museum.

In their turn it is the responsibility of all officers of the division to undertake public relations and public education in order that the people of Queensland can be made fully aware of the importance and value of Aboriginal relics.

The professional staff of my department are preparing education kits which can be used by the Aboriginal rangers during their frequent visits to schools within their areas and by honorary wardens and teachers.

The honourable member for Mt. Isa appeared to have first-hand knowledge of the work undertaken by Aboriginal rangers, and he commented upon the frequent visits by rangers to schools, providing discussion and education for the children. They also attend various clubs and service groups throughout their areas in order to approach all levels of the community.

The member for Hinchinbrook commented upon the advisory signs that are established near Aboriginal relics, and this is part of the endeavour to inform the public who visit a relic of its importance and place within the whole range of Aboriginal culture. The public have commented favourably to my department on these signs, which are proving extremely successful.

The honourable member for Barron River mentioned the training programmes organised by my department for honorary wardens appointed under the Act, and I would like to point out that the response from wardens to the rather strenuous work that must be undertaken during these week-end programmes has been quite remarkable. The Aboriginal rangers in any area co-ordinate the efforts of the honorary wardens, and this creates a determined and informed body of people to assist in the protection and preservation of Aboriginal culture.

The honourable member for Windsor raised perturbations that dams and mining construction throughout the State would not be permitted to take place in the event of there being Aboriginal relics in the way. I would like to point out that this has already been proven incorrect, and indeed the honourable member for Hinchinbrook in the Chamber last Tuesday noted the operation to remove Aboriginal engravings from the bed of the Burnett River, where they would have been inundated by an irrigation barrage. There was no question that the barrage would not be constructed, but this Government, fully realising the intrinsic value of the engravings, saw fit to remove them from any danger.

I was surprised to hear the honourable member for Flinders comment that to his knowledge there was no documentation of Aboriginal sites in North-west Queensland. I can reassure the honourable member that, since the appointment of Aboriginal rangers based in Mt. Isa, over 100 Aboriginal sites have been inspected, surveyed and fully documented. Records are held in the archaeological division office in Brisbane, and copies of all records are held by the Aboriginal rangers in Mt. Isa. The honourable member also commented upon the desirability of fencing sites, and I would mention that a programme to fence and protect the more vulnerable sites throughout the State is under way.

Members also commented directly or indirectly upon the cultural differences that exist within our State. I feel I have made the social implications of preserving the cultural traces and remains of the Aboriginal people quite apparent. All Queenslanders have an opportunity to appreciate the traditional culture of the Aboriginal people, and by the preserving of the remains of that

culture Aborigines are provided with a means to establish a sense of continuity vital to all groups within our community.

I shall now discuss the proposed amendments in some detail and in so doing answer several queries raised by honourable members during the introductory stage.

Section 7 of the principal Act relating to the responsibilities of inspectors and wardens has been amended to clarify the situation regarding these appointments. In the principal Act section 7 (C) could have been interpreted as giving wardens the right to conduct surveys and excavations, which can only be approved by myself under section 21. The original intention in the principal Act is now clearly expressed in the proposed amendment.

In section 7 (2) it is made clear that the power to search a person and his baggage is only granted to inspectors appointed under the Act. I pointed out in my introductory speech that inspectors are senior officers of the State Service and it is not my intention to extend the appointment of inspectors beyond this.

Subsections 4, 5 and 6 of section 7 are additions to the principal Act and I have been advised by counsel that this is a normal inclusion in any Act in which powers similar to those in section 7 are given. I felt it advisable that the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act be in accordance with other and similar legislation.

It is proposed that section 19 relating to access to Aboriginal sites be amended firstly to ensure that conditions for permission to be upon an Aboriginal site can be firmly established. In order to ensure full protection for relics located upon a declared site, it is necessary that the conditions be made clear and that they be observed.

Section 19 (2) (D) is an addition to the principal Act, and I noticed that the honourable member for Isis raised perturbations as to the intention of this addition. Under the principal Act, any tourist wishing to visit an Aboriginal site required my personal written permission. For the most part, it was necessary that each tourist apply individually. Over the years during which the Act has been administered, this has proven to be most inconvenient, particularly to the bona fide tourists wishing to view the Aboriginal culture of this State. As members will be aware, my department is anxious to extend public relations and public education in order that the people of Queensland and visitors to the State will be made aware of and can appreciate Aboriginal culture. Tourism within this State is increasing and will continue to do so, and the amendment to the legislation will ensure that tourist potential is not hampered. It will still ensure under section 19 that I or my delegates can impose restrictions and conditions upon the access of the person to the site.

