Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 1976

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Queensland Marine Act 1958–1972.

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

Harbours Act 1955–1972.

Queensland Law Society Act 1952–1974.

Regulation under the Architects Act 1962–1971.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. RAIL FREIGHTS FOR COUNTRY EXTENSION LIBRARY SERVICE

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

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

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

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Prior to the increase in freight rates in November last, a 2 kg parcel of library books between Brisbane and Mackay was carried for the ridiculously low charge of 12c each way. The present charge of $1.00 each way is more in line with the cost of providing the service and remains less than the charge of $1.30 each way for a comparable service in New South Wales.

It is not the function of the Railway Department to subsidise the operations of the Library Board. However, in view of the strong representations which have been received from so many Government members, the whole matter will be investigated by the Government as a matter of urgency.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF REVENUE FROM INCREASED RAIL FREIGHTS

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

(1) How much additional revenue will be derived from the northern zone of the Queensland Government Railways system following the recent 40 per cent increase in rail freights?

(2) What will be the increase in revenue from the southern zone?

(3) In view of the appalling living conditions of track maintenance gangs on the Great Northern Line, where in one camp a set of wagons was burnt out, an inch of water lay on the floor after every shower of rain, the interior temperature of the wagons was 110°F and the temperature was so incessant that refrigerators would not work, could the additional revenue generated in the northern zone be left there rather than repatriated to the southern zone to defray a deficiency which appears from the Railway accounts to be $110,000,000 per year?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) This information is not available as the apportionment of revenue on a divisional basis is not carried out until after the close of each financial year. However, as emphasised in the commissioner's annual report, in which this information appears, the divisional allocation is an arbitrary one and does not necessarily represent a true result of working a particular section. The respective divisions of the Railway Department, which have been established for administrative convenience, do not operate in isolation but are interdependent. The South Eastern Division, for instance, is involved in extensive outlays in the employment of staff, the maintenance of track and the provision of goods handling facilities necessary to cope with the handling of traffic which is not confined to that division but is destined for other divisions.

(3) The specific complaint of the honourable member will be investigated. He would, however, appear to be under a misapprehension when he suggests that a deficiency of $110,000,000 in the Southern Division was subsidised by revenue from the Northern Division. Reference to table 10 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways for the year ended 30 June 1975 will disclose that on the basis of the divisional allocation contained in that table the Northern Division showed an operating loss in excess of $10,000,000. In mentioning a figure of $110,000,000, the honourable member would appear to be referring to the amount of $110,279,443 shown in table 1 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways, mentioned as

being the amount of capital invested in the Southern Division of the Railway Department and not the operating loss.

3. BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL LAND TRANSACTIONS

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

(1) Concerning mention in the Annual Report of the Auditor-General on the Books and Accounts of the Brisbane City Council for the financial year 1974-75, does the council have the right to purchase land for development and resale?

(2) How much land does the council hold for this purpose?

(3) Where does the money come from to purchase this land?

(4) Where does the money come from to provide roads and meet other developmental charges?

(5) Has the council acted illegally in the acquisition of land, the subdivision of land or the use of moneys in the purchase and development of land for resale?

Answers:—

(1) The Brisbane City Council has certain powers to purchase land for development or redevelopment and resale under the provisions of the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964–1975. It also has certain powers under the Local Government Act 1936–1975 to provide housing accommodation for the inhabitants of its area, particularly for persons who have limited means or are not adequately housed. The council could acquire land for this purpose, construct dwelling-houses on the land and then sell the houses.

(2) I have no knowledge of the amount of land held by the council.

(3) The funds required could be raised by way of rates, or the council could raise a loan under the City of Brisbane Act 1924–1974 for the purpose.

(4) See answer to (3).

(5) This question raises a matter of legal interpretation and I do not feel that it would be appropriate for me to comment thereon. However, I note the honourable member's concern at the council's buying land for the purpose of subdivision and resale. Frankly, I do not think that is a function of local government.

4. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND AURUKUN AND MORNINGTON ISLAND MISSIONS

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

What is the relationship of the Presbyterian Church to Aurukun and Mornington Island Missions and is the church assisted in any way by the Government?

Answer:—

The Presbyterian Church of Queensland is responsible for the material and spiritual well-being of the Aboriginal residents of the Aurukun and Mornington Island Communities. The church has a responsibility to the Government to provide good management of the townships to enable the Aboriginal residents to progress as citizens of this State.

In earlier days, much of the money needed to maintain the missionary service was provided by the public through church appeals, but in recent years the financial burden has moved to the State. In the past five years the Queensland Government has spent almost $4,000,000 in grants, assistance and development in Aurukun and Mornington Island, as well as funding the educational programmes. In the same period the church through its administrative agency, BOEMAR, spent less than a quarter of a million dollars. In all kindness, and with the greatest of respect, I believe the church is finding it very difficult to cater for the needs of the people, particularly their material well-being, by the provision of experienced manpower.

Queensland departed from a protective hand-out system in 1965 and adopted a policy of self-sufficiency for the Aboriginal people at the request of their leaders. They are equal citizens and seek to stand on their own feet; my Government is willing to assist where requested but it will not be a "wheel-chair"—our Government communities offer a hand, not a hand-out. The Aboriginal people of Aurukun and Mornington Island question their rate of progress compared with other communities in the State. They question the ability of BOEMAR and I believe they have reason to do so. The Aurukun people have, in fact, given BOEMAR 12 months to prove its worth. I cite one example of BOEMAR failing in its vested responsibility.

At Mornington Island a town plan was prepared in 1969 and approved by the Aboriginal Community Council for the development of Mornington, which included siting of a hospital and 20 houses. Hospital tenders were called and a contract let in May 1973. After delivery of materials, the local administration desired the hospital to be resited—on a frontal dune area susceptible to tidal surges, 10 of which occurred in the past 73 years. The town plan favoured a more secure location. Independent town-planning consultants supported the town plan location and ultimately BOEMAR agreed to the building proceeding on the original site. However, because of delays, this procrastination resulted in the contractor withdrawing, rightfully demanding almost $80,000 for the materials delivered. As a result, the

hospital—then due to be finished in 1974—will not now be completed before 1977. For some three years the people have been denied this facility.

And then we have Aurukun. An opportunity existed for Aborigines to share in progress, but it was put at risk by an emotional attack on the project, claiming destruction of the sacred sites. It appears BOEMAR is bent on renegotiation, which, it has been indicated to me, would include reconsideration of the 3 per cent profit-sharing. If opponents to the agreement live in hope of a bigger share of profits—more money—then let them say it; let them discuss Aurukun as a business proposition rather than a smoke-screen of emotion. But then, too, they must accept the responsibility if the whole project collapses and Aurukun and Queensland end up with nothing.

5. MOTOR-CYCLE REAR-VISION MIRRORS

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

(1) Has he received objections to regulation 68 (7) of the Queensland Traffic Regulations, which requires motor-cycle rear-vision mirrors to be designed with flat, reflecting surfaces?

(2) As motor-cycle riders are of the opinion that flat-glass mirrors are largely obscured physically by the motor-cyclists themselves and are therefore unsafe, has any consideration been given to the use of convex mirrors which, whilst providing a slightly distorted effect, are easy to get used to and in the opinion of motor-cyclists are preferable to flat-glass mirrors with their obscured view?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The honourable member, who no doubt like myself cannot claim to be an expert where motor-cycles are concerned, does little for road safety or motor-cyclists as a whole by repeating unsupported opinions without going to the trouble to check with the appropriate authority as to the substance of the claims made.

In February this year I received numerous letters of a circular form objecting to regulation 68 (7) of the Queensland Traffic Regulations and seeking authority to use convex glass mirrors on motor-cycles. The circular approach I received had its origin in an anonymous appeal which used emotive and somewhat offensive language. For instance, it referred to "thousands of mad motorists who are only too happy to test the strength of their bumper-bars against our tail-lights". I also received a letter from one gentleman who subsequently indicated that the circular letter was initiated and distributed by him. I also received representations from the honourable members for Lytton and Toowong. I have replied to all of these.

It is an interesting study of human nature to note that numerous people are prepared to sign a protest apparently on an anonymous statement of a position made without any apparent semblance of authority. It is also equally apparent—and with due respect I must include the honourable member in this—that no-one took the trouble to read the actual regulation as the regulation number quoted in the correspondence and by the honourable member in his question is not in fact the relevant Queensland traffic regulation. To set the record straight, I would point out that the law on rear-vision mirrors is set out in the schedule to Part 13 of the Queensland Traffic Regulations, which provides in clause 73 (4) as follows:—

> "A rear vision mirror fitted to a motor vehicle manufactured on or after the first day of July, 1973, and intended to be capable of reflecting to the driver of such vehicle as far as practicable a clear view of the road to the rear of such vehicle and of any following or overtaking vehicle shall have a flat reflecting surface."

The clause is based on National Code Draft Regulation 1006, which provides inter alia—

> "(5) Any mirror fitted to a motor vehicle, manufactured on or after 1 July 1973, and intended to provide the driver with a view of following or overtaking vehicles, shall be designed with a flat reflecting surface."

and also on National Code Draft Regulation 1827, which in referring specifically to motor-cycle rear-vision mirrors states that "mirrors shall have a flat reflecting surface."

It will therefore be seen that the requirement is not a unique Queensland regulation, but is based on a National Code and Draft Regulations prepared by a technically competent advisory committee to the Australian Transport Advisory Council known as the Advisory Committee on Vehicle Performance. In addition, the requirement that vehicle mirrors should have plain surfaces is endorsed in a statement on road safety policy by the Institution of Engineers, Australia.

I indicated to the various correspondents that on the case which had so far been presented to me I would not be prepared to recommend a change in the regulation unless such a change was recommended by the advisory committee formulating the National Code Draft Regulations and the amendments were accepted by the Australian Transport Advisory Council. I went further to suggest that the appropriate course of action would be for any person desirous of having a review of the regulation made to advance a case to the Advisory Committee on Vehicle Performance of the Australian Transport Advisory Council.

In addition to having technical and other officers of State and Commonwealth transport authorities, this committee has representation from the Australian Road Transport Federation, the Society of Automotive Engineers of Australia, the Australian Automobile Association, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, the Australian Transport Workers' Union, the National Association of State Road Authorities and the Australian and New Zealand City Transit Conference, so that there is considerable expertise and, I would suggest, a formidable body of opinion involved in this matter.

6. NEW SCHOOL, BAYVIEW HEIGHTS, CAIRNS

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

(1) Have negotiations been completed and agreement reached relative to the acquisition of land for the erection of a new primary school in the Bayview Heights area, Cairns?

(2) If so, has a firm undertaking for construction of the bridge access road and provision of service facilities been granted and approval received?

(3) Is it still expected, as indicated in his reply to my question of 28 August 1975, that tender requirements will be completed and the school ready for occupancy at the commencement of the 1977 school year?

(4) Will a pre-school facility be established at this school from the outset?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. It is anticipated that the land will be taken for school purposes as from 27 March 1976.

(2) Yes, a firm undertaking has been granted and approval received.

(3) In accordance with the draft capital works programme for the 1976-77 financial year, planning is proceeding in anticipation of having the school ready for occupancy at the commencement of the 1977 school year, provided funds are available. The honourable member will appreciate the tenuous state of finances available for capital works.

(4) Subject to availability of funds, pre-school facilities are planned for the 1977-78 financial year.

7. PIG-SWILL; LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY; LABORATORY FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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

(1) How many (a) dairy farms, (b) licensed butcher shops and (c) licensed slaughter-houses closed or ceased production in Queensland in 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75?

(2) To what extent would pig-swill feeders be compensated for loss of income if and when the law banning the swill-feeding of pigs is implemented?

(3) Will an environmental impact study be carried out in all local authorities into the disposal of wet swill and will local authorities not be burdened with this expenditure before the proposed implementation of the ban?

(4) When will the laboratory be built in the Rockhampton area for the testing of blood plasma for T.B. and brucellosis, to expedite the sale of livestock overseas and interstate?

Answers:—

(1) (a) Net losses of dairy farms were —887 in 1972-73; 1447 in 1973-74; and 259 in 1974-75.

(b) Records of licensed butcher shops are not designed to enable the requested information to be supplied. Registrations are reviewed from 1 July each year, but details of the numbers of closures or of new registrations are not kept.

(c) Prior to 1 January 1974, slaughter-house licences were issued by Magistrates Courts in Queensland, but this responsibility was transferred to the Queensland Meat Industry Authority as from that date. Records indicate that there were 224 licensed slaughter-houses on 1 July 1973. Of this number, 22 did not apply for fresh licences on 1 July 1974. One licence was allowed to lapse in 1973-74 and a further 38 in 1974-75. Of this number, 11 closed as a result of declaration of the Maryborough regional meat area and a further seven as a result of transfer of operations to existing yards. The total on 1 July 1975 was 163, a net loss of 61 over the period.

(2) No consideration has been given at either Federal or State level to the provision of adjustment assistance to pig producers forced to discontinue feeding swill following the implementation of legislation to ban this practice. Experience has shown that in the majority of cases such producers may readily adapt to using alternative foods with, in many instances, a marked increase in efficiency and hygiene. In September 1975 it was estimated that 6.8 per cent of pigs were fed on diets containing some swill. At that time the estimate of production loss after introduction of a ban was put at 1.6 per cent. Events since that date indicate the loss in production may be even less than this figure. Some piggeries previously feeding swill have expanded production on alternative foods and, in the six months ending 31 December 1975, pigmeat production in

Queensland increased by about 9 per cent on the 1974 figure. This shows how quickly the industry can change production trends, even at a time when a number of swill feeders actually ceased production.

(3) Inquiries have revealed that in 38 local authority areas there appeared to be no piggeries feeding garbage. Therefore, no additional disposal problems should arise. Burial, either at refuse dumps or sanitary depots, was indicated as the proposed method of dealing with additional food wastes by 54 local authorities, 17 others would utilise grinders to sewerage in combination with burial at outlying centres and five intended to dispose of the wastes through sewerage alone. There would therefore not appear to be an overriding necessity for an environmental impact study in all local authority areas in the State. However, as honourable members are no doubt aware, environmental control comes under the portfolio of the Honourable the Premier, and there is already in operation a garbage disposal study for the Moreton region, comprising a joint effort by the Co-ordinator General's Department and ten local authorities. This should yield information that could provide guide-lines for local authorities in other areas of the State.

(4) In spite of expected severe cut-backs of finance, we have framed a contingency budget which will still provide for completion of the laboratory at Rockhampton by July 1977.

8. IWASAKI PROJECT NEAR YEPPOON

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Hartwig,** pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Following on a survey carried out by Mr. John Peach, President of the Yeppoon Chamber, in which he asked Mr. Iwasaki if he would agree to Government requirements and in regard to which I have a letter confirming the requests signed by Mr. Iwasaki, has the Premier been advised by Mr. Iwasaki (or has his representative indicated) that he would be agreeable to complying with the requests made by the Co-ordinator-General?

(2) Will this Queensland Government never allow the Iwasaki project to eventuate?

Answers:—

(1) My Government requires Mr. Iwasaki to supply a detailed plan of his proposed development, including a contour map of the land he proposes to develop. I understand that Mr. Iwasaki has appointed consultants to undertake this work.

(2) My Government cannot give approval to Mr. Iwasaki to proceed with his proposed development until such basic information is received and properly analysed.

9. CAPRICORN INSURANCE LTD.

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

(1) Must an insurance company satisfy the Insurance Commissioner that it has an excess of assets over contingent liabilities before policies may be offered for sale or issued?

(2) Was this done in respect of Capricorn Insurance Ltd.'s funeral benefit plan insurance?

(3) Was the company required to supply further proof of an expansion of excess of assets over contingent liabilities before it commenced selling comprehensive motor vehicle policies?

(4) Were the funds received from sales of its funeral benefit plan secured in a special trust?

(5) If the funds were so secured, will the investors in the funeral benefit plan be protected although the company is now in receivership?

Answers:—

(1) In order to obtain a licence to carry on an insurance business in Queensland, the Insurance Act 1960–1975 requires that—

(a) the intending insurer, if not already carrying on business outside Queensland, must have a paid-up capital of at least $150,000;

(b) the total assets of the insurer must exceed his total liabilities (other than share capital) by $100,000 or one-tenth of the premium income for the year next preceding the date of application for an insurer's licence. Obviously a newly incorporated company cannot have premium income for the preceding year and so it must have assets of at least $100,000 more than liabilities.

(2) Capricorn Insurance Ltd. satisfied the above requirements when it obtained a licence.

(3) No. Having satisfied the legislative requirements to obtain a licence, a company may underwrite this class of general insurance risk without further reference or approval.

(4 and 5) Funeral benefit business in Queensland is governed by the Friendly Societies Act 1913–1974. Contributions (less management allocations) are paid into and funeral benefits are paid from the Sickness, Medical or Funeral Benefit Trust Fund, governed by a board of trustees comprising three Governmental officers and one representative of the businesses. However, insurance companies that conduct funeral benefit business in Queensland are exempt from this control. Thus, the funeral benefit business of Capricorn was not conducted through this trust fund; if it had

come within the ambit of the Friendly Societies Act, the interests of contributors would have been secured.

10. AUTHORITY TO DEAL IN FOURTH-SCHEDULE DRUGS

Dr. Lockwood, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

What professions or persons are entitled to procure and distribute, sell wholesale or retail, and dispense fourth-schedule drugs such as veterinary antibiotics without having a veterinary surgeon present during trading hours?

Answer:—

I must make it clear that not all veterinary antibiotics are fourth-schedule drugs. Certain preparations which are considered to be safe for use by farmers without veterinary supervision have been released from schedule 4 and are available for over-the-counter sale. In relation to those products which are schedule 4 drugs—

(a) Veterinary surgeons are authorised to procure and dispense or supply in the course of their practice;

(b) Pharmaceutical chemists are authorised to procure and dispense upon a veterinary surgeon's prescription. They are not authorised to sell without a prescription;

(c) Manufacturers and wholesalers licensed under Part F of the Poisons Regulations are authorised to procure and sell by wholesale, but only to "authorised persons", that is, veterinary surgeons, pharmaceutical chemists, other licensed wholesalers, and others mentioned in the following paragraphs;

(d) Certain stock-feed millers are authorised to obtain antibiotics for use in the manufacture of animal foodstuffs only. They are not authorised to sell the antibiotics as such, but only as a constituent in feeds at a level not above 50 parts per million;

(e) Universities and Government departments are authorised to obtain such restricted drugs as they need for their own use, but are not authorised to sell or distribute them.

The presence of a veterinary surgeon is not required in cases covered by (b) to (e) inclusive.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SECURITY OF BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Has he read the "Tele-money" column of 18 March 1976 headed, "We told you so" in which Peter Charlton of the "Telegraph" said that the building society movement in Queensland had for 18 months been seeking improvements to the supervisory offices and contingency funds for societies in difficulties? He also said that the Government had up till last December refused to provide for a contingency fund and had only recently increased the staff of the registrar of building societies. Will he explain to the House why the Government has not acted on this pressing matter previously and what effect the delay in Government action has had on investors, who have been frightened and worried as a result of runs on societies in recent weeks?

Sir GORDON CHALK: I think the questions concerning the building society movement in Queensland have been very well ventilated over recent days. I believe that the actions taken by the Government, after consideration of all the facts made available to the registrar, are such that, when a contingency fund has been established under legislation passed in this House, the security of building societies will be far better than it has ever been in the history of this State.

Having said that, I shall now refer to the points that have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. It is true that for some time discussions have been held between the Association of Building Societies and the Government in relation to the activities of various societies. As late as November of last year, when it became evident that one society was encountering a few problems, there was a discussion about the possibility of establishing a contingency fund. The House was not sitting at that time. As an inducement to a number of societies to buy the mortgages of a society that appeared to be in trouble, an undertaking was given by me to the association that a contingency fund would be established during this session of Parliament.

However, the basis of that contingency fund was a rescue operation for a particular company; it was not to be a contingency fund of the type that has now been discussed and worked out by officers of the Treasury Department and the Department of Works and Housing. There is a difference between the contingency fund that was discussed earlier, which was in effect a rescue operation, and the contingency fund that we now believe can be established on certain terms and conditions to ensure that in future there will be greater security for those who invest, or have invested, in building societies.

POLICE ACTION ON CITY VIOLENCE

Mr. BURNS: I preface a question to the Minister for Police by referring to a report published over the week-end that restaurant, club and theatre owners in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley night-life area are petitioning the Premier to clear out brawling hoodlums from their premises, and the report of two ministers of religion—I think Major Ray

Wilson of the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul chaplain Father John Fitzgerald —that elderly people who have collected their pensions are being systematically bashed and robbed by thugs in the heart of the city. I ask: What action has been taken this year by the Police Force and the Minister to start to protect citizens in the heart of the city from this thuggery?

Mr. HODGES: The protection of the citizens of Brisbane and the rest of Queensland will be carried out in the normal manner, with efficiency, as it has been in the past.

CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE BETWEEN PARADISE POINT AND HOPE ISLAND

Mr. GIBBS: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: As there is no road from the northern end of the Gold Coast across Coombabah Creek to the Albert Shire, would he give consideration to the construction of a bridge from Paradise Point to Hope Island?

Mr. HINZE: I thank the honourable member for his question, which refers to a connection between Paradise Point on the mainland and Hope Island. I understand that this matter has been under consideration by the Albert Shire Council for some considerable time. Such a connection would require the construction of a small bridge and would shorten the journey by seven miles. The area concerned already has a high traffic density and I am prepared to give consideration to the proposal.

PINE RIDGE ROAD

Mr. GIBBS: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: Could Pine Ridge Road be declared either a rural or urban arterial road so that permanent road works could be carried out on it?

Mr. HINZE: The comments I made in reply to the previous question apply here also. Pine Ridge Road has a very high traffic density; it links the Pacific Highway with the Paradise Point area. All roads in Queensland are now coming up for review, and this one will certainly be looked at.

AUSTRALIAN EQUITY IN MINING VENTURES

Mr. MARGINSON: I ask the Premier: Does he agree with the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Anthony) that there should be a minimum of at least 50 per cent Australian equity in the shareholdings of multi-national mining companies which are mining minerals in this State? If so, what action does the Government propose to take with respect to firstly existing mining and secondly future mining ventures?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is well known that the Queensland Government—and I, personally—strongly support Australian participation to the greatest extent in any mining venture in any State. On the other hand, we also recognise that in certain instances it is not possible to have a greater percentage of Australian equity. We always seek to do the best we can when negotiating the various deals that come forward from time to time. That is so with the various coal projects that are forthcoming and the Aurukun project. I have had discussions with the people who ultimately may mine at Aurukun as to the Australian equity in this company and I have been given an assurance that at the appropriate time when the company is ready to start, it will come up with what the company hopes to be a favourable decision for the company, the Queensland Government and the Australian Government. We want to do the best we can but we must always recognise that in certain instances we cannot have full, or even half, Australian or Queensland participation.

PREMIER'S ATTITUDE TO ABOLITION OF NEW SOUTH WALES PETROL TAX

Mr. TURNER: I ask the Premier: Has he seen the article in "The Courier-Mail" of 17 March wherein the New South Wales Premier announced the abolition of that State's petrol tax at an estimated cost in revenue of $80,000,000? In the light of the New South Wales Government's recent criticism of his proposal to eliminate death duties, will he give an assurance that he and other State Premiers will not gang up against New South Wales for dropping an $80,000,000 revenue earner for the New South Wales Government?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think my attitude is well known. I interest myself mainly in Queensland and Queensland's responsibilities and activities. I have no intention whatever of suggesting any criticism of the New South Wales Premier. Indeed, I would congratulate him as a man of initiative and vision who realises what the people of New South Wales want. How he is to make it up I would not have a clue, but evidently he knows.

DEATH DUTIES

Mr. YOUNG: I ask the Premier: In view of the number of questions that private members are currently receiving from their constituents about the abolition of death duties, will he inform the House what is the current Government policy on the matter?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Naturally, honourable members and the community in general are interested to know what the situation is. The policy and attitude of both Government parties—the National Party and

the Liberal Party—have been clear to members of the House and to Queenslanders generally for many, many years. We have stated what we wish to do and hope and believe we can do. The proposal will be put before the Cabinet and then before the joint Government parties. Indeed, I give the honourable member a firm assurance that it will go before Cabinet and then before this House. I commend the honourable member for raising the matter.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE FOR JULIUS DAM

Mr. JENSEN: I ask the Premier: As the workers and citizens of Mt. Isa have contributed so much to the coffers of both State and Federal Governments through taxation and export earnings, will he assure them that the National Party through either the State or Federal sphere will pay the full cost of the Julius Dam—$7,000,000—thus guaranteeing for them a reasonably priced water supply?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I would not take that amount from the funds for the dam at Bundaberg in which the honourable member is so interested. His colleagues in the Federal sphere did that for him before they left office.

The previous Labor Government let the people of Mt. Isa down over the Julius Dam. It just would not play ball with them. It indicated that it would not, and it did not. We in the State Government have played a vital role in the construction of the Julius Dam by contributing many millions of dollars. MIM Holdings Ltd. has also contributed a large sum of money.

The other night in Canberra I asked the Prime Minister for financial assistance for the construction of the Julius Dam specifically, as well as for the irrigation scheme outside Bundaberg. Individually, those two projects were discussed at length. In relation to each, the Prime Minister informed me that, because of the condition in which the economy was left by the Whitlam Government, no opportunity exists at present for the Commonwealth Government to provide the assistance that it would like to give and that we wish to receive.

DEATH DUTIES

Mr. JENSEN: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: In view of the Premier's apparent haste to abolish death duties, does he know if the Premier has had a premonition that he will not be on this earth with us for much longer?

Sir GORDON CHALK: I have no knowledge of it.

DERAILMENTS, MT. ISA-DUCHESS RAILWAY LINE

Mr. BERTONI: I ask the Minister for Transport: Will he advise what action he has taken regarding the six derailments this year on the Mt. Isa-Duchess railway line and, in particular, the three in the past week? As they occurred in close proximity to one another, could the Minister give the possible reasons for those derailments?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: The honourable member is obviously concerned and I share his concern. There have been a number of derailments and I arranged for engineers—both mechanical and civil—to inspect the line and the type of rolling-stock being used. As late as Sunday, when the latest derailment occurred, I dispatched the chief civil engineer and the chief mechanical engineer to Mt. Isa. I have had a report back this morning from the chief civil engineer that the cause of Sunday's derailment was a broken axle on the front bogie of a wagon. However, he has indicated tentatively—and I expect a full report tomorrow or the following day—that there is some deficiency in the track in the area that the honourable member is concerned about. When his report comes to hand, we will have the matter rectified as soon as possible.

"PIG-SWILL" LEGISLATION

Mr. HOUSTON: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Is he aware of the report in "The Courier-Mail" of 20 March this year in which it was stated that rural industry officials were concerned at the obvious attempts by certain National Party back-benchers of this Parliament to conduct a vendetta against him over what has been termed the "pig-swill" legislation? Is it a fact that because of the opposition of these members this Bill was withdrawn from the parliamentary programme last week? Is this withdrawal in conflict with the policy of the United Graziers' Association, which is, as its State president (Mr. W. E. Meynink) said in a newspaper article on 18 March of this year, that the move must be made to help protect the grazing industry from the threat of foot and mouth disease?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I did read the article to which the honourable member refers. There are some people who are concerned over this issue. It is a policy matter and no doubt I will be speaking to members in an appropriate place.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

COST OF LOANS INVESTIGATION

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (12.4 p.m.): I was rather pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition give notice of a question about the loans investigation. I had hoped that he would be silly enough to repeat his claims about the

$250,000 or $500,000 that the inquiry supposedly cost. He has got his figures mixed up with the Iraqi loan affair and one can understand how confused he has become over the whole investigation.

Over the last few days the media have reported various statements of alleged costs to public funds of inquiries conducted under my authority into matters relating to what is commonly referred to as the loans affair. Briefly, and for the record, I would mention that these inquiries were initiated as a consequence of certain information which was brought to my notice which made it appear that there could eventually be revealed certain illegal acts and the possibility of fraud in relation to loan-raising efforts on behalf of the Australian Government which could thereby jeopardise the interests of the States. On my assessment of this information, I considered it my responsibility to initiate certain inquiries.

As I have said, various statements have been reported by the media as to the cost of these inquiries to the public purse and on more than one occasion a figure of $250,000 has been alleged. Making such a statement is completely irresponsible and too ludicrous for words. Expenditure incurred to date and charged to departmental Votes is as follows:—

	$
Police Department ..	2,910.00
Premier's Department	7,546.64
	10,456.64

The charge to the Premier's Department Vote includes an amount of $939.40 in respect of air fares to and from Melbourne and Canberra for discussions with and at the request of Commonwealth Government authorities. The above figures do not include costs of overseas telephone calls, accounts for which are not as yet complete but these are not expected to exceed $1,000.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition of the old saying, "Let sleeping dogs lie." One does not go over and kick a sleeping dog; it might bite him. And as far as I am concerned, this particular dog is not dead; it is just sleeping.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Mining Act 1968–1974 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Local Government Act 1936–1975 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961–1975 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Act 1964–1973 and the Fire Safety Act 1974 each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

ASSOCIATIONS (NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF) BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Herbert, read a third time.

ABORIGINAL RELICS PRESERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Wharton, read a third time.

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (12.10 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In closing the debate at the introductory stage of the Bill, I promised to answer queries raised by honourable members. This I intend to do first and follow by explaining the purpose behind amendments not already mentioned.

The honourable member for Nudgee raised the possibility of doctors with doubtful standards of qualification obtaining registration in southern States and then coming to Queensland to be registered.

Mr. Burns: Did you see the story in the southern Press about people going in by the bus-load to be registered?

Dr. EDWARDS: Yes. I will refer to that shortly.

I can assure him that practitioners registered in southern States are not automatically registered here in Queensland. The Queensland Medical Act demands that in each instance the qualification must be the basis on which a decision is made. In many instances all States recognise graduates from a particular country—for example, all States automatically register British graduates. In some instances a southern State might recognise, say, a degree from an Indian university which Queensland does not. The fact that another State has registered such an applicant does not make him eligible to be registered here.

The honourable member also expressed doubt about the screening examination. There is already in existence an acceptable screening examination conducted by the American Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, known commonly as the E.C.F.M.G. The Americans devised this examination to determine eligibility to work as an intern in an American hospital. The examination is a written multiple-choice type of examination set in the English language. It also contains a separate section aimed specifically at testing the candidates' knowledge of English. Applicants from many countries throughout the world sit for the examination, which is conducted in February and July each year. A study of the results from various countries gives an indication of standards. Our own students sit for this examination mainly as practice for their own finals, although a few do go to America in their intern year or later. Our pass rate is about 96 per cent, whereas that achieved by Indian candidates is only 40 per cent and that of applicants from the Philippines is as low as 23 per cent. The American Commission has indicated its willingness for Australia to make use of this test as a step in registration procedures. I want to make sure that the honourable member understands that it is only a screening test.

The honourable member for Nudgee, along with several other members, referred to the after-hours medical services. I want to make it quite clear that the department is not introducing an after-hours service outside the casualty departments of our hospitals. These are privately conducted. The Bill will give the Medical Board power to introduce by-laws to control such services. Some of the faults with the present practices have been that some have endeavoured to cover too large an area with too few doctors.

Mr. Melloy: Could you give any instances of suspected malpractice by these people?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am not prepared at this stage to discuss malpractices of that type. However, I have had discussions with all the medical call services in Brisbane and they are very happy with the type of legislation that we are now preparing. A large number of complaints, of course, come to the department, to me as Minister, and also, I have no doubt, to the honourable member, as local member, about instances when doctors are not available for an after-hours call service. These complaints do not necessarily refer to the call services themselves, and it is hoped that the legislation which it is intended to introduce in due course will overcome the problem now existing.

As I said, some of the faults with the present practices have been that some have endeavoured to cover too large an area with too few doctors. One doctor cannot adequately cover an area from the south side of Brisbane to Strathpine. In some instances the records have been inadequate and the doctors employed have had insufficient experience. These services can be very valuable if conducted properly and the amendment will assure that adequate supervision is given.

The honourable member for Townsville pointed out that the proposals for screening of foreign medical graduates will allow the brighter students of some countries not presently recognised to apply for registration, and this is so. At present it is an all-or-none procedure.

He also referred to the amendment dealing with dissections at the Anatomy School. The present legislation demands that the remains of a body used for dissection be decorously disposed of within a period of two years. This poses a problem. An expert dissector may produce a specimen which shows admirably the various organs of a particular part of the body. These specimens are excellently suited for teaching and to have to discard them after two years is not sensible. The amendment will allow such dissections to be kept indefinitely.

The honourable member also mentioned the problem of foreign students completing their medical training here and then not wishing to return to their own country. There have been such cases. They are the responsibility of the Commonwealth Immigration Department, and the State Health Department has always co-operated with the Immigration Department in not employing them in hospitals. Unfortunately, when asked to leave Australia some do not return to their own country but go somewhere else.

The honourable member also referred to the amendment dealing with medical fitness to practise. The suggested provision allows for the setting up of a committee of medical assessors to determine this.

The Medical Board would refer to such a committee cases of severe psychiatric illness, such as the one referred to by the honourable member. Occasionally the board hears of very elderly practitioners who, owing to infirmity, are no longer capable of practising. Recently a son of such a practitioner pleaded with the president of the board to take away his father's right to practise as he was afraid he would do some harm.

The honourable member for Rockhampton, along with other members, mentioned the difficulty in attracting doctors to country areas. After visiting many of these areas, I asked my officers to prepare plans for improvements in this field. These are now being considered. Some of the suggestions have already been put into action.

The honourable member for Flinders and the honourable member for Gregory mentioned the relief doctor system. The doctors in rural areas need two kinds of relief—one for holidays and one for week-ends. Until recently it was extremely difficult to supply relief for week-ends in one-doctor towns, which are often many miles from another doctor. The department has two sources available—scholarship-holders in medicine and doctors from metropolitan hospitals. Every applicant for a post in a metropolitan hospital in his second year after graduation is eligible to relieve in a country post for two months. In recent years the number of scholarships awarded has been increased. Last year and this year, over 30 have been given. This has enabled the director-general to provide more holiday relief and initiate week-end relief in some rural areas. Last year, 48 superintendents and medical officers were given holiday relief through the scheme. An additional doctor is now appointed to Bowen, Emerald, Charleville, Longreach and Mt. Isa and this gives the doctors in nearby towns time off, either at week-ends or during the week—a feature which they have not enjoyed for many years. For instance, the additional doctor at Emerald relieves the superintendent at Emerald for a week-end and then goes to Blackwater, Clermont and Springsure to relieve there. It is hoped to increase this service as more relievers become available. Where necessary the relieving doctor travels by air.

