

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 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:—

Order in Council under the Medical Act 1939–1973.

Regulation under the Consumer Affairs Act 1970–1974.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ATTEMPTS TO SOLICIT ADVERTISEMENTS FOR
HEALTH STAFF SOCIAL CLUB MAGAZINE

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (11.3 a.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of honourable members and people in their electorates that at the present time a person or persons are attempting to solicit advertisements claiming to be from the State Health Department. It has been brought to my attention by a shopkeeper in my own electorate who was approached to place an advertisement in a Health Department magazine. The State health staff social club has published a quarterly review over many years which is printed by a reputable publisher at Fortitude Valley. This firm is provided with a copy and obtains its finances by selling advertisements. It has advised my department that its selling is carried out over the telephone on the basis that the advertisement will appear in the "Social Club Review" and it categorically states that on no occasion has anyone from the organisation claimed that he represents or is a staff member from the Health Department.

The firm, Metro Publications, has advised that it has had considerable difficulty with the organisation claiming to publish the "Health Conference Review" or the "Health Review." It has reported that some of its clients have been approached by a Mr. Hart, who claims to be an officer of the Health Department, the implication being that if an advertisement is not placed in the Health Department's social club magazine, officers of the department may see fit to take action against the owner of the premises. Information has been received that cheques for advertising ranging up to \$190 for a full page have been extracted from clients on this basis. Cheques have been made available to Thomas W. Williams and Associates of 1-3 Cobden Street, North Melbourne.

I draw this to the attention of honourable members and I trust that the representatives of the Press in the gallery will ensure that this practice receives wide publicity because I believe the practice constitutes a deliberate fraud. I advise honourable members that I have referred the matter to the Commissioner of Police.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. AREA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SPENDING

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

As many local authorities in the Moreton Region appear to be in danger of losing

money allocated under the Area Improvement Program if it is not spent before 30 June, will he clarify the situation so that local authorities can proceed with or abandon projects for which funds were approved?

Answer:—

The Area Improvement Program is the shining example of what can go wrong when a central Government intrudes into the management and administration of local issues. The programme was introduced by the previous Commonwealth Government on a basis which duplicated State and local government administrative activities and responsibilities. As a condition of the grants, the Commonwealth Government exercised the right to approve detailed programmes of works and to nominate the amount of funds to be available towards expenditure on the programmes each financial year. In addition, the Commonwealth Department administering the scheme has had to consult on various aspects of availability of finance with the Commonwealth Treasury. After the projects have been carried out, the State is required to account to the Commonwealth Government for expenditure under the scheme. Obviously, with the Commonwealth Government discussing reductions in expenditure, avoidance of wasteful administration activities, and absorption of specific purpose programmes into forms of general purpose assistance to the States, doubts arise as to the continuation of this particular programme. I and my department have tried hard to clarify just what funds will be available during this and subsequent financial years to carry through the programmes already approved between the Commonwealth and the State, and I have recently received a letter from the Commonwealth Minister which does clarify the position to some extent. From that letter, I believe it can be assumed that projects which are started before 30 June 1976 will receive funding up to the amount provided on the 1975-76 programme to enable their completion although the work may be carried over into the next financial year. There is, however, still some doubt concerning projects whose over-all cost is only partly covered by the 1975-76 programme and I am hoping that this remaining aspect will be clarified shortly.

2. BUILDING ACT

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

- (1) When will the Building Act 1975 be proclaimed?
- (2) What changes have been or are intended to be made to the Act or the schedule when the Act is proclaimed?

Answers:—

(1) The Building Act 1975 has been proclaimed in force as from 1 April 1976.

(2) No changes to the Act are proposed at the present time. However, the schedule, which forms part of the original Act and comprises the Standard Building By-laws, has been amended by Orders in Council published in the Gazette on 6 and 27 March, 1976. Other amendments will be made to the Standard By-laws from time to time but it is not possible at this time to say what those amendments might be.

3. NEW POLICE STATION FOR SANDGATE

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

Have any plans been prepared to build a new police station at Sandgate? If so, will it be built on the present site or will it be relocated on land now occupied by the Sandgate Girl Guides?

Answer:—

No. A new police station at Sandgate is included with other essential police building projects in the Police Department's forward planning and it is intended that the new police station be located on the site of the existing police station.

4. RELOCATION OF ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

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

Has a decision been made to move the Adult Education Centre from William Street? If so, where will the centre be located and on what date will it be in operation at the new location?