Delegation of my authority will be granted only to responsible and senior officers of my department who are conversant with the legislation and requirements, to ensure the conservation and preservation of Aboriginal culture.

It has become necessary to amend section 20 (1) of the principal Act as it has been found that relics have been covered with earth and it is the opinion of council that the addition of the words "cover" and "conceal" will enable action to be taken by my department should such vandalism occur.

Section 20 (1) is further amended to ensure that the court can request restoration of a relic and the site around it. During the introductory stage of this Bill, honourable members appeared to be well aware of the fact that Aboriginal relics are irreplaceable and it is therefore impossible and undesirable to place a monetary value upon a relic. In fact such endeavours have been rigidly avoided by my department. However, it is felt that the cost of an attempt to restore a damaged relic would be suitable penalty should such restoration be possible. In order that the moneys be properly used under professional direction, an addition to the principal Act in section 20 (1) is made. It is proposed that moneys for the purposes of restoration shall be paid to the director for that purpose. The qualified staff of the director are then able to assess whether restoration is possible and to supervise the work being done.

It has been found necessary to amend section 21 (1) as in the principal Act it was possible for me as Minister to direct work only upon an Aboriginal site. Under the amendment I will be able to direct work anywhere within the State as considered desirable.

It is proposed that section 21 (2) be amended to exclude the term "for anthropological purposes". I have found in recent months that environmentalists and researchers engaged in environmental studies have endeavoured to use Aboriginal relics as a means for postponing development. In most cases they have not applied for approval to carry out this research for they have argued that the intention of their project has not been anthropological. There are a number of research projects proposed and taking place which incorporate the study of Aboriginal culture within them and by removing the words "anthropological purposes" my approval will now be required. It will be possible to establish rational research development on all matters pertaining to Aboriginal culture within this State.

In section 22 of the principal Act it was only necessary for researchers removing relics from Aboriginal sites to surrender them to the director. The proposed amendment requires that a researcher surrenders all relics removed from the location where they are found to the director for classification. This will ensure that the State retains all cultural material of the Aboriginal people of Queensland.

As I mentioned in my introductory speech, penalties established in 1967 are insufficient in 1976. In the principal Act all penalties for offence were either $100 or $200. It is proposed that these be increased to $200 and $500 respectively. Penalties are included as a deterrent. However, I would point out that the aim and impetus of the administration is in the education of the public to establish an awareness and understanding of the value of Aboriginal culture to all citizens of this State and indeed to the Commonwealth.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (9.29 p.m.): As I understand it, the main purpose of the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act is to prevent interference with relics, to prevent unauthorised excavation of relics, to collect information relating to the existence and state of relics and to declare particular areas to be Aboriginal sites.

In his second-reading speech the Minister indicated that the declaration of such sites shall be made by a committee consisting of three statutory members. The first of these is a representative of the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, the second is a professor of anthropology and the third is the Director of the Queensland Museum. A number of other persons are appointed by the Minister and, amongst others, they include the chairman of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Mr. Les Stewart, and Jack O'Chin, another member of the committee. The Minister named some others tonight. Apparently it is proposed that the Professor of Material Culture at the James Cook University (Mr. Peter Lauer) and the Curator of the Anthropological Museum at the University of Queensland will join the committee. As always, only a minority of the members of the committee are of the Aboriginal race. The Minister said that out of 200 wardens who have been appointed only 20 are Aborigines. He did not say how many rangers were Aborigines or Islanders.

The machinery should be effective to ensure that local Aborigines with a particular knowledge of their areas are seconded to the committee when decisions relating to their particular areas are made. As the main purpose of the legislation is to preserve Aboriginal culture, these people who have an intuition about an area, a local knowledge of an area and a local knowledge of the culture should have an important say in such sessions.

One section of the Act that is being amended provides for the Minister to permit authorised excavation of certain relics and applications for such excavations must be recommended by the committee and referred to the Minister. Again no provision is made for the wishes of the local Aboriginal people who would be affected by such excavations within their community or on their reserve. The Aboriginal culture is not preserved by excavating artefacts and placing them in glass cases in museums and allowing people to look at them. In my opinion, the sites should be preserved intact with public access on a restricted basis with the permission of the community, the people on the council on the reserve or the Aboriginal or Islander people themselves and under the direct supervision of those people or of the warden.