Last year superintendents in country areas were given the opportunity to attend courses run by the Family Medicine Programme at Brisbane and Townsville. The department approved leave on pay and the fares for the superintendent, and the Family Medicine Programme provided the locums. I pay tribute to the co-operation received from the Family Medicine Programme. The department will continue to make it possible for country superintendents to attend such refresher courses. Plans are also under way to hold annual conferences of medical superintendents, where clinical and administrative problems will be discussed.

Last year arrangements were made for a physician from the Royal Children's Hospital to fly to Mt. Isa to assist the superintendent with paediatric and adult medical problems. This pilot scheme was so successful that approval will be given for a full-time physician to be stationed at major provincial city hospitals, from where he will visit smaller hospitals at regular intervals. Since the introduction of this programme, we have had an offer from another full-time specialist to go to another area.

Accommodation for the doctor and his family is also being looked at and a submission for air-conditioning of Western Queensland superintendents' homes has been submitted to Cabinet.

Thus the department is improving relief, overcoming professional isolation, providing more specialist services and improving the rural superintendents' accommodation.

In passing I must pay tribute to the Flying Surgeon Service based on Longreach and servicing approximately 20 western Queensland towns.

I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for mentioning the sterling work done by the doctors in our State hospitals. I share with him an admiration for their excellent performance.

The honourable member also mentioned the problems with abuse of barbiturates and analgesics. The answer, I feel, lies partly in education and partly in legislation. Education must include informing the medical profession and the public of the dangers.

Action has already been taken on analgesics, particularly phenacetin, which is suspected of causing kidney damage. None of the more popular brands of analgesics on the market include phenacetin and this drug can now be prescribed only by doctors. The National Health and Medical Research Council is still considering the problem.

The points raised by the honourable member for Toowoomba North regarding the after-hours services are well worth considering and this applies to his remarks on medical registration. I would like to tell him that the director-general interviewed 26 applicants for posts in our psychiatric hospitals during his recent visit overseas and the Baillie Henderson Hospital is well up on the priority list in offering positions to some of these.

The honourable member for Mackay also raised the matter of specialists in country areas and I have referred to what the department is hoping to do in this regard. If he cares to refer to me any case of undue hardship in travel for specialist treatment, I will certainly have it investigated.

I thank the honourable member for Brisbane for his remarks regarding the after-hours service which will help when the by-laws are being drawn up.

The honourable member for Salisbury's tributes to the work of certain sections of the Health Department are appreciated. Her queries regarding the medical course will be passed on to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Saint.

I have discussed the matter of rural medical services with the honourable members for Flinders and Gregory several times and I feel sure that they will appreciate that something has already been achieved and that the plans I have mentioned will still further improve the situation.

The honourable member for Flinders mentioned western service and the promotion scale. He no doubt was referring to the fact that scholarship holders have to serve a term before they can train to be specialists. All applicants for scholarships are told that the scheme is purely a recruiting scheme for country areas. The disadvantages of having to serve in country areas are carefully pointed out to the students. However many long-term scholarship holders have been given positions as registrars in metropolitan hospitals in their last year of bonding when legally the department could have kept them in the West.

I thank the honourable member for Warrego for his remarks regarding air-conditioning of ambulances, and accommodation for doctors and dentists. I shall be visiting the honourable member's electorate in the next few days and will have an opportunity to discuss these matters with him first hand.

So far in these comments on questions raised in the previous debate I have covered some of the proposed amendments but the remaining ones need explanation and this I will now do.

In keeping with a Government decision that the upper age limit of members serving on statutory boards should be 70 years, the amendment provides for this age limit to apply to members of the Medical Board. The Bill also provides for payment of board members in accordance with a recent Government decision.

Whilst the Medical Board is responsible for the administration of the Act, the everyday running of the board's activities is the duty of the registrar of the board and it is proposed that the board's documents be authentically signed by him. This includes the summoning of witnesses when the board wishes to investigate a matter within its jurisdiction. These are mainly matters of a disciplinary nature.

There is some doubt at present as to whether the Auditor-General has the power to examine the board's books and accounts. A proposed amendment will clarify the position.

The existing legislation does not give the board any power to remit or waive fees in deserving cases. Some doctors who are past the age of active practice but wish to remain registered must pay the full registration fees. It is proposed that the board have some discretionary power.

It is mandatory that any applicant who is registered to practise medicine in Queensland has reached a desired standard in his training and experience. He should have sufficient knowledge of the English language to interpret his patient's symptoms, prescribe the treatment and manage the case. He should also himself be medically fit to carry on his work. The University of Queensland Medical School set a high standard of training right from its inception. It is imperative that all who are registered in this State, if they do not hold the Queensland qualification, hold a qualification which is at least as high as this. The National Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications has made a world study on medical training courses. It has supplied this information to all Australian Medical Boards. The presidents of the boards meet annually, and qualifications outside Australia have been studied at recent annual meetings. There is now agreement as to those qualifications which should be accepted as being at least equal to those obtained in Australia and automatically registered.

Up till now the Queensland Medical Board has automatically registered graduates from other Australian States, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and prescribed medical schools in Canada, Ireland and South Africa. It is proposed to add to this list of medical schools for automatic recognition the University of Singapore and the University of Hong Kong. These two medical schools have always been of high standard and for several years have been recognised by some other Australian States. It is interesting to study the results that students from these two universities obtain in the common E.C.F.M.G. examinations. Their results compare very favourably with our own students and are well above the results obtained by Indian and many European students. Recognition by Queensland will be a step towards uniformity throughout Australia. These medical qualifications will be listed in the second schedule to the Act. All graduates from these schools will be eligible for automatic registration.

At times the Medical Board receives applications for registration from graduates of medical schools for which automatic recognition is not recommended. Some, but not all, of these may be suitable for registration. At present the board may ask them to sit for a clinical and oral examination conducted here in Queensland by the Professors of Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics.

A new method of dealing with these applicants is suggested. Firstly, the applicants will be required to sit for an approved preliminary examination—and I have already referred to the E.C.F.M.G. examination. After this first step, they will be asked to sit for another written examination, based on Australian medical conditions, taken in Australia. After the candidate has passed the

second step, the board if it deems fit may ask him to sit for a clinical and oral examination as at present and also have further experience in one of our hospitals. This method will allow candidates from countries which do not have automatic registration to demonstrate that they are equal to our own graduates and therefore fit to practise medicine in Queensland.

There is a third method of registration in the Bill. The first qualifications candidates gain are those obtained at their primary graduation, or what is referred to here in Queensland as the final or sixth-year examination. Naturally some go on obtain post-graduate degrees. Some candidates hold a primary qualification not recognised in Queensland but a specialist qualification that is recognised for specialist registration in Queensland. For instance, he may have graduated in India but have obtained a fellowship in surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons in England. At present the board may register such a candidate if it believes he has the knowledge, skill and ability to practise medicine efficiently in Queensland. Sometimes this is hard to assess, and it is proposed that the applicant may be given the opportunity to show his ability in a hospital or institution in Queensland. If after a time he is judged to be eligible for full registration, the board will then grant it. The approved specialist qualifications are set out in the proposed third schedule to the Act.

The Bill provides for the possibility of the establishment of further medical schools in Queensland and the adoption of the term "intern" to describe the graduate doing his compulsory pre-registration year. The States have decided to adopt this term nationally.

The Medical Board occasionally receives advice from other boards that they have erased a medical practitioner's name from their register. The Queensland board has no power to take action in such a case. A practitioner in a southern State may be erased from the register owing to addiction to drugs and have demonstrated he is no longer suitable for registration. It is proposed to give the Queensland board the necessary power to erase his name from the Queensland register if the circumstances warrant it.

Matters of a disciplinary nature concerning a registered practitioner may be dealt with either by the Medical Board or by the Medical Assessment Tribunal. The Bill proposes amendments to those relative provisions in the existing legislation. It is proposed that the medical practitioners who assist the judge of the tribunal retire at the age of 70 years, in accordance with the general decision already mentioned. When the board itself deals with such matters, it is proposed to allow the board to adjourn the case for a period and later make an assessment after considering the particular doctor's behaviour during that period. The Bill also proposes that the board make a decision regarding costs of such actions, a power it does not now possess. It is further proposed that when a doctor's name has been erased from the register by the Medical Assessment Tribunal and he decides to be heard for restoration, the board may make an investigation and, if it wishes, oppose his restoration. The board has no such power at present.

Under the amendment to the section of the Act dealing with post-mortem examinations, the practice of removing parts for histological and teaching purposes will be validated.

Before proceeding to carry out a surgical procedure it is necessary for a doctor to obtain the consent of the patient or, if the patient is a minor, the consent of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of an emergency such requirement may be waived if immediate action is necessary and the consent cannot be obtained. In fact a doctor would be failing in his duty if he did not act immediately, regardless of whether consent had been obtained or not. Sometimes, however, an occasion arises when an elective operation is necessary to prolong or save life. There is time to plan the operation but the patient himself is too confused owing to a psychiatric illness to give consent and no relative is available. In these circumstances it is proposed that the medical superintendent of the institution where the patient is an inmate give consent, provided he is not the doctor who will perform the operation.

Other amendments deal with the updating of penalties.

The Bill includes very important amendments and I commend it to the House.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.30 p.m.): As the Minister said, the Bill contains some very important and, I would say, very desirable provisions for the medical profession. What I am most interested in at this time is the registration of overseas doctors. This is a very ticklish point because Queensland is so badly in need of doctors that I do not think we should be in a hurry to reject those who are not immediately able to present suitable qualifications in terms of Queensland legislation.

They should be given the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications to reach the standard required in Queensland. We are suffering a shortage of doctors. It could be true that many overseas doctors entering Australia do not possess the qualifications required here but are particularly proficient men medically. Perhaps some provision could be made for what could be termed post-graduate studies to enable them to bring their standards up to what is required by Queensland law. As the Minister pointed out, it is most important that we should establish a standard here and stand by it rigorously in the intake of overseas doctors.

We have to be particularly careful in view of the large number of medical men who for various reasons are fleeing from their

own countries and coming to Australia. I refer to the southern Press statement about bus-loads of such doctors seeking registration. I do not know how true that statement is, but apparently there is an influx of Asian doctors seeking registration in New South Wales. I do not suppose that anyone in Queensland, including the Minister, knows the exact qualifications of those doctors who are seeking registration in New South Wales.

A suggestion was made to me last week that many of them who are seeking and being granted registration in New South Wales are being snapped up by various after-hours medical services. I do not think that this applies in Queensland. I understand there are not many after-hours medical services in operation here. But it is something we must look at and ensure that every medical man who comes to Queensland is fully qualified. I do not know that the regulations in New South Wales would be less severe or discriminatory than those in Queensland, but there must be some means by which doctors are able to secure registration down there. I agree with the Minister that we must be very particular in registering doctors for medical services in Queensland.

I know that we go overseas seeking doctors to implement our services and that we have to take what we can get. I think the Minister mentioned that Dr. Patrick had contacted about 27 doctors, but are they coming?

Dr. Edwards interjected.

Mr. MELLOY: I appreciate the work that Dr. Patrick did while he was overseas and I hope that it does help our services in the State.

I understand that there are three major after-hours services operating in Brisbane. Apparently these services have to be accredited by the A.M.A. I do not think that that should be the province of the A.M.A.; I think it should be a function of the Medical Board. I do not know whether the Minister has any ideas along those lines.

Dr. Edwards: The legislation will give the board powers to accredit them or otherwise.

Mr. MELLOY: I think that is desirable. Personal prejudices or influences could come into the matter if it remained the province of the A.M.A. I understand that some after-hours services have been refused accreditation by the A.M.A. I do not think that is right. If after-hours services employ doctors who are fully qualified (I imagine they would be, or they would not be practising in Queensland), I do not see any reason why they should not be given accreditation in line with others who enjoy that privilege. I am interested in what the Minister will include in future legislation concerning after-hours services, as they are most important.

Before very much is done in this field, I think a survey should be carried out to ascertain the need for after-hours services. Apparently it is very great. The shortage of doctors who are available at nights and week-ends is causing much distress in the community and I think that a very full survey should be made of the need for after-hours services. The Government or the Medical Board should consider drawing up a roster under which doctors would be available at nights and at week-ends to ensure that the public has access to doctors when urgent medical attention is needed. I have received innumerable complaints from people who have not been able to secure medical services at week-ends. This is a matter to which the Government should give close attention. It should control after-hours services to ensure that they are available to the public at any hour of the day or night.

I think it is essential that the names and qualifications of doctors employed by after-hours services be known to the Medical Board. This is an essential safeguard for the people. So great is the need for after-hours medical services throughout the State that they should be controlled by the Medical Board. I do not know what the situation is outside Brisbane; in the major provincial cities I presume it would be the same.

The Minister referred to the fitness of medical practitioners and the need for assessment of their ability when they reach a stage in life when they may not be capable of carrying out their duties as they should be carried out. The Act prescribes that if it comes to the notice of the Medical Board that a member of the medical profession is unfit to continue in practice, action can be taken. I should like to know how such a situation comes to the notice of the board. Is it reported by other practitioners or by the public? Who decides when the condition of a medical man should be brought to the notice of the Medical Board? We could not have anybody at all in the community passing judgment on the ability of a doctor to carry out his duties. Is there a medical police force or something of that nature that keeps a regular check on doctors? How will the Medical Board know if some doctors are not fit to continue to practise? It is a matter of great interest because one cannot just move in on a doctor and say to him, "Look, we don't think you are fit to continue to conduct your practice. You can come up before the board and we will decide whether you are fit to carry on your practice or not." The Minister must have something in mind, or he would not have introduced this amendment. He must know how he is going to do it, how it will be be brought into operation and how it will affect medical practitioners.

A member of the board might even come to the Minister and say, "Look, you have been in Parliament and have not practised for so long that you are not now fit to carry on your medical practice. I think we will cancel your registration." If someone

on the Medical Board was sour on the Minister, that could happen. Someone might even say to the other medical practitioners in the Parliament, "You are so out of touch that you should not be practising. We will wipe you out."

The other matter I wanted to discuss concerns the way that the board deals with medical practitioners, I presume, for misconduct. The Bill states that the board may adjourn the matter for a period not exceeding 12 months. This is pretty difficult to follow because a medical practitioner who is being dealt with by the board is there because he has been deficient in some way. Perhaps the purpose of this period of adjournment of up to 12 months is to give him a chance to redeem himself, or does it mean that he can be dealt with straight away? Who is going to decide?

The Bill also states that the board and the medical practitioner concerned may in writing agree to waive the requirement—that is an immediate decision on the case—and defer it, if necessary, for up to 12 months, during which time the medical practitioner's conduct will be observed by the board. I would like the Minister to go into that matter a bit more deeply in his reply and inform the House just what is the situation.

Generally I feel that the Bill is a very desirable one in that it clears up a lot of points, particularly the retirement age of members of the Medical Board. This is a desirable provision because I think that everybody should be retired at 65 years. I do not care who the person is, whether a departmental commissioner or anyone else, once he reaches the age of 65 (although the Bill extends it to 70), he has lost 95 per cent of his initiative and I would say he is just coasting along until the day he departs this earth. I do not think any person in this age group has the inducement to make any radical changes in the conduct of the Medical Board or in the conduct of any other department or organisation of which he is a member.

It is a good idea to insist on retirement from the Medical Board at the age of 70. I think this provision is included in another Bill which the Minister has introduced relating to the membership of hospitals boards. This provision extending the retirement of members of the Medical Board to 70 is a very generous one. I would retire them at 65. I do not care who the person is, once he reaches that age he is not worrying about what is going to happen in the next 10 years. I know I am not, and I am well past the age of 65. Generally Opposition members go along with the provisions of the Bill.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (12.45 p.m.): I feel quite sorry for the honourable member for Nudgee. Obviously age is catching up with him. If we were to wipe out everyone at age 65, I do not think we would have very many administrators either in public life or in commerce. A man is only as old as he feels.

Mr. Melloy interjected.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: The honourable member backs racehorses that should not be running. Why not let the other fellows have a run?

I congratulate the Minister and his officers on this amendment to the Medical Act, which has always been a sound Act. I note that it is being updated particularly because of the increasing number of overseas graduates who are coming to this country, and great care is being taken with their assessment.

One matter that ought to be considered is the age of registration. I recall that in my graduation year two fellows were under 21 years of age when they graduated. They could not practise medicine and could not sign certificates until they reached the age of 21 years. I do not know whether the quality of primary and secondary teaching has kept pace with the quality of the medical curriculum, but if it has there could quite easily be graduates under 21 years of age today. An assessment should be made in each individual case. If a person has the necessary qualities and has passed his examination, I do not see why he should not be registered before he is 21 years of age, because when he reaches the age of 18 years he can vote, serve in the Army or get married. He has a considerable number of choices as to the way in which he will live. If he has attained a degree at 18 years of age, he probably has balance much above that of the ordinary lad of a similar age, and that balance and his knowledge should allow him to be registered.

While I am dealing with qualifications, I point out to honourable members that Queensland has been well protected in that respect in the Bill. In perusing it, I noticed that, in dealing with specialties, it provides that the qualification of the Royal College of Surgeons in general surgery can be accepted if it was obtained before 1973, subject to the holder's having a Certificate of Higher Surgical Training or completing the required three years' additional training. That is an excellent idea. As I said at the introductory stage, many people think that because a person holds a higher degree he is a specialist. I note that the Bill will ensure that the requirement for additional training will be adhered to.

Surgery is not an art; it is a trade. Many people seem to think that surgeons have mystical ability that has been bestowed upon them by God. Actually, of course, the ability to practise surgery is bestowed upon a person by an Act of Parliament, and it is imperative that the Act of Parliament should ensure that basic training in surgery has been long, strict, and severe. In my opinion, in the field of surgery we ought to get back to an apprenticeship system similar to that for fitters and turners, engineers, electricians, painters

and plumbers. The importance of basic training must be emphasised. In the University of Queensland, clinical tuition and basic training in physiology and anatomy are as good as one would find anywhere in the world. The older universities in Australia have no advantage over the University of Queensland in teaching ability and the arrangement of the curriculum.

One aspect of medical training that I consider has been a little bit backward is being updated in the Bill. I refer to the approach to anatomy schools and the autopsy material available. This will be of great interest to the James Cook University at Townsville, which will be developing a medical school. Again it shows the far-sighted attitude of the Health Department in setting up a second medical school associated with a provincial university.

The changes in the Act to allow more ready access to material for autopsy, the preservation of autopsy material and the preservation of specimens of anatomy are, I believe, excellent and a step in the right direction. For many years a lot of people thought that anatomy could be learned simply by dissecting parts of the human body. This is totally fallacious. A student can learn anatomy also by examining well-prepared specimens, and facilities to enable this to be done are provided for by the Bill.

The various specialties have been dealt with quite adequately by it. There is, however, one that has been overlooked—administration. For many years people considered that a doctor was wasting his talents if he became an administrator. I believe that a person cannot become a good medical administrator without having first obtained basic training in medicine. Recent years have shown increasing interest among medical practitioners in the administration of their profession, with the result that from our colleges we have emerging a large number of medical administrators. Yet nowhere in the Act are administrators grouped together under a specialty.

Years ago we had a diploma of public health, which was considered to be essential to the holding of an administrative position. However, if a person who has done basic medical training wishes to specialise in administration he could quite easily obtain the necessary qualifications by becoming a Fellow of the Australian College of Medical Administration. He cannot hold such a degree without first having completed a very difficult course of lectures and demonstrations and then passed an examination. I understand that this degree is recognised in the various States in the administrative field. I suggest that we include such a degree in our list of qualifications for specialists.

We have heard a great deal of talk about the fitness of medical practitioners and their ability to practise medicine. It has always been difficult to assess whether a doctor is fit enough to practise his profession. As a whole the medical profession is a fairly honourable one. Doctors might cut each other's throat, so to speak, at a dinner party or afterwards, and engage in backbiting, but when it comes to dealing with the public they are fairly honourable. One only has to recall all the claims that were put forward when Medibank was being implemented. The public were scared into believing that they would be bled white by doctors who engaged in snide practices and unscrupulous deals. Such claims have proved to be totally unfounded. Medibank's problems are its inherent weaknesses, not the alleged greed, gluttony or malpractice of the medical profession.

The medical profession polices itself. The average man who has practised medicine for a number of years knows when his faculties are waning and when his brain is not as active as it used to be. In the long history of medicine very few medical practitioners have been forced to retire.

Most of the medical practitioners who have been brought before the Medical Board have first passed through the courts on charges of abortion, of drug peddling or of committing various other heinous crimes. It is interesting to note that the Medical Board is not beholden to the findings of the courts when it takes action. It can either condemn or reprieve a medical practitioner, regardless of the outcome of his appearance in court. Sometimes this causes considerable alarm to the public; nevertheless the Medical Board comprises sensible and intelligent people. I am quite sure that the medical profession is generally quite happy with the operations of its lords and masters in the Medical Board.

Whether or not a person is fit to practise is determined not only by age but also by his knowledge of medicine. There are two aspects: physical and mental fitness on the one hand and knowledge or competency in the profession on the other. Competency in the profession is one of the hardest things in the world to assess. Certain doctors may appear to be very knowledgeable but may not be. Years ago it was said that becoming a successful doctor could be rather painful in that to get a thoughtful look a doctor should have haemorrhoids, that this usually increased his income because he always regarded his patients with a thoughtful look.

Mr. Melloy: They buried their mistakes.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: That old cliche is so true; the honourable member need not worry about that. The deeper doctors go into medicine the more they find they are not infallible. Unfortunately many members of the public think we are infallible, but we are not. I have seen people die although biochemical tests of their blood, their breathing apparatus, electrocardiogram and everything else that could be done was normal. I

remember one man saying to me, "I am going to die tomorrow." I said "Bull! You are not; you are as fit as I am." But my God, he was dead next day. I don't know why he died; I may have made a mistake somewhere along the line, but biochemically —as far as we could assess according to science—he should not have died.

This is where a doctor's qualifications and basic training stand by him. If a person is competent to go through the basic training laid down in the Bill—and an overseas graduate is to be assessed as provided in the new schedule—I do not think we can say that his practising medicine in Queensland means that he is being let loose on the public through the neglect of the Department of Health. I feel that the department will have done its job properly and that the public is being kept secure by its actions. I commend the motion.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.57 p.m.): Mr. Speaker——

A Government Member: Dr. Hooper!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: M.B., B.S.

I enter the debate to speak briefly on that principle of the Bill relating to after-hours call services. The time is long overdue for making a decision to regulate the after-hours services given by medical practitioners in this State. Over many years medical practitioners in Queensland have been getting away with murder—literally and metaphorically. Outside surgery hours it is virtually impossible to obtain the services of a doctor. Most general practitioners enjoy a well-paid practice at their surgery. Some suburban doctors churn out patients through their surgeries like sausages through a sausage machine.

Mr. Lindsay: Shame!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is a shame. This practice should be corrected.

They put patients through a very cursory medical examination. Some doctors have admitted to me privately that they do not have the time to give their patients a thorough examination. I have found that many doctors' waiting rooms are overcrowded and dingy. It would not hurt the Brisbane City Council Health Department to visit some of the suburban doctors' surgeries. It is quite apparent that a large number of medical practitioners—particularly those like the honourable members for Townsville and Toowoomba North—regard their degrees in medicine as the gateway to a fortune.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true. Any medical practitioner can be guaranteed $20,000 a year. Graduates from other faculties at the university——

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: This is only a sideline for them. Graduates from other faculties such as engineering, which is at least as hard as medicine and probably harder, cannot be guaranteed an annual income of $20,000 a year. Doctors should be made to accept the good with the bad.

In the absence of a proper after-hours call service, some human vultures are battening on human suffering and misery. I refer to the after-hours call service run by Christopher and Christine Mann, who advertise that they have radio doctors, the hours at which they are available and the fact that they give a free service to pensioners. I am told on good authority that this after-hours call service recruits doctors from overseas, gets them out here for three months and then employs them on this after-hours call service.

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Before lunch I spoke about human vultures who are battening onto the human misery and suffering of people who desire after-hours medical care. I referred to a doctors on call, after-hours service run by Drs. Christopher and Christine Mann, who advertise that they are "radio doctors", operating from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. nightly, 12 noon Saturday till 6 a.m. Monday, and all public holidays. They also advertise that they offer free service to pensioners. Those in that organisation, I repeat, are scabbing on the A.M.A. What they have been doing——

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is a fact they have been scabbing on the A.M.A. If the honourable member for Murrumba will restrain himself a little, I will try to enlighten him, although he hasn't much between the ears.

I will outline what is taking place with that service. They charge the full A.M.A. fee of $17.50. Out of that the medical practitioner receives $8, the driver of the vehicle $4 and the after-hours medical service $5.50, $5.70, or whatever the case may be. Quite a lucrative racket is carried on in the South, and I will be interested to hear the Minister's comments about this in his reply.

What compounds the felony is that the people on the switch taking the calls—taking information from people who ring up after hours—have no medical qualifications at all. As a matter of fact, some of the people on the switch have about as much medical knowledge as the honourable member for Windsor, who, I am told on good authority, cannot tell the difference between dandruff and haemorrhoids.

Mr. MOORE: I rise to a point of order. I can well tell the difference.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The doctors—particularly those who are being recruited from overseas by this after-hours medical service—are scabbing on their mates. I can see that the Minister agrees with me. I know that the Minister would agree with me, too, that the A.M.A. is possibly the best trade union in Australia—and probably the most restrictive. When the general president of that organisation nods, the ordinary general practitioner never shakes his head.

In conclusion, I would be glad if the Minister could give the House an assurance that he will do something about this very shonky after-hours medical service that is run by Christopher and Christine Mann.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (2.18 p.m.): In rising to speak on the second-reading debate, I address myself to a few remarks made by some of the Opposition spokesmen. The honourable member for Nudgee spoke almost as though he were in favour of introducing a compulsory out-of-hours service set up by the Medical Board. I do not think there should be any element of compulsion in any service in this country, be it electrical, medical, dental or anything else. Those who wish to do out-of-hours calls—and I am one of them—can join with their fellows in providing an out-of-hours service. As I have said before, the service provided in Toowoomba is much better than that in Brisbane.

I believe that the A.M.A. can, by consultation within its own ranks, sort the matter out. I believe it will do so. It has sorted out a great many other problems. Indeed, even last night the president of the A.M.A. was in Toowoomba addressing doctors——

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: The member for Archerfield was not there. He is not a doctor and he never will be.

The A.M.A. is well aware of the problems in this area. Moves are already being made to find a solution.

I do not think that the medical profession needs a medical police force, which was alluded to, perhaps half in jest, by the member for Nudgee. As I said at the introductory stage, the profession has looked after its own members, particularly in times of physical or mental ill health. They have taken into their confidence their brothers, the Director-General and his senior officers. These medical practitioners have been helped over their problems.

It should not be forgotten that doctors are people and that they can suffer from each and every illness suffered by every other member of the community. If a doctor has nerve trouble he can have treatment and, like other people, recover and return to his practice when he is fit and able to do so. As I said before, previous Ministers for Health and Director-Generals of Health have seen that those doctors have returned to their practices when they are capable of doing so. There is no need for a doctor who is sick with any particular illness to be compelled to retire from the profession that he loves.

There has been talk of dealing with misconduct by members of the profession. We live in a day of sexual licence, so to speak. We are well aware of the problems of dealing particularly with patients suffering from mental illness and having, as part of their problem, sexual delusions. I mention in brief a case I heard of where the particular attraction of a patient was members of the medical profession and of another profession that I will not name because it was through no fault of their own that the members of that profession were attractive to that lady. Her trick was to call doctors and members of the other profession to her house and she would receive them scantily clad. She had a severe mental illness. She had treatment for the complaint in several places. I am sorry to say that as a result of her mental illness she has since died.

If matters of misconduct are to be the subject of a hearing, they should be considered by persons who are fully alert to the whole gamut of the problems that doctors can face with patients and particularly the manner in which patients can present themselves to doctors.

Mr. Jensen: I'll have something to say on that shortly.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: The honourable member for Bundaberg no doubt has some homespun knowledge to add interest to this debate. He usually does, and I look forward to hearing him.

Persons in need of certification can say the most vile things about others and will spread rumours. They will also lay charges against persons in all walks of life. The medical practitioner is in no way exempt from their charges and claims which can be very carefully investigated to see if they are possible or likely, and the medical practitioner's version needs to be firmly recorded.

These matters should always be heard first by a panel of doctors. It is no good starting such a proceeding in a court of law, for example, or before some committee that has almighty powers, because, especially if the charges are made public, they can do irreparable harm to the person who is claimed to be in breach of medical ethics and to the person laying the charges that are shown to be false and put up only because of mental illness.

There are some problems within the A.M.A. Honourable members might be aware of this. The A.M.A. has had some problems in disciplining its own members and, indeed, these days, not all doctors are members of the A.M.A. A great many doctors who are in salaried positions—and they represent about 40 per cent of doctors—do not belong to the Australian Medical Association. They have joined the Professional Officers' Association

in the belief that they can be better served by that association. The A.M.A. can and will react to the need and I do not think that there is any call for any strong, firm, binding legislation in this matter. It should be remembered that the A.M.A. can react to occurrences on a day-to-day basis whereas legislation may take one or two years to become effective. It must also be remembered that if a person is determined to break the law he will study the legislation, find its weaknesses and act accordingly.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (2.26 p.m.): I have been very interested in what has been said today about doctors. I should like to mention that my mother-in-law is 84 years of age and my wife has always taken her to one doctor. As a pensioner, she was always treated free. When my wife took her to see the doctor after Medibank was introduced, $6 in cash was demanded, not the pensioner's Medibank refund of $4.50. Fortunately, my wife had the money in her purse. She then had to go to Medibank and return to get her mother's signature to claim the $4.50 from Medibank. That is the type of thing that happened when Medibank was introduced. We all know that general practitioners were sour at the Labor Government and were not going to treat pensioners. It was blatant robbery to charge my mother-in-law $6 when all she could be refunded was $4.50. When my wife returned to the doctor to get a repeat prescription—she could not take my mother-in-law, at her age, with her all the time—Medibank was again charged for a visit, only this time on my wife's signature. I emphasise that that charge was merely for a repeat prescription, not a consultation.

Dr. Edwards: That is not in the Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not care about that. I want to tell the House something about general practitioners. It is about time someone did that. I am talking about the ordinary G.P. who is supposed to be the one who looks after the health of the community.

That same doctor could have killed my daughter; she was treating her for infection when she was pregnant in her tube. On the way to Brisbane she collapsed in the car. She was taken to a doctor at Caboolture and was rushed to hospital for a special operation. Her doctor did not know what was wrong with her; she had been treating her for an infection. That illustrates the type of G.P. to whom the people have to pay money.

My father was a Doctor of Science. My brother died at seven years of age from peritonitis. The doctors did not know about that at the time. My father wrote in his album, "Killed by the ignorance of our present-day doctors." I can remember when my brother died at Toowong and when my father wrote those words in his album. My father was a true doctor—not a G.P. He was a true Doctor of Science and one of those who can genuinely be called doctors. Medicos parade as doctors yet they can kill people. I know that the honourable member for Townsville admits that medicos can bury their mistakes. We all know that those in all professions are not infallible, but it is quite astounding when doctors can make mistakes of the type that I have mentioned.

Present-day doctors are bludging on Medibank. It was mentioned in the Sunday newspapers this week that country doctors were making $70,000 a year out of Medibank. If they are not bludging on Medibank, how are they getting that money?

Dr. Edwards: Working hard.

Mr. JENSEN: When a person goes to a doctor for a repeat prescription the doctor does not even look at him but he still gets his money from the Government. Is that working hard? My wife has to sign a form when my mother-in-law wants a repeat prescription. Is that working hard? It is about time this type of thing was stopped. It is about time doctors remembered their oath, started to believe what they should believe and began to look after the community as a whole.

I have nothing against doctors. I have suffered from no serious illnesses. The only time I ever had trouble was when I spent three days in hospital having my tonsils out. I personally have never had any cause to make complaints about doctors. My doctor is the Government Medical Officer in Bundaberg. He would not do these things. I even go up and discuss politics with him. He does not charge me another $10 for taking up his time; he likes to know what the people think. Just the same, doctors are there for our benefit, and if they are not going to act in a proper manner when an old pensioner like my mother-in-law goes and visits her doctor and is robbed in that she is charged $6 while Medibank refunds only $4.50 and she has to pay the other $1.50 out of her own purse, then something must be done about them. She has been going to the same doctor for years, yet he does that to her. If that is not daylight robbery by a G.P., I do not know what is. It is about time that type of thing was stopped. I would not have minded except for the fact that my wife was inconvenienced. She had to go back again, get forms signed then go to Medibank and get the money. It was a damn disgrace. When the Liberal-Country Party Government was in power, the visit was charged straight to the pensioner medical service, but as soon as Medibank was introduced this was altered and she had to pay cash.

A Government Member: Is it Medibank you don't like or doctors?

Mr. JENSEN: Look, I'm talking to the doctor, not the mug.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member knows that he should not interject unless he is sitting in his rightful place. I ask all honourable members to obey the rules of the House.

Mr. JENSEN: I think the Minister wants to ask a question.

Dr. Edwards: You realise, of course, that your Government abolished the pensioner medical service when it brought in the Medibank programme.

Mr. JENSEN: Oh, it did nothing of the sort. Don't give me that. Get out with you! All that had to be done was to change the system and charge it to Medibank. The Minister knows that. The incoming Government was so sore at the Labor Government that it wanted to charge people cash; it wanted pensioners to pay on the knocker. The Minister knows that; it was known right throughout Queensland. If this is the type of thing which G.P.s do—these people who take an oath to look after us—I don't know what is wrong with them. They have lost all sense of decency and all regard for the community. I do not say that of all of them. I know my doctor would never do that, but there are certain doctors who do this because of political bias. They should not hold a person's political views against him, particularly a pensioner's. I have no more to say about this, I just wanted to bring it up because it concerns me and it concerns my wife. She is the one who has to take her mother to that doctor. Why the hell she ever takes her to that doctor I don't know.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (2.33 p.m.): I spoke during the introductory debate to voice my concern at the possibility of a second-rate medical service which would, I believe, result from the introduction of so-called medical call services. I believe that this possibility of a second-rate medical service is one which is recognised by the medical authorities. We are not improving, we are not updating and we are not upgrading the type of medical service which will be rendered. I understand that that is admitted by the medical profession itself, and nothing in the comments I have heard so far in this debate has caused me to change my mind. Furthermore, the inquiries I have made and what I have seen on television about the people who are involved with the existing medical call services have confirmed the fears which I held when the Bill was first introduced.

Today we heard the honourable member for Archerfield speak about one medical call service operated by people who are obviously not qualified and who are obviously involved in a dichotomy of fees. There is the call service operated by Mr. Rogers, the gentleman I saw on television, who freely admitted that he operates on behalf of some 40 to 50 doctors in the metropolitan area. He freely admitted, too, that the doctors who actually attend the patients are purely his employees. As I said, what I have seen and heard since the Bill was introduced has done nothing but confirm my fears.