Answer:—

Yes. The building presently occupied by the Supervisor of Adult Education and the Metropolitan District Office of Adult Education is to be demolished. Arrangements are in hand to refurbish part of the South Brisbane Town Hall building for adult education purposes. Consideration will be given to decentralising some of the adult education classes to make them more accessible to those attending them. Some classes will be held in the South Brisbane building. However, the Board of Adult Education has recommended to the Public Service Board that suitable classroom space be obtained in a central location for those classes which cannot be duplicated and held in the suburbs and which cannot be conveniently held in the South Brisbane building. I shall keep the honourable member informed of the outcome of the approach to the Public Service Board.

5. HOMES IN PATH OF PROPOSED NORTHERN FREEWAY

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

(1) Are residents in the inner northern suburbs of Petrie Terrace, Paddington, Red Hill and Kelvin Grove prevented from selling, repairing, altering or rebuilding their homes if they are in the path of the proposed freeway?

(2) As an officer of the Main Roads Department informed a resident in Haughton Street, Red Hill, approximately 12 months ago that, because of a freeway proposal, she was not permitted to undertake major structural change to her home, is this correct and, if not, will he ensure that departmental employees give accurate information to the public?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) My department always gives accurate information to the best of its ability and there are no immediate requirements in Haughton Street, Red Hill. If the resident of Haughton Street to whom the honourable member refers requires confirmation in writing, it will be available.

6. ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

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

As his answer to my question on 30 March indicated that as at 31 December 1975 there were 12 electorates above and three below the allowable 20 per cent zonal variation of the quota, with many variations numbering thousands of voters, will he concede that there presently exists an urgent need for a redistribution in the public interest?

Answer:—

The question of an electoral redistribution is a matter of Government policy but I would point out to the honourable member that 67 electorates, some 82 per cent of the total, are within the allowable quota variations and I am sure that, on reflection, he will appreciate the basic facts of the situation.

7. RISK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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

(1) In view of the close proximity of the Queensland border to the new nation of Papua New Guinea, and with his sincere concern to minimise the chances of foot and mouth disease entering Queensland, is he aware of the large number of deer and pigs regularly traded between Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait islands and Bamaga?

(2) Can foot and mouth disease come to Queensland through animals from Papua New Guinea? If so, what action is being taken by his department and the corresponding department in Papua New Guinea to minimise the risk?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of reports that animals are being travelled from Papua New Guinea to islands in the Torres Strait and to the mainland, but investigations by our inspector of stock at Thursday Island have so far failed to substantiate such reports.

(2) At present, foot and mouth disease is not known to be present in Papua New Guinea. Should it ever gain entrance

to that country, it would pose a serious threat to Australian livestock. The movement of animals from Papua New Guinea to islands in the Torres Strait is prohibited under the provisions of the Commonwealth Quarantine Act. It is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to see that this legislation is enforced. Acting inspectors of stock have been appointed by my department to each of 15 islands to ensure that movements of animals between the various islands are regulated. It is my understanding that the animal quarantine service in Papua New Guinea is making sincere efforts to keep foot and mouth disease out of that country and to inform New Guineans that the movement of livestock to the Torres Strait islands is prohibited.

8. SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES OF POLICE

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

(1) What is the average cost to the Government of training a first-year police constable?

(2) What is the average salary paid to police officers?

(3) How much money is paid in overtime and other allowances, apart from normal salaries, to police officers?

Answers:—

(1) Training of cadets and probationaries for appointment as constables is carried out at the Queensland Police Academy over varying periods. Upon being sworn in, constables are allocated to selected police stations for further training for periods of approximately three to four months. It is not possible from available data to isolate the average cost of training a first year police constable.

(2) Information as to salaries paid to sworn-in members, probationaries and cadets is not itemised in the appropriate Police Department Vote. Current fortnightly award rates of salary are:

	\$
Chief Superintendent ..	837.80
Superintendent Grade I ..	807.90
Superintendent Grade	
II	771.40
Inspector Grade I ..	743.40
Inspector Grade II ..	713.90

	\$
Inspector Grade III ..	684.60
Inspector Grade IV ..	649.80
Senior Sergeant	469.60
Sergeant 1/c	438.00
Sergeant 2/c	411.20
Senior Constable over 15 years	377.60
Senior Constable 10-15 years	369.50
Constable 1/c	337.90
Constable over 5 years ..	314.60
Constable 2-5 years ..	301.90
Constable 1st year ..	287.20

(3) Expenditure for overtime and other allowances in the last completed financial year (1974-1975) was \$5,302,280.

9. LOADING OF EXPORT BEEF

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

(1) Does the loading of export beef onto ships cease every time it rains, even when it is only a light drizzle? If so, what effect is this having on the beef industry in Queensland?

(2) Will he make representations to the various parties concerned to see if arrangements can be made to speed the loading of export beef?