The principal Act is amended in a number of ways. One clause of the Bill clarifies the power of search. I shall have more to say about this when we discuss the clauses. The Bill provides that an inspector may "search the person and the baggage and effects of any person for relics and inspect and examine any relic found thereon or therein." The following section of the Act gave the warden exactly the same powers as an inspector as such and a warden had general power of search. On my interpretation, the amendment removes the power of the warden to undertake any search of personal effects and baggage.

The Bill provides that the inspector or warden may enter a place where there is reasonable cause to suspect a relic is situated. He can enter a home or any other place he so desires. But entry will only be made on the issue of a warrant by a justice of the peace. The purpose of granting power of entry is to exercise the principle of that section of the Act at the moment. He requests name and address and he can search, with inspector's powers only. He has power of seizure and arrest and he can order a person to leave the site, but in a home apparently he cannot search; he can only enter and look around. It is good that entry to premises should be made only on the authority of a warrant, especially in the case of wardens who may not have had any training in law enforcement. I think we also have to consider that the civil liberties of citizens of the State should be protected.

I return to the section with which I was dealing because I may not have quite clarified it to the satisfaction of the Minister. My interpretation of the Act is that in the home, away from an actual site, a warrant does not give a warden power to search among personal effects, or anywhere else in the home. I believe that the legislation has removed the warden's power to search. It would probably be to the good if a warden were able to obtain a warrant to search personal effects because unless a relic is on the premises and in view a warden has no further power in this situation.

The principal Act was designed to protect Aboriginal relics and sites. It set up the mechanism for declaring certain sites to be protected and it provided penalties for vandalism and theft of Aboriginal relics. I said, I think, at the introductory stage—it bears repeating—that although the Government pretends to care for the Aboriginal people by protecting and preserving their relics and sacred places, it supports a policy of desecration of specific sites and tracts of

land by mining and other activities. This has been seen in Mapoon, Weipa and, of late, Aurukun.

The Government can well be accused of hypocrisy. In one voice the Government says it will protect the Aboriginal people of Queensland but, when the chips are down, the Government allows others to walk onto Aboriginal reserves and take over. The Aboriginal people at Mapoon were driven from their traditional tribal lands. In Weipa their culture was overrun by a mining venture, and their tribal life was eroded by the encroachment of civilisation. The mission system with which they were happy and contented was overrun and their life style was confounded by the inequalities of the white man's methods. The expansion of white settlement has deprived the indigenous people of their land. In some cases they have been driven off their land and settled on reserves and we now see them being driven off their reserves. I believe that this Government has encouraged this situation with the backing of the mining companies.

Over a long period some people have criticised what they call hand-outs by Governments to the Aboriginal people, but when it comes to handing out the mineral and pastoral wealth of this State I would venture to suggest that what is going on now is the biggest hand-out in history, not a hand-out to the Aboriginal people but a hand-out by them. It is unfortunate that certain sections of the principal Act state that these relics are to be the property of the Crown. Of course, this is consistent with the Government's approach in that it seems to adopt the paternal approach at all times. The real ownership of these relics should not be taken away from the Aboriginal people and vested in the Crown. It is their property and they should be the people to be given the responsibility of looking after it. I suppose we could say, and rather ashamedly, that it is consistent with what has happened in Australia over a long period and that we believe we have the right to protect, look after and paternalise these people and say, "Their relics have to be looked after by the Crown, the Government, or some body. The Aboriginal people are not capable of looking after them themselves." This is in effect what we are doing in this Bill. What we are saying in effect is that these indigenous people who have been here for 35,000 or 40,000 years should have no title to their relics or their land in this country of ours. These are the real issues that this Parliament should concern itself with.

Broadly the Act is designed not for the needs of the Aboriginal people but the needs of archaeologists and academics. Specimens and other finds are usually taken away from the area in which they are found and placed in a museum or other public place. Of course, the people who do this highly specialised work are doing an excellent job in recording and analysing—what? They are analysing Western history in Australia; they are not analysing, recording, and looking after Aboriginal history in Australia. Perhaps we could commend them if they were looking after the relics of Aboriginal history in Australia, but again it seems to me that we are looking at the question from the white man's viewpoint and recording it in our museums as we have done in the past 200 years. I think we should be having a closer look at our priorities in this regard. We are removing Aboriginal relics and other forms of Aboriginal culture—their heritage not ours—from their tribal lands and placing them in museums.