I took it upon myself to make inquiries in the Business Names Office into another after-hours call service. I found that it was solely in the name of one person who is a doctor. But that is only part of the argument. The fact that that man is qualified and is the sole proprietor, not sharing with his wife or some other person with whom he might otherwise share, does not really prove anything. There is nothing to prevent a dichotomy of income between persons who are qualified and persons who are not.

Again, there is nothing that I know of—in fact, I understand that the practice is to the contrary—to prevent people other than trained people, or even people who have had some nursing experience, acting as telephonists for medical call services. So if medical call services are to be implemented—and it seems that they will be implemented, although I cannot support their implementation—it is essential that the people who handle telephone calls have some medical training. I am assured by medically qualified persons that in the case of, say, the Flying Doctor and the Flying Surgeon, the people who handle the call service are in fact qualified to the extent of having at least some medical training. That would be an essential provision in any legislation that is introduced.

The other aspect about which I was concerned at the introductory stage was the splitting of fees. Everything that we have heard so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, indicates that that is exactly what is going on and that, on the recommendation of the A.M.A., fees are being collected, where possible, by the doctor who attends. Why the A.M.A. should be prepared to recommend that that be the practice, I do not know, because I understand that the A.M.A. and the B.M.A. have always, as a matter of ethics, more than discouraged—frowned upon—the splitting of fees and have in fact taken steps against practitioners who have been involved in the splitting of fees with persons who are not qualified. That is what is going on now. I have had my fears confirmed that the attending doctor is actually an employee of the call service.

The honourable member for Nudgee spoke earlier today about the large numbers of doctors we may be importing from overseas. There is nothing to ensure that such doctors, having satisfied the Medical Board and, consequently, having become registered in Queensland, will not be prepared to work for a considerably lower fee and under conditions that normally would not be accepted by our own doctors. So again I see a lessening of the standard of medical service being rendered to the patient.

I believe that it is our function as a Government to ensure that there is an improvement, certainly not a waning, in the standard. With the introduction of out-of

hours medical services, I can see that nothing is more likely than a deterioration in the standard of medical services.

I am concerned that honourable members have not been able to see exactly what is proposed in the Bill that has been circulated. One sees in it only a reference to such services as a medical call service; there is nothing to indicate exactly what is intended. All we heard from the Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was how it is proposed to legislate for the service. It is a matter of political philosophy that we, as a Government, do not believe in government by regulation; yet that is what we are going to have. We are going to have a totally new brand of medical service foisted upon us.

Dr. Edwards: It's not a new brand; it has been in operation for many years in Britain, America and Canada as well as in Australia.

Mr. LOWES: The Minister says it is not new. It is certainly new to Queensland—new to the extent of being novel.

Dr. Edwards: No, it has been operating here in Brisbane for 15 years.

Mr. LOWES: The Minister says it has been operating for some time. Be that as it may, it is a matter that is causing considerable concern to the health authorities—so much so that this legislation is being brought forward. However, the method of legislating is what I draw attention to. We, both as Government members and as parliamentarians, should have been given a fuller picture of what is intended in this proposal concerning the medical call service.

The two abuses of which I am aware are fee-splitting and the system under which young doctors who are bonded and under service contracts work for the after-hours medical call service. This cannot tend towards the elevation of medical services in the State. The foregoing are merely some of the reasons why I view this legislation with grave concern.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (2.41 p.m.): One of the provisions in the Bill, and one that I am very pleased to see included in it, allows for recognition by the Medical Board of Queensland of qualifications attained by persons at universities in this State other than the University of Queensland. This provision is timely, and one that many of us have sought for some years.

Although in this respect the Bill is a step forward, it is still a long way from the establishment of medical faculties at other universities in Queensland, so I rise to stress the urgency of getting on with the establishment of the faculty of medicine at the James Cook University of North Queensland.

For approximately two years the faculty board at that university has endeavoured to set up such a faculty. However, for some reason—I am not quite sure whether the board is bogged down—nothing seems to have eventuated. Perhaps the Minister will enlighten the House on this aspect.

From time to time northern members and western members have complained about the inability to retain doctors in the sparsely populated areas of the State as well as in places whose climate is perhaps not as cool as that in Brisbane. It is quite surprising, therefore, that doctors have come to Mackay from southern States to escape the rat race of the big cities. They regard the opportunity to practise in provincial cities and smaller towns as being far more attractive than life in a big city.

The most suitable person to set up in practice in either North Queensland or Western Queensland is one who has close ties with the area and desires to put down his roots there. Most of the students who attend the James Cook University are young men and women from the northern and western areas of the State together with those from Central Queensland, and I believe that the establishment of a medical faculty at the James Cook University will help in attracting medical students to that university.

We must look forward to the day when the James Cook University will provide a specialist faculty of tropical medicine. If such a faculty is established there, benefits will flow to other countries throughout the world. Because we have virtually the only Caucasian population established in a tropical area, we have found already in North Queensland a number of medical problems.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! A second-reading speech must be pertinent to the Bill before the House. If the honourable member can tell me what section he is directing his comments to, I shall be pleased to let him continue.

Mr. CASEY: They are not directed specifically to a section, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but to the new principles in the Bill that enable persons to qualify for medical practice in Queensland in places other than Queensland. It is not proper to allow mere qualifications to be the deciding factor. The added qualifications in the Bill should cover the full range of tropical medicine. I am sure that the Minister knows full well that not a great deal of research into tropical medicine is carried out in the tropics. Quite a deal of research is allowed under the Medical Act that we are debating today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are not debating the Medical Act. We are debating the Medical Act Amendment Bill, and there is a great deal of difference.

Mr. CASEY: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I omitted the words "Amendment Bill" when I referred to it.

The provision relating to qualifications from universities other than the Queensland University will assist us to retain qualified

medical practitioners in the North. At the same time it is necessary to develop the Townsville General Hospital as a proper medical school. I am sure that the honourable member for Townsville well appreciates the need for that and the great benefits that would flow to two-thirds of the area of the State and two-thirds of the people in the State. That was the main point I wished to bring to the attention of the House, and clause 15 is the one to which that distinctly and definitely relates.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (2.48 p.m.): This could be very useful legislation. When it becomes law it could be used in the interests of the people of Queensland, but having been in this House for quite a long time and having known the snobbery that exists in the minds of some people including politicians towards the medical profession, I am sure that most of the amending provisions will be like words written on water. They will not be carried into effect. Because I hold the Minister in fairly high regard I do not wish to embarrass him, but I think he knows that as well as I. Nevertheless, this is not a bad piece of barnstorming to be shown to the public so that the Government may say, "We have done this and that about the medical profession." In other words, the Government will say, "We have included these matters in the law." But how will the law be administered? Who can take on the medical profession? Not even members of the medical profession!

On one occasion I sat in a big meeting in North Queensland which got quite a lot of publicity. At that time I said that it would be a relatively simple matter to clean out the charlatans from the medical profession and that it would be an impossibility to clean out the charlatans from the legal profession because there are too many in it. Nevertheless, I doubt that any Government will ever have the intestinal fortitude to clean out the charlatans in the medical profession.

I shall now deal with a couple of provisions in the Bill with which I am in complete accord. First is the provision that gives the Medical Board power to make by-laws to regulate and control "medical call services". I do not know that there is any more pressing problem today among the people of Queensland than the fact that when they want a doctor, or when they think they want a doctor, they just cannot get one.

I know, of course, that there are quite a lot of hypochondriacs in the community; I know that there are quite a lot of psychosomatics in the community; but I also know that there are quite a lot of people in the community who cannot arrange, as the medical profession think they can arrange, to get sick or have an accident only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. five days a week. When they do get sick or when they do have an accident outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, it is imperative that a doctor attend them.

We in Townsville are very fortunate to have a couple of doctors who will see patients after those hours. We have, too, a very good hospital with a very good casualty centre, where a patient can be treated at any hour of the day or night. However, we must face up to the fact that there are quite a lot of people who for some reason or other, known only to themselves and their gods, do not like to go to a casualty ward. They would rather die than become associated with the hoi polloi who go to a casualty ward.

If the Minister can, in his closing speech on the second reading of the Bill—or in Committee—tell me in plain, unambiguous terms how he proposes to compel doctors to treat patients outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., five days a week, I will be very happy to listen to him. I feel sure that he wants to be able to do those things, but I am very doubtful whether he will be able to.

I refer now to another facet of the Bill. Vague legalistic terms always arouse in me a mixture of, shall we say, humour and contempt. If I may say so with all due respect to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder who they think they are kidding. The explanatory notes to the Bill say—

> "The Medical Board, when dealing with a medical practitioner for a minor disciplinary matter,".

Will the Minister for Health tell us what he considers to be a "minor disciplinary matter"? I would like to know what a "minor disciplinary matter" is. If a doctor is brought before the Medical Board to answer charges on a "minor disciplinary matter", we all know very well where it will finish. It will finish up with the A.M.A. or the Surgeons' Association. I do not know how many separate organisations the medical profession has today. It has the A.M.A., the General Practitioners' Association, the Surgeons' Guild, I think it is, and even the Naval Surgeons. As one dear old lady said, "How these doctors specialise." Will the Minister please tell me—a simple country lad with only a rudimentary and elementary knowledge of the English language—what in his opinion a "minor disciplinary matter" means as it applies to the medical profession?

Then we go on to the term "postmortem examination". It is "defined to meet all circumstances relative to the removal of tissues and organs for examination and testing". I can remember the very eminent doctor who was Minister for Health in this Government, the late Dr. Noble. He had a very firm idea that he should put the screws, if I may use the vernacular, on doctors who were removing all sorts of organs and bits of tissue for all sorts of reasons—mainly pecuniary reasons applicable to themselves. He decided to introduce a measure in the House. He put it forward when he was a private member, of all things, and he made a very fine speech on it. He said that the Medical Board should insist

that, if a doctor removed a piece of tissue or an organ, it should not be handed over in the operating theatre to the sister known as the dirty nurse, and thrown into the bucket. Rather it should be put aside and sent down here or somewhere else to be tested to see whether there had been a need to remove it, whether the organ was diseased, whether it was not a healthy organ and should have been left in the human body. I have been critical of the medical profession, the legal profession, and even the political profession if by the grace of God it can be called a profession.

I know that we have to allow for certain eventualities. At times a doctor has to remove a healthy organ. Sometimes he has no choice. If, for instance, there are clinical symptoms in a country place, or even in a big hospital, that give the impression that the patient is suffering from peritonitis because something is wrong with the appendix, the appendix has to come out.

If when it is taken out it is found by the doctor that he has made a serious but genuine surgical error and it was not the appendix that was playing up at all, the doctor should not be held responsible for it. It is what is called—I forget the exact term—a mistake of the trade. So it is very difficult. Even if a doctor sent down a perfectly healthy appendix—or perfectly healthy testicle, or anything else—the board would say, "Why did you take this out?" The doctor would say, "It was a calculated risk that I had to take in order to save the patient's life." When all is said and done, the great majority of doctors consider that it is the patient's life that is the first consideration. How then can the Medical Board discriminate between the honest, genuine doctor who makes a genuine surgical error and the doctor who would rip out anything at any time simply to get the fee.

We know very well that when the free hospital scheme was introduced—long before Medibank—a person could register with one of the medical societies. If he was suffering from a double hernia he would go to a doctor and the doctor would repair one hernia this week and the other one in three months' time so that there would be two separate payments. So how can discrimination be made between the honest doctor who makes a genuine mistake and the charlatan who works only for the money that is in the game? I do not wish to deal with some of the beauties we have in the North—luckily they are dying off—but a few of them are left who would rip out anything for any reason as long as there was dough in it.

One of the first jobs for the Medical Board is to get more doctors. I appreciate the remarks of the honourable member for Mackay, who said that our universities, such as the James Cook University, should train more doctors. There is a suggestion that a big hospital should be established there. Unfortunately, even in Brisbane the university cannot train the doctors that the people need. Because of the intricacies of the medical profession and the training of doctors it cannot keep up the supply. Doctors must be practised in clinical examination and to gain that practice they must have big hospitals and patients. If they do not have them, the trainee doctors cannot get the clinical experience.

Some very humorous stories are told about clinical experience. Dr. Delamothe, a former Minister for Justice, used to tell a very fine story. Over the years, the medical profession has worked on the basis of trial and error. We know that some diseases ascribed to certain causes were not ascribed to those same causes a few years ago. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you do not mind my digressing for a moment because I think it comes within the terms of this Bill, Dr. Delamothe told the story when he was going around with one of the big shots in one of the big hospitals in the South they came to a thin chap who was in a pretty bad way puffing and panting. The doctor told all of the young doctors who were gaining their clinical experience, "Here is an outstanding case of emphysema which is caused by blowing musical instruments, particularly trumpets. Here is a particularly bad case of it."

The patient was asked, "Are you a bandsman?" He was just able to say, "Yes." They all then walked away towards the next patient. Dr. Delamothe thought that he would go back to talk to this fellow. He said, "You're a bandsman?" The patient replied, "Yes." Dr. Delamothe asked, "What did you play?" The answer was, "The drum." So it is with many other diseases and complaints—the causes have changed. Although many patients died, as "Nugget" Jesson would have said, in the "internum", doctors have gradually learnt by trial and error the causes of many diseases.

I really think that some other method should be devised for the training of doctors. Clinical examination, treatment and training is quite satisfactory for a man or woman who proposes to become a general practitioner. Nowadays, however, the great majority of doctors do not become general practitioners; they become specialists in one little field of medicine or surgery. I think that they should be required to disclose such an intention very early in their medical training. They could then be trained in that field only and restricted to it when they go into practice. I think that if the board would give consideration to that suggestion, it would be possible, with the present number of patients and hospitals, to turn out at least 10 to 12 times as many doctors as now graduate.

Here's another little beauty. I love these words! I do not want to embarrass you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I have often complimented you on your knowledge of etymology and philology. I think it is a great credit to you that you should have devoted so much time to the study of the

English language, its meanings, its uses and abuses. Where would one find words more capable of elastic interpretation or misinterpretation that these—

> "The decorous disposal of bodies or parts thereof upon completion of post-mortem or anatomical examination by a School of Anatomy is ensured (Clause 33)."?

What is meant by the "decorous disposal" of a body? I can remember saying in the days before cremation that I would not care if my body was cut up and used for cray bait. I would think that that would be "decorous disposal" of my body because, when all is said and done, it would serve some useful purpose. The crays would get a feed out of it, anyway. To put a body into the earth to rot, decay and moulder away is not decorous. Has anyone here seen a corpse after it has been lying for about four or five days in the heat? Has anyone seen a cadaver taken from the grave after it has lain there for five or six weeks or months? Does anyone call that the "decorous disposal" of a body?

Mr. Melloy: It means they don't throw parts in the bucket any more.

Mr. AIKENS: If the honourable member knew about the training of doctors, he would know some of the things that go on in schools of anatomy. I recall a dentist friend of mine saying that when he first entered the School of Anatomy at Sydney University he was hit slap in the face with about 3 lb. of human liver. That sort of thing goes on and I suppose it is all in the game. But what does "decorous disposal of bodies" mean? Can the Minister give some indication of the meaning that he sees in those words? I think the "decorous disposal" of a body is cremation—the consumation of the body by fire to destroy everything except perhaps the ashes and any small hard pieces that are left unconsumed. To say that the burying of a body is decorously disposing of it is, I think, placing a very great strain on the English language.

This leads me to the next section of the Bill with which I wish to deal and which I think is wide open to abuse. The Bill states that when a person is unable, through disorientation, etc., to consent to surgery and relatives are not reasonably available to give consent, the medical practitioner may consent. What a wonderful word "reasonable" is. It can mean anything. Certain specified medical practitioners may consent on behalf of the patient. It is like saying to a drunk with a number of pints of beer lined up along the counter, "You cannot have any of those" or, "You can have all or any of them." Fancy allowing medical practitioners to decide whether or not a patient is to have an operation. Surely there must be someone apart from the medical practitioner, some unbiased person, who can decide whether or not that operation should be performed. For instance, it could be some reputable citizen. Somebody could be appointed in each area.

If a man or woman comes into a hospital and is disorientated—that, too, is a wonderful word; one can play a lot of tricks with that one—and is therefore not in a fit mental or physical condition to consent to an operation, are we to go to the doctor who is going to perform the operation and say, "Well, Bill Jones" or "Tom Smith, M.D."—whatever he happened to be—you make up your mind whether this patient is going to have an operation"? It is quite possible that the patient should have an operation, that it is eminently desirable, but that practice will land us in all sorts of trouble.

I have been looking through the Bill and I think I can see some vestiges of what I was looking for. I can remember the case of Dr. Max Michael. He was a German doctor, and a pretty good one. As a matter of fact he was the man who talked to poor old Frank Barnes about endocrine disturbances and other things at a time when doctors did not know the difference between endocrine disturbances and a bottle of Coca-Cola. But he was disbarred because of unprofessional conduct. He was supposed to have operated on a woman for a cancer of the cervix that she did not have. She did not have the operation, either, but that did not stop the Medical Board from disbarring him.

What happened, of course, was that Dr. Cilento—I have some very nice photographs here of Dr. Cilento if anybody would like to see them—as the Registrar General of Health in Queensland charged him with this offence. Dr. Cilento was also a member of the Medical Board that tried him for the offence with which he had charged him, and the board disbarred him.

Dr. Michael came to me and asked what he could do about it. I said, "If you fiddled with this woman's cervix I am not going to help you, but I know Cilento and I know there is a legal loop-hole here through which you could drive a diesel locomotive." So I sent this fellow along to the Full Court. The Government of the day took along, I think, five barristers and six solicitors. The more barristers and the more solicitors one has representing one in a case, the less chance one has of winning.

These people went to the Full Court of Queensland and this old fellow went along by himself. He said, "I am basing my appeal against my disbarment on the grounds that the man who charged me was the man who tried me and the man who punished me and that is absolutely contrary to British law and the British concept of justice." The Full Court upheld his appeal and restored him to his former position. But he was a very wise man. He knew it would not last very long before they would get at him again, so he went back to Germany or wherever it was he came from.

So when we are talking about the powers of the Medical Board to punish doctors for all these intangible offences and, shall we say, wide-open offences that the Act deals with, let us remember that sooner or later, if the board wants to fight, the issues go back to the lawyers and they go back to the three judges of the Full Court. Considering some of the decisions that the Full Court has made in criminal matters where ordinary citizens are concerned, honourable members know very well that the criminals always get the big end of the stick, and so it will be if the Full Court happens to deal with an errant doctor. All the crook doctors will get the big end of the stick.

Now I want to say something about the new Minister for Health. I congratulate him for trying. He cannot be blamed for that. I congratulate the parliamentary draftsman, too, for drawing up a Bill that would probably fool blind Freddie but will not fool the ordinary intelligent citizen when he reads it. He will read this amendment to the Medical Act and say, "Who does Lou Edwards think he's kidding?"

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (3.11 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the second-reading debate and indicate that I wish to make only a few comments in reply.

The honourable member for Nudgee referred to the need for an opportunity to upgrade standards of doctors who come from overseas but who do not quite reach the standards set here. This has occurred for a long time. Doctors from overseas countries who have not been able to qualify or reach the registration standards set by the board have been able, of course, to go into a certain year of the medical course and complete the course. I know of many overseas medical men who did not reach the standard we wish them to reach in this State and who did either one, two or three years, as determined by the university, and were then able to graduate and register.

The honourable member also mentioned the bus-load of doctors from Singapore, and I saw that report. Of course, doctors from Singapore or Hong Kong are reaching the standard of Australian State universities, and we would certainly welcome these doctors to this country. If they can get in through the immigration system and they have qualified at either the Singapore or Hong Kong universities, they certainly would be able to apply for registration in Queensland.

I was very interested in the honourable member's comments on after-hours services. My departmental officers and I believe that the proposed amendment has already done a great deal for after-hours services, and I will say more about that in a moment. However, I make it quite clear that we are not going to do anything at the moment. We are going to await submissions from the A.M.A.—and I spoke to the president of the A.M.A. again this morning—and from the General Practitioners' Society and from the doctors themselves. We have already received some submissions from call services. I have spoken to the proprietors of all the call services in Brisbane, and they are all prepared to make submissions relating to the by-laws that the board will be asked to lay down. I am certain that those by-laws will cover situations about which I will say more in a moment.

I think that the honourable member for Nudgee suggested that the board itself should operate the after-hours service. I could not accept that and, of course, it would not be within the power of the board to do it. However, I think that the medical profession itself will have to consider providing an after-hours service. Such services already operate in many country centres. If I remember rightly, it works in Toowoomba, where a group of doctors have got together, and I think it also works in Ipswich. It works in areas in which a group of doctors get together and look after each other's calls at the week-end. I think that is the ideal service, and it is hoped that the legislation will lead doctors to do that instead of employing after-hours services that have not given the service that they ought to have given.

The honourable member's contribution indicated support for the basis of the Bill, and it is hoped that the legislation will bring about an upgrading of after-hours services in which he was particularly interested.

The honourable member for Townsville has been of great assistance in the preparation of the Bill. He is, of course, very well recognised as a surgeon and I respect his views tremendously. He stressed the need for specialist training. I do not think that I, a humble general practitioner, need tell the House of the high standard that the honourable gentleman has himself set in surgery for many years. The training that he has given to the many people who have gone through the Townsville Hospital while he was superintendent speaks for itself. As I said, his surgical prowess and ability is well respected, and I think that he has spoken very well from practical experience of surgery and the treatment of people in North Queensland.

I was very pleased to hear him support the programme to prepare and continue to hold anatomical specimens. Of course, this will be a very important practice in the future. As techniques improve more and more as time goes on, it will be possible to retain some of the older specimens and some of the more recent specimens for a much longer period than has been possible up to date.

The honourable member for Archerfield referred fully to the problems associated with one particular after-hours call service. I would be only too pleased to send a copy of his speech to the Medical Board so that it can decide what action, if any, can be taken

if the situation as presented by the honourable member is factual. I would be only too pleased also to keep him informed of any developments.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North made a fine contribution and defended the ethics of the medical profession. He referred very kindly to the medical profession generally. We feel very strongly that we must encourage the profession to uplift its standards and its ethical standards, which have been held in high regard for a long period. I know that he would support me in this view.

The honourable member for Bundaberg raised the Medibank problems. These are not, of course, referred to in the Bill. I do, however, sympathise with him in the problem that confronts him. I would suggest that he talk his wife into changing her doctor if she is not satisfied rather than criticise the Bill. Certainly the matter that he raised is not within the ambit of the Bill.

As he did at the introductory stage, the honourable member for Brisbane expressed the view that the legislation defined the after-hours call service as a second-rate medical service. I cannot agree with him. I do not think other speakers agree with him, either. As I indicated to him by way of interjection, after-hours call services have been operating for many years overseas. It is not fair to expect doctors to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These days heavier demands are made upon them in practice than in years gone by when people were not as conscious of the need to call the doctor. Thirty or 40 years ago, when a doctor was on call in solo practice, there was certainly no need for an after-hours call service. However, because of heavier demands, and changes in dedication, maybe, doctors and their families—and this is a valid point to make—are not prepared to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr. Moore: Some work 9 to 5, have Wednesday off for golf and have the week-end off as well.

Dr. EDWARDS: That is their choice.

Mr. Moore: Don't try to defend everyone.

Dr. EDWARDS: What I am trying to say is that no other profession is as dedicated as the medical profession.

Mr. Moore: Except politicians.

Dr. EDWARDS: In some cases that would be debatable. We feel very strongly that we must try to encourage ethical practices within after-hours call services. As a result of this amendment a great deal of concern has been expressed by doctors as well as by the community about such services. The fact that people have been fighting among themselves indicates their concern at the prospect of the introduction of such standards as to ensure better care for the patients.

The honourable member asked what was in the regulations. I have indicated quite clearly that this proposal will not be brought in until it is discussed fully by the health committee and by the Government and until we have received submissions from all interested parties. We would expect our regulations committee to look at the legal side as well. What we are trying to do is improve the standard of care for the patients. We feel that we will be able to achieve this.

The honourable member for Brisbane also claimed that a large percentage of call services used bonded doctors. I am informed by the proprietor of one service that he has only one hospital doctor working for him and by the proprietor of another, and bigger, call service that at the most 10 per cent of his doctors are bonded doctors, the others being doctors who are prepared to work full time in this service.

Whilst I appreciate the honourable member's concern, I can assure him that this legislation will not lead to a second-rate service. He raised the point that after-hours calls should be taken by doctors. In no practice, not even in a 9-to-5 practice, are phone calls taken by doctors. Rather are they taken by either a girl at the desk or a sister. We would like to see all calls taken by a medical sister. In fact the A.M.A. has recommended the introduction of such a system, as it has recommended, too, that there be a medical director associated with all call services. We look forward to this. We shall certainly bear in mind the concern expressed by the honourable member and keep him informed of all matters associated with this aspect.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to the James Cook University. The Government has approved in principle of the development of that university and has at this stage schematic designs in hand for such development. There is a very real need for the establishment of a medical faculty at the James Cook University. The honourable member's point about the need to retain doctors in the North and North-west is indeed a valid one.

Mr. Casey: Has a faculty dean been appointed to assist in planning?

Dr. EDWARDS: The university senate is considering this. It discussed it with me some time ago. We are waiting on the university to come back to us regarding its funding programme. It will be totally responsible for funding the pre-clinical year's work and we will certainly develop the clinical buildings and so forth. As the honourable member knows, the Universities Commission has certainly made a mess of its funding. We are hopeful that that will not delay the first medical students entering the James Cook University. If I recall correctly, it was to be in 1980, with the first graduates in 1985. I am hopeful that the programme will not be interrupted.

Mr. Casey: Aren't you blaming the Federal Government?

Dr. EDWARDS: Because of the planning; the blame has to be placed on someone in the Federal Government over a long long period. We are ready to plan and we are hoping that our buildings will be ready on time.

The school of tropical medicine that the honourable member for Mackay referred to is an excellent concept. We are hoping that this will be developed as one of the specialities of the area.

As always the honourable member for Townsville South made a very good, humane contribution to the Bill. He was a little over-concerned about the removal of organs. The Bill does not refer to the removal of organs from live patients but to "postmortem examinations". The honourable member for Townsville South also confirmed the need for a medical school at Townsville. I know he has been fighting hard for it. As to his request concerning the decorous method of disposal of a body—I am sure that the term does not call for me as a doctor or Minister for Health to define or determine what it is. I am sure that society demands this and that bodies are certainly disposed of with decorum, as the honourable member for Windsor said by way of interjection.

The honourable member for Townsville South said that he was a little concerned about the doctor who was to do an operation being given the right to authorise it. The Bill does not allow the same doctor to give the authority and perform the operation. It has to be another doctor. I feel this will cover the matter raised by the honourable member. I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Mr. MELLOY: Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

(Quorum formed.)

Motion (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Row, Hinchinbrook, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 38, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! I point out that if any honourable member wishes to speak on the second or third schedules he should do so on clause 39.

Clause 39, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

MEDICAL ACT AND OTHER ACTS (ADMINISTRATION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (3.26 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Now that honourable members opposite have had time to peruse the Bill, I am sure they will agree that its provisions are not contentious and will support its passage through the House.

At the introductory stage, I outlined the purposes both of the amending provision contained in this Bill and the new provisions to be incorporated into the Act on the recommendation of the Solicitor-General, to an extent that I feel there is nothing further I need add at this juncture.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (3.27 p.m.): As the Minister has pointed out, in the main the Bill is for administrative purposes. It relates to the appointment of inspectors to the seven professional boards and contains a clear definition of their powers and duties. The Opposition sees nothing to quibble about in the Bill and concurs with its contents.

Motion (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Row, Hinchinbrook, in the chair)

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (3.30 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In my address at the introductory stage, I gave the Chamber a broad outline of the purposes of this Bill. Now that honourable members have had the opportunity to study this legislative proposal, I propose to elaborate upon its content.

Reference is made in various sections of the Act to the director-general and in order that the intention is clear, a definition has been included in the Bill for this term.

The appointment of an inspector or assistant inspector of hospitals is now made on the nomination of the Under Secretary of the Department of Health and provision has been made accordingly.

Establishment of medical and other training schools is at present subject to approval of the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the senate of the University of

Queensland. This Bill will enable such approval to be given by the senate of the universities established in Townsville and at Mt. Gravatt where this is appropriate.

The title of "matron" for the head of the nursing service in State hospitals has been supplanted by that of "nursing superintendent" and the relevant award has been amended accordingly. The Bill adopts this title.

In respect of teaching hospitals, provision exists for the director-general to be assisted by two representatives of the senate of the University of Queensland in determining appointments to staff positions. A clause in this Bill will enlarge this provision to provide for representatives from the senate of the relevant university to participate in staff selections.

I dealt at length, in my introductory speech on this Bill, with the provisions which establish separate control of the Redcliffe Hospitals Board, apart from the metropolitan network, the effect of this action on clerical staff at the various hospitals, the need to establish a Special Purposes Fund for hospitals boards, and funding of the Mater Public Hospital as a result of the introduction of the Medibank hospital programme in Queensland.

I feel certain that honourable members, having had the opportunity to peruse the Bill, will fully understand the intention of the various sections pertaining to these matters. The honourable member for Nudgee, however, sought clarification on seniority rights of clerical staff when Redcliffe Hospital is divorced from the metropolitan hospitals network.

Discussions have been held with officials of the Federated Clerks Union on this proposal and clerical staff at Redcliffe have been made aware of the impending separation. These officers have been given the option to stay in the employ of the Redcliffe Hospitals Board or, if they wish, to transfer to the clerical staff of one of the metropolitan hospitals. As all staff at present have relativity, one hospital to another in the metropolitan hospitals and Redcliffe Hospital, any staff electing to transfer will not affect existing seniority for promotional purposes in the metropolitan hospital service. Similarly, the seniority of staff that elect to stay at Redcliffe Hospital will be established in their present relativity, one to another, for future promotional purposes in the employ of Redcliffe Hospitals Board.

Provision is made in the Bill to extend the terms of Cabinet's decision concerning retirement or non-appointment of members of boards and committees who have attained the age of 70 years to all members of hospitals boards.

Mr. Jensen: When do they do that—at age 70 or the next birthday?

Dr. EDWARDS: When they attain the age of 70. They will complete this term and a new board will be appointed shortly.

The Bill also removes the requirement for disqualification of board members who are concerned or participate in any profit from a contract with the board. There is adequate provision in other sections of the Act to ensure a member does not take advantage of his position in financial dealings with the board.

From time to time it is necessary to provide additional representation on hospitals boards and in special circumstances to create new boards or amalgamate existing boards. The Act in its present form provides that a member of a hospitals board holds office for three years from date of appointment. The only departure from this practice is in the case of a death or retirement of an existing member, when a suitable person may be appointed to fill the vacancy to the completion of the triennium.

This Bill will provide that all members of hospitals boards are appointed only to the end of the triennium as it is desirable that the boards be reconstituted at the one time.

A clause of the Bill applies similar provision to that existing in the State Public Service in respect of the working of overtime by an officer or other employee of a hospitals board receiving a salary greater than a determined amount—$13,153 per annum at present. Authorisation for the working of overtime by these employees and remuneration for it will be in the discretion of the board.

In the present financial climate, the requirement that boards invite quotations for the supply of materials or public tenders for performance of work to cost more than $500 is considered unrealistic and this limitation is now increased to $1,000.

It is no longer necessary for financial reports of a hospitals board to be sealed with the seal of the board and this requirement is now deleted.

To avoid any misconception, the requirements for hospitals boards to provide facilities for training of students of universities in medicine, dentistry or other ancillary course, or for the training of student nurses and nurse aides, are clearly established.

The present provisions of the Act concerning transfer of patients in certain instances are extended to provide for inter-hospital transfer and for transfer to nursing homes operated by hospitals boards. Honourable members would be aware that many aged patients do not require specialised hospital care but rather the attention that is provided in a nursing home. It is desirable that a board be able to transfer such a patient to a nursing home where the patient is unable to act on his own behalf and no relatives are available to accept responsibility.

The Act clearly lays down procedures in respect of offences of a minor nature by employees of hospitals boards. Recent experience has revealed that these provisions are not applicable to the permanent heads of the board's administration, that is, the medical superintendent and the nursing superintendent. As action could be required against these officers as with any other employee, the provisions of the Act are widened to provide the necessary power.

The Third Schedule of the Act is amended in this Bill to provide for payment of mileage allowance to witnesses attending hearings of the appeal board. Minor inaccuracies that occurred when the Bill was last amended are now corrected.

This Bill is of an administrative nature and is designed to continue the efficient management of this State's hospital service to the benefit of all residents of this State. I advise the House that I shall be moving two minor amendments to clauses 5 and 6 at the Committee stage.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (3.37 p.m.): The Bill contains three major points. They are the autonomy of the Redcliffe Hospital, the constitution of hospitals boards and the transfer of patients to nursing homes.

The first matter is the autonomy of the Redcliffe Hospital. I think that that is what it amounts to. The Minister referred to the retention of seniority rights of clerical staff. I think that this is very important to staff members because I am sure that concern for their future would have been felt among them. Their seniority rights are to be retained in any change of administration between the North Brisbane Hospitals Board and the Redcliffe Hospitals Board. I am pleased to be assured by the Minister that the staff will not be disadvantaged in any way.

The second matter is the constitution of hospitals boards. I am pleased to see that the Minister has placed an age limit on board members. Those who have reached 70 years of age will now retire and others will retire immediately they reach that age. The remarks that I made in an earlier debate concerning members of the Medical Board apply equally to members of hospitals boards. I think it is quite wrong to have elderly people on such boards. It must be frustrating to any Health Minister to find his activities hamstrung by the presence on hospitals boards of old fogies and cronies who in many cases have only sufficient strength to put up their hands to vote and who do not, with certain exceptions, make a constructive contribution to the business of the board. Anything concerning hospitals is a comparatively young man's job and a vigorous Minister for Health will want on hospitals boards people who are able to see things as he sees them.

Mr. Jensen: The last Minister was 67.

Mr. MELLOY: There are exceptions. I also think that the constitution of the boards should allow for as much staff representation as possible, particularly medical staff. I think they have a greater knowledge of what is required in a hospital than would any lay member who might be appointed to the board. The age restriction is a step in the right direction. I do not suppose there are many people over 70 on boards, but if there are they should certainly be removed. They should be removed before reaching that age, as a matter of fact.

I think the transfer of patients from hospitals to nursing homes is very desirable. I think special provision should be made for aged patients in nursing homes to relieve a hospital of the responsibility, except in the case of those hospitals with special geriatric units. As to the Special Purpose Fund and the handling of funds contributed by Medibank, I suppose these required special attention. It is essential that the money provided through the Commonwealth-State hospital agreement—now known as Medibank—be properly distributed and that all hospitals throughout the State receive the benefit of any funds that are available, whether they be Government hospitals or hospitals such as the Mater. I think that the Special Purposes Fund will ensure the proper handling of these funds, as will the Hospital Administration Trust Fund.