There is a very close affinity between the Aborigines and their land. They believe they gained their spirit from the land, and their culture is steeped in their association with the land and with the spirit places. If we take their artefacts and relics from them, we take their culture from them. Therefore, I think we should act with great caution.

After reading the Bill, my main concern is that neither the amendments contained in it nor the provisions of the Act give local Aborigines any specific rights. They have had their sacred places taken from them; now we are going to step in again—one might almost say over their relics and the bodies of their ancestors—and remove artefacts and specimens. The Act states specifically—

> "No provision of this Act shall prejudice the rights of ownership of any Aboriginal tribe or member of an Aboriginal tribe in relics used or held for use for tribal purposes."

It also says that a person who usually lives subject to Aboriginal tribal custom has free access to and enjoyment of the relics and his use of them is to be in a manner that is sanctioned by tribal customs, laws and so on. What is to happen when relics are taken away from the tribal area, either to Brisbane or to a museum? What access or rights will the Aborigines have in such a situation? That is all the Act says on the matter, and it then goes on to regulate white use of or involvement with Aboriginal relics. There is no machinery in the Act to deal with Aborigines using and living on tribal land. It is brutally silent on that aspect.

As I said earlier, the Act does not cover and protect their sacred sites, either. It covers only areas in which Aborigines have had an effect on the landscape by leaving remains or relics there. The land and the spirit places that are known to the Aborigines are not covered. The Act covers only material that can be carried away or to which people can point.

The Aborigines were a tribal people and did not build great structures or cathedrals for their worship but set aside areas for sacred purposes. Unless one had been shown a bora ground by an old Aboriginal, one would not recognise it. Although it has probably been padded down by bare feet over hundreds of thousands of years, one cannot find it unless one actually knows the

site. Bora grounds are not protected by the Act. They might be involved with tribal lands; they might be on a particular site. They might mean something to the people of Yarrabah. There are bora grounds at Budda Baddoo, but the Aborigines will not take everybody there. They will take only those whom they trust. How can a bora ground be preserved without the co-operation of the Aboriginal people? The older people tend to hide places such as that and revisit them only as members of a select group. Many of them have lost the spiritual style of their ancestors, but they go along to those areas because they have a feeling for them. I suppose it is a kinship. Probably it is like the white Australian visiting a place in Wales where his father was born. He makes a sentimental journey. These people think very deeply about it. Many of the tribal Aborigines have no access to these areas if they are chased off the land. When they do have access to them they seem to return to them.

I refer particularly to localities on Cape York Peninsula. In Weipa and Laura I know places where Aboriginal culture is still intact. At the top end of Cape York Peninsula the white man's settlement at Bamaga has been established on an Aboriginal area. No provision in the Bill protects this part of the Aborigines' culture.

The Bill provides for an increase in penalties for misuse or destruction of Aboriginal relics. How is a bora ground destroyed? How do we fine somebody for destroying that sort of site? It is a token measure for the preservation of Aboriginal culture because it deals only with an individual abuse of a particular thing—something we can see. We are not grappling with the problem of preserving Aboriginal relics, let alone that race's spiritual history and culture. The issue of land rights is closely connected with the preservation of Aboriginal culture. I am sorry to say that, by collective abuse, the white society has failed to preserve Aboriginal relics and culture to the degree that it should have. Some lands have been returned to Aboriginal owners. I cite particularly the Yarrabah reserve, in my electorate, which is religiously guarded. It must be remembered that we Europeans have received from the Aborigines the biggest hand-out of all; that is, their land or, as we call it, our land.

I realise that there are penalties for the misuse or destruction of Aboriginal relics. I must accept that as being at least an attempt, at last, to preserve some of the relics in existence in our time. I still believe that what we are doing is being done from a white man's attitude, looking at the matter from a white man's horizon. Unless inalienable land rights are give to the tribe, and they are allowed to use and preserve that land in their own tribal way, the very culture of the Aboriginal people will become a dead relic left only to the archaeologist and scientist to uncover and rediscover.