I think most of the Bill is of an administrative nature, and at this stage we are quite happy with its contents.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (3.42 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak on this Bill because I see some facets in it that are most interesting and have obviously been introduced for the betterment of the people of this State. There is only one thing I am sorry to see and that is the disappearance of the title "matron" from our hospitals. It is very difficult to imagine running down the stairs and saying, "Good morning, nursing superintendent". It is much easier and more friendly to say, "Good day, matron. How are you?" These women are usually very dedicated. Rarely do they marry. They spend their whole lives nursing and looking after people. Especially in Queensland these women usually spend many, many years—sometimes 20 or 30 years—in one hospital. They become identities in the community. They often identify themselves with various social projects and they are often a great source of comfort to many people who have lost relatives. They have also been a great help to hospital superintendents, and I am sorry to see that the title "matron" is to disappear.

The other subject dealt with by the Bill is that of hospital boards. I think it most probable that my ideas will not change anything in this Bill, but I will offer them to the House so that members of the Minister's staff can think about them. Firstly, I think the structure of our boards is sound, especially at the top. The chairman of the board is usually the

stipendiary magistrate, and if a man is capable of trying a person—especially now he is allowed to deal with more heinous crimes than before—he should be quite capable of directing and administering the day-to-day business of a hospital board. He also brings to the hospital board considerable local knowledge and a considerable knowledge of the law. I think that the present structure with the stipendiary magistrate being the chairman should not alter.

I also think that the Department of Health or the Government of the day should not lose control of the board. Previously if a Labor Government was in power there was a Labor representative on the board; if it was a Liberal Government he was a Liberal representative, and similarly with the National Party. We have to face the fact that the Government of the day should have some control over the running of a hospital seeing that it is paying the bills. I think that the Government member should have direct access to the Minister and to the director-general if there are any problems.

In my opinion, the time has come when local authority representatives do not deserve a certain place on the board. Many years ago local authorities contributed to the finances of district hospitals and base hospitals. They no longer do that, and they have not done so for many years. Usually local authority representatives merely keep a seat warm and do not contribute anything to the solution of problems associated with the hospital concerned, and I believe that the provision of a seat for a representative of a local authority should be reconsidered.

The Minister's department could well look at the situation with the idea of making elections to the board a triennial event to correspond with local authority elections. They might also consider giving a certain place on the board to people who, having nominated, are elected by popular vote of the citizens of the area, rather than allowing the local authority to nominate a representative. Any citizen could stand for election, and I think that the result would be that we would have on the board first-class businessmen and people dedicated to looking after the sick, who would take an interest in the hospital and not merely keep a seat warm as many board members are doing at present. There must be more active people on the boards.

The honourable member for Nudgee spoke about having a member of the medical profession on the board. That is an excellent idea. I do not think he should be selected by the A.M.A. A representative of the A.M.A. may not have any interest in hospital procedure and may know very little about hospital work, because not every doctor knows much about running a hospital. In my opinion, the medical representative on a board should be selected by the consultant group or the medical staff of the hospital. He would then be someone interested in running the hospital and someone who knows hospital work, as well as being a medical practitioner.

Dr. Crawford: Certainly not a retired man.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: No, an active member. In common with other board members, he would have to retire at 70 years of age. If his faculties became a little bit slow, the Minister or the A.M.A. should be able to remove him.

I was very pleased to hear the Minister mention the payment of clerical staff. For years many members of the clerical staff of the hospital service of this State have worked extraordinarily long hours and received no overtime for it. I remember that at the Townsville General Hospital various clerks would work till all hours of the night, especially during pay week, making out pay cheques and checking money. They were extremely dedicated. In fact, some of them worked as long as the older residents did. Allowing members of the clerical staff to accept overtime for their work is a very good move. It can only lead to good staff relationships and an improvement of the hospital service as a whole.

I notice also that the tender system is to be altered. Usually the managers are very competent and capable men who know what they want. It must be very frustrating for them to have to obtain special permission to spend $1,000. They will now be able to spend amounts from $500 to $1,000 without any problems or delays.

Dr. Crawford: There should be full financial autonomy.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Up to a point. We have full autonomy in the Commonwealth medical services for Aborigines in Townsville, but that is not working very well. There must be a check on the finances somewhere.

The idea of transferring chronically ill patients to nursing homes sounds good in theory, but the nursing homes must not be too far away from their base. Admittedly, as suggested, many of these people may not have relatives. However, they have friends. I know of several instances in which people were transferred from Townsville General Hospital to "Eventide". They had friends and acquaintances in Townsville but no relatives, and it was suddenly discovered that it was quite a hardship for the people concerned to be transferred, in their age or infirmity, to an area where they had no acquaintances. That must be taken into consideration, and it probably will be considered when the nursing home programmes are investigated. The city of Townsville has only the Hospice and the Pallarenda Nursing Home, both of which are well booked out in advance. I suggest to Townsville residents that when they attain the age of 40 years they book their beds there.

I turn now to the appointment of matrons and superintendents. Applications for these positions are called on the open market. To obtain appointment a person must possess certain qualifications and, in the case of superintendent, high degrees usually of specialist rating. But it is not always easy to obtain such qualified persons, and it is even more difficult to obtain a person with administrative ability.

In both nursing and medical administration friction will arise. Anyone who thinks he can go through the medical or nursing profession without encountering friction from co-administrators, residents and nurses is living in a dream. Tempers can quite easily become frayed and people can become disturbed. For this reason I have always found it desirable to have a magistrate as chairman of the board. In my career I have been involved in several disturbing incidents and have always found that the magistrate, as chairman, was a man I could go to as one who had a balanced approach to the law and one who kept in constant touch with what went on outside in the community. He was always a stabilising influence.

However, when it comes to a matter that cannot be solved locally the board has a certain duty to attend to it. I have in mind for example, instances of matrons getting on drugs or superintendents getting on the grog, as has happened in the past, and neglecting their work. The chairman of the board should have supreme power, but not to the extent that he is able to dismiss or suspend the superintendent. He should contact the director-general, who, only with ministerial approval, could suspend or dismiss the superintendent or the matron. The powers should rest with people outside local influences.

I understand that the Bill provides for a right of appeal. In fact the mechanism of appeals is laid down quite clearly. I understand that witnesses' fees will be paid, so I do not see any problems arising here. However, if the local board has the power to dismiss the matron or the superintendent summarily on the spot without consultation with the director-general and his authorisation, problems certainly will arise. I say "director-general", but I cannot see him working wholly or solely without ministerial co-operation and collaboration in such instances. This is a safeguard both to the service and to the superintendent and matron, who is now known as nursing superintendent. If either of those officers has committed any culpable act, he or she may be dealt with by the authorities.

I am pleased to see that within the department the administration of financial arrangements is to be broken up. Accountants have told me that this will lead to increased efficiency, so the department is to be congratulated on having taken this move, particularly in relation to the Redcliffe Hospital and general accounting staff.

I have offered my suggestions on the matter of dismissal of the superintendent and the matron. I have no idea how the Minister intends to move in this regard; nevertheless I believe that the Bill is a sound measure and one that will benefit the community.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.55 p.m.): Comments made so far in this debate relate to the need to review board membership. I note that the honourable member for Townsville spoke about ensuring that the Government was always represented on boards. He also commented on removing the local authority representatives.

In view of the recent incidents in Rockhampton concerning a hospital for the intellectually handicapped, the last thing we want to do is take away local representation. Many answers are required to the issue raised. It hit the headlines on TV and in the Press. It seems that back in 1974 a local authority representative, Alderman Fraser, tried to use his position on the board to ensure that certain action was not taken by the Government. The Minister is no doubt well aware of this matter, but for the edification of honourable members I point out that construction of a $500,000 hospital has just taken place. The Saturday edition of "The Morning Bulletin" published in Rockhampton indicates that the hospital was built in a watercourse. I knew that this was a very wet area. I had been there on a couple of occasions and noted how the water lay there, but I did not realise until reading the article that protests had been made by the board in 1974. In the same paper, the board spokesman said that the protest was never replied to. If we are to start reviewing management——

Dr. Edwards: Where do you get your facts from?

Mr. WRIGHT: I suggest that the Minister look at page 2 of "The Morning Bulletin" of Saturday 20 March. The Minister must clarify the situation because someone has not done his homework.

Dr. Edwards: You are accepting that as fact?

Mr. WRIGHT: No, I am asking about it. If the Minister read today's edition of the paper he would see that I have challenged both the board and the aldermen and put the question back to the Government. The issue must be probed very carefully. Either the board did not do its job in the first instance and the local authority representatives did not do their job, or there has been a breakdown of communication between the Works Department, the hospitals board and the Health Department.

Dr. Edwards: Or the job is not completed.

Mr. WRIGHT: That may be so, but are we now to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in fixing a drainage problem when

the hospital is almost complete? Many answers are needed because the article states that back in 1974 the hospital board raised this matter, and that, although its opinion was never sought by the Health Department on where the hospital should be sited, it did say that it should be built on the high ground. It has now been put forward that somewhere along the line the site was changed and the hospital was put in a watercourse. There is some evidence to back up the claim of the board and the alderman in question because they say that back in 1974 council officers saw an 18-ton bulldozer excavating 2 ft. above the sewer line and notice was served on the contractor to stop work, and that the sewer line was relocated around the building at additional expense. It is obvious that full thought was not given at that time to the matter. Irrespective of who is to blame, we have this problem.

Dr. Edwards interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Minister might reply to me in detail because I think everyone is interested.

Dr. Edwards: I should like to ask you a question. Was the statement made by the board or is it just a report?

Mr. WRIGHT: The statement was made by Alderman Fraser. The report also records the board chairman, Mr. E. N. Loane, as saying—

> ". . . if they did take over the hospital building in its present condition they would be responsible for rectifying the inadequate drainage."

The manager, Mr. K. Yarker, is reported in these terms—

> ". . . the new building was to have been officially opened by Dr. Edwards on 10 April, but this plan had been dropped because of the condition of the grounds."

The article is headed "Board rejects city hospital for handicapped." It comes back to the board. No doubt the board met on this issue and made some type of unanimous decision to reject receiving this hospital because of the reasons now given by the manager and the chairman of the board. We should come to grips with what caused this. Was the site of the hospital changed at some time between the early part of 1973-74 and when construction actually started? Was a protest made by the board and by the city council in Rockhampton about the starting of the hospital? Was the protest ever received? Was it ever replied to? What action was taken by the Health Department to overcome this obvious inadequacy in the siting of the hospital?

It will be the people who will pay. Because of the delay in using the hospital, it will be the people who will suffer. We certainly need this unit for the intellectually handicapped. I am greatly concerned about it. I just could not believe that there could be such a breakdown between Government departments; that so much money could be spent without some consultation between the Health Department, the Works Department and the hospital board. Maybe the Minister would advise us about exactly what has happened. What part has the hospital board played in this? Is it his policy to seek the opinion of hospital boards when construction is taking place?

Mr. Moore: If the Minister answers you, you won't have any more "Think" features to write.

Mr. WRIGHT: I will take that comment.

It is clear that some breakdown has occurred and that answers are required. I am quite prepared to hear the Minister's answers on this. No doubt he is prepared to give them. Someone is not telling the whole truth. Perhaps Alderman Fraser has simply raised this matter for political convenience a few days before an election. I might say that my first thought was that he had suddenly got onto this issue, which he had not worried about since 1974, and rushed into print in the paper on it because it was receiving State-wide publicity. But, having looked at the article in detail and read the comments of the manager and the chairman—and the headline "Board rejects city hospital"—I claim that further answers are required. I would ask that the Minister either now in his reply or at some future time in a ministerial statement tell us exactly what has happened in this instance and what will be the cost of improving the site. Some explanation is required. I hope that the Minister will give it.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (4.2 p.m.): I rise in this debate principally to speak about the provisions in the Bill relating to hospital boards. I imagine that hospital boards were constituted for a few reasons: not only to advise the Minister—and through him, the department—on how the hospital should be run and what should be done at a particular hospital, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to look after the needs of the people in the locality.

Three hospital boards affect my electorate —the Bundaberg Hospitals Board, the Isis District Board and the Maryborough Hospitals Board. It is about the latter that I wish to speak specifically. Some time ago the Government in its wisdom created a separate board for the Isis District Hospital. That is working very happily and does an extremely good job in the Childers area. I would hate to see the Isis District Hospital being administered from Bundaberg—not that I have anything against Bundaberg or the Bundaberg Hospitals Board. However, I believe that, as the area of Isis and Childers is an entity in itself, it is reasonable that the Isis District Hospital should have its own hospital board.

I now move a little further south in my electorate to the Hervey Bay area. The Hervey Bay Hospital is administered by the Maryborough Hospitals Board. I have been the subject of a considerable amount of criticism and ire from certain members of the Maryborough Hospitals Board because I dared to speak out on behalf of the people of Hervey Bay about the facilities at their hospital.

Mr. Jensen: It's in your electorate, too.

Mr. POWELL: Yes. As the honourable member for Bundaberg says, it is in my electorate, too. It has been my aim, since becoming responsible for the Isis electorate, to find out the problems of the Hervey Bay people. From the problems that they are facing with their hospital, it appears to me that there should be a separate hospital board for Hervey Bay. This Bill sets up a hospital board for Redcliffe, as I understand it, separate from the metropolitan hospitals boards. That is a sensible move. Redcliffe is an entity in itself, as is Hervey Bay. At the moment the Hervey Bay Hospital is being improved. It is better now than it was 12 months ago. Presumably it is far better than it was a few years back. At one stage it was no more than a first-aid post. According to statistics formulated by the Maryborough Hospitals Board, apparently the use made of the hospital is not sufficient to warrant the installation of better facilities. This is why Hervey Bay should have a separate hospital board. If the rationale behind the hospital board system is that the board is there to look after the interests of the local people, as well as advise the Minister on hospital affairs, there can be no argument against a separate board for Hervey Bay. It is a separate entity. It has a permanent population of 9,000 to 10,000 people and a holiday-time population of 40,000 people, yet there is no board separately looking after the hospital at Hervey Bay.

I have come under criticism from certain people on the Maryborough board who claim that they look after Hervey Bay as well as possible. I challenge that statement because I do not think they do. Perhaps, with all good intentions, they try to look after the hospital at Hervey Bay. Perhaps—and I will give them this—they have looked into the matter. But they regard Hervey Bay as a suburb of Maryborough and it is not. Perhaps in the dim, dark ages it was regarded as a seaside village which was an adjunct to Maryborough; but that is no longer the position; as I said, it is a separate entity. After next Saturday it will have its own local authority, and it is growing very quickly. It is my contention that its hospital must grow similarly to the town. Therefore Hervey Bay needs a separate board.

If the Government does not agree that a separate board is needed at Hervey Bay, there is no way in the world that Hervey Bay should not have three or four representatives on the Maryborough Hospitals Board as of right. The Maryborough board naturally looks after Maryborough. It has done so. One has only to look at the Maryborough Hospital and the facilities that are being put there to realise that the Maryborough Hospitals Board is doing an excellent job for Maryborough. But my concern is for the people I represent at Hervey Bay. The Hervey Bay Hospital needs to be upgraded.

As recently as last week a deputation comprising some members of the Maryborough Hospitals Board and people from Hervey Bay met the Minister. In his usual cordial manner he listened to our arguments and no doubt the Health Department is currently investigating some of our problems. I have no doubt that the Minister, being a doctor, has sympathetic understanding towards the feelings of the people at Hervey Bay. His limitation is similar to that of other Ministers. He does not receive enough money to carry out the work he would like to. If the hospital boards are to be established in areas and represent to the Minister and the Government the problems faced by the people, it is high time that a separate board was established for the benefit of Hervey Bay alone.

The Bill regularises the position of the person 70 years of age and over. The honourable member for Nudgee, I think, was a little too harsh on some of the older members of boards in our community. I know people on the Bundaberg Hospitals Board who are over 70 years of age and doing an extremely good job on the board. It will be a shame to see them moved off the board simply because they have reached that magical age of 70. I will be happy if I ever reach that age. It is a shame that these people are being summarily dismissed because of their age. I know that it is practically impossible to do it in any other way.

I agree with the sentiments expressed by the honourable member for Townsville. He suggested that a doctor should be on the hospital board, and I agree. However, I disagree that the doctor should come from the hospital itself. He should be a representative of the doctors within the community who serve the hospital. It is not only the doctors at the hospital who attend to patients in hospital; private medical practitioners also have quite a lot of contact with the hospital. If they are dissatisfied with the services that they receive from the State hospital, they will put their patients in private hospitals. This does in fact happen and the doctors in this House could perhaps give us some instances of dissatisfaction with Government-run institutions. With a doctor on the board as of right, many of these problems would be eliminated.

Having a magistrate as board chairman is quite sound. Generally speaking, magistrates are objective and boards need people who

are objective rather than those who lapse into subjective thinking. A magistrate, being the fairly objective person that his job requires, usually does an extremely good job as board chairman.

As a previous speaker said, what is needed is more board members who are not only physically active but mentally active. If the board system is to work, board members must be prepared to do their homework. They have to be prepared to go to hospitals regularly to listen to people's complaints, to see what is going on and to be alert enough to know the answers to the problems. We all know that abuses occur in all Government-run institutions and they occur in hospitals no less frequently than in other establishments. An alert board can obviate many of the problems that arise in the hospitals system.

Doctors on hospital staffs are highly trained people but usually only in the field of medicine. Quite often there is trouble not only with medical practitioners but other professional people through lack of training as administrators. When doctors, teachers and police are taken from the jobs that they have been professionally trained to do and put into administrative positions, there is often extreme difficulty with those to whom they are supposedly administering and the reason is that they are not trained as administrators.

On hospitals boards there should be people who are alert, who have some administrative ability and who can pry into things. The job of a hospitals board is, after all, to ensure that the hospital is run correctly and to act as agent, as it were, for the Government and the people. This is a most important point that is often overlooked. Too often hospitals are regarded as places to suit doctors and nurses rather than the patients. The people whom the hospitals are supposed to serve are the ones of whom the greatest care should be taken and their problems should be heard.

The Bill provides for the payment of overtime. This brings to mind some of the problems experienced at the Bundaberg Hospital as a result of the cyclone on 22 February last when many nurses voluntarily worked overtime to help clean up the mess. Obviously the part of the Bill that allows this sort of thing to continue will assist in the efficient running of a hospital.

The Bill refers to the tender system and the place of the manager in the operation of that system and the running of a hospital. The manager is essentially an administrator. He has to administer the funds that he is given and he must have a lot of expertise. He is the one who has to make sure that equipment and drugs are obtained at the lowest possible rates. There is a great responsibility on his shoulders to ensure that the tender system operates in the correct way. No doubt the Bill will assist in bringing this about.

The section dealing with nursing homes interests me greatly because the Minister has informed me that plans for a nursing home to be established at the Hervey Bay Hospital have been approved by the Health Department. It is quite obvious to me that when it is established at Hervey Bay the facilities of the hospital will have to be upgraded. If this is not done, elderly people will have to be transported regularly and often backwards and forwards between Maryborough and Hervey Bay, which in my opinion would be detrimental to their health and also disruptive to their relatives. I think the honourable member for Townsville said that nursing homes should be very close to hospitals for the benefit not only of patients but also of the relatives of patients. We are not taking enough notice of this factor.

For the Hervey Bay area in my electorate, the administrator has worked out that it is cheaper to treat a patient at the large hospital in Maryborough, irrespective of the fact that there is a hospital at Hervey Bay, so the poor old patient gets carted off to Maryborough, which is 25 miles from Pialba, and he is treated there. The relatives of the patient have to travel backwards and forwards to Maryborough regularly and often to see him and I do not think that is fair at all when we have a hospital at Hervey Bay which should be being used. With the establishment of a nursing home at Hervey Bay I sincerely hope that the facilities at the Hervey Bay Hospital will be upgraded to such an extent that in all normal cases the patients at the nursing home will be able to attend the Hervey Bay hospital instead of having to be carted backwards and forwards to Maryborough, which is a waste of time and energy. In addition, the road is not very good and we cannot see any hope of having it upgraded to an acceptable standard within the next few years. At least there is a glimmer of hope for the hospital. The establishment of the nursing home is welcomed by the residents of Hervey Bay and if—it is a big "if"—the facilities at the hospital are upgraded this will be welcomed even more. With those remarks about the Maryborough Hospitals Board and my plea for a separate board for the Hervey Bay Hospital, I support the Bill and look forward to further legislation that the Minister brings forward in his usual energetic fashion.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (4.17 p.m.): There are one or two points I would like to make about the Bill. I agree with the honourable member for Isis in one respect and that is that hospitals are there to serve the patients and not for the doctors and nurses.

I want to make a few remarks about the structure of hospital boards. I think the honourable member for Townsville said that a doctor from the hospital should be a member of the board. This is quite a good idea, provided that the doctor has spent many years at that hospital or at a hospital. I do not think we can assume that, because

a doctor works at the hospital, somebody there will vote for him. He might be a radical completely lacking in administrative qualities. As the honourable member for Isis said, he might be appointed because he is a good fellow, a radical who will introduce better conditions for the doctors and nurses and not for the patients. I think it is most important that a doctor appointed to a board has the administrative qualities to see that the board's affairs are properly conducted.

I want to make a few remarks about the Bundaberg Hospitals Board. The honourable member for Isis mentioned the Hervey Bay Hospital. I know that Hervey Bay is a much bigger township than either Gin Gin or Mt. Perry, but the Bundaberg Hospitals Board administers both the Gin Gin Hospital and the Mt. Perry Hospital. Today those two hospitals are without a doctor. The doctor has resigned and I believe that at the present time the responsibility of running those hospitals rests with the matron or the superintendent. A doctor from Bundaberg visits them a couple of days a week. Nevertheless, they are administered from Bundaberg.

Let us have a look at the composition of the Bundaberg Hospitals Board, the board which administers not only the Bundaberg Hospital but also the hospitals at Gin Gin and Mt. Perry. Mr. Tulley, the stipendiary magistrate, is the chairman of the board. The deputy chairman is Dr. McKeon, a great doctor, who has been in Bundaberg for over 50 years. He is probably over 70 and, as has been mentioned, will have to retire this year. He might not be as physically fit as he was 20, 30 or 40 years ago. He took my tonsils out 40 years ago. He was a very good doctor and he is still practising today. He will retire, and I do not dispute that he should. Although he has done an excellent job for the city, his retirement will allow a younger more energetic doctor to come onto the board.

Then there is Mrs. Innes from the Gin Gin area. She is the wife of the chairman of the Kolan Shire Council. Another appointee is Councillor Schuh from the Mt. Perry area. Then there is Councillor Maughan from the Woongarra Shire. They are all National Party members, all political appointments.

As the honourable member for Townsville said, board members should be elected somehow by people who are interested. It should not simply be the case of the council saying, "We will elect Mr. Maughan. He is the chairman. He will be a member of the Hospitals Board." Nobody knows whether he cares two hoots about the board. Another council says, "We will give Mrs. Innes a position on the board because her husband is chairman of the shire council."

Mr. Powell: She represents Gin Gin.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, Gin Gin. Schuh probably represents the other areas. Then there is Peter Nielson, a life member of the National Party, who is now 75. He has just had his 50th wedding anniversary.

Mr. Powell: And still going strong!

Mr. JENSEN: I know him quite well. He is a very strong man. However, he is another political appointment. Not one member of the board is other than a political appointee. As I said, I do not know whether any of them cares two hoots about the hospital.

It is not like the ambulance committee in Bundaberg, for which nominations are called.

Mr. Dean: And in Brisbane, too.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, and in Brisbane. The honourable member for Sandgate has just been elected to the ambulance committee in Brisbane with the second highest vote in the State. That is hot off the press. If someone sends that information to the "Telegraph", he will get money for it.

I have indicated what has been occurring on hospital boards, and I am pleased that the Minister is going to look again at the situation.

Mr. Powell: The Bundaberg Hospital has done a good job, hasn't it?

Mr. JENSEN: I would not dispute that for a moment. It has been carried on very well.

An Honourable Member: In spite of the board.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, in spite of the Board. Certainly there are some good men on the board. Dr. McKeon is an excellent man. He knows Bundaberg and has been practising there for 50 years. I do not know whether Mrs. Innes, Mr. Schuh or Mr. Maughan contributes anything to the board. Peter Nielson contributed something to the board at one time.

The point I am making is that nominations are called for election to the ambulance committee and those who are thought to be best fitted are elected. That does not apply to hospital boards. The appointments are completely political. It is about time the Act was altered. I am aware that both Peter Nielson and Dr. McKeon will leave the Bundaberg Hospitals Board; but, unless the Minister takes notice of what the honourable member for Townsville said, political appointees will take their place.

I wish to make one other point. In replying to the honourable member for Rockhampton at the introductory stage relative to optometrists in hospitals, the Minister said—

> "Of course, under Medibank, those who are not satisfied can receive optometrical treatment. Therefore, one wonders whether

the department should continue optometrical services and the provision of spectacles when such services are available under the Medibank programme. This is one of the things we are looking at at the moment. I assure the honourable member that I shall let him know in due course about the matter."

I hope that the Minister does not intend to abolish the scheme under which pensioners presently get spectacles at the hospital. I do not care whether or not a means test is introduced similar to that for dental services, but I suggest that if the Minister tells pensioners to get their spectacles through Medibank he will be doing a disservice to this State.

Dr. Edwards: You obviously are happy with the present system.

Mr. JENSEN: Very happy with the present system. I am not happy when people such as the stipendiary magistrate can go to the hospital and get spectacles free. However, I believe that they should be available to pensioners and other people after a means test has been applied. As far as I am concerned the system is satisfactory. I receive complaints, but——

Dr. Edwards: That is not what the honourable member for Rockhampton said. Do you disagree with him?

Mr. JENSEN: No. I am coming to that. The honourable member for Rockhampton mentioned Trevor Henderson, who also supplies the Bundaberg Hospital. The Minister will recall that, during the debate on the Optometrists Bill on 18 October 1974, I mentioned that a private optometrist had been engaged in Bundaberg and he was a damn sight worse. He promised to supply three types of frames but later said that he could not obtain them and supplied only one. In the following year when his contract was not renewed the board, under Peter Nielson, squealed to the Minister to have it renewed. I appealed to the Minister not to have it renewed. The optometrist from Bundaberg submitted a tender after closing date and then squealed to get it again. We got Trevor Henderson back.

I have received complaints about Henderson, but they arise only because the pensioners do not know the facts. If they want a different type of frame or a lens that will not fit into the frame supplied by the hospital, they pay for it. As recently as last week an aged pensioner wrote to me saying that a friend of his went to the hospital thinking she could obtain lenses free of charge but was charged $35 for lenses and $25 for frames. I checked with the manager of the Bundaberg Hospital, who said no complaint had been received. I told him that I did not know the name of the person concerned and asked whether he knew if the person had asked for bifocals or a lens of a different shape. He replied that probably that was the case. I then wrote to the pensioner stating that if I was supplied with the other person's name, I would check up on the case. If she had come to see me or the manager of the hospital, she would have been made aware of the fact that the hospital can supply only what is permitted by regulation. If she wants to obtain square lenses she has to pay for them. However, the lenses and frames that are supplied are quite satisfactory. In fact I would not mind wearing them myself. If I had the guts to go to the hospital to obtain free glasses, I would do so. I would not pay an optometrist $40 when I can buy the same article in Brisbane at McLachlans for half the price. He charges pensioners only $8 to $10, so what are the optometrists making from their racket? As the honourable member for Rockhampton has said, the person who has the contract to supply frames to the hospital board is on a racket. If some old lady says she does not like the frames supplied she can obtain another type of frame, provided she pays $20. But the damn things are not worth a dollar, and this is where the racket comes in.

The optometrist in Bundaberg made a nice packet out of the Bundaberg hospital and he squealed when he lost his contract. The situation will be no different with the present optometrist. I repeat what I said two years ago. I don't want the Minister or his department to terminate pensioner optometrical services. They are a good thing. So long as we give pensioners a choice of frame, whether it be black, blue, white or silver, or even a filigree setting, and the correct lenses, that is all anybody asks. As I say, I would rather obtain spectacles free than pay an optometrist $40 for them, but I do not believe that people should be able to obtain free spectacles from a hospital unless they pass a means test. Dental services are not free unless the patient passes a means test, so why should optometrical services be free? People who can afford to pay for optometrical services and obtain them free are robbing the hospital board and the State. It is about time that was stopped. But the Minister must continue to provide pensioner services and must ensure that the optometrist abides by his contract.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (4.28 p.m.): In rising to participate in this debate, I congratulate the Minister on bringing forward these amendments, which were very well received by his legislative committee and by the joint parties. In fact, they appear to have been well received by all honourable members.

This Bill is another example of good government. It is brought forward in anticipation of changes that will be made throughout the State and will allow the machinery of government to function more smoothly. Clause 4 contains an amendment to cover the anticipated development of further medical schools, perhaps firstly at Townsville and then later at Mt. Gravatt. This is an

example of the Government's attempt to decentralise not only industry but also centres of learning in the State. It is excellent to note that the legislation will not have to be amended should another medical school be provided.

The Bill contains amendments to ensure that boards can function smoothly in their ordinary day-to-day procedure such as the purchase of groceries and other provisions. There will be fewer reasons for a member of a board to absent himself from board meetings. While this may not be a problem in a city like Brisbane, in a small country town where there are very few men on a board, it could well be that one or two members of the board are businessmen who, prior to this legislation being enacted, would have had to absent themselves from board deliberations because of a personal or pecuniary interest in proceedings.

Of special interest to people in the southern areas of Brisbane is the decision to further support the Mater Hospital, particularly the assistance in the way of funds to be made available with the Treasurer's approval, from the Hospital Administration Trust Fund. This gives the stamp of approval of the Government and the Health Department to the administration of the Mater Hospital, particularly the Mater Children's Hospital, which provides a tremendous service on the south side of Brisbane in an area that is well recognised as not having enough public hospital bed capacity to meet demands as the city extends further and further to the south. In future, the legislation will not have to be further amended if the Government should decide to support hospitals that provide public beds for patients.

Clause 15 of the Bill provides for the transfer of patients from a hospital. My old boss, the former Secretary of the Ipswich Hospital, who is now the honourable member for Wolston, will recall, as I do, that 12 or 13 years ago, chronic patients were in the Ipswich General Hospital for from one to two years and received 5s. after their pension was taken from them. They were in the hospital because there was nowhere better for them to go. Some of them required virtually no acute hospital care. They were mainly geriatric patients receiving convalescent care which, as every honourable member knows, currently costs about a quarter or a third of the cost of running acute emergency hospital beds. General hospitals that have an elderly patient who has no friends or relations to arrange other accommodation for him—perhaps because there is insufficient money to pay for accommodation in a private convalescent home—can remove the patient to a State-run convalescent home. Patients from the Princess Alexandra Hospital can be transferred to Wynnum where there is a new, excellent facility. It looks extremely good; it is open and inviting. The Royal Brisbane Hospital can transfer patients to "Eventide".

In Toowoomba, patients will be able to be transferred to the Mt. Lofty home. I would like to make a few comments on the annex at Mt. Lofty. Although that home provides a very good service, it does not have an inviting appearance about it. In fact, it has an air of isolation. It is not a good thing for geriatric patients or patients who have suffered a stroke to feel that they are being admitted to a remote institution. They need to feel assured that they are going to a place that has a flow of people—not just the staff coming on duty, but men, women and children who come to visit. Much could be done, particularly at the Mt. Lofty Hospital, to encourage more groups of people to go through the establishment, thus giving the patients a change—a relief—broadening their outlook and, in some cases, giving them a great deal more hope.

Because these places have an unwelcome appearance about them, often they are shunned by patients. It is not the quality of nursing care being offered, but just that they engender in patients a feeling of being about to leave society—a feeling much the same, I suppose, as that of someone about to go to prison, who would hate his enforced withdrawal from society. Patients need more encouragement and they need to know that there will be a greater stream of the general public passing through the institution.

The best of these hospitals have a vertical strata of patients. In other words, they are not all bedridden. The best convalescent homes that I visit have a mixture of psychiatric patients, who are fully active and able of limb but who might be suffering from a severe mental illness; people who perhaps have a congenital mental defect; and some crippled and bedridden through arthritis or strokes. Some of the latter have a quick and active mind and they use the patients who are quick of limb but mentally retarded or psychiatrically ill as their arms and legs. These mixed groups can get along quite well together. Much of the tedium and the feeling of being trapped that is experienced by a paraplegic who is unable to get out of his bed is removed if there is a constant stream of visitors or other patients. This might be one thing that the State could look at.

I feel that there needs to be not only a face-lift in the approach to the Mt. Lofty annex but also a face-lift in our attitudes to the care of those people who are patients. There is a need also to remove the air of aseptic appearance of these places and to allow patients instead to take some of their favourite items of personal comfort from their own homes—a favourite chair, some of their favourite furniture, their own television set and perhaps even a small refrigerator. Certainly my own limited experience as a patient in a hospital bed made me feel at a

loss to entertain a variety of visitors. The patient is not even able to offer them a cup of tea or a piece of fruit, let alone any of the things he might normally offer a guest in his home. The Government might care to look to these improvements in the future, particularly for patients facing very long stays in hospital.

The member for Bundaberg mentioned the perennial chestnut of the provision of spectacles. As he has mentioned that subject, perhaps I could feel free to comment on it. While we have a contract with Trevor Henderson at a peppercorn fee, it is perhaps remiss of us to criticise the service he offers. Plain lenses and spectacles with steel frames are provided absolutely free. If people want bifocal lenses, the cost of the lenses is an added expense to them. Similarly if they want pebbles or lenses of different shape to fit some of today's modern frames they have to meet the added cost. Perhaps there is a need to guarantee at least a small selection of commonly acceptable frames in a limited range of colours without making any attempt to cope with the fashions that come and go rapidly with spectacle frames.

There is also comment that the director-general is to be contacted in matters of discipline concerning the medical practitioner. It is only proper that, in his position, he should be made fully aware of the circumstances in any impending disciplinary matter. This protects not only the medical practitioner but also the board.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (4.41 p.m.): I wish to raise one aspect that was brought to the attention of the former Minister. The present Minister may or may not have considered this aspect when he was drafting the Bill. One member of the Cairns Hospitals Board represents both the city council and the Shire of Mulgrave. He is elected by the members of the two local authorities. This means that, after the elections next Saturday, there will be nine members of the Cairns City Council and 12 members of the Mulgrave Shire Council. Those members will elect the local government representative on the Cairns Hospitals Board.

It is obvious that the shire council, with the smaller population but the greater representation, will inevitably elect one of its members as the local authority representative on the board. Although the actual site of the Cairns Base Hospital is within the Cairns local authority area and the Cairns local authority represents 32,000 to 35,000 people, it is outvoted every three years when the local authority representative to the hospital board comes up for election.

I realise, and I am quite sure the local authorities realise, the need for representation from both areas. Both local authorities are very compatible and, in many ways, they are not in competition. However, this is one area in which competition does raise its ugly head. I do not believe that either of them desires to reduce the representation presently held by the other. They got together in 1973 amicably and suggested to the then Minister for Health that representation for this board be devised on a population basis. For example, if there were one local authority representative for each 15,000 people the Mulgrave Shire Council would have one representative on the board and the Cairns City Council would possibly have two.

On that occasion the Minister said that that suggestion would be considered when the Hospitals Act was next amended. To my knowledge, this is the first occasion since then on which it has come before the House. I believe that what I have said is a soundly based proposition and I seek from the Minister the reason why such a suggestion has not been included in the provisions of the Bill.

I cannot see any reason why the Cairns City Council cannot be represented on the board. On a local authority basis, I support the need for such representation. I disagree with the member who said that local authorities have no need of representation on hospitals boards or that their representatives are merely seat-warmers.

Mr. Frawley: Who said that?

Mr. JONES: I think it was the honourable member for Townsville. I disagree with him. What he said may be true in some local authority areas, but it is not in mine. Perhaps I could refer to some board members who are seat-warmers but I do not intend to do that now. I merely raise this point because I was asked to do so by both the Mulgrave Shire Council and the Cairns City Council.

A similar anomalous situation applies in the case of other boards. On the regional electricity board the Cairns City Council has two members and the Mulgrave Shire Council shares a representative with a number of other shires. But that is another problem for another day. The Cairns City Council and the Mulgrave Shire Council would like the Minister's comments on this matter.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (4.48 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their comments on this interesting measure. The honourable member for Nudgee mentioned autonomy of the Redcliffe Hospitals Board and supported the programme outlined. He also supported the introduction of the age limit of 70 years for board members and mentioned the matter of staff representation on hospitals boards. The Government has made it a matter of policy that wherever possible there will be a medical representative on boards. He will not be a representative of the A.M.A. He will, however, be a doctor and wherever possible every effort is being made to obtain such representation on boards throughout the State.

The Government has also, as a matter of policy, set up medical advisory committees wherever possible. Such committees have an advisory function to the boards and it is hoped that this will increase the effective influence of medical personnel. They sit in on board meetings and they are welcome on all occasions. Only this morning I spoke to the president of the A.M.A. about this matter and we feel that we can come to a suitable arrangement on it.

The honourable member for Townsville referred to the position of matron. I can agree with him. He said that he liked the word "matron" and I think most of us would agree with that. However, the nursing profession has requested a change of name to "nursing superintendent" and, because of the Government's relationship with the nursing profession generally, we have agreed to include that designation in the Act.

The honourable member also mentioned the structure of boards. I welcome his comments and support his feelings that stipendiary magistrates make ideal chairmen. I feel certain that stipendiary magistrates have added considerable stature to hospitals boards. The honourable member for Townsville was able to speak very strongly from his 19 years' experience as a medical superintendent of the support that he received from the various stipendiary magistrates who occupied the position of chairman of his hospitals board.

The honourable member for Townsville also said that he did not feel that there should necessarily be a local government representative on a hospitals board. I assure him that I considered this matter at the time and it is one thing that will have to be considered again in the future. I feel that we will come up with an answer. I will refer to that further when I reply to the comments of the honourable member for Cairns. The honourable member for Townsville also suggested the appointment of a representative of the medical staff. What we have suggested to hospital boards is that, where there are visiting staff at hospitals throughout the State, they have a non-voting representative on the board who can express the advice of the visiting medical specialists. We feel that this suggestion will be accepted by all the boards throughout the State and that this will assist a great deal.

The honourable member for Rockhampton raised the matter of the centre for handicapped people. I was aware of some of the newspaper publicity and I regret that it was not an accurate report from the information that has so far been provided to me. I will give the honourable member a lot more information in the next couple of days. The situation is as follows: approval was given some time ago for a 40-bed nursing-home unit to be constructed not as part of the hospital but for intellectually handicapped people as part of our programme as a Government to include these profoundly intellectually handicapped people within the hospital. It is a building of very modern design as the honourable member is aware, and it has been constructed—in line with Government policy—in the grounds of the Rockhampton General Hospital, the total cost being met by the Department of Health. Of course, the project is a joint one and I want to make it quite clear that, from our understanding and from the reports we have in the files, it is a project which has the complete co-operation of the officers of the Rockhampton Hospitals Board and senior officers of the department. The selection of the site was raised by the Rockhampton Hospitals Board in its letter in 1972—not in 1974—and the Department of Health raised no objection to the site selected by the board. It was an alternative area that had been proposed by the Department of Works—not the Department of Health—which was programmed to be utilised for other purposes associated with the Rockhampton Hospital.

I am informed by officers of my department, after consultation with officers of the Department of Works, that the present drainage problems affect only the environs of the ward and not the ward itself—it has nothing to do with the foundations or the ward itself; it affects only the environs of the ward—and because of the recent extreme wet weather it is much more manifest than it would be normally. This problem has been the subject of a study and, as I indicated, drainage works are planned. The design of these works is well under way and they will obviate the present difficulties being repeated through stormwater on the grounds. So I am informed that the siting of the building is entirely satisfactory in accordance with site utilisation within the perimeter of the restricted space available to the hospitals board and, as I indicated, the building is a very satisfactory one for the purpose for which it was designed and the cost of the drainage work is certainly justified on the basis of site utilisation.

Mr. Wright: Are you saying there was no protest either from Alderman Fraser or the hospitals board?

Dr. EDWARDS: I did not say that at all. What I did say was that the original selection of the site was approved by the Rockhampton Hospitals Board in a letter to the department of 24 February 1972. I intend to give the honourable member a full summary of this by letter in the next few days, but the facts as presented by the Press are not correct. I stand by the decision that the site was selected as a result of the board's suggestion, approved by the department, queried by the Department of Works, and has since been sorted out. At this stage the only problem is not the site itself but the drainage of the environs. This is why I will not be opening the centre on the planned date—because the drainage has not been completed. I will be visiting it on 6 April, and certainly the honourable member will be quite welcome to come along with me and see it on that occasion.

I would like to mention the comments made by the honourable member for Isis. He referred to a separate board for the Hervey Bay Hospital. I think he would agree that I made it quite clear to him the other day when I met a deputation that I could not support this suggestion. I will not accept any part of his suggestion. I feel there is a need for better communication between the two areas. It was suggested that there be three or four members from the Hervey Bay area on the Maryborough Hospitals Board. That will be considered, but I do not think we can go as far as that. The matters raised by his deputation the other day are certainly being investigated and I hope to have an answer for him soon.

The honourable member for Bundaberg made several comments about hospital boards which I appreciate.

The honourable member for Toowoomba suggested that we should look at the situation of the Mt. Lofty Hospital, and I will take notice of his comments.

The honourable member for Cairns raised the matter of representatives from all local authorities. I think he has missed the whole point of local government representation. The provision for local government representation should not be taken to mean that each council is represented. The representative is appointed to represent all the councils of an area. The council representative on the Cairns Hospitals Board, whilst he might be selected from the Mulgrave Shire Council, does not represent only the Mulgrave Shire Council; he represents both the Cairns and Mulgrave Councils. I make it clear to honourable members that he represents all the shires. For example, my own electorate has five local authorities. If each area had its own representative—Ipswich, Esk, Boonah, Laidley and so on—that would mean five members. That would be more than the total membership of the board. The principle is that the member represents not one shire but all the shires, and it is hoped that all representations from the shires will go through that member.

Mr. Jones: The method of election is a little bit loaded.

Dr. EDWARDS: I do not see any other way of overcoming the problem, and I think most local authorities are happy with that method. One or two areas have complained to me about it.

The honourable member for Townsville suggested that the local representative be removed. His suggestion will be considered. However, I do not intend to change the provision at this stage. As I said, I hope that the local authority representative, no matter which area he is from, will represent all local authorities in the area covered by the hospitals board.

Those are the only comments that I wish to make.

Motion (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of s. 5; Certain applications to be submitted to Director-General—

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (4.57 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 2, omit all words comprising lines 31 and 32 and insert in lieu thereof the following words—

'(a) in the first paragraph,

(i) omitting the word "matron" and substituting the words "nursing superintendent";

(ii) inserting at the end of the paragraph the words ", and shall not be dismissed without the prior approval of the Director-General";'."

The reason for the amendment is to protect the superintendents. It has the complete approval of the superintendents throughout the State. The honourable member for Townsville (Dr. Scott-Young) supported the amendment, and I commend it to the Committee.

Amendment (Dr. Edwards) agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (4.58 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 2, insert the following new clause to follow clause 5—

'6. **Amendment of s. 5B.** Section 5B of the Principal Act is amended by, in subsection (3), in the first paragraph, inserting at the end of the paragraph the words " , and shall not be dismissed

without the prior approval of the Director of Dental Services in Queensland" '."

The amendment is self-explanatory. It refers to the possible dismissal of dentists employed in the hospital service.

New clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 18, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5.2 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill now be read a second time."

When introducing the Bill I said it was a relatively simple matter in that its only provision is to vary the principal Act's requirement concerning the retiring age of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations.

In essence, the Bill will permit the present or any future incumbent to be continued in office, with the approval of the Governor in Council, past the age of 67 years and to a retirement date not later than attainment of the age of 70 years.

I would have thought that this machinery amendment would have occupied the House's attention for a comparatively short period. However, the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition saw fit to speak at some length on the concepts of the principal legislation, although he had been given an opportunity to do this when that legislation was before the House in April 1975.

Several other honourable members commented similarly on the basis of the original legislation and its application since the establishment of the Parliamentary Commissioner's Office. No doubt some of these observations have merit and will be borne in mind when the time is opportune for that Act to be examined. But it should be remembered that in introducing this particular amendment I stressed that one of the reasons for bringing it forward was that the Parliamentary Commissioner's Office, while functioning efficiently, nevertheless required some further period of settling-down operations and the acquisition of a wider experience. This will be achieved by allowing the present Parliamentary Commissioner the opportunity of cementing and consolidating what has already been accomplished. When we come to the end of this initial period then no doubt an opportunity will be given for a review of the progress of the legislation to that date.

In the meantime, the first essential step is to make provision for the current commissioner to complete his establishment responsibilities. This the Bill presently before us does, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! I remind the House that a second-reading debate is restricted to the Bill, which, on this occasion, contains only one provision, namely, a variation of the age limitation.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.4 p.m.): As you have said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill contains only one amendment, and that is the omission of the words "sixty-seven years" and the insertion of the words "67 years or such later age not exceeding 70 years as the Governor in Council approves in a particular case." Without reflecting on the good service rendered by Mr. Longland, I consider it to be a pity that the whole mechanism of the office of Ombudsman has not been amended at this time. However, as I made my point on this aspect at the introductory stage, I shall not repeat it.

I wonder why we have to amend the Act in this way. I accept the Premier's point that Mr. Longland has had an opportunity to set up the Ombudsman's department and that we should now give him a little more time to finish establishing it. Having done that, to use the Premier's words, he will then step down and hand over to a suitable successor. My contention is that most Parliamentary Commissioners retire at the age of 65. The Premier said that the New Zealand Government extended the Ombudsman's retirement age to 72 years. That is virtually a lone item. For example, in Great Britain the Parliamentary Commissioner's Act of 1967 sets down 65 years as the retiring age of the Ombudsman. If we believe that the ordinary man in the street should retire at 65, we should retain that principle right through. If we say that someone, somewhere, should continue a little longer, we should say the same about men in the Railway Department and all other Government departments. When we say that the Ombudsman or a certain public servant is entitled to an extension we should apply the same principle to all—to road gangers in the city council or anyone else who believes that he has something to contribute after his normal retiring age.

As I said, in Great Britain, 65 years is the retiring age of the Ombudsman. In Canada, section 2 of the Canadian Parliamentary Commissioners Act of 1972 provides for the retirement of the Ombudsman at 65 years of age. In Northern Ireland, section 1 (3) (c) of the Commissioner for Complaints Act of November 1967 provides that the Ombudsman shall vacate his office when he or she attains the age of 65 years.

Mr. Casey: He might not last that long.

Mr. BURNS: Even in that troubled area they believe that they can find another Ombudsman when the holder of that office reaches the age of 65, and that he should be able to retire.

In Western Australia, section 5 (4) of the Western Australian Parliamentary Commissioners Act of 1971 provides that the Ombudsman shall vacate his office at 65 years.

My argument has nothing to do with Mr. Longland personally; it concerns the principle of retirement at a certain age. It is on the same lines as the discussion we had when Mr. Longland was appointed. At that time the Premier made a statement which I applauded. I referred to it at that time in the second-reading stage when we spoke of having a member of the Public Service as the Ombudsman. Today, I found a statement attributed to the Premier in an article of 9 January 1973, which reads—

> "Queensland's first ombudsman is likely to be a Queenslander with a legal background.
>
> "He is not likely to be drawn from the Public Service, nor is he likely to be a Parliamentarian."

While I am not attacking Mr. Longland personally, my thoughts on public servants cover Mr. Longland. The point is that any public servant who grows up in the service is aware of the Public Service attitude and, no doubt, has made many friends in the service. If as a Parliamentary Commissioner, I had to investigate a complaint about someone I had worked with in the service for a long while, I would find the job completely different from investigating someone I had never met before or did not know on a personal basis.

I believe that the appointment of a barrister or a person with some kind of legal training is important. When we come to appoint Mr. Longland's successor, we should think of a young, energetic, active man or woman with legal training so that people would not necessarily think that there is a bias towards public servants. The community has a feeling about policemen investigating policemen, or public servants investigating public servants, or politicians investigating politicians. The community believes that there should be some independence. Today we are saying, "We will let Mr. Longland extend his service to age 67 or 70", as the case may be. I accept the Premier's suggestion that we will have a very close look at the provisions in the Act when Mr. Longland retires. I do not accept the idea of people in senior positions continuing to hold them after age 65. I believe we should also consider whether we should have senior public servants in this position at all.

Mr. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (5.10 p.m.): The suggestion that 65 years of age is necessarily the cut-off point, as has been made by the Leader of the Opposition, is in my submission not a valid one. Many, many officers in this State serve ably well past that age. We must remember that we are not here dealing with just an ordinary member of the Public Service. We are not here dealing with somebody who has the status of a clerk. We are here dealing with somebody who is filling an outstanding position, and to reach such an outstanding position, usually a man must have outstanding talents—and not only outstanding talents but outstanding physical fitness, because it is very difficult to achieve and succeed in high office without rare qualities. I do not think we should be blinded into thinking that, because 65 is a good general rule in most cases, it is necessarily either a good rule or an appropriate rule when we are dealing with the very highest offices of the State.

If 65 had been used as the cut-off point in the past we would have been deprived of much of the best work of Sir Owen Dixon on the High Court, we would have been deprived of much of the work of Sir Edward McTiernan; the Americans would have been deprived of Oliver Wendell Holmes; the British would have been deprived of Winston Churchill——

Mr. Burns: Are you suggesting that nobody would have been available to take their place?

Mr. GREENWOOD: My retort to the Leader of the Opposition is that what we are talking about is not any old place or the capacities of thousands of people to take it. We are talking about the highest offices of State, and the capacities that are requisite to fill those places are very, very rare indeed. We cannot afford the wastage of consigning to the scrapheap of retirement people with these rare qualities who are still fulfilling their duties efficiently and well.

I went onto the university senate in 1960. One of its members at that time was the Vice Chancellor J. D. Story. J. D. Story is an ideal example of a great public servant who, long after the age of 65 years, did some of his best work. After his retirement from the Public Service, he took up the onerous task of chief administrative and executive officer of the University of Queensland. I cannot think what the university would have been like if it had been deprived of the services of that man over such a lengthy period of time.

Mr. Casey: Taking the converse argument, it is equally easy to quote people who have achieved their greatest by the time they reached 30 years of age.

Mr. GREENWOOD: I am not denying that at all. What I am saying is that, if a person has reached greatness by that time, his services should be preserved for as long as he is capable of exercising those qualities. It is a dreadful waste to push him out at 65 if he is capable of going on further. Those are the arguments that I would ask this House to bear in mind in rebuttal of the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (5.13 p.m.): I support my leader in his opposition to advancing the age limit of the Ombudsman from 67 to 70 years. The Premier has said that the

Ombudsman is presently functioning efficiently and that he wanted to cement what has already been accomplished. I am completely opposed to this measure. I have nothing against Mr. David Longland. He is a gentleman who has served his State very well, but he was pushed into the wrong position. He was the wrong appointee. Now the Government wants to continue him in that position for another three years because the Premier says he is carrying out the job efficiently. That is the Premier's view, but it is not my view after some of the cases I have seen the Ombudsman act on in the Bundaberg area. He is to carry on for another three years to protect parliamentarians and Government departments—the institution, whether it be local government or Parliament. The extension of the age limit to 70 is in no way warranted. The Ombudsman was given two years to set the office up. As a public servant he has done so, knowing full well what the office should be. He himself is the wrong man, but he did set the office up and he has it working. It is time the Premier put in a younger person instead of allowing a person of 67 to carry on.

What about Ray Smith, a Liberal and a barrister who has been a member of Parliament? He is a young man who would probably be a better Ombudsman. What about Col Bennett, who was on the council for 12 years and then became a member of this Parliament? He has the expertise to do this job better than an old public servant who has done his day in the Public Service, has retired and has been pushed into a position that does not suit him. Now he will continue in office from 67 to 70 years of age because the Premier wants him there to protect the departments and the institution.

He is supposed to be there to protect the rights of the people. I said this on the introduction of the legislation in 1974. I said that I hoped the Ombudsman would be appointed to further the rights of the people. I do not believe he has been appointed for that purpose or that he should be allowed to carry on. He is a gentleman who has served this State well. Let him retire in peace and not be attacked in this Parliament over the next two years for the decisions he will make. I will attack him now if Mr. Deputy Speaker will give me some latitude.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! I will not. The debate is restricted to the age limitation only.

Mr JENSEN: I was hoping, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you would give me some latitude to show up some of the decisions. I do not think he is capable of carrying on. He has made decisions protecting the institution against the rights of the people in the Burnett Heads area. While he protects the blooming local government and not the people——

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. I think that the honourable member is getting beside himself a little or is getting off the rails. We are dealing with the age of the Ombudsman and not his policy.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg will restrict himself to the one principle under consideration.

Mr. JENSEN: I am trying to but, with due deference to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to explain why I do not think the age limit should be increased from 67 to 70 years. I cannot simply say, "Don't increase it", without giving the facts. My facts are there. I say that he is protecting the institution and not the rights of the people. People go to him with cases and I have cases here.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: I am not going to bring them up.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable gentleman is out of order.

Mr. JENSEN: If I were given the opportunity I would bring them up, but I know you are not going to give me the opportunity.

Mr. Casey: The strain of these cases would be more telling with age.

Mr. JENSEN: It would be, and Mr. Longland should not be put through it. He has had a fair run and has looked after the Public Service well; but if he remains after he is 67 years of age, I will attack him on his decisions and, as time goes on, other honourable members will attack him on decisions that he should not be making at his age. He has to make decisions as an Ombudsman and not as a public servant or a protector of the Premier, his Ministry, his Government and the institution of the local councils. He was appointed by the Premier to protect the people's rights. The Premier wants him to continue for another two years to protect the Government, the institution. I do not think it should be allowed. I have heard different Government members, particularly the honourable member for South Brisbane, condemn this business of an Ombudsman because he was not appointed in the correct manner in the first place. I know I cannot go back onto that. I repeat that I am completely opposed to it. I have every respect for Mr. Longland but I am completely opposed to some of his decisions and to his being allowed to continue in office. I shall raise these cases at a later date. I did not want to do that but I will have to do it. If the Premier is going to keep him there for another two years to make decisions to protect him and the institution I will attack him in this House, which I do not want to do. But I shall do it.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (5.20 p.m.): I am afraid the previous speaker confused age with ability. They both start

with "a" but there is a big difference between them. I should like to confine myself wholly to age and performance.

Age is a peculiar thing. It can be judged by teeth and by growth. In a tree, it can be ascertained by rings. But human beings are a little different. Usually associated with increasing age are increasing tolerance, increasing knowledge and increasing wisdom. One finds that the easily frustrated young man becomes with age a more tolerant and balanced person. As long as his cardiovascular system maintains its elasticity and resilience, he will not age prematurely. This, of course, does not apply to everyone. Some age sooner than others mainly because their cardiovascular system does not stay young. As a result, their mental processes do not become more resilient and they do not become more tolerant. The effect of age varies in each person.

In the present case, I understand that the Ombudsman was appointed to set up a very important and almost experimental department of the Government. He was chosen because of his previous ability and skill. His age was not considered at that stage. He has fulfilled his job extremely well and he has obviously not aged in the sense that his ability to reason, think and make sound judgments is impaired. Obviously he is a man of judgment, tolerance and considerable knowledge in both legal and general social problems.

I do not think that anyone should be forced to retire immediately he becomes 65 years of age. The position varies somewhat with the occupation followed. A man who works hard with a pick and shovel is usually worn out and needs to be retired at 65. There are some of this category who are quite willing to continue working. I have seen a timber-cutter still cutting logs and using the adze at 80 years of age. But such men are exceptions. Most men who work hard wish to retire at 65 because at that time they find that their work is becoming a little hard for them. Those in the not-so-arduous professions—lawyers, doctors, school-teachers —in which more effort is put into mental than physical processes can continue actively and give good service to the community if they are allowed to work after attaining the age of 65.

Mr. Frawley: What about politicians?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Remember Winston Churchill and his magnificent speeches that everyone used to wait upon. During the War I have seen signalmen sneak out to turn on the radio because Churchill was going to make a speech. I saw that same man on a street corner in London as a drivelling imbecile. Age had caught up with him and his advisers had not advised him to hang up his gloves. He still kept battling on and it was pathetic to see a man who had made such magnificent speeches turn into a drivelling idiot. That is what age can do, but in the case of this man it took many years. He was well past the age of 70 when he started to slip. In fact, at the age of 70 most probably he was in his prime.

The honourable member for Ashgrove mentioned certain people. I well remember a most brilliant intellectual, Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn, who was the backbone of many carefully planned procedures at Sydney University. He was a member of the senate of that university and even in his eighties he gave some very sound judgments and decisions which aided the development of that institution into a great university. Such men are not common, but the person who is the subject of the Bill is most probably one of that type. If the Premier decides in his wisdom that this gentleman has his full mental ability and wishes to extend his appointment till the age of 70, I consider that the Premier is doing the State a service.

This cannot, of course, be made an everlasting appointment. I think he should be given a chance to set up his office as it was originally planned. Mr. Longland will retire when that plan is fulfilled or when he reaches the age mentioned in the Bill.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5.25 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate and their general support for the work done by the Ombudsman. He is a man I hold in high regard, as do all members of Parliament. The honourable member for Bundaberg appears to have been dissatisfied with some of the Ombudsman's decisions in that they did not go the way he expected, and he now feels it is his duty to condemn the actions of the Ombudsman. I appreciate the other remarks made by honourable members.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah —Premier) (5.27 p.m.); I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

When I listened to the remarks made by the honourable member for Bulimba after I had introduced this simple measure, I could not help wondering if there were not a faint tinge of sour grapes in the vehemence with which he objected to the proposal to pay the occupant of a parliamentary office the princely sum of about $2.05 per calendar day for undertaking the duties of Government Deputy Whip. After all, with its present ten members, the Opposition has three such occupants of

parliamentary office in its ranks. Thirty per cent of its present membership receive additional salaries under the Constitution Act Amendment Act—the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Whip.

An Honourable Member: Shocking!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, it is shocking.

It is not the Government's fault if the honourable member for Bulimba finds himself in the remaining 70 per cent. We cannot help that. It was the decision of his colleagues to remove the honourable member from the senior of those three positions and it is certainly not, as I have said, our fault if he has not been chosen by his colleagues to fill another office attracting additional salary. And let us remember that for all his sound and fury over a nominal financial recognition of the position of Government Deputy Whip, and this is interesting, the honourable member and his colleagues raised no such protest in 1961 when the position of Deputy Leader of the Opposition was financially recognised for the first time. They were in it boots and all. The honourable member said that he did not get enough and that he should receive much more. Did members opposite give any consideration to that position through all the years we were in Opposition? Not on your life! They would not acknowledge it.

If one were to follow through the honourable member's argument that once the position of Government Deputy Whip is so recognised the recognition will never be removed and that it should not be perpetuated if there should ever be a substantial drop in the number of Government members after a general election, then I suggest he turn his eye inwards upon his own party. Some honourable members opposite ought to give up their additional salary. In particular, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—he is not in the Chamber at the moment—should ask himself whether those arguments should not apply quite forcibly to the present circumstances surrounding the financial recognition of the position of Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If the honourable member for Bulimba wants to have that recognition abolished, for the reasons he has propounded in relation to the position under discussion, I shall be very happy to accommodate him. He has only to say the word and I will adopt the arguments that he has put forward.

Finally, the Opposition endeavoured to make some noise about an additional salary of $750 per annum—a very nominal figure in these times, and not half enough for the work that the honourable member for Windsor, who is a very active member, will do. Honourable members opposite should remember that each of them, in common with nearly all members of this Assembly, has received in recent years the services of a personal electorate secretary whose salary is nearly 10 times as much as that proposed for the Government Deputy Whip. How petty an outlook they have in attempting to chide the Government for proposing that the Government Deputy Whip should receive some $2 a calendar day for helping to make this Assembly run more efficiently! Once again, I do not recall any of them objecting when my Government provided the services of an electorate secretary to each of them—something which our predecessors in Government would never have contemplated, even in their most generous moments—if they had any!

I do not intend to delay the House any longer. The principle involved in the Bill is sound, it follows a very interesting precedent in relation to the position of Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and it is essential in view of the present number of members elected by the people as a result of my Government's policies and performances.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.33 p.m.): The Premier spent so much time justifying the proposal to appoint a Government Deputy Whip that one feels he probably has something to hide. I intended saying that the Opposition had little to say in opposition to the proposal, but the Premier has spoken about improving the efficiency of the House. Earlier today I heard the bells ringing for the formation of a quorum. Now that there is to be a second Whip on the Government side, it might be possible to ensure that 15 or 17 of the 70 members on the Government benches are here. The Opposition will accept the proposition that a man be paid to do the job. But let us make certain that the Government, which has 70 per cent of the members in the Parliament and receives 70 per cent of the wages and has all the staff provided for the Parliament, other than the very meagre staff provided for the Leader of the Opposition—it has been at the present level for some time and is the smallest staff provided to any Opposition leader in Australia—will ensure that the payment of $750 a year to the Government Deputy Whip is justified and that in future there will not be any need for the ringing of bells so that a quorum might be formed.

Mr. Ahern: You can't help; you have only 10 members.

Mr. BURNS: Let me make it very clear that it is not the job of the Opposition to maintain numbers in this Chamber. The honourable member for Landsborough is paid by the Parliament to keep the Government's 70 members in line. Now he has an assistant, I hope he will be able to do his job much better than he has done it in the past.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (5.34 p.m.): Anyone listening to the Leader of the Opposition might well think that the Bill was a personal Bill introduced by the Premier—almost a Bob Moore Bill. His

approach to the whole subject is ridiculous. This is an administrative procedure. Listening to the Leader of the Opposition, one would think that the Whip's job was similar to that of a blue cattle dog—rushing round and heeling members to get them into the Chamber. Obviously the Leader of the Opposition does not know anything about the duties of the Whip.

Mr. McKechnie: That is the way they work.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: That is not the way this coalition Government works. We have 69 members on this side of the House, and they represent electorates spread throughout the State. It is thanks to the Opposition that we have 69 members. The Opposition is so damn weak and its policies are so poor that its members have themselves to blame for the present situation. We should do everything possible to improve the functioning of the majority parties.

I understand that the House of Commons has 20 Whips, and they all have their jobs to do. While I have been in this Parliament the honourable member for Windsor, in addition to assisting the National Party and the Liberal Party, has assisted members of the Opposition and discussed their problems with them. And this is the ideal situation. We should have as Deputy Whip a member who has a sound knowledge of the procedures of the House. I consider the appointment of Deputy Whip to be an excellent move. I hope that when Mr. Moore retires from Parliament—he will certainly not leave this place as a result of the strength of the Opposition—Parliament retains the position of Deputy Whip.

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (5.37 p.m.): I rise to answer some of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. It is true that quite often the numbers in the House are light on. However, the important thing to remember is that members who are absent from the Chamber are in the building. Even though the Premier and his Ministers might be absent from the Chamber, they are in the building carrying out their ministerial duties. The Government, as distinct from the Parliament, has a duty to govern the State properly and in doing this, Government members attend frequent committee meetings during the day. We on our side of the Chamber are working hard for Queensland. We certainly are not out playing around.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.38 p.m.): The Premier seems to be in a great hurry to get this Bill through. As I said at the introductory stage, the circumstances surrounding the introduction of this measure are quite remarkable. I have nothing against the honourable member for Windsor but, before this measure was brought forward, the Premier told Parliament that he was to be the Deputy Whip. The name of the person was given before the position was created. I do not retract anything I said at the introductory stage with regard to the work done by the Opposition Whip. He does a tremendous job, whether the Opposition comprises 10, 11 or 33 members.

Mr. Frawley: You're crawling to him.

Mr. HOUSTON: And he's worth crawling to. He does a tremendous job both for his electorate and in this House.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is not abusing private citizens now, so he should hold his peace.

The Government has had its present number of members for over 12 months but apparently until now it was not considered necessary to appoint a Deputy Whip. I say again this appointment is obviously a political one to strike a balance of payments between the Liberal Party and the National Party. There's no doubt about that at all.

As to the work done by this Parliament —the Bill has been before us now for three days and on each of those days the division bells have had to be rung because there has not been a quorum present. If with one Whip the Government could maintain its numbers in the Chamber, surely it can do even better now with two Whips—one of whom has not yet been paid for his higher duties, but I imagine that retrospectivity will be involved. The point is that the bells have had to be rung. Even then the required number for a quorum has not been obtained on the Government side alone. During the debate on most of the Bills, very few Government members have been present.

Mr. Casey: We have the Leader of the House as well.

Mr. HOUSTON: I thank the honourable member for Mackay for his interjection. All the Leader of the House does is tell us that the prepared programme is wrong. Never in the last six months have we been able to read the orders of the day and place reliance on them. That is completely ridiculous. That is all part and parcel of a Whip's work. Everyone knows that, at the earliest, the Stock Act is not to be debated before Thursday. Whether or not the Minister for Primary Industries retains his position after tomorrow's Government Party meeting is, of course——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The Whips are not responsible for the Business Paper.

Mr. HOUSTON: I accept that. The items on the Business Paper are numbered. On today's Business Paper there are two third readings, and the next item of business is the Stock Act. Surely these Business Papers mean something when they are given to us. They are not put on our desks for fun. They are to tell us the order of business for

the day. It was obvious to everyone that the third item to be dealt with was the Stock Act. I am glad that the Leader of the House is present. He was so anxious to tell us that there was a change he did not even wait until the normal time; he got up prior to that.

A Government Member: Were you here?

Mr. HOUSTON: I am always here.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am here even on Thursday night.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am about to deal with the position of the Whips. Over the years—at least until the last couple of years—the Opposition Whip talked to the Government Whip and we got a very accurate assessment of the order of business for the day and an accurate assessment of the number of speakers on any legislation to be introduced. When I was Leader of the Opposition, the Whips, irrespective of who they were, could tell me accurately what the order of the day was and the number of speakers. Unfortunately, in recent times—I do not know if the Premier is involved in this—we have been unable to accept the word of the Government Whip. Every time he told us something, we could bet our boots that within a short time the situation would be reversed. From the Government's point of view the Whip's job is virtually to try to camouflage the real situation. The Government Whip knows that more than once I saw fit to ask him why there was a change of circumstances. What he said to me is of a private nature.

It boils down to this: do we need two Whips for the Government members? In my opinion only further confusion will be created. At times one will be in the House and the other will not. To which Government Whip will the Opposition Whip talk? Will he talk to the Whip or the Deputy Whip? Over the years the Whip has shown that he does not know what is Government policy on debates on certain days? How could the Deputy Whip know any better? I make my position clear: when I spoke on behalf of the Opposition I said that this appointment was unnecessary, that it was a political gimmick—"more for Moore". I stand by that, irrespective of what the Premier said about the Opposition. Because the Opposition has few members, more work falls on each—on the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the others. If the Government is thinking of increasing the number of positions in this Parliament——

A Government Member: Next thing the Opposition will be wanting more money.

Mr. HOUSTON: Don't worry about that. Very shortly we will have two new members on this side of the Chamber—just as soon as the by-elections are decided.

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (5.45 p.m.): I have not heard so much nonsense spoken in this Parliament in a long time. There is no doubt at all that the speech just made by the former Leader of the Opposition is just plain nonsense—nothing else. The running of the business of the House is known to him and to most other honourable members. Recently a Leader of the House was appointed. He is responsible for the business of the House. In the morning he communicates to the Government Whip what the business of the day will be and it is the Whip's responsibility to communicate that directly to the Opposition Whip if the Leader of the House has not done so. That is what happens. That is the principle that is adopted.

However, there seems to be no doubt that some new rules are being written by the members of the Opposition as to the maintenance of numbers in the House in the present Parliament. It is for that reason that a Government Deputy Whip is necessary. The Opposition has now completely abdicated all responsibility for maintaining a quorum, according to what has been said here today by the Leader and former Leader of the Opposition. They have said that it is not their responsibility to maintain the numbers in the House. That was not the attitude of the Opposition in the previous Parliament, nor do I think it should be the attitude of the Opposition in this Parliament. They have a responsibility to assist in the maintenance of a quorum. Clearly, they have abdicated their responsibility. Very few of them are here at any time. Many of them are absent from the House. They take their job in this place very lightly indeed. It is to assist in that situation that the Government has created the official position of Government Deputy Whip. That will make no difference to the business of the House or to the communication of the business of the House from the Leader of the House to the Government Whip and to the Opposition Whip.

There can be only one Government Whip, but I would like to make it known that there is no division of opinion between the Government Deputy Whip and me. We all know the person who is to occupy that position; so we all know that there could be no possibility of conflict. The honourable member for Windsor and I consult very closely and I envisage absolutely no problems nor do I foresee any confusion arising.

Problems have arisen through alterations in the order of Government business. I think it is fair to say that it has not been good enough that we have had to depart from the Business Paper. Perhaps we should give more serious consideration to seeing that we stick to the order on the Business Paper. But let us bear with the Leader of the House in this and understand the problems he has, with

Ministers coming and going and legislation being drafted. I do not think the position is worse here than it is in any other Parliament. When legislation passes backwards and forwards between departments and draftsmen and Ministers are absent at interstate conferences, his job is very difficult, particularly when he has to say on Thursday night what the business will be on Tuesday. However, without any doubt there has not been so much stupidity uttered by the Opposition in a long time. This measure is absolutely justified and deserves the support of all honourable members.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (5.49 p.m.): I had not intended entering this debate; but, having heard the remarks of the Government Whip about Opposition members treating their duties lightly, I rise to assure him that they do not. An examination of "Hansard" will show that this party, now of only 10 members, has been able to match the Government in any debate. We do not treat our duties lightly. In fact, a check of "Hansard" will show that, within the past fortnight since Parliament resumed, on four occasions the Opposition has called the attention of the Chair to the state of the House, indicating that fewer than 16 members were in the Chamber. Today, 50 per cent of our members were present when Mr. Speaker's attention was drawn to the state of the House, and there were only 10 out of 69 Government members in the Chamber. A quorum is 16 in addition to Mr. Speaker or the Chairman and, as I said, half of our members were in the Chamber.