How many local people are consulted about how their heritage is to be protected? This Bill does not provide the machinery for that. It provides for inspectors, wardens and rangers to administer particular areas, but the people could well be strangers to those areas. The 20 Aboriginal wardens who have been appointed are pretty well spread out. True, Aboriginal rangers are being appointed, but how many of them come from the areas which they service? Is this another case of the imposition by whites of their culture upon the Aborigines? Is it a case of whites implementing Acts and telling the Aborigines what is best for them? Is it another form of paternalism? Are we wittingly or unwittingly searching out for "Uncle Toms" to toe the line, as they did in Aurukun, and are we telling people what is best for them, what they should do and what they should support? Or are we allowing the people to work these things out for themselves over a long period of time?

Section 19 is being amended to allow a permit to be issued with conditions attached. Will any local Aborigines or the local authority of Aborigines have any say as to who deals with the tribal area or the tribal heritage? We would not allow, say, Americans to come into the city of Brisbane and excavate areas of our city without some prior consultation, nor would we allow people to walk without permission on our land, whether we be graziers or suburban property holders. With the resources available to the D.A.I.A. and the apparent rapport that the Minister has developed with the local Aborigines in Aurukun, surely some mechanism could be established to allow consultation with the Aborigines in the areas that will be affected.

Under the Act academic field work on an Aboriginal site is prohibited unless permitted by an authorised person. Apparently the authorised person is either the Minister or the occupier of the property on which the site is located. The effect of this section is that, unless the D.A.I.A. approves of the type of work carried out by the archaeologist or the academic mentioned, such person would not be allowed to operate on or to have access to that particular site. I wonder, if this archaeologist or academic decided to criticise the policies of the department, for how long he would be granted permission and allowed to go on that particular site. There is no provision for appeal against such a decision, and I don't think any further consideration is going to be given to anyone who is refused a permit. I believe, as does the A.L.P., that local Aborigines should have a say in the granting of a permit.

A further amendment deals with delegation of the Minister's authority. I hope that it is not delegated only to members of the department of Aboriginal and Islanders

Advancement in Brisbane and other public servants because decisions and administrative arrangements would then be made in Brisbane rather than at the true base—that is, the Aboriginal people who are directly concerned and whose needs should be taken into consideration on site.

The final amendment is to widen the scope of the legislation to encompass all relics found in Queensland, not merely those found on Aboriginal sites. The remainder of the amendment deals with relics found.

The Act provides no form of registration of collectors of relics and probably no form of registration of the relics. The New Zealand Antiquities Act provides for the registration of collectors or dealers in indigenous relics. This is a fine idea, one that we could well take from the New Zealand legislative procedure. The New Zealand Act does not allow any dealings in relics other than by a registered person. A condition of registration is that the collection shall be available for inspection by the authorities. Collectors must also notify the authorities of any changes in the collection from non-registered sources. Exploitation of relics could be reduced and controlled if such provisions were embodied in our legislation. Relics should never be kept in the sole possession of individuals. They are a part not only of Aboriginal and Australian history but also of world history, as I said in my speech at the introductory stage.

The New Zealand Act also establishes a Maori Land Court which has general jurisdiction to control dealings in artefacts. This Maori court decides ownership of artefacts. I see such a court as an excellent means of introducing indigenous control.

In New Zealand, the local elders and people with technical knowledge combine, or sit together. A similar tribunal could be evolved in our situation to decide what to do with relics, where they are to be located and how they are to be preserved. That is the one proper way of looking after our Aboriginal people, their rights, their relics and their culture.

So far only eight sites have been proclaimed under the Act. No sites have been declared since 22 September 1973. It was recorded in the department's annual report that officers in the Carnarvon, Laura, Cooktown and Mt. Isa regions had located a considerable number of new and previously unrecorded sites. The report said that preparations are in hand to ensure their protection and preservation. I might well ask why these locations have not been proclaimed as Aboriginal sites.

The Minister failed to mention the assistance given by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies to the department for mapping and recording of Aboriginal sites. He forgot to mention also the $18,000 given by the institute to finance an officer to record rock carvings in South-east Queensland. As well, the department has failed to give the institute duplicate copies of documents relating to the recording and mapping of sites. That is a very short-sighted approach, because it is necessary to keep not only a State register but also a national register.

A national register would ensure that damage to Queensland files by flood (such as happened in 1974), fire or other disaster would not lead to the loss of very important information. I do not see why the information cannot be duplicated in other places. Every other State in Australia is co-operating with the institute, which does not, however intend to act as a library having this information. It intends to refer all inquiries about State sites to the relevant State departments. I think that this is one option the Minister could take up.