Government members should not get the idea that we do not adopt a responsible attitude to our duties. I have no falling out with the Government Whip, but when he makes statements of that nature I, as the Opposition Whip, want to clear them up. In future he should see he has at least 16 out of his 69 members in the Chamber and it will not be necessary to call for a quorum again.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (5.51 p.m.): It is unfortunate that the honourable member for Wolston is sometimes rather confused about his numbers. During the past 12 months I have been in the Chamber on almost every occasion when a quorum has been called for. On some of those occasions, the need for a quorum to be called for was created by the majority of Opposition members walking out of the Chamber, leaving only one or two, in an endeavour to embarrass the Government. I do not consider that to be very responsible conduct. Nor do I consider that their sanctimonious statements about how marvellous they are and how they show responsibility to the Parliament warrant any merit, either.

To say that a Government Deputy Whip is not needed is ludicrous. The Opposition, with 11 members, has a Whip. The Government, with 69 members, had one Whip and one honorary Whip. In the past 12 months we have learned to appreciate the work performed by the Whip. A very great burden was placed on him. The Opposition does not need to have an appreciation of the work that is involved. Not only that, but the Leader of the Opposition has said that they do not need to have an appreciation because they do not believe they possess any responsibility in that regard.

It is most important to remember that the Government increased its numbers by 22 in the last election—twice the total number of Opposition members. With 11 members, the Opposition has a Whip. All that the Government is recognising is that, with the increased majority on this side of the Chamber, a greater burden has been placed upon the Government Whip and on the Government Deputy Whip. In appreciation of that it is believed that where there is work there should be reward. That is what the Bill does.

If the Opposition is so sincere in its contention that the amount of work required for 69 members is not great enough to have a Government Deputy Whip, I might suggest that, as the Opposition has only 11 members, it might like to give back some of its benefits. Obviously all that the Opposition needs is a part-time Whip. If that is the type of argument the Opposition puts forward, it should take the matter further.

I give the Bill my fullest support as it recognises, in this case, that the honourable member for Windsor has done a great deal of work in the position during the past 12 months. That work is now being given recognition by this Parliament. It has been appreciated by many new members in this Parliament because it was he, more than anyone else in this Parliament, who enabled newer members to come to know many of the procedures and to understand many of the difficulties and problems. Because of that realisation, the work he carries out—he probably spends more time in the Chamber than any other member—and his great appreciation of the Standing Rules and Orders, it is fitting that we should not only recognise the position of Government Deputy Whip and thereby accord a pittance of appreciation but also pay a tribute to the work already done by the honourable member for Windsor.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (5.55 p.m.), in reply: We have listened with a great deal of interest to the debate which seemed to spread a little into the activities of what a party Whip and now a Deputy Whip does and does not do. I should like to say that the Government Whip, Mr. Mike Ahern, is a man for whom I have a tremendous regard and appreciation.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why don't you put him in Cabinet?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: He is doing a very good job as Whip and we need him very much. One thing is certain: I certainly would not have anyone from the Opposition side in Cabinet.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member for Archerfield is not in his usual place in the Chamber.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: For a long time before there was a Minister in charge of the House, the honourable member for Landsborough helped me very considerably in the duties and problems of preparing legislation, having Ministers ready and generally running the House. I can only give very sincere thanks to the honourable member for the part that he played in the years before I had the present Minister for Police as Leader of the House. I also thank him for the job that he is presently doing as Whip. In Mr. Ahern and Mr. Moore we will have a very excellent team that will co-operate for the over-all good of the House. I only hope that the Opposition Whip will co-operate and keep his men in order. I know that that is not very easy to do. However, I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

[*Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 7.15 p.m.*]

FORESTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (7.15 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

My resume of the provisions of the Bill at the introductory stage covered the issues involved fairly comprehensively and I do not think there is any need for me to recapitulate to any great extent.

I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. It is fairly clear from their comments that there is general agreement on the provisions of the Bill. However, the remarks expressed by some speakers following the introduction of the Bill would suggest that the provision relating to the possibility of applying certain areas to recreational purposes was misunderstood. I must emphasise here, to clarify any misconceptions, that references to recreation in this Bill apply to State forests and not to national parks. Provision has already been made for recreational management of national parks in existing legislation. I might mention that forest recreational facilities are generally intended for use by all sections of the community rather than by any one group to the exclusion of the majority.

In essence, the use of State forest areas for recreational purposes in accordance with the expanded concept of multiple use in State forest management will provide areas of attraction and natural beauty for the general use and enjoyment of the people of Queensland as tranquil places of retreat from the stresses and strains of urban existence and as supplementary and alternative areas to the State's national parks, which are ever-increasingly popular with those who visit them. In recognising the needs of the public and to generate an awareness of the resources available in State forests, the Conservator of Forests and his staff have provided picnic facilities in various State forests to encourage their use and enjoyment. Bunyaville near Everton Park, Daisy Hill in the Redlands area, Lake Tinaroo in North Queensland, Waterpark Creek near Yeppoon, Freshwater Creek east of Gympie, Rogers Park near Yarraman and Duncan Park near Nanango are examples of areas where recreation facilities have been provided on State forests in recent years.

For some time the Government and its officers have been aware of a need to provide areas for the pursuit of outdoor activities such as horse-riding, trail-bike and mini-bike-riding, and driving four-wheel-drive vehicles. A committee has been set up by the Government to examine the availability of land for recreation purposes generally, and to consider ways and means of providing suitable land. The House will be informed at an early date of the findings of this committee. For some years now these latter outdoor activities have been permitted on appropriate State forests during suitable seasons of the year. However, because of the damage they would do, they cannot be permitted on national parks.

It would seem that some honourable members are not aware of the definition of a national park. A definition to be used as a guide-line by administrators and park users, in the Australian context, was adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on National Parks in 1970, attended by ministerial representatives of all the Australian States and the Commonwealth. This definition is—

"A national park is a relatively large area set aside for its features of predominantly unspoiled natural landscape, flora and fauna, permanently dedicated for public enjoyment, education and inspiration, and protected from all interference other than essential management practices so that its natural attributes are preserved."

This definition is very similar to that adopted internationally by enlightened national park adminstrators. The concept is adopted in essence by my National Parks and Wildlife Service, with the proviso that no more than 160 hectares of any national park or one half of the area, whichever is the lesser, may be managed as a recreation area. Honourable members will realise that this concept does not envisage management of the great bulk of national park areas for other than passive recreation.

The honourable member for Bundaberg asked what forms of public outdoor recreation were considered to be compatible with sound

management of State forests. Picnicing, swimming, fishing, bush-walking, orienteering, horse-riding and nature study are very acceptable forms of outdoor recreation as they do no harm to the forest environment. Motoring on selected forest roads is accepted as a suitable recreational use. Users, however, should be aware that almost all these roads are gravel or natural-surface roads, that the grades are frequently steeper than on public roads and alignment is frequently not suited to high-speed traffic. Trail-bike-riding is allowed under permit in sections of natural State forests where the fire danger is not high and where the activities of cyclists will not seriously damage other forest values.

Obviously we should not permit trail-bike-riding where it would damage young trees needed to stock the area. It should not be permitted on areas where it would lead to serious erosion problems. It should be kept well away from sections of forest which the public use for passive recreation. But we do recognise trail-bike-riding as a legitimate form of recreation. Areas of State forest have been set aside and more will be set aside to meet part of the public demand for trail-bike-riding opportunities, without impairing the values of the remainder of the State forest for other uses. The use of four-wheel-drive vehicles for recreation purposes raises many problems. Where they destroy fragile land systems on State forests, their use cannot be countenanced. The destruction of dune systems on State forests by beach buggies, in the name of recreation, cannot be tolerated by any environmentally aware instrumentality. However, their use is permitted on formed roads provided these are not so wet that they will be damaged.

Shooting is a recreational activity not permitted on State forests. Forests are managed as fauna sanctuaries and recreational shooting is absolutely incompatible with this concept. While some forms of destructive recreation use are prohibited, the honourable member will see that many forms of public outdoor recreation in natural surroundings which should not be permitted on national parks are now actively promoted on State forests. The Government is proud that it has taken this initiative over recent years and increasing use of State forests for appropriate outdoor recreation is envisaged.

The honourable members for Merthyr and Toowong referred to the great significance to the people of Brisbane and nearby districts of the proposal by this Government to establish a park from Mt. Coot-tha to Mt. Nebo. This park would be managed with a view to promoting appropriate recreational uses in forested surroundings, without prohibiting other compatible uses such as timber-getting and apiculture. I would like to emphasise to honourable members that the concept here is not a national park, as defined by the Forestry Act 1959–1975. Management of national parks aims at the permanent preservation, as far as possible, of the natural condition over most of the area. The proposed Mt. Coot-tha-Mt. Nebo Park occupies a position in the broad range of park types different from that of a national park. The management will permit some compatible commercial usage of the area. It will facilitate access to, and deliberately promote, a range of recreational uses. It will include some areas managed as national parks, but the park as envisaged does not fit into the accepted concepts of a national park. The title "D'Aguilar Forest Park" has been proposed as an appropriate name. However that may be, the Government is aware that a park is needed in the D'Aguilar Range to meet outdoor recreational needs of the people. Despite the obstruction of the Brisbane City Council, I can assure honourable members that the Government will see this need is met.

The honourable member for Belmont again expressed his concern that certain forest areas be set aside for recreational use by operators of four-wheel-drive vehicles, trail-bikes and mini-bikes. I point out to the honourable member that the preservation of national parks in their natural state, as far as possible, for the inspiration of all the generations to come, precludes the use of vehicles of this type on national parks, other than on such roads as may be constructed therein. As I said previously in this speech, the use of State forests to meet some of this recreational demand is accepted as reasonable, subject to the appropriate permit being obtained from a forest officer.

The honourable member questioned the need to increase the term of imprisonment provided for breaches of section 87 of the principal Act. As I explained in my introductory speech, this brings the penalty into line with that provided for in the recently enacted Fauna Conservation Act. This section of the Act deals, inter alia, with forgery and I am sure honourable members will agree that there are circumstances in which forgery must be regarded very seriously.

The honourable member for Cooroora referred to the power given by this Bill to the Conservator of Forests to retain parts of State Forests in their natural state.

This provides legislative endorsement for the long-established policy of retaining aesthetically attractive areas as beauty spots. These will continue to be managed with a view to the non-impairment of their natural beauty and their use for recreation. More recently the conservator has been setting aside tracts of forests as scientific purposes areas. These are managed with minimum interference by man and can serve as soil reference areas, geological monuments, gene reservoirs, or samples of natural communities, any of which are not adequately represented in other preservation areas in the State. This legislation supports the retention by the conservator of these important resources in their natural State.

The honourable member for Callide has raised a number of matters concerning national park management. It is most heartening to see the interest he is taking following the southern visit of my parliamentary committee and I thank him for his interest and support. This is not the time to go into park management in great detail, but there are two aspects that he mentioned that I would like to refer to briefly.

One is the matter of charging entry fees to national parks. This is a matter on which I have an open mind and I would be most interested in the views of honourable members. My National Parks and Wildlife Service tends to the view that fees should not be charged for entry to a park unless expensive services or facilities are provided. The parks themselves should be free and the public able to visit them freely and with a minimum of constraint.

The honourable member also referred to the subject of roads in national parks, and asked how could people view a national park extending over 1000 or 2000 acres if there is no road through it. This is a question I take pleasure in answering for two reasons. The first is that Queensland (and here I pay tribute to the officers of the Department of Forestry who were responsible) pioneered the system of providing access by means of carefully constructed walking tracks with a smooth surface and easy grade. These tracks make walking so easy that even relatively elderly and infirm people can cover quite long distances. The second reason is that I recently had the pleasure of inspecting Carnarvon National Park and, having walked three or four miles up the Carnarvon Gorge and back again, I can vouch for the fact that it is possible to view quite extensive areas of national park on the basis of walking tracks taking off from one or more points on the perimeter of the park. On the other hand, roads into a park not only detract from the landscape but present serious management problems. I won't go into that here, except to point out that the United States, which previously espoused the idea of providing high-grade road access into the parks, has now swung round to the Queensland idea of excluding the private motor vehicle as far as practicable.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to certain matters related to the Mt. Funnel-Cape Palmerston area. I am not in a position to comment on the dealings of the company to which he referred, but I will refer to the national park proposal. This was selected by the then National Parks Branch of the Department of Forestry in the course of a systematic survey of the coastal region of Queensland. It was thoroughly researched and the proposed boundaries delineated after negotiations jointly carried out with the lessees by officers of the Department of Lands and of the National Parks Branch. This proposal is being processed and will be declared as a national park in due course.

The provisions of the Bill before the House will provide future legislative protection against any wrongful use of the words "national park" which may have occurred in this matter. The honourable member also referred to the very beautiful Whitsunday area and the need to provide camping facilities there and to regulate and control the camping. With this view I agree completely, and I am happy to advise the House that this matter is being given high priority by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

I thank the honourable member for Toowoomba South for his comments. He has highlighted the need for increased recreation facilities in natural surroundings in the neighbourhood of our cities. National parks and State forests can provide some of these facilities. However, it is important to realise that these will not be able to fulfil their major functions, and at the same time meet the full recreational demand. There is a need for local authorities, service clubs and private enterprise to provide for a substantial proportion of this recreational demand. The Leader of the Opposition proposed the use of fire breaks in the Beerburrum pine plantations for trail-bike-riding. Permits are not issued for trail-bike-riding in plantations. The riders will leave the roads, and the open exhausts favoured by many riders are likely to start fires. The public investment here is very high and this fire-risk cannot be accepted. Intending trail-bike riders in this locality are issued with permits to ride in the hardwood forests in the Woodford area. Recreational motorists are encouraged to drive on plantation roads and picnic facilities have been established in the Beerburrum plantations for their use.

The honourable member has also expressed concern at the procedural amendments involving timber reserves and in fact the over-all procedures involved in bringing a national park proposal before Cabinet. In particular he objects to the powers vested in the Minister for Mines and in general to any overriding powers of any Minister. I would like to spend some time on this matter because it is undoubtedly very important. At the same time I will refer to a matter raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton in connection with a proposal mentioned in "The Courier-Mail" of 5 March 1975.

First let me return to the general definition of a national park which I gave earlier. Honourable members will recall that it referred to land "permanently dedicated" and "protected from all interference". This should mean, and in Queensland does mean, that, once declared a national park, the land must not be used for any purpose which constitutes "interference". It is permanently dedicated to public use and enjoyment but it cannot be used by either the State or a

private individual for any use which constitutes interference with its natural condition. And the protection goes even deeper than the present legislation. Under the Mining Acts it is expressly provided that there can be no prospecting and no mining on a national park in Queensland. For this reason—because it is a permanent dedication and because it excludes commercial development—it is very important to ensure, before dedication, that national parks status is undoubtedly the best land use in the public interest.

My national park officers bring a wide range of expert knowledge to the task of assessing national park proposals and I expect them to take proper cognisance of other potential land uses and, where it is apparent that it is more in the public interest for another use to prevail, I am confident they will adopt an impartial attitude and recommend accordingly. However, in the ultimate, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be able to bring to bear the same expertise in other fields as is available in the Government departments specifically dealing with those fields. To take but one example and that is the one concerned in this amending Bill, although the National Park and Wildlife Service has experienced graduate foresters on its staff well able to recognise commercially valuable forest, they clearly are not in a position to know the over-all position with respect to timber supplies, market demand, long-term sustained yield possibilities and so on which the Department of Foresty must take into account. It is therefore right and proper that, in any proposal which includes commercial timber, the director should obtain the views of the Conservator of Forests on the proposal and submit them to me together with his own recommendation for my consideration.

In the case of mineral values the matter is still more complex. A competent geologist can indicate whether a particular geological formation is likely to contain minerals but only thorough prospecting can determine whether or not it does. Therefore in areas which are potentially so valuable for minerals that they are declared as gold or mineral field, it is appropriate that the Minister for Mines should have the right to object to the declaration of a national park which by precluding all prospecting would for all time prevent any possibility of the potential mineral value being discovered.

And this leads me to the area to which the honourable member for Rockhampton drew attention. The quotation he read from "The Courier-Mail" is correct. The area referred to is in the Iron Range region. It is extremely important biologically and on geological indications it could contain considerable mineral wealth. Until more prospecting is carried out, the mineral potential remains unknown and therefore it was proposed to reserve certain areas as timber reserve as a form of holding tenure which would allow protection from all other forms of development but permit prospecting to continue. This, I might add, was for a particular area of potential mineral interest. Other substantial areas will be declared national park and the timber reserve converted to park in due course if this is found to be its best public use.

This brings me to the matter of the National Parks and Wildlife Service legislation generally. I hope to see consolidated legislation in the lifetime of this Parliament. Amongst other things that legislation will deal with types of reserves. Much thought has gone into the classification of reserves for nature conservation purposes at both the local and international level. IUCN—the International Union for the Conservation of Native and Natural Resources—has drawn up one such classification. I am sure my service will be examining these matters and will come up with a classification best suited to Queensland's present requirements, and no doubt included in that will be a form of holding tenure for areas with undoubted value for nature conservation but where the position concerning alternative land uses is not clear enough to make a final determination as to where public interest lies in the long term.

Several honourable members have referred to the proposals of the Honourable the Premier concerning the Great Dividing Range. This was reported in proper perspective in "The Australian" for Wednesday 7 May 1975, and the reporter quotes the Premier as saying—

> "I have drawn up a program which the director of the new National Parks and Wildlife Service and his staff will investigate and make recommendations on. The major proposals are—
>
> 'The preservation of the Great Dividing Range in Queensland' . . .".

and he went on to list other broad concepts. Clearly the Premier was giving the lead to his service as to some of the main areas of conservation that he desired to have afforded some priority. With respect to the Great Dividing Range, the Premier expects his director to consult with other Government departments and recommend how the range should be dealt with.

This does not imply that every kilometre of it should be national park—but that early attention should be given to ensuring that appropriate sections of it be so reserved, other sections be devoted to forestry activities, yet others to fauna sanctuaries over leasehold and so on—in short, that the proper use and preservation of the range be carefully planned and that this be given early attention.

I have made a number of comments on national parks matters raised by honourable members following my introductory speech, even though they are not strictly relevant to the Bill before the House. I have done this

because of the obvious interest of honourable members in the policy and administration of the new National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This Bill proposes an enlargement of the objectives of State forest management. The Conservator of Forests will still give priority to production forestry in management of State forests, but is authorised by this Bill to give due consideration to grazing, conservation and recreational values in management of State Forests. He is enabled to consider conservation values which are not satisfactorily catered for in national parks and other reserved lands in Queensland. He is enabled to consider aesthetic values in management. Most importantly, he is enabled to provide for outdoor recreation in natural surroundings and hence lessen the demand for this type of recreation on national parks. This should greatly facilitate the management of national parks by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to meet the cardinal objective: their preservation as far as possible in their natural state.

This Bill should promote continued fruitful co-operation between the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Conservator of Forests in management of lands for which they are responsible in the best overall interests of the people of Queensland.

At this second-reading stage, I again commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (7.37 p.m.): The Minister has given a very comprehensive answer to most of the matters raised by members who spoke at the introductory stage. However, what impressed itself upon me most in the Minister's speech was what he pointed out as the difference between the recreational facilities that are allowed in forestry areas and national parks. He went on to explain what a national park really was and how damage could be effected to national parks if certain sports were allowed within them.

He listed the various recreational pursuits that are permitted in national parks. He mentioned nature studies. Somebody asked me, "Does that mean you can have a nudist camp in a national park?" He said that to him that was a nature study. I don't know whether the Minister would allow a nudist camp in a national park.

Mr. Tomkins: I have seen some, but I don't allow them.

Mr. JENSEN: It does go on?

Opposition Members: Tell us where.

Mr. JENSEN: The Minister emphasised the difference between forest areas and national parks. That difference is most important. He explained why he will not allow trail-bikes in certain areas. With both motorbike-riding and trail-bike-riding there is a danger of forest fires.

We asked that certain areas be set aside in forestry areas for trail-bike-riding, because facilities are not available in most cities and towns throughout the State for that sport. Probably the only place available would be in a forest area. If forest areas not used for plantation purposes were made available for trail-bikes, no interference would be caused to timber production.

Of great importance was the Minister's indication that mining could not be carried out in national park areas. I know that shooting is not allowed. That is a recreation, but the Minister has said that it will be forbidden. It is not permitted in State forests, either, nor should it be permitted. Unless there is some very real reason for it, the Minister should not exercise his power to allow shooting in national parks or forest areas.

The Minister mentioned protection against the wrongful use of the words "national park". I know that one of the reasons for this Bill was to define the term "national park" and to ensure that the term would not be used haphazardly. It more or less set out, as the Minister said, what a national park was and that term is protected.

The Minister mentioned mining. One good point he made was—

> "Therefore in areas which are potentially so valuable for minerals that they are declared as gold or mineral field, it is appropriate that the Minister for Mines should have the right to object to the declaration . . ."

I think that he should have the right to object in certain circumstances. If that mineral wealth is important to this country, it should be looked at. Whether it is mined or not is another thing, but the potential of the mineral wealth should be known. We have other areas that could be set aside as national parks or forest areas.

Minerals today are pretty important in the wealth of this country. I do not believe that mining should be allowed in any national park, but the potential of what is there should be known and if it becomes necessary to have that mineral wealth for our well-being, we should have it. We should not say, "That is a national park and we cannot mine it." It depends on the economic situation at the time. I do not believe that something that could be a Kalgoorlie or a Coolgardie should be set aside with the Government saying, "You can't touch that. We know there's plenty of gold in there. We know the world is crying out for it but you cannot have it because it is in a national park or forest area." It must be looked at when the need arises. It need not be hidden away. The potential of this country should be checked. We have to protect future generations. Therefore the wealth of this land must be known. It is no good this Minister saying to the Minister for Mines, "You can't go in there. It's a national park. You can't prospect. You can't even look at it." I believe that an inspection should be allowed so that the Mines Department will know the potential and the value of the area. If the necessity

arises, that department should have the right to go in and mine. It would be a Government decision.

Mr. Ahern: You are at variance with your leader on this question.

Mr. JENSEN: I am not. If my leader were the Premier of this State and the potential was there and the necessity arose, he would have to make that decision. If it was uranium or anything else needed for this country to defend itself, we would have to take the initiative. That is what a Government is for. It is there for this country and its people, not for somebody overseas.

Mr. Houston: You wouldn't give it away for 5c a tonne?

Mr. JENSEN: No, I would not give it away or just hand it out to foreign countries. We must know the potential that is there and take advantage of it, not waste it or hand it out to foreign enterprise.

I believe that the consolidation of all of this legislation will be worth while, instead of coming into this Chamber with bits and pieces of Acts just to change the definition of "national park". I hope that the Act is consolidated in the life of this Parliament.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (7.44 p.m.): It is very good that the Bill contains a clarification of the two terms, "State forest" and "national park". Whilst we have that clarification, I must agree with the honourable member for Bundaberg that it is not made completely clear just by saying that we will now have areas defined specifically as national parks or State forests if we are unable easily to tell precisely which is which.

Because of the great interest that has been taken in this matter by many people in my electorate, I am very pleased about the provision of areas which can be made suitable for the use of trail-bikes and recreation vehicles and for other recreational activities. I hope that this will give the lead to local councils in the possibility of setting aside areas much closer to the urban environment than many State forests are, where young people will be able to use recreation vehicles away from the backyards of people and the neighbour right next door or the parklands that are being destroyed by these people. They should be special areas set aside by councils for people to use for recreational purposes. I have said almost "ad nauseam" that Governments and councils have to accept the responsibility of providing areas for the use of trail-bikes, mini-bikes and other vehicles that are becoming a popular form of recreation.

I am pleased to see that with this Bill Queensland is taking a lead in this area and I only hope that this will impress itself upon local government bodies, specifically the body that possesses the major power in Brisbane. Brisbane is a large city with a large population and many people who wish to use trail-bikes and mini-bikes for recreation find difficulty in doing so because they do not have the transport to take them 10, 15 or 20 miles to a place that may be set aside for their use in a State forest. All that they can do is push the vehicle for perhaps half a mile or even a shorter distance.

Mr. Houston: Don't you think that the companies marketing these bikes have some responsibility in this matter?

Mr. BYRNE: I do not know whether the companies marketing them have that specific responsibility. That would be like saying that if a company markets boats it should provide lakes on which the people can use them, or that companies that market motor-cars should also build roads; similarly, that bicycle makers should provide bicycle tracks. I do not think that that necessarily follows. I do agree, however, that there is a responsibility not only on governmental bodies but on commercial and community bodies to see that this recreational activity, which is increasing daily, has a place provided for it. It is no good giving a child an electric train set without rails, nor is there much point in having trail-bikes and mini-bikes unless there is somewhere that they can be used without infringing the rights of others. In other words, a child should not be restricted to driving around the house for three hours a day disturbing not only his own parents but those who live next door. There may be a shift-worker living nearby who needs to sleep during the day, and the noise created by these recreation vehicles is immense. I am sure there is not a member in the House who has not had complaints from constituents about the noise of these vehicles and the difficulties that they create.

This modern form of recreation vehicle is making problems in the community and they are problems that Governments, community and commercial bodies must recognise and endeavour to overcome.

Mr. Jensen: Bicycles are a more healthy type of vehicle. It is only the present state of wealth that allows people to buy the other vehicles.

Mr. BYRNE: Bicycles might be a much healthier form of transport. To take that argument further, one might say that it was a sad and sorry day when we changed from the horse and cart to the motor vehicle with the smog pollution that it has brought with it. The point made by the honourable member for Bundaberg is not completely relevant; it misses the crucial issue.

I applaud the provision of the Bill under which the Conservator of Forests is given power to have areas set aside under his management for not only sporting and recreational purposes but also for aesthetic purposes.

The Minister mentioned the payment of entrance fees to State forests or recreational and aesthetic areas. In Western Australia recently, while travelling up the coastline of that State through some of the very large and deep gorges that are beauty spots I noticed honour boxes at the gates on the roads leading into these areas. They have only one way in and one way out and at the entrance gate is a box with words to this effect: "This is an honour box. All contributions will be greatly appreciated and will go towards the maintenance and running of the parklands." Of course, I contributed to the fund because it was a very worthwhile project. I am sure that most people in Queensland would appreciate the importance and value of such areas and would also make similar contributions. In that way the necessity to pay someone to collect entrance fees is avoided and this responsibility becomes part of people's personal initiative. I recommend that as a suitable way of raising revenue for that purpose.

In conclusion, I once again applaud the Bill, especially on the far-sightedness of the clause relating to the provision of areas for recreational purposes and also the broadening and clarifying of the points raised in relation to State forests and national parks.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (7.50 p.m.): Initially, I would like to thank the Minister for commenting on some of the points I raised at the introductory stage. I was very concerned about the use of the words "national park" in relation to the Cape Palmerston National Park and I wanted to be sure that the type of activity carried on by the developers could never be repeated. I am very glad of his assurance here this evening that the provisions of this Bill will prevent this happening in the future. I would suggest to the Minister that, if ever the occasion does arise and others use the name "national park" to sell land and defraud people throughout the State of their hard-earned savings, he hit them very hard indeed by using the punitive powers of the Act.

I was also very interested to hear the Minister's comments on the paying of a fee to enter a national park. Further to what the honourable member for Belmont has just said on this point, I think there are national parks where our National Parks and Wildlife Service should deliberately place rangers and charge a fee for people on guided or conducted tours through those areas. Certainly we do not have many places in Queensland such as the Jenolan Caves in New South Wales, but this practice has been carried on very sucessfully there for a number of years. And but for these properly conducted tours in that and other areas by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, many of the natural beauty spots of that State would have been destroyed over a period.

If we must have people employed in these areas and the State cannot meet the cost, until such time as it can do so there is no harm in this practice of charging an entrance fee. Of course, it becomes a bit difficult in some of our national park areas. During the introductory stage I referred to the Whitsunday Islands area, perhaps one of the most beautiful national park areas in the world. That area contains a number of walking tracks which are very good indeed. The Minister commented on this in relation to another national park. These facilities have been available for a number of years now and I do not see that there should be any charge in such circumstances. I think this is a very worth-while service indeed to the public of this State. Localities such as these should in fact be open, free and available to the public at all times. I want to make a clear distinction between national park areas and the cave system which I mentioned earlier and which is something entirely different again.

During the introductory debate I mentioned complaints I had previously raised with the Minister, and I will not go into them again. But there is one problem in the Whitsunday Islands area which the National Parks and Wildlife Service definitely must have a very hard look at, and that is the condition of the boats used by the service. They must be kept in good order and condition. At one stage last year the boat used by the forestry rangers in the Whitsunday Islands area to get over to and around the national park was out of commission for something like four or five months waiting on a simple part to be sent from Brisbane through the complicated system that the department apparently has.

It was rather funny that one of the fellows who were rorting people by putting them on an uninhabited island in the national park was prepared to make his boating service available to the forestry rangers so they could get out to the islands and see what was going on. Of course, if they were doing anything contrary to the provisions of their permit to camp in the national park, they were well forewarned that the national park ranger would be arriving because he would be travelling into the area in this fellow's boat.

The Minister should take a very hard look indeed at this problem. That boat must be available at all times, and it must be able to get out fairly quickly. Weather does not make a great deal of difference, because one can cross the Whitsunday Passage to Whitsunday Island, Hook, Henning and Dent Islands and many more virtually at any time in reasonably safe and sheltered waters, other than when a cyclone is about. A big boat is not required; the smaller boat that is there now is adequate, but it must be maintained in a serviceable condition at all times.

At this stage I wish to raise a couple of other points. They relate to a new principle embodied in the Bill under the heading "Cardinal principle of management

of State Forests". It sets definite and distinctive guidelines for the management of State forests in Queensland, and I intend to comment on some of the criticism of the management of State forests.

The first criticism relates to the preservation or retention of flora in some State forests and the perpetuation of its beauty. I appreciate that most of the provisions of the Bill on the management of flora in the forests are designed to give people a greater opportunity of admiring the beauty of State forests and the flora and fauna therein. However, as with other aspects of nature, there must be an opportunity for people to learn about them, have things explained to them and become educated. I have found over the years—and this applies to a tremendous number of things in the community—that this is best done by voluntary groups in the community.

For example, the groups who know most about the preservation of wildlife and the marine biology of the Barrier Reef are members of shell clubs throughout Queensland and those engaged in the collection of shells. In fact, in some instances they know more about shells than many marine biologists do, and they certainly are the people to whom one should go if one wants to become educated on that subject. They collect shells in the proper manner. In the same way, if one wanted to learn about flowers, one would go to a horticulturist.

In Queensland there are several organisations classified as native orchid groups, and in the rainforest areas of the State there are some of the most beautiful native orchids in the world. In my own electorate, in the Eungella Range area, which is one of the best national parks on the mainland in Queensland, there is a variety of orchid which I think is called Schneideral Major. It is one of the most beautiful orchids one could see and it is found only in that area.

Under the existing provisions, native orchid groups are permitted to collect under licence. However, they are subject to certain conditions, and they are very awkward conditions indeed. For example, they cannot collect on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays. Most of the people in these groups are ordinary employees in the community who live perhaps 40 to 50 miles away from a State forest in which they can make collections.

Certainly a number of beautiful orchids are retained in their native state in national parks. Not everyone can go to national parks at regular intervals and have a look at them, and in many respects the native orchid groups perform something of a community service. Through its State forests management scheme, the department did permit orchids to be collected by the cutters. But again the cutters were on the job only during week days. By the time the native orchid collectors could go and see them at the week-end and make collections under their licenses, the orchids would be dead. The cutters were not members of the clubs or registered groups who knew how to look after the orchids and preserve them.

In my opinion, in the management of State forests, some system should be devised under which clubs can be registered or individual members of clubs can be licensed to enable them to collect orchids lawfully. The club itself will then impose the necessary restrictions on its members. If the rules of the club are properly drawn and the clubs are properly conducted and a proper licensing system is enforced by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, control can be exercised. In my own area the members of one such club are very keen on this. There is no commercialisation of any sort, and that is how it should be. They provide additional samples for community purposes. For example, a number of our native orchids are now being displayed in parks in the Mackay area as well as in other public places. The natural beauty of the area is put on public display.

I think that you, Mr. Speaker, will recall the beauty of the Kuranda Railway Station. It was the pride and joy of the whole of the State. Many native orchids and plants from the North Queensland rainforest area were placed on display at the station, and tourists who travelled from Cairns were amazed at the natural beauty of the plants. It is a pity that over the years the display has been allowed to decline. If you will allow me to digress for a moment, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Minister to look closely at this aspect and to encourage the display of our natural flora in State Government buildings as well as in other public places.

Nowadays there is a trend towards the planting of native plants. Whereas until a few years ago people used to plant imported species in their yards, they are now growing native plants such as the bottle brush. The people in the suburbs are now planting more native flora. If this is not done, many of our native plants will disappear, because unfortunately some species are peculiar only to very small forest areas.

On the management side, I turn now to the cutting of timber in State forest areas. They are set aside from national parks to ensure that sufficient timber is made available to industry, particularly the home-building industry. In some State forests the trees are relatively small and they are selected and marked for cutting by Forestry Department officers. As we know, much of the good timber was taken out years ago with the result that only small trees remain in forest areas. Cutters experience difficulties in instances where trees are cut and are held in place by surrounding trees. A tree that is held up in that way constitutes a danger to cutters unless it is snigged away from the stump.

The Forestry Department imposes a peculiar rule that a log cannot be snigged

until such time as it has been inspected by the forestry ranger and Crown branded in accordance with the principles of management of State forests. This means that the cutters incur considerable additional expense, which eventually is passed on to home buyers. The Minister should look at this matter very closely. On many occasions the bulldozer that does the snigging is working in an area other than that in which the cutters are at work, so it becomes necessary for the cutters to go and get the bulldozer to come and snig the log. But if the inspector is not present this is not allowed. The present system provides for the marking of saleable timber at the stump. It is checked again at a later stage at the ramp, and it can even be checked in the mill.

We should follow the New South Wales practice whereby snigging can be carried out on the spot with complete safety for the cutters. For three to four months of the year, because of weather conditions, they are unable to work, but in the eight to nine months remaining they work very hard to earn enough for the whole of the year. It would be an advantage if we adopted a different method of State forest management, perhaps one fairly similar to that followed in New South Wales where crowning can be done at the loading ramp or the mill when the log is taken in. A final measurement is always taken after a log is cut, even when a marked tree is involved, because the department tries to ensure that it is paid full royalty on the size of the log worked on a super ft. basis.