As the institute is co-operating with funding, it is hypocritical to deny documented information to this institute. How can Australia's national and natural history be recorded adequately if the States do not co-operate in providing this type of information?

I said in my speech in the introductory debate, and I reiterate it in this speech, that Aborigines have a close spiritual connection with the land that once belonged to them. Many problems of the Aborigines and of the Islanders are derived from their complete alienation from their tribal land and the disruption of their culture. The Act could have led to a return of at least some of that tribal land which is inhabited by those who are still considered to be practising their local customs. Quite a number of Aboriginal tribes in Cape York Peninsula still practise their local tribal customs.

Mr. Hodges: Get back to the relics.

Mr. JONES: What are relics? What is the Minister's definition of relics?

Mr. Hodges: If you don't soon wind up, we will all be relics.

Mr. JONES: I know that the Minister is not interested in the Aboriginal people as such. Whatever the Minister might consider to be a relic, the Aboriginal people consider a midden, a native well, a camping site, a settlement area, a container, a shield, a canoe tree, a carved tree, paintings, engravings, bora grounds, ceremonial grounds, burial grounds, axe-grinding grooves and quarries all to be relics. To the Aboriginal people they are all associated with the land.

Mr. Hodges: That's what we want you to talk about.

Mr. JONES: That is what I am talking about—the land on which these people roamed, tribal land which is very important to them. I know that the Minister is not acquainted with the situation.

The Act should have led to a return of some of the tribal land to these people and it should be considered as being inhabited by

them. This problem is not solved by transporting Aboriginal people away from their tribal land, transporting their relics away from their tribal land, transporting Aboriginal rangers to their tribal land or putting into their areas wardens who are not directly associated with the particular tribes in those areas; it is purely administrative convenience; but the local Aborigines should make the decisions about why and where their relics should be preserved.

Although the work of academics and archaeologists is well recognised, respected and commended, I do not think that we, as a Government, should serve the interests of the archaeologists and academics alone. We should give full consideration to the needs of the Aboriginal people and their say in how their relics and their culture should be preserved.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries) (10.10 p.m.), in reply: After the long dissertation I gave at the introductory stage and the comparatively few questions asked, I was rather surprised by the long contribution of the honourable member for Cairns. I shall reply to those of his comments that were pertinent. Many of them had no connection with the Bill.

I remind the honourable member that the committee is an advisory body. There are five members and two more are to be appointed to make seven. All rangers are Aboriginal people.

Access to reserves is subject to the consent of the Aboriginal council. In almost every case relics are protected and preserved on the site. Except in emergency circumstances, they are not put in museums. It is far from the truth to say that they are put in museums.

The honourable member referred to sites on some mining areas. If he knew anything of this subject, he would realise that they are protected by the Crown for the Aboriginal people. The mining companies are, by agreement, required to protect these sites. They have to be recorded and protected for Aborigines.

The honourable member raised the matter of Bamaga. I remind him that every person there is a migrant. The settlement began only in 1949.

Mr. Jones: What about Cowal Creek? Are the Aborigines there migrants?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Jones: Rubbish! They are not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Cairns has made his speech. The Minister is now replying.

Mr. WHARTON: The New Zealand Act was copied from the Queensland Act. All the provisions of the New Zealand Act are covered in Queensland.

The Institute of Aboriginal Studies is under attack by Aborigines for being too academic. Senator Bonner left it for that reason.

Whilst thanking the honourable member for his contribution, I invite him to come along to the division and learn something of what is being done. He should talk with the rangers so that he would get to know a little of what is being done to preserve these relics.

I say finally that we are not taking from the Aboriginal people their relics, their sacred sites or their culture. On the contrary, we are preserving them for the Aboriginal people and the people of Queensland and Australia.

Motion (Mr. Wharton) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There are eight clauses in the Bill. Does any honourable member wish to address himself to any clause?

Mr. JONES: Clause 7.

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of s. 22; Method of disposing of relic taken under authority—

Mr. JONES: I am sorry, Mr. Hewitt. I wanted to speak to clause 2, which amends section 7 of the Act.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. The vote has been put.

Mr. Jones: You go for your life in that case if that's the way you want to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not a question of the way I want to do it. I asked for members to indicate any clauses to which they wished to speak. The honourable gentleman said that he wanted to speak to clause 7. It is not my fault if he misinterpreted the position.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.