In most places where State forests are being worked, the timber jinkers carting the logs go out past the forestry camp in the area. They could be checked there.

I should like the Minister to look closely at the two points I have raised. I presume that further regulations will flow from the new provisions on management of our State forests, and when that is done I should like special consideration to be given to the two points I have raised.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (8.7 p.m.): When I consider some of the terminology used in this debate, I wonder whether we are playing too much with words and whether time will prove that we have been too smart for our own good. Today too many terms are being used. I appreciate the Bill and the thought behind it. I realise an attempt is being made to make clear what we think should be a national park, but I am surprised and disappointed that the Minister should say in his second-reading speech that we were departing from the international definition of a national park. At a later stage he said that a requirement had been drafted, that finally we tried to get somewhere close to it but we were not complying exactly with the decision.

My reason for asking whether we are playing too much with words and terms stems from my reading of the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he referred to State forests, national parks, environmental parks, wilderness parks, forest parks, scientific areas, research areas, soil reference areas, geological monuments and natural communities. Sooner or later we should decide on one simple title that people can understand. By using so many different names we could well be accused of pulling the wool over people's eyes, of doing this so that we will be able to say of a particular area, "That is not really a national park."

Our definition is quite good although it does not measure up to the international standard. It says that it is a relatively large area set aside for its features of predominantly unspoilt natural landscape, flora and fauna, permanently dedicated for public enjoyment, education and inspiration, and protected from all interference other than essential management practices so that its natural attributes are preserved. Firstly, that proves straight away that the Liberal Party has been lying in the Brisbane City Council campaign. The Minister said quite clearly in his second-reading speech that the national park that was advertised so widely by the Liberal Party for Mt. Coot-tha and Mt. Nebo is not a national park at all. According to the Minister's definition, the State Cabinet report that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" in February 1974 in these terms—

> "State Cabinet yesterday accepted an interim report on a proposal to create a national and recreational park from Mt. Coot-tha to Mt. Nebo."—

was also misleading. The Minister stated, in his speech—

> "I would like to emphasise to honourable members that the concept here is not a national park"——

The Minister was talking of the proposal put forward in the House by two Liberal members in the introductory stage. He then said—

> " . . . not a national park as defined by the Forestry Act of 1959–1975. . . . Mt. Nebo park occupies a different position in the broad range of park types, than a national park."

That story we have been reading in the Press about the great national park to be built at Mt. Nebo is not really true. Now we are told it is going to be the D'Aguilar forest park. I am not certain what a forest park is. The Bill does not seem to define it.

Mr. Tomkins: It is not there.

Mr. BURNS: So what we have now is another new term, the meaning of which is known to no-one. This Bill provides that the term "national park", except as defined in this Act, cannot be used in any advertisement; that will be against the law. I will be able to talk about forest parks; I will be able to talk about reference areas; I will be able to talk about wilderness areas, and I will be

able to use all these other terms used by the Minister in his speech. But there will be no definitions laid down for those and no legal sanction against their use. Until the Act is consolidated—that has now been promised in the lifetime of this Parliament; last year it was promised this year——

Mr. Tomkins: No.

Mr. BURNS: It wasn't last year?

Mr. Tomkins: No.

Mr. BURNS: We will accept the Minister's intimation. The point is that, unless we really define where we are going, stop fooling around with all these different terms and set down very clearly what we mean, people will eventually say that we are only playing with words and that we are not fair dinkum in our approach to national parks. People want to know what will be conserved, how we are going to conserve it and how we go about setting it aside. How do we go to the Minister to say, "We want this area conserved."? What sort of criteria do we have to measure up to? They are the things people want to know. They want to be able to do it very clearly and very concisely.

I thank the Minister for his very clear explanation about mining. It is the first clear explanation we have had about mining in national parks. I accept the idea of basic land-use studies to lay down our future plan. However, while I am on that subject, I express concern at the statement about Agnes Waters, which appeared in the paper on 14 March 1976 under the heading—"Bushland study by sandminer". It reads—

> "A sandmining company has started an environment impact study of lease areas covering much of a proposed national park near Agnes Waters in central Queensland, 130 kilometres north of Bundaberg.
>
> "The company, Mineral Deposits Ltd., was awarded leases last month covering 500 hectares, stretching 12 kilometres south of Agnes Waters.
>
> "The environment impact study on the new lease areas located close to the southern edge of the existing leases was ordered by the Mines Minister (Mr. Camm)."

I would have thought it should have been this Minister's responsibility to order a study, because the article goes on to say—

> "The areas intrude into much of a region of natural vegetation called Deep Water Holding.
>
> "The National Parks and Wildlife Service have a long standing proposal for Deep Water Holding to be declared a national park."

Under these circumstances, until a definition is written into this Act, the Minister for Mines and the mining company will still make a determination first.

I believe in land-use studies. I believe the person in charge of the State's over-all planning concepts—the Co-ordinator-General, I suppose—ought to be ordering a study of the area and determining what is there and available—the natural resources, the research areas, the types of timber, the flora and fauna and the type of minerals. Having discovered that, we should then make a determination about whether to use the area for mining or for national park.

Under the proposals in the second-reading speech and those that have been gradually coming out of the mincer of the Government's P.R. machine over a period of time, we are not too sure exactly what is going to be finally saved, because a little bit will be put aside as a timber reserve; other little bits will be put aside in case we need to mine them later, and still further areas of the national park itself will be set aside as recreational areas. What really ends up being a national park and—what was it that the Minister called the area that was not going to be managed?

Mrs. Kyburz: A recreation reserve.

Mr. BURNS: That is the non-managed area.

Mr. Tomkins: Forest park.

Mr. BURNS: The confusion in the minds of Government members comes out very clearly. I have read the Minister's speech and followed it through. The honourable member for Salisbury says "recreation reserve" and the Minister says "forest park". We are debating a Bill to clear up the definition of "national park"; yet three of us in the House have three different versions of the proposal.

Mr. Jensen: Ask him again.

Mr. BURNS: If we asked the Minister again, we would probably get another answer.

The point is that it ought to be cleared up. I do not believe that the sort of piecemeal activities we have had for some time under the Forestry Act will be cleared up until we have completely new legislation before the House dealing with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The sooner the Minister can bring that forward, the more satisfied we will all be, I am sure.

I should like the Minister to explain why the definition is very similar to those adopted internationally by enlightened national parks administrations and where the difference is. What is the difference between the definition in this Bill and the definition of enlightened national parks administrations internationally?

Mr. Tomkins: I think we can make up our own minds on what we want in Queensland.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, but we ought to know what the other people have said. The Minister referred to it. He said that the definition is

very similar to that adopted internationally by enlightened international parks administrations. He should be able to outline the difference between the two and explain the different need in Queensland. I accept that there might be one.

I should also like an explanation of the idea that no more than 160 ha of any national park or one half of the area, whichever is the lesser, may be managed as a recreational area. When we are discussing a national park, 160 ha does not seem to be a very large area.

In the Minister's speech I notice another idea the Government has backed away from. We now find that the Premier did not mean all of the Great Dividing Range. He meant some of the Great Dividing Range and 160 ha out of the area it now covers will not be unreasonable.

I accept the Minister's explanation and am pleased that it has been given in relation to pine forests, hardwood areas and trail-bikes. It is one of the areas that we must move upon very quickly. The other day there was a terrible accident because somebody strung a wire across a path at such a height that it almost decapitated a young lad who was riding his bike. I do not know the type of area it was. But we have reached the stage where people will not put up with this noise. Hundreds of these bikes are being sold and finally it is left to us to provide areas in which these bikes can be used. The sooner we start using some of our forestry and hardwood areas for trail-bike-riding, the better, and the sooner the noise control legislation is introduced the better. If we do not tackle these problems quickly, we will have further trouble like that terrible act the other day.

Another problem raised by the Minister or another honourable member was the erosion caused by and the pollution emitted from these bikes. I imagine that is one matter on which the Minister's forestry officers can advise him. Like every other honourable member, I would appreciate the earliest possible assistance. I think that the Minister said he would establish a committee to report back to us on horse-riding, trail-bike-riding and mini-bike-riding areas. The sooner we can have the findings of that committee and its recommendations and the sooner we implement some of its findings and give these lads an area in which to ride their bikes and give the people in the city a bit of peace and quiet, the better. I wonder why the Minister has to admit that we will not be able to do it all and, in many ways, that we will have to leave it up to others.

I wonder also at the lack of action after the admission about national park areas where we are having trouble already. We are going to control trail-bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles in national park areas.

Again I make a plea for Moreton Island to be declared a national park. This is one of the problems I face in accepting the Minister's proposals on mining. It seems to me that the right way to do it is to look at the island, decide that it is of value to our city and say that that island and that land are of certain value. Then we weigh up the value as a recreation area as against a sand-mining area and decide that the people need it as a recreation area, and we declare it a national park.

The current way of doing it seems to be to grant mining leases over the area and what the miners do not want we can have as a national park. It always strikes me as strange and completely irresponsible to have a national park on Moreton Island—a great bay island—in close proximity to the greatest proportion of the people in Queensland and find that the park does not reach the water, that visitors have to walk through a mining or development lease to get to the park. On Moreton Island, the four-wheel-drive vehicles can go up and down over the sand, but the Minister says they will be controlled in national parks. That section of his speech is not relevant as the land is not in a national park. Therefore it is not in the area that could be protected under this section of the Bill.

I make the point again that it is time we reduced the number of classifications and definitions so that we can get the situation clearly in our minds. There is no definition of a forest park. I should like to know the Minister's definition of a wilderness park, a forest park, a scientific area, a research area, a soil reference area, a geological monument and a natural community. Can he give us some examples of such areas? Almost everybody living in the city today is subject to more and more pressure and more and more noise and there is an increasing desire to get away from it all. People want recreational areas on their doorstep and there will be a growing demand on us to provide them. Nor are such areas wanted only for recreation and outdoor sport. We need areas of quiet bushland where we can walk in peace with our neighbours and friends, look at the birds and trees that were there 100 years ago and say to our children, "This is what it used to be like before the big developer came in with his bulldozer."

Mr. SIMPSON (Cooroora) (8.22 p.m.): It is interesting to see the Leader of the Opposition bushed. No doubt he likes being bushed at times, for reasons other than those involved in describing areas that will be reserved in forests for other than forestry use.

Making areas available for the use of recreation vehicles is, I believe, very necessary so that young people have an outlet for their energies and can follow a recreation that will keep them occupied and possibly prevent delinquency or damage to other people's property. National parks are not the place for this activity and I think we have to look to forestry areas.

I also notice reference to the benefits of permitting grazing in the area. Although we must take note of the grazing aspect because it is necessary for forestry culture that some grazing take place at times, I see a problem here. With the beef industry at its present low ebb, many people with grazing leases are waiting for better times. They are facing many difficulties one of which is shire rates. They have many restrictions imposed on them in such areas, apart from fencing requirements and the need to avoid overstocking. Even the type of stock is strictly controlled. In other words, they have to specify whether it is a dairying grazing lease or a beef grazing lease. In addition, they must control tick infestation on their animals; they must pay in advance, and they must see that no damage is done to trees. If any damage is done, they are liable for it. All of these considerations make grazing leases very much in favour of forestry. That in fact is the prime use of such areas. People on this land at present have to meet very considerable expense, which includes the added cost of shire rates. How a person argues from the grazing point of view that the value is too great when in fact he is not the one on which the valuation is imposed, I do not know.

The Minister broadened his remarks to include national parks and he referred to imposing a charge to enter them. On a recent tour of New South Wales, including Mt. Kosciusko, we found that the park entrance charge had been increased to $1.40 a head. Although there was some unfavourable comment and some people turned away when it was first introduced, the majority accepted it.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. SIMPSON: Yes, I think there should be a charge where a service is provided and the public are catered for with barbecues, seating facilities, some form of shelter and that type of thing to a standard found in national parks in other countries and in other States. When we reach that stage, if we do charge people they will pay more respect to the facilities provided.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. SIMPSON: I think there should be a special rate for families so that the entrance fee is not too great an imposition. Another possibility where a national park is located so that it can be visited many times in a year by the same people is that we charge an annual fee. We could work towards the issuing of an Australia-wide pass, if you like, issued in one State but allowing people to enter parks in every other State.

Mr. Byrne: What do you think of the idea of the honour box, not having to pay someone to collect the money?

Mr. SIMPSON: I think it is a bit messy. I think the standards of national parks have to be raised to the point where people think they are getting some value for their entrance fee, which can then be put towards the cost of running the park. The entrances to some national parks in New South Wales are manned only from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. They try to get a fee from the majority of people and this in general terms covers about two-thirds of the cost of running the park.

Mr. Burns: You reach the stage where nothing will be free.

Mr. SIMPSON: Yes, but there are a number of people who think that those who use the services should pay for them.

Mr. Burns: You said they have to pay for them.

Mr. SIMPSON: In certain circumstances. I think each case must be looked at on its merits. The Minister made the point that in general terms roads in national parks should run only around the perimeter. This would present difficulties in the Simpson Desert and in some of our other more remote national parks, because if one wanted to get to the waterhole at the other end of the park one would be worn out getting there. I think there is some logic in preserving parts of parks in their natural state by not giving people ready access to them, and I think the easiest way is not to build roads to those areas. People should be allowed only to walk to such areas. The whole question of the use and availability of national parks needs to be looked at from the point of view of the preservation of the park so that it can in fact be used for the benefit of the community, and I think that is the important thing.

Certain areas of forests have been set aside for different purposes. In certain forest areas there might be small deposits of peculiar soil types or certain types of flora and fauna which have been discovered since the area was first declared and planted. These areas are left in such a state that the animals and birds can persist. In other cases a record is taken of exactly what is growing in those areas so in fact there is a datum point which can be referred to so that in the future a check can be made to see whether the artificially altered ecology has in fact changed the natural ecology of the area. In those areas in which the ecology has been altered, this does not detract from the general public enjoyment of the area. I commend the Minister on the introduction of the Bill.

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (8.30 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to take part in the second-reading debate on this Bill, not only because it is an important measure—of course, it is only a stop-gap measure or an indication of what will come in the future—but also because I particularly wish to support the Minister as he has supported me.

The Leader of the Opposition made a pun on the word "park". He said that the Liberal Party and its team for the city council

election had been playing with the word "park". I must inform him that the present Brisbane City Council is doing precisely the same thing. The administration of the council is so corrupt that it has made much of the fact that it has given parkland to the people. Does not the land belong to the people? How dare the aldermen give land to football and soccer clubs, allow them to fence it and then apply for a Government subsidy, thus taking land away from the people! Therefore, I accuse the Leader of the Opposition, as is my duty, of indeed playing with the word "parkland" for his own purposes.

I must admit that I agree with some parts of the honourable member's speech. In common with many other members of this Assembly, I am concerned about the Mines Department's administration of certain areas of land and the fact that it does seem to have priority in land usage. Of course, this is a philosophy of the use of industrial land, and it is not one that I think we are going to change quickly. That saddens me greatly. While the population at large makes such big demands on Government, the Government is duty bound to meet some of these demands. The only way it can do that is with money, and minerals bring money. It is as simple as that.

I am particularly concerned that local councils should provide areas for the use of trail-bikes and mini-bikes and that these areas should be as far as possible from centres of population. Sometimes I think we pander too much to the population. Just because, at the age of 11 or 12, a pampered boy is given a mini-bike, is he then entitled to annoy the people around him—in fact, to annoy the whole of the suburb in which he lives—by riding the wretched, monstrous machine up and down the street? In fact, I think we are giving people too much power, and I presume that the Bill will force councils to provide land for use by riders of trail-bikes and mini-bikes. Land on the site of a rubbish dump would be very suitable. That is where mini-bikes should be.

I was very pleased to see that a committee is to be set up by the Government to examine the availability of land for purposes of recreation and to consider ways and means of providing suitable land. I hope that the Minister will consider the availability of land in Brisbane. As I have said previously, there has been a 66 per cent alienation of public land in Brisbane for various reasons. Honourable members have seen a multitudinous array of buildings plonked onto what was previously public land. In fact, there has been such an alienation of public land that people simply do not consider that Brisbane has parks any more.

In addition, the Botanic Gardens were once a very beautiful area. They were used by both city and country people, and I am sure that many members representing country electorates have visited the Botanic Gardens when in Brisbane. What has happened under the Labor administration in the Brisbane City Council? Motor-cars are now allowed in the Botanic Gardens. What other city administration in the world allows motor-cars to travel through botanic gardens? Not only that; there are parking metres in the Botanic Gardens! What an anachronistic attitude! What a disgusting alienation of public parkland! It was once a beautiful park area, but now the Q.I.T. has crept into it. I know the Leader of the Opposition will say that the Labor Party is not to blame for that. Don't point the finger at me; I'm not in Cabinet, and I don't want the Botanic Gardens made available for car parking.

I am gravely concerned about the Botanic Gardens. In fact last week I was over there and noticed what looks like a beautiful toilet block being plonked on this side of the gardens where there once stood an old fig tree. Perhaps I should not pose the rhetorical question: which do we prefer—an old fig tree or some public toilets? However, I suggest to the Minister that we should look at the governing of the Botanic Gardens, because it is a very important issue.

I am particularly concerned at the Minister's comment that national parks are permanently dedicated for public enjoyment, education and inspiration, and that they should be protected free from all interference other than essential management practices. My concern here is for the State forests, where the range of fauna is not as wide as some foresters would lead us to believe. The areas are very dark; they are not happy areas. It is not a happy ecosystem with a great variety of fauna. As for the comment that my dearly beloved kangaroo would be happy to live there—I will say one thing: "Ha, ha!" If I were a kangaroo, I would not live in a State forest.

The argument relative to natural bushland and State forest is a wide-ranging one, and I do not wish to enter into it now as I feel that the Department of Forestry has the necessary expertise to perpetuate and carry on that argument. Even though we might rue decisions that it makes, it is the department that possesses the necessary expertise.

The Minister also stated that reference to recreation in the Bill applies to State forests and not to national parks. That is an excellent emphasis, because it does seem to have been a bone of contention. He added that forest recreational facilities will generally be made available. I know that he is stating, in effect, "Look-outs and picnic spots will be made available in State forests." I would ask the Minister to arrange for notification to be given to the public of these beauty spots so that the people will know where the look-outs are in the State forests to the north of Brisbane. With the

Minister I visited these look-outs—they are beautiful areas—but I am sure that a lot of people in Brisbane have not been there.

I would also urge the Minister and his department to conduct through the schools an education programme on the usage of these beauty spots. He could even go to the extent of putting up at the spot a sign that emphatically lays down the law on the way in which a beauty spot is to be used. People are people. Just as there are the elitist carry-your-litter-away members of our society, there are the pigs in our society who will throw their litter away. We have to try to educate them, firstly by erecting signs and secondly by educating the children.

Another matter I bring to the Minister's attention is the fact that shooting as a recreational activity is not permitted in State forests. Thank God for that! Need I say more? The smaller the area in which we permit shooting, the greater hope our wildlife has of surviving. And it has enough to contend with now. As I have said before, people are people. Forests are managed as fauna sanctuaries. This is wonderful in that it gives us a little bit of hope. Recreational shooting is absolutely incompatible with this concept. I take umbrage at the Minister's statement—I know that probably he himself did not write it—that shooting is a recreational activity. Shooting animals is not a recreational activity and it never will be. Shooting wildlife is a so-called sport for people who have nothing better to do and are so filled with aggressive traits against society that they need to take a gun and stamp out in the bush.

I am concerned particularly that, in a fauna sanctuary, we should permit as little noise as possible. If we allow trail-bike-riding in State forests, how will the few animals that live there survive? As human beings, we are concerned continually about noise and noise pollution. We have to consider the fauna in our State forests; I am very concerned about their welfare also.

I ask the Minister to investigate the possibility of starting a junior rangers scheme for national park development and education. The Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty has a junior membership scheme. Under that scheme children at school are taught what happens within society and how to prevent cruelty to animals. A junior rangers scheme has been instituted in New South Wales. In schools the children are told how to conserve animals, how to help sick and wounded animals in the bush, not to trap animals and not to shoot them unless it is absolutely necessary. I urge the Minister to look into a similar scheme for Queensland because something must be done to educate our young people.

The idea of consolidating legislation is particularly good. I hope that it comes about during the life of this Parliament.

I bring to the Minister's attention the much mooted Kooralbyn development, which is very pertinent to the Bill. Although the developer of this land has not actually used the words "national park", the terminology of the advertisement has been so cleverly worded that it has hedged right around it. The promises of this heavenly haven are, "Permanent preserved environment". How can an environment be preserved when it is nothing but land development? It is also to be a "Flora and fauna sanctuary". What high-falutin words for just another land development! If it does take off, it might very well be beautiful. Far be it from me to denigrate what perhaps could work. It is very unfair that a land developer should use the terms, "Permanent preserved environment" and "Flora and fauna sanctuary". Where there are people it is most difficult to provide for these two things.

I am concerned particularly about the amendment to section 34 of the Act, to be found in clause 8 of the Bill, in these terms—

> "Exempt by order under his hand a State Forest or any part or parts of a State Forest from the getting of forest products therein with a view to the retention of the area exempted in the natural state".

Does this give hope to the people who are battling quietly and incessantly against the introduction of the wood-chip industry to Queensland? Conservationists are losing the battle in New South Wales. When I spoke to some foresters, they agreed that the bark from the slash pine which lies on the ground could very well be used for the wood-chip industry as could some of the waste residue from timber factories. We must be very careful about our State forests. If the Conservator of Forests has power to exempt certain areas from any use other than that which he decides, does that mean that he can exempt for all time, if it is written into the Bill, wood-chip-getting from State forests? We can legislate to control what occurs in State forests but we cannot legislate to cover what occurs on private land.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (8.45 p.m.), in reply: I would like to thank all members for their ready acceptance of this very simple Bill, which was meant only to tidy up a few odds and ends between the Forestry Department and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. There is no doubt about it; it has drawn quite a variety of comment tonight, most of which is reasonably easy to answer. I shall deal with some of the comments in turn.

The honourable member for Bundaberg inquired about nudists in national parks. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is concerned to know how to act towards nudists frequenting Granite Bay in the Noosa National Park. Perhaps the honourable member would care to inspect the problem and give the service the benefit of his views on it.

Mr. Burns: Will you pay his way?

Mr. TOMKINS: We will go into that later. It is very easy to put up simple problems, but I would like to see what his simple answer is.

The other matter he dealt with—and practically every speaker has in some way—was the matter of trail-bikes. The first meeting of the interdepartmental committee to deal with the availability and provision of recreation areas was held yesterday under the chairmanship of Mr. Cedric Johnson from the departments of the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport. A couple of departments are involved. The committee is investigating the whole matter. All sorts of areas are affected—not only our department, but also Main Roads, local authorities and many others. As a matter of priority, in the first place the committee has decided to consult the trail-bike and scramble-bike clubs about their specific requirements in regard to the type and area of land necessary for that recreational pursuit. As a contribution to the work of that committee, an assessment will be made using the field officer resources of the Department of Lands and Forestry.

Mr. Burns: A lot of young people are not in any of those clubs. I think you ought to try to make it a bit wider than that by making a public statement calling on people to make submissions. That might help.

Mr. TOMKINS: It is not really my prerogative. The committee has been set up under the departments of the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport. It is that Minister's responsibility, and I am sure that the matter will be adequately dealt with.

The matter of trail-bikes has been raised elsewhere. I may have said it once before in the House, but on a recent visit to Canberra I noticed that an area of forestry land has been set aside exclusively for trail-bikes. People who want to take advantage of it have to take their bikes to the park and ride them there—and there only. That is for slow-moving trail-bikes. That is the way the problem is being handled in Canberra.

The honourable member for Belmont, too, raised the matter of trail-bikes. I believe that the answer I have given would convince him that we are dealing with the matter. He made suggestions about entrance fees. The honourable member for Mackay supported the principle of charging in certain circumstances. That will be investigated. I believe we could charge in circumstances where we offer some considerable service in a particular park. That is what is done in southern States, and I believe the time will come when we have to give consideration to it. However, I do not think that as a broad principle we will charge under all circumstances. It is a matter of whether in a particular park we believe it is really necessary.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to charging in national parks. At Chillagoe, where parties are conducted through the caves by Wildlife Service guides, it is likely that fees will eventually be charged, for that is a case where service is given. Although at the present time there is no charge, we are presently considering the matter. Elsewhere it becomes doubtful whether the amount collected in fees would cover the cost of collection. Most visits are made at the week-ends, when overtime would have to be paid to staff. That is where the problem is encountered. I am sure honourable members agree that it should depend entirely upon the circumstances of each case.

The Leader of the Opposition inquired about various tenures. It is quite easy to define the various tenures. We have national parks, forestry areas and so on. In view of the number of members who have spoken tonight about what these areas represent, I think that in due course the National Parks and Wildlife Service might conduct a seminar on this matter and invite people to come along and learn what is required. I do not say that facetiously. The longer I am in this portfolio, the more I realise how much people are interested in this sort of thing. But there are reasons for it all.

The specific question the Leader of the Opposition asked me was how the Queensland definition differed from the internationally accepted definition of a national park. The international definition has the additional requirements that a national park must be freely available for public visitation and must be administered by the highest competent authority in the State. I do not know whether we are the highest competent authority. That is about the only difference.

The honourable member referred to forest parks. I mentioned forest parks because that term has been used freely in connection with the Mt. Nebo-Mt. Glorious concept. The reason it is mentioned is that it is not covered under our Act. We envisage introducing special legislation to cover that so that we would have national parks, State forests and Brisbane City Council freehold land in an area that could be termed a forest park. We would set up legislation so that it could be managed as such.

The Forestry Department does not mind forestry land being made available for this purpose. The Forestry Department has two activities: the first is to take timber and the second is to look after recreation. All it would be doing would be vacating the recreation field, and the very small amount of timber that is taken would make little difference to the enjoyment of those areas. "Forest park" is purely a name to cover the situation out there.

Mr. Burns: Earlier this year you announced it as a national park.

Mr. TOMKINS: No, not really.

Mr. Burns: I have the Press cuttings.

Mr. TOMKINS: That I said it was a national park? There is very little national park in the whole concept. It is nearly all State forest and a considerable area of Brisbane City Council freehold land. The idea is to try to put a line around the whole area and to use it for ever as recreation area. It is a good scheme. As I have said before, I should like to see the A.L.P. adopt a more co-operative attitude in this matter. As legislators, we owe something to the people who live in a city like Brisbane and should provide something by way of recreational facilities.

Over the week-end I took the opportunity to interest some Brisbane City Council members in this project because people standing for election should be educated. In that area there are some very nice recreation set-ups at present. If we can become a little bit determined, an authority so established would qualify for funds from State and Federal sources and, I would imagine, assuredly so from the Brisbane City Council. Tonight I am speaking in a non-political sense. I should like to see the Opposition more co-operative about this project for the benefit of future generations.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about Moreton Island. An investigation is being conducted there and I think that is fair enough. He also mentioned mining rights. It is a question of how these matters are determined. I think the procedure in Queensland is fair enough. For example, if a parcel of land is falling due near Eurimbulah in the Wallum belt, where considerable moves are being made for national park declarations, it is only right that the Lands Department, if it wants to do it, should consult the Mines Department to see if it has any requirements. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is consulted and if it says that it would make a good national park it becomes not a tug of war, but a question of land use between the two. I think that that is fair enough.

Mr. Burns: What about land-use studies? We do not have any land-use studies on Moreton Island; only environmental impact studies.

Mr. TOMKINS: I am talking about the way we declare national parks.

In fairness to the Mines Department, it must be said that it does give up areas in which there are mining requirements. Mining is an industry that contributes very much to this State and it has to be treated in the same context as any other activity. After all, people have varying interests. There are many who are extremely interested in a very good job of mining and they, like those who are interested in national parks and wildlife, have every right to be considered in land-usage matters.

I repeat that I think the multitude of tenures is necessary. If any had to be removed, I think that one would be national park. State forest is a very good tenure to administer. By legislation people can be excluded or allowed entry.

Mr. Burns: You can do the same with national parks.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is not so. Persons have the right to enter a national park in the daytime. They cannot be stopped. The forest park is a separate set-up altogether which would have to be introduced by means of legislation to cover the variety of tenures there. I hope that I have made the position clear.

The other matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition was the question of 160 hectares. That is close to 400 acres, which is a fairly substantial area in a national park to call a managed section. Some national parks run into hundreds of square miles.

Mr. Burns: If it says 160 hectares or half?

Mr. TOMKINS: That could happen, too, but, generally speaking, national parks are not declared over very small areas. It depends entirely on the area. I want to make the point that even if it was half 160 hectares, it is still a substantial area. The camping area in the Carnarvon National Park would, I imagine, be no more than 30 or 40 acres, yet it is a substantial area in which thousands of people can find plenty of recreation and plenty of means of gaining access to the national park.

I believe I have covered most of the points mentioned. I should like to comment on one point raised by the honourable member for Salisbury. She spoke about junior rangers. I should like to inform her that the junior ranger programme has already been started. It was run at Lamington during the last Christmas vacation. It proved popular and it will be continued next Easter.

I should also like to thank her for her interest in conservation generally. Recently I had the experience of being involved at Evans Road Reserve. She acted with great credit over that area. She had a petition from over a thousand constituents who said that they would like the park left as it is. I think that is fair enough. I might be criticised in some places for some of the action that I took, but I have a very clear conscience because I believe I acted in the interests of the people who live there. I think great care is needed in the development of parks generally. I am one who strongly supports the development of sporting complexes but each case has to be treated on its merit.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment of s. 34; Powers of Conservator of Forests in relation to use, etc., of State Forests—

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (9 p.m.): I wish to ask the Minister about the amendment of section 34 by the words, "Exempt by order under his hand" etc. I wish to know precisely if this will give the Conservator of Forests the power to exempt under his hand the getting of wood-chips from State forest areas? As I said earlier, perhaps I am reading too much into this amendment, but I would like the Minister to clarify the point because it is of national and State importance.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (9.1 p.m.): The honourable member is referring to the powers of the Conservator of Forests. Let me say that there has been no move in this State to encourage the taking of wood-chips. Clause 8 promotes and encourages the recreational use of State forests and exempts selected parts of a State forest from the getting of forest products, with the object of retaining representative samples of the existing forest in the natural state. I would just like to add, particularly for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, that this is why in our legislation we have another type of tenure known as a beauty spot, and it is in this context that we protect areas which contain particular types of timber that we want to preserve for all time. I can assure the honourable member for Salisbury that she should have no problems on that score.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

DAIRY ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM AGREEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (9.3 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Honourable members have now had the opportunity not only to consider the Bill and the two agreements to be ratified, but also to debate the introduction of the companion Bill to broaden State-financed assistance under the Primary Producers' Assistance Act. It is obvious from the debates that honourable members favour the assistance provided in the Bill for restructuring the dairy industry, and that further assistance is desired.

On the question of further assistance, the honourable member for Mackay mentioned that the Industries Assistance Commission had recommended scrubbing the Dairy Reconstruction Scheme. Whilst this is partly true, the door is not closed. What the Industries Assistance Commission has recommended is that after 30 June 1976 there will be no separate reconstruction scheme for the dairy industry. That commission then drew attention to the fact that recommendations to be contained in its report on rural reconstruction will be sufficiently flexible to deal with the specific adjustment problems of the dairy industry. It added that these are to be regarded as an important part of the commission's recommended assistance for the dairy industry. Unfortunately that commission's report on rural reconstruction is not yet available, and we are in the dark as to what type and level of assistance is being recommended.

Honourable members will recall my reference to policy announcements during the recent Federal election that further dairy adjustment assistance was planned. Coupled with the Industries Assistance Commission report there is obviously a reasonable prospect of further assistance. Let us hope that any assistance will be sufficiently substantial and long-term to enable the job of restructuring to be completed and provide an Australia-wide efficient and viable dairy industry.

The honourable member for Bundaberg criticised the fact that the two Bills were not brought on together or presented as one Bill. The Bill under discussion is simply to validate the two agreements covering a scheme which is no longer in operation. I know that the honourable member now realises this. As the second Bill is related to this Bill in its aims the honourable member's comment is a reasonable criticism. However, I feel it has been more constructive and relevant to deal with each Bill separately.

I note that the honourable member suggests there are too many small factories and that they should be closed in favour of a decent central factory. There are already moves by the co-operative in the Wide Bay-South Burnett Region for an amalgamation and adjustment of factories in their areas. I understand that at this stage the proposal has not made much progress, but it does illustrate industry awareness of the need to effect economies of operations at factory level.

There is no dispute that it is in the interest of a viable dairy industry that some factories should be assisted to upgrade their operations. It is in this field that we hope to give some, but very limited, assistance with State funds.

I would like to be able to say that adequate funds could be anticipated or made available for generally upgrading or restructuring factories and also dairy farms. However, I am realistic enough to know that this is most unlikely. The honourable member will be pleased to know that the Bundaberg factory is one of those being assisted with Commonwealth money.

I would like to thank the honourable member for Warwick for his words of

praise for the administration of the scheme and the officers concerned. It is very encouraging at officer level to know that your efforts are appreciated by the House. I feel that a lot has been achieved, but there is still a lot to be done.

Appropriately, the honourable member has mentioned that the scheme priorities were changed from helping people to leave the industry to helping those who desire to remain in it. This has been one of the most satisfying aspects of the later operations.

It is an interesting point that whilst 424 dairy farmers took advantage of the scheme, this number represented only 10 per cent of those leaving the industry during the period of four years that the initial scheme operated.

The honourable member for Warwick also referred to some proposed new State measures and stated that they would be very acceptable and timely innovations. Honourable members will by now have had the opportunity to study that Bill to amend the State scheme.

The honourable member for Bulimba has obviously given a lot of thought to the question of prices and returns, particularly the adjustments associated with conversion to metric as from 1 April. His observations about the inequality of returns and capacity to sell products were quite relevant, and will be of particular interest to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Primary Industries.

Obviously the farmer will be disappointed that in the rounding-off of the retail price of the metric packs the extra fraction of a cent could not have been given wholly to him. However, it must be borne in mind that the wholesaler is faced with some added cost in converting to metric.

I noted that the honourable member for Bundaberg regards milk as a cheap product compared with soft drinks and also that, from his point of view, it is one of the best drinks that one could have when added to Bundaberg rum.

The contributions to the debate by the honourable member for Mackay were timely and informative. He referred not only to the worrying problem of world-wide over-supply of skim-milks powders and casein, which was also touched on by the honourable member for Bulimba, but also to the pertinent matters of interstate competition and jealousies.

I have been advised that in the short term the situation with regard to sale of skim-milk powder could even worsen. This will seriously affect the Victorian dairying industry which has a very large manufacturing segment.

Whilst Queensland factories are faced with the same problem, fortunately the production of powder in Queensland is comparatively small. The repercussions on the industry should be felt less in Queensland than in Victoria and Tasmania.

Admittedly Queensland got a major share of the Commonwealth moneys, but it might interest honourable members to know that Victoria did better. What is important is that in implementing its own scheme this State has demonstrated to the other States that it is prepared to put its shoulder to the wheel and endeavour to assist with restructuring even though State resources are very limited.

Queensland's success with the first four-year scheme as compared with other States was due to several reasons. Firstly, Queensland and northern New South Wales had by far the highest percentage of small uneconomic farms, plus the added problems of age and, in many areas, up to 10 years of drought conditions.

Queensland also was in the fortunate position of having flexible acquisition and leasing legislation, and experienced officers, thus enabling operations to commence immediately. The main problems of the other States were overcome when the new agreement provided for the alternative of conveyance procedures. It might be noted that in the period of nine months of operations Victoria committed over $5,000,000 on farm amalgamation.

I would agree with the honourable member for Mackay that the Australian Dairy Corporation's plan for stabilisation and orderly marketing is completely unacceptable to the Queensland dairy industry in its present form. I am advised that the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation and the Queensland Co-operative Dairy Companies Association have expressed the same feeling, particularly with regard to the levy on liquid milk.

At this stage I am not aware of the reaction of other States apart from Victoria, which favours a national scheme.

It will obviously be some time before a final decision is arrived at. In the meantime, the Honourable the Minister for Primary Industries and his officers will no doubt be watching developments with considerable interest.

It might be appropriate at this stage to clarify the terms of loans from the Commonwealth to the State and from the State to the farmer or factory. Commonwealth moneys are made available to the State under two different sets of terms and conditions. Moneys for lending to farmers for bulk milk conversion and to factories are made available interest-free and repayable half-yearly over a maximum term of ten years. Money for all other purposes, for example, land, dairy upgrading, other farm development, stock and plant, are on the basis of half grant and half repayable loan. The loan is repayable with interest at 6 per cent per annum over a maximum term of 25 years with up to two years' rest from repayments. Except for interest-free bulk milk conversion loans the question of interest on loans, and for that matter terms of loans, was entirely at State discretion.

State terms to borrowers are as follows:—

(1) Bulk milk conversion (that is, bulk vat installation, modification of plant, water and access)—up to 10 years interest-free;

(2) Land—generally up to 20 years with interest at 5 per cent per annum over the term;

(3) All other purposes including dairy upgrading, development and stock—up to 10 years with interest at 5 per cent per annum over the term;

(4) Factories—generally 10 years, 15 years in some cases, with interest at 7½ per cent per annum over the term.

The Commonwealth favoured a factory lending rate much closer to current bank rates. This was resisted. The State terms to farmers are particularly attractive, and I understand that they were not bettered in any of the other States.

I will deal briefly with the main provisions of the agreements, most of which will be continued under the State scheme. The provision of the former agreement for acquisition and disposal of marginal or uneconomic dairy farms has been continued, but with fewer restrictions. Provision is also made for purchase of build-up land for existing dairy farms, a shortcoming of the original scheme.

Funds may be made available for farm development, improvement, stock, etc. in the case of amalgamation or for upgrading existing dairy farms. Interest-free loans are available for conversion to bulk milk supply. Loans may cover the cost of supply and installation of the vat, provision of water, electricity and access to the dairy and for upgrading the milking plant. In addition, a farmer wanting to upgrade, rebuild or relocate his dairy may be given an additional advance with interest.

Factories may be assisted with expenditures associated with the provision of bulk milk receival facilities as a result of supplier change-over to bulk milk production.

Other measures, for which there was no call in Queensland before the scheme was suspended, were assistance to diversify out of dairying and limited assistance to those leaving the industry.

Once again, I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate and commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (9.13 p.m.): The Opposition completely agrees with the provisions contained in this Bill, which will do no more than validate the agreement signed last year between the State and Commonwealth Governments.

I know that the Act has been suspended and the only hope that we in the Opposition have is that the present Government will lift that suspension and help those dairy farmers who are in need of further assistance. When the Dairy Reconstruction Scheme was introduced in 1972, a total of $25,000,000 was made available, and as the scheme was expanded and the Federal Bill was introduced to provide further assistance to primary producers, the sum escalated to something like $48,000,000.

As I said at the introductory stage, I do not think money should be used to prop up small, uneconomic butter factories. The Minister has said that this matter has been looked into and that some of those butter factories will amalgamate. We must keep industries going, but at the same time we should not be called upon to prop up every little section of an industry that is not viable.

Mr. Dean interjected.

Mr. JENSEN: I realise that the honourable member for Sandgate would have us eat all the cows. Some of them, however, are pretty tough and are good only for milking.

As I say, the Opposition is in agreement with the Bill, which validates the agreement signed last year.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (9.15 p.m.): I thank the Minister for his comments at the second-reading stage in reply to some of the submissions made at the introductory stage. I am a little concerned about the finance being provided for the conversion of dairy factories, particularly in view of the Minister's comments about the additional problems in the skim-milk manufacturing field. As the Minister said, I referred to this at the introductory stage. I am concerned about what is happening in other States. As the Minister pointed out, in view of the world-wide situation, it seems that things will get worse in the production of skim milk. A definite restriction should be imposed by the department. Maybe it is a little late to do that now seeing that the agreement has been signed by the Premier and the former Prime Minister (Mr. Whitlam), and this Bill virtually ratifies it. But administratively we could look very closely at the possibility of some funds being made available to factories that are kept viable by skim-milk production. If the position is to worsen as the Minister outlined, we could well be pouring a lot of money down the drain and more money will be needed to keep these factories viable. If some of the factories have to be closed down or amalgamated as suggested by the Minister and the honourable member for Bundaberg, now is the time to look very closely at the production of skim milk.

This problem has to be tackled in Queensland and the other States and, as the Minister pointed out, some aspects of it are covered by the Minister for Primary Industries. He should insist at Commonwealth Agricultural Council level on the other States doing likewise. It is little use our placing some restrictions on skim-milk manufacture in Queensland if the other States do not do likewise. Pressure must be applied either under this measure or through the dairy

stabilisation scheme to Victorian producers who are grossly over-producing. If that is not done, they will flood the Queensland market with skim milk—as has happened so often—as the result of stylised TV advertising campaigns, to the detriment of whole-milk sales, particularly when Queensland producers are pushing for increases in whole-milk prices. Any skim-milk advertising campaign must have a detrimental effect. In the past the big money, the quantities of skim milk and the promotional techniques of the Victorian factories have been very successful in Queensland. One problem that must be looked into under this agreement is the amount of money to be made available to factories that rely upon skim-milk production for their viability.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (9.18 p.m.), in reply: I thank both honourable members for their comments on the Bill. It relates to an agreement which has been suspended and which will be replaced by a new scheme that I will be introducing shortly. In the circumstances many of the comments on this Bill have been unnecessary. The contribution by the honourable member for Mackay about skim milk really applies to the next Bill.

Mr. Houston: He is trying to help your next Bill.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is very kind of him.

The agreement was so good that the funds ran out and the former Federal Government suspended it. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, and Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (9.21 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

I must again thank the honourable members for Bundaberg, Warwick and Cunningham for their contributions to the debate. They have successfully highlighted some of the proposed new features of the State scheme for dairy industry restructuring.

Whilst the Act at present provides for a fairly comprehensive range of assistance, it is nevertheless limited. At the time the scheme was introduced, it was intended mainly to assist dairy farmers to purchase nearby build-up land and to provide for stock and dairy improvements for purchasers of marginal dairy farms or dairy build-up land. Provision was also made for assistance with conversion to bulk-milk supply, including upgrading of structures and plant and additional dairy cows.

It is quite obvious that honourable members on both sides of the House favour not only the continuation of this special assistance to the industry but also the much-improved and flexible programme now proposed. I agree with the honourable member for Warwick that the shortage of funds at present should not preclude updating the scheme.

I was interested in the comments of the honourable member for Bundaberg, wherein he favoured control of financial matters associated with the scheme being taken over by the Agricultural Bank. The honourable members for Warwick and Cunningham left no doubt that they were against this suggestion. I feel it would be appropriate to enlarge on my reply in the introductory debate.

The original Commonwealth scheme required that the land in the marginal dairy farm must revert to the Crown and then be made available by the Crown under a suitable tenure. In these circumstances, as my department was the only authority with the necessary legislation and expertise to efficiently meet these requirements, it was the obvious choice to administer that scheme.

Most other States, including those which operated through their Rural Bank, had to operate under real property conveyance processes which were much more time-consuming and cumbersome, particularly if encumbrances were involved. This is one of the main reasons this State made such good progress.

As I have previously indicated, my department in association with the State Treasury came to the rescue with stock and improvements only when it became obvious that the normal lending authorities—and I include the Agricultural Bank—either could not or would not assist. My department had funds available and it was in the interest of the industry that they be used.

Bulk-milk conversion assistance was taken on at the suggestion of the State Treasury after it had canvassed the Agricultural Bank, Rural Reconstruction Board and my department. The Agricultural Bank was, and is, restricted by its limitations on lending. At that time the limit was $20,000 and the average price for a marginal dairy farm was $27,000.

I mention here that the scheme has assisted many Agricultural Bank clients who would have been unable to obtain their additional requirements through the bank.

The bank's requirement of first-mortgage security was also a major problem as it would virtually restrict lending to its own clients, and then only up to the bank's limit. Because many dairy farmers were clients of trading banks, they would not have been able to get assistance other than for the purchase of bulk vats through a special scheme already operated by the Agricultural Bank.

One further point is the matter of assistance to dairy factories. The Agricultural Bank was approached, but indicated it was not interested. Amongst other things, the Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act would not have permitted total lending as was envisaged and proposed by the Commonwealth.

I believe that, if it administered the Act, the Agricultural Bank could not have exercised the flexibility necessary for the success of the scheme. Also, if the bank's function was limited to securities and the financial aspects, the procedures would have been too cumbersome, with the added possibility of a clash of interests or opinions in some cases.

To sum up my comments on this matter, the Dairy Farm Reconstruction Scheme involves not only financial matters (in which area the Lands Department has already proved itself; for example, in the field of rural reconstruction and the Brigalow development scheme) but also the allied expertise in land valuation and compensation matters and negotiations, and, in addition, in the most pertinent field of land tenure amalgamation and adjustment.

I am quite confident that the Lands Department could quite efficiently and competently administer the combined lending responsibilities of the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board and the Dairy Farm Reconstruction Scheme if it was ever called upon by the Government to do so.

As I have already mentioned in my introductory remarks, I feel that eventually the responsibilities and roles of the Rural Reconstruction Board and the Dairy Adjustment Program could be combined and operated by my department to the advantage of all rural industries.

The provisions in this Bill relating to adjustment to farm ownership where an uneconomic family partnership exists, or where assistance can be given to accelerate the retirement of the parent member of a family owing to age or ill health, could well be incorporated in a general rural reconstruction scheme. These new provisions will necessarily be restricted to very special cases owing to the very limited funds available. It would have to be administered on the basis of a rescue operation where the Agricultural Bank is unable to assist, and funds either are not available or are only available on unacceptable terms through the trading bank.

It is proposed, where need is demonstrated, to advance sufficient to re-establish the parent in a town or seaside house. Unfortunately, the scheme cannot hope to finance the full purchase price for the farm and improvements, etc., and the father would have to be willing to carry the balance upon reasonable terms.

The honourable member for Warwick mentioned that "Code of Practice" was a new phrase to him. This, of course, is a matter concerning the Department of Primary Industries. I am advised that Code of Practice for dairy factories is a code accepted by the chief dairy officers of all States and of the Commonwealth. Honourable members will agree it is most important to present a good image for the processing side of the industry both in Australia and overseas. The code is being introduced in a sensible manner without undue hardship being imposed on a factory. Factories are being encouraged and assisted to plan their future operations. It is also being introduced on a progressive basis with initial emphasis on hygiene. Factories are being upgraded as finance becomes available.

The Industries Assistance Commission report to the Federal Government on the dairy industry refers to evidence tendered and its inquiries about assistance to implement the code. It has suggested an examination of benefits in relation to costs, and that implementation of the code be delayed while the examination is being made.

Honourable members may be aware of a recent press release that the Industries Assistance Commission in its report on rural reconstruction (and this includes dairy industry adjustment) has suggested that a reconstruction scheme be kept going for another five years but that interest rates under the scheme be related to the long-term bond rate. A copy of the report is not yet to hand. If the report is correct it will make the State scheme with its low interest rate even more attractive.

I thank the honourable member for Warwick for his support for removal of the statutory limit on lending. Neither the Commonwealth scheme nor the Rural Reconstruction Scheme provides set limits on lending. Experience has shown that a limit on lending would not have been practical or in the interests of reconstruction. I would suggest that in some cases the Agricultural Bank limit has placed its borrowers in the position of having to go further afield, often to the high-interest short-term market to obtain essential additional funds for farm development, etc.

Finally, I note the very favourable comments by honourable members on the manner the schemes have been administered by my department, and I thank honourable members for these expressions of confidence.

I again commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (9.29 p.m.): The Opposition has said practically all that needs to be said on this matter. We appreciate the assistance that this legislation has given to primary producers and to make the dairy reconstruction scheme viable. Without this assistance it would not have worked as well as it has done.

Nevertheless, most of the money has been allocated under these schemes. I said that I appreciated the way the Lands Department administered the scheme and carried it out. But most of the money has been passed out to the people who required it, especially our percentage of the $48,000,000 involved in the dairy reconstruction scheme. It has helped to reconstruct the dairy industry and bring in bulk-milk supply and the rest of it under this Bill.

What I am getting at is that the money has to be paid back. The Government administers the scheme and tells the farmers what money they are to get. The money has been allocated and it has to be paid back over the next 10 or 20 years. I do not believe that the Minister's department should administer repayments for the next 10 or 20 years. The Agricultural Bank is quite capable of taking that section over and attending to the return of the money to the Government. I am not saying that the Minister's department cannot do this work; I am saying that it should be done through the Agricultural Bank. I am not arguing about the Minister's looking into the need for assistance and the allocation of funds, but, once that has been done, the matter of repayment should be taken over by the Agricultural Bank. Once dairy farms have been reconstructed and assistance has been provided, the scheme will not continue for very long. If it is necessary in five years' time to prop the industry up again and make larger farms, more money might have to be provided. At the moment all I want to say is that the Agricultural Bank should take over the return to the Government of funds that were allocated by the Minister's department.

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (9.32 p.m.): I should like to make a contribution to this second-reading debate. I intended to speak at the introductory stage but, because of my involvement in other Government activities, that was not possible.

I should like to compliment the Minister on the introduction of the Bill and also on the complementary legislation concerning the reenactment of the agreement with the Federal Government that has just gone through the House. To appreciate the necessity for this legislation one has to give some consideration to the history of the dairy industry in Queensland. It has been a history of fluctuating fortunes and frequent attempts at moderation and adjustment in the face of persistent economic pressures. In spite of these circumstances, I believe that it is a credit to Queensland and the Government that the dairy industry is still progressing and is still one of the very important primary industries in this State. In spite of the vicissitudes that the dairy industry has suffered, it will doubtless continue to be one of Australia's most basic and important sources of food production and land setttlement. I think that not only this Government but the Federal Government is completely justified in wishing to support this industry in the manner prescribed by the legislation now before the House.

It has also been a matter of great interest to economists and also, of course, a point of political argument for generations. It is a matter of regret, I feel, that basic rural industries have for so long borne the brunt of social and economic change caused by factors not always within their control. The dairying industry is an example of this. I think it is unfortunate that at times it becomes a political issue. I do not think that these matters should become political issues. I think there should be a unified approach to the sustenance of basic industries.

It has always been a source of disappointment to me that prosperity is so often denied to families which provide society's basic needs. Industries such as the dairy industry have rendered a service to Queensland, yet with few exceptions it seems to be taken for granted that those who work in such industries are predestined to struggle and to be deprived of many of the amenities enjoyed by those for whom they provide an essential service and some of the basic necessities of sustenance.

The point I am coming to is that I am convinced that we as a Government have an obligation to the dairy industry in the sense that every member of society has an obligation to every other member. This is no less so in the case of the association of this Government with the dairy industry, so we have from time to time endeavoured to honour this obligation by enacting suitable legislation to afford dairy farmers and the dairy industry the opportunity to adjust to changing economic, social and technological demands. I do not think we should overlook any of these factors. Social and technological demands are placed upon all industries in this age of technology, and the basic rural industries are no less affected. In fact, I would not hesitate to say that I think some of the technological advances that have been accepted and paid for very dearly by the dairy industry are showing today that this industry can continue to provide Queensland with a basic and necessary food product at a very competitive price to the consumer, and I think this is tremendously important.

A recent article on the dairy industry stated—

> "The Industries Assistance Commission Report on the dairy industry stated 'Pressures on farm and factory costs are generated almost entirely by economic

forces outside the dairy industry. Since 1960 these have been the forces of economic growth and inflation. Economic growth is reflected in rising costs of labour and services. Inflation does not always have its origins outside of the rural sector. There have been times when high export prices for agricultural products have contributed to inflation in Australia, but the dairy industry has not contributed significantly to inflation of either the demand-pull or cost-push types.

" 'Pressures on farm and factory returns are generated in part by economic forces outside the dairy industry . . . Thus, the resultant downward pressure on the value of returns from export sales of dairy products has been beyond the control of the dairy industry. It is virtually impossible to increase the total revenue from sales of dairy products in Australia as rapidly as general levels of income have been increasing. And the international structure of prices at which dairy products are traded is largely beyond the control of the dairy industry, being determined by levels of production and stocks in North America and Western Europe and the trade and protection policies of these producers and of Australia's principal trading partners'."

I would like to refer also to comments made by other speakers about the raising of the statutory limits on borrowing from the Agricultural Bank. I think I am correct in saying that in 1974 a great debate took place in this House on this matter, and I am pleased to say that in 1975 the statutory limits were indeed raised to the great benefit not only of the industries which were afforded this facility but also to the other lending sources which were under great pressure owing to the economic demands which were being made on them by the dairy industry and other agricultural industries. I think that the quotation I made from the report of the Industries Assistance Commission clearly points out the true position of the dairy industry. It also applies to the position of many other basic food industries in this country.

I would now like to quote from a speech made by the Minister for Primary Industries only last week at the half-yearly meeting of the Council of Agriculture. He said—

"The last three years have not been easy ones for rural producers.

"However, I feel that the relatively recent change in the Federal sphere will result in less antagonism towards rural producers and a more co-operative approach to the solution of rural problems.

"This Council, its member bodies and other voluntary Organisations, like the Graingrowers Association and the United Graziers' Association are ample proof that farmers are prepared to help themselves like any other sector of the community, provided that there is fair recognition of the particular problems of the rural sector."

I feel that that is a tremendously pertinent expression of opinion from one of our own Cabinet Ministers, whose portfolio is vitally concerned with the dairy industry. I think that his remarks certainly complement those made by the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service when introducing this legislation.

People are too apt, through ignorance of the facts, to criticise primary industries and accuse them of being subsidised by the public purse. What the public does not realise is that in most instances the cost to the consumer in Australia is kept below world costs by properly managed and administered government assistance to industries. Few people realise the mutual benefits that arise from mutual responsibility and consideration within the ranks of our own society.

I am pleased to be able to say that the Queensland National-Liberal Coalition Government has indeed recognised its responsibility in this regard; hence the legislation now before the House.

Before concluding my remarks, I should like to say how pleased I am that in my electorate, which is not a dairying electorate, I have had the pleasure recently of witnessing the establishment of a new section of the dairy industry in Queensland in a tropical rainforest area. Because of technological advances and the availability of drainage and pasture improvements and modern machinery, I am able to boast in my electorate of a milk supply of considerable quantity and quality from a tropical pasture scheme that I believe will be as successful as any other facet of the dairy industry in Queensland.

I support the legislation whole-heartedly and compliment the Minister on its very timely introduction.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (9.42 p.m.): I wish to comment only briefly on the Bill.

There is no doubt that the Rural Reconstruction Board and the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme have allowed people on the land to improve their properties by farm build-up. Of course, the old adage "Get big or get out" applies today and, unfortunately, there is no place in the industry for the little man. That is becoming quite evident, and it is very sad indeed to reflect upon the plight of the small landowner. However, as I said, the advent of the board and the reconstruction scheme has assisted landowners to acquire larger properties.

Reverting to the state of the industry, I should like to use a little joke to illustrate my point. It is said that there are three ways of going broke. The first is by backing slow racehorses, the second is by entertaining fast women and the third is by starting a dairy farm.

Mr. Muller: What do you do?

Mr. HARTWIG: Like the honourable member for Fassifern, I am from the land. Unfortunately, he is farther away from the land than I am.

In my opinion, this legislation is a little bit too late. This morning I asked a question of the Minister for Primary Industries as to how many dairy farmers had gone out of production in the last three years. His answer told a very sorry story for dairy farmers in the State of Queensland, because in that period about 2,700 dairy farms have closed. That was brought about principally by the boom in cattle prices, when everybody thought that all they had to do was sell dairy farms and become graziers overnight. It was not long before they found that that was not a payable proposition.

I believe that the time has arrived when the Government ought to consider establishing a rural bank. Although the Agricultural Bank is operating, it is not a trading bank in the true sense of the term. I say this in all sincerity, because I believe that today virtually everybody is mortgaged to trading banks and they are unable to meet the high rates of interest charged by most of those banks. The price of the product does not warrant the payment of high interest rates of 10, 11, 12 or even 13½ or 14 per cent. If we are to put confidence back into the primary sector we must give consideration to the establishment of a rural bank. Both the Premier and our federal leader, Doug Anthony, have made comments along these lines. But so far all we have done is pay lip-service to such a proposal. I want to know why primary producers cannot invest in their own bank and at least be responsible for keeping interest rates to a minimum so that people who borrow money will have some chance of repaying the loan.

While the Rural Reconstruction Board has done a mighty job, it is only making a piecemeal attempt to do what a trading bank could do. Farmers and landowners generally could invest their savings in a rural bank, and if one man sold out, the money could be made available to another primary producer who wished to improve his land. Today a landowner who sells out and banks $100,000 could see the money gobbled up by Coles, Woolworths or some other big company that wishes to erect a multi-storey building.

Unfortunately primary industry is in such a sorry state that anyone who talks about enticing people to go onto the land and to borrow money is engaging in wishful thinking. Many people are simply unable to meet the interest rates on the money they borrowed.

Recently we have had a run of good seasons, but as surely as night follows day we will soon find ourselves in the midst of another drought. It is in times of drought that the people on the land look for assistance. The most worth-while form of assistance we can give is the means of conserving fodder. However, today, anyone in the western or northern parts of the State who tries to conserve fodder is required to pay up to $52.50 a tonne for hay. In other words, he is up for $50 a tonne before the hay leaves the railway yards.

Mr. Houston: Why is it so dear?

Mr. HARTWIG: Because of steep increases in freight rates, added to the high price paid for hay in times of drought.

Getting back to the Rural Reconstruction Board—all I can say is that it has made money available when the trading banks have failed to do so and it has helped people acquire land. But those people are generally in the 45 to 50 age-group. Very few young people avail themselves of this finance. Although the board has done a mighty job, it has to rely on Commonwealth money. And who knows how long that will continue to flow through? Primary industry is calling for the establishment of a rural bank. People in primary industry must be given the necessary finance at reasonable rates of interest.

The interest on the money that primary producers owe is preventing them from being viable. The abolition of the butter subsidy was a sore loss and the cost of production does not let producers pay off their debts. Something must be done to assist them. Rural reconstruction has assisted them and the Minister is active in his portfolio. However, as I said, it is only a stopgap measure and much more is needed.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (9.51 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Bundaberg, Hinchinbrook and Callide for their contributions to the debate. This is a carry-on from the previous Bill and, indeed, the debate has not been much different. The honourable member for Bundaberg is a staunch supporter of the Agricultural Bank. Our department is already a major collector of revenue. It has no problem in handling repayments of dairy reconstruction loans. We handled the brigalow scheme and we are quite capable of doing this job. I think I indicated in my opening remarks that we have certain advantages over the Agricultural Bank through limitations of interest rates and so on.

The honourable member for Callide referred to the establishment of a rural bank. As he already knows, that is not in my field. All these schemes have been evolved over a period. Queensland has never had the advantage of a rural bank which States such as New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria have enjoyed.

Mr. Houston: That is up to the Government. You have been in power for 18 years. What are you dragging your heels for? It is no good making excuses.

Mr. TOMKINS: I am not making excuses. I am very doubtful if the bank would serve any good purpose.

Mr. Wright: Why not institute a State bank?

Mr. TOMKINS: I think that is virtually what the honourable member for Callide was saying. I do not think we could split the two. If anybody is really interested in that, he can consult the Treasurer.

My department has been administering the dairy reconstruction scheme and the brigalow scheme for years, and it has not met with any real problems. It operates in the same way as a bank. For a thing to be an advantage, it has to be proved to be an advantage.

Mr. Wright: It has not got credit creation.

Mr. TOMKINS: I know that; that is a point.

Funds cannot be spent twice. In other fields of State Government endeavour, Queensland takes up a lot of funds that would probably go to a rural bank. This is a complex matter and I make no apology for not having such a bank.

I thank the honourable member for Hinchinbrook for his contribution on the problems in the dairy industry. Most honourable members realise that any type of endeavour on the land today is a battle. That is why the Government should be quite happy to be able to offer a scheme similar to the one I outlined for the industry to take advantage of. Quite frankly, I believe I will see the time when these schemes are amalgamated. I believe that the problems confronting the dairy industry and rural reconstruction have a common factor and the two schemes could be amalgamated. If that were done, there could be some saving in administration, which would be helpful.

There is not a great deal in this Bill which was not included in the last one. I again thank the honourable members for their contributions.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 10, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

CLEAN WATERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (9.56 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In the introductory stage, I set out to explain to honourable members the provisions of this Bill, which I then described as a very simple and straightforward measure aimed primarily at tidying up administration aspects of the Clean Waters Act.

At this second-reading stage, I would like to reply, broadly, to a few points made by some speakers, and to outline to the House the Government's growing involvement in the field of water pollution control—and some of our plans for widening our role still further.

Several speakers in the introductory debate complained about the lack of a 24-hour 7-days-a-week service to act on pollution complaints. While I agree that this is an admirable aim, in a practical sense such a service is out of reach at the present time, for reasons tied up with economics, staffing and many other factors. Government officers of course already carry out investigations into water pollution outside of normal office hours and at week-ends, and I have made it clear before that I will authorise the working of overtime, whenever it is considered necessary, for this purpose.

The matter of an out-of-hours telephone number for handling complaints will be considered; but, to be completely effective, this telephone service would need to be backed up by staff on stand-by with all the necessary equipment. As a point of interest, honourable members might be reassured to some extent by the fact that the lack of such an after-hours telephone service at present does not deter or prevent people from registering complaints when they encounter a problem. The Director of Water Quality (Mr. Leon Henry) receives many such calls at home, and action often emanates from these calls.

With regard to staffing of the Water Quality Council, I would repeat that all engineers and scientists do act as inspectors in addition to the two classified inspectors, and action is being taken to increase the number of classified inspectors. The Act empowers me to appoint other people as inspectors for special purposes and this will be done should the need arise.

As mentioned previously, the number of staff plus vacancies is 40, and negotiations are under way with the Public Service Board over a further three staff appointments. There are two problems in filling all vacancies at present. One is a shortage of accommodation—in Townsville as well as Brisbane—and the other problem is the shortage of

people with desired qualifications and experience who are prepared to apply for the positions. Water quality control is a comparatively new field in Australia and therefore there is very keen competition for the few competent people available. In our case, if advertised vacancies cannot be filled by qualified people from within Australia, then I shall consider seeking them overseas.

From comments made by some speakers in the introductory stage, it is clear that some members still do not fully understand what licensing under the Clean Waters Act involves and aims at—and some apparently don't want to. The misconception still exists in some quarters that a licence under the Act is a permit to pollute—and very clearly, as I have previously stressed, this view is a load of rubbish.

Each licence imposes conditions which the licensee must fulfill and, in addition to a requirement for water quality in the receiving stream, the licence conditions must take into account available practicable means of treatment. The licence conditions are reviewed annually and can be changed each time the licence is renewed. Failure to comply with the conditions of a licence can lead to prosecution and fines of up to $10,000 (and $1,000 per day) for a first offence.

While the maximum fee applies to any number of discharges from the one premises, premises at different locations are charged separate fees. Some exemptions were granted under the Act because it was necessary not to break agreements entered into prior to the Act. I can assure honourable members that requirements for water pollution control are contained in the various Acts and agreements for which exemptions have been granted.

It is true that the number of complex chemicals becoming available makes it very difficult to determine what analyses should be carried out on effluents and natural waters. This is considered by a multidiscipline staff in the light of knowledge of industrial activities in the area, including primary as well as secondary industry.

Use also is made of the many excellent publications of the U.S.A. Environmental Protection Agency textbooks and journals and publications of the World Health Organisation, and Queensland's Agent-General in London provides information frequently on current practices in the United Kingdom.

From all this, it must be clear that every endeavour is made to keep Queensland's water pollution control administration up to date with changing trends and techniques. The application of this overseas information to meet Australian conditions often requires some modifications and adjustments, of course, and a number of projects are in hand to study local effects.

For example, a research project is being undertaken at the James Cook University in North Queensland to ascertain the effects of heavy metals on local marine organisms. Research work of this kind is very costly, and often slow because of its nature, but it is none the less most desirable.

On the question of analyses relating to water pollution, it must be remembered that the analyses which can be carried out at present are limited by the facilities at my department and the Health Department. I would point out, again, that action is in hand to increase these facilities. Regular surveys are carried out in many of our waterways in Queensland, and information relating to these surveys is available in annual reports.

Several speakers referred to alternative methods of disposing of wastes, to suit local conditions, etc. Alternative methods of waste disposal—such as land disposal—already are under extensive investigation, of course, and questions such as the operation of large regional plants instead of small local plants are among the many issues being considered. It is clear that in some cases, tertiary treatment will be required in future and practical methods are being examined.

The treatment of wastes for reuse by industry also is being investigated.

As honourable members would realise, of course, the best methods of treatment and disposal of wastes are of little value unless they are properly operated. With this in mind, the Water Quality Council has adopted an objective that, after June 1978, it be a condition of licences that qualified operators be employed. It is realised that some compromises will be necessary at first, but the employment of qualified operators at treatment plants will be a major step forward. My department organises short courses of lectures and field demonstrations for treatment plant operators and it is hoped to hold these more frequently in future.

There has been criticism periodically, and earlier during this debate, of an alleged lack of action under the Act, in the metropolitan area and elsewhere. I do not accept this criticism, and I believe that these critics would do well to look more closely at precisely what is being done right now in many areas before bursting forth with comments on things they either do not understand or do not take the trouble to research first.

As examples of what is being done right now—a large multi-million-dollar Brisbane City Council treatment plant is under construction at Luggage Point; the new metropolitan abattoir has its own new treatment plant; many other major industries also are installing costly treatment equipment, and others have been connected to local authority sewerage where their wastes will be treated. From this, it can be seen that very real progress is indeed being made and I commend the Water Quality Council and its

staff on the work that it is doing in a very difficult field, and one which is becoming more and more complex.

As I have indicated previously, there are still a few industries which are slower to act than they should be, and these industries will have to be given a push. Honourable members can be assured that action will be taken in these cases, and where industries do not comply with reasonable requirements they will be dealt with under the Act. The provision for fines up to $10,000 for first offences and $20,000 for subsequent offences of a serious nature are not in the Act for nothing, and I will not hesitate to press for penalties up to this maximum if the offences are considered serious enough to warrant it.

The disposal of hazardous wastes is a matter of growing concern, and it is being given a lot of attention. It is necessary to have some safe way of disposing of these hazardous wastes by burying or incineration or by some other form of treatment to make them harmless. In some cases, they may be reusable, even. Research presently under way should provide some of the answers we are seeking.

Some of the early mining ventures have left very difficult waste problems, and in some cases practical solutions to them are not readily available. For example, a very close study has been of tin-dredging and the Mt. Morgan Mine, and some improvements have been made, but the likely final solution is not obvious at this stage.

On the primary industry side, to assist farmers guide-lines have been produced for the disposal of farm manure, and it is apparent that many farmers are taking advantage of these guide-lines to minimise farm disposal problems.

My final point at this second-reading stage would be to agree with some members who referred to the need for greater expenditure on water-quality control. I believe the strides that have been made in this field in the past few years have more than justified the level of spending in this area up to now, and I agree that further increased spending is justified and would result in even more notable progress in future.

I believe this government can feel proud of its achievements up to now in the field of water-quality control, and I believe it is significant that speakers on both sides of the House in this debate have praised the work of the Water Quality Council in carrying out the Government's policies.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (10.6 p.m.): We debated the Bill at great length at the introductory stage. Members on both sides of the Chamber spoke of the problems in their electorates. Tonight I can tell the House that Opposition members have considered the Bill. It has only three clauses, one of which covers the title. We want industry, and all others who pollute the State's waters, to help us overcome this very important problem. We want them to be good neighbours because a good neighbour does not throw his rubbish into the yard next door. We do not want to drive industry out. We welcome industry, but we would like it to be of a kind that does not pollute our waters.

The principle of the Bill is the increasing of penalties. But what is the use of increasing penalties if the Act is not going to be policed and harsher steps than those that have been taken over the years are not now to be taken? Opposition members agree with the increases but we also make a plea to the Government to have the Act policed more than it has been in the past.

I heard the Minister say that we were happy with the Water Quality Council. To some extent we are. We believe that it should have greater assistance.

Mr. Houston: And more staff.

Mr. MARGINSON: Exactly. We believe that it should be given more assistance and more staff to do this very important job.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (10.8 p.m.): I have a pollution problem in my electorate. I referred to it at the introductory stage but unfortunately the Minister was out of the Chamber at that time. I should like to mention it again tonight on the second reading of the Bill. The Minister did say tonight that he is fully aware of the problems associated with the regrettable closure of the Mt. Morgan mine.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. HARTWIG: My word it has, Mr. Speaker. There is heavy run-off from the mineral wastes at Mt. Morgan and it finds its way into the Dee River.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That has nothing to do with the second reading of the Bill. If the honourable member looks at it he will see that it has only three clauses and the subject he is dealing with is not mentioned. This is the second reading.

Mr. HARTWIG: The Bill amends the Clean Waters Act. The Minister saw fit to mention the Mt. Morgan mine and the run-off that reaches the Dee River. All I have to say is that the Banana Shire Council and landowners along the river are very concerned about mineralised waste finding its way into the river. Stock will not drink the water now and if it is used for irrigation it will kill lucerne. Unfortunately this river is one of the worst of mineralised streams that I have seen. The water is definitely polluted. I merely take this opportunity to draw the Minister's attention to this matter.

Motion (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

The House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.