Answers:—

(1) The loading of beef on container ships is not interrupted by rain, but loading on conventional vessels is stopped whenever it rains. Stoppages caused by rain have an insignificant effect on the beef industry because most of the beef exported to the markets of major importance is in containers. For beef required to be loaded on conventional ships, there are adequate on-shore freezer facilities to prevent any deterioration during hold-ups caused by rain.

(2) As requested, I shall initiate discussions with the parties concerned.

10. MEDICAL OFFICER, COMMUNITY HOME CARE CENTRE, MARYBOROUGH

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

Has a replacement medical officer yet been appointed for the Community Home

Care Centre at Maryborough? If not, when is an appointment expected?

Answer:—

The position of Medical Officer, Community Home Care Service, Maryborough, was advertised but unfortunately no applications were received, in consequence of which no appointment has yet been made.

The department is presently investigating by what means the medical services for the Community Home Care Service, Maryborough, may be met.

11. TV SETS IN HOSPITAL WARDS

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

(1) Has his department a policy regarding patients viewing private television sets in public, intermediate and private wards of Government hospitals?

(2) Are television sets allowed into Government hospitals and, if so, must they be used in conjunction with ear-phones?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) This Department has not determined policy in respect of television sets in the wards of public hospitals controlled by hospitals boards. This is a matter for consideration and determination by individual hospitals boards.

In this respect, I would direct the attention of the honourable member to an answer I gave to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on 18 March 1976 in respect of the policy of the South Brisbane Hospitals Board.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

Mr. BURNS: I wish to ask a question without notice of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. In view of his assurances in answers to previous questions in my name that depositors in building societies would be completely protected, I draw his attention to the statement in today's "Courier-Mail" by

the liquidator (Mr. J. Rees) that the realised assets of the Australian Permanent Building Society would fall at least \$500,000 short of deposits and debts. I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware that Mr. Rees also stated that there was no certainty that mortgages could be traded at par and that, unless the State Government made up the deficit, more than 4,000 depositors would bear the burden? To ease the grave concern that must be felt by investors in this society, will he now give a positive guarantee that the Government will cover this substantial deficit and that the funds of the 4,000 investors mentioned by Mr. Rees will be totally protected by the new scheme?

Sir GORDON CHALK: I read the statement by Mr. Rees in this morning's newspaper. I believe that Mr. Rees, as the liquidator, has spoken in correct form, naturally not knowing what are the responsibilities or the decisions of the Government. What I said previously, and repeat now, is that we will establish under legislation—provided it is approved by this House—a contingency fund. I indicated that that fund would at least cover those responsibilities of persons who have invested as shareholders in the societies referred to. The basis of the contingency fund is for the purpose of ensuring that anyone who has invested by way of shareholding in a building society will ultimately receive a return of his money. The Government can do no more than that. At this stage it is necessary to get legislation through the Chamber to establish that contingency fund. After the passing of the legislation, arrangements would be able to be made so that the contingency fund could borrow to enable the return of the money involved.

ASSISTANCE TO INVESTORS IN SUSPENDED BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. BURNS: In asking the Deputy Premier and Treasurer a further question without notice, I refer him to a question I raised yesterday about people who have put all their money, such as lump sums they have collected in superannuation, into building societies, and who are now trying to live off the interest on that money. I raise with the Deputy Premier and Treasurer the question of people who cannot pay their grocery bills, rates and electricity bills. I

wonder whether we could look at the question of, not having a run, and not releasing the funds completely, but making provision for a small amount to be drawn on a weekly basis. I am talking about a very limited amount that would let these people live. They are in a terrible situation. I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Can he do something about it?

Sir GORDON CHALK: No-one realises more than I do the plight of some of these people. I would say that I have received a thousand letters and probably the same number of telephone calls from such people. But the first point to remember is that any person who, wisely or unwisely, rightly or wrongly, invests his money in a building society is not a depositor but a shareholder and is entitled to be treated only as such. If there were any relaxation of the principles of shareholding, one group of persons would be receiving favourable treatment over others.

I should also point out that, since the building society problems arose, I have received a large volume of correspondence and many telegrams from shareholders in companies such as Keith Morris and Alfred Grant asking what the Government proposes to do in relation to them. They had put their savings into those companies. I emphasise that the problem confronting the Government is that persons who invest their money in building societies are shareholders.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition that every effort is being made to try to clear up the situation in relation to the five societies concerned. I hope that by the end of the week we will arrive at a solution that will enable those persons who are presently financially embarrassed to receive sufficient money to be able to carry on.

BOMB ATTACK ON CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

Mr. LANE: I direct a question to the Minister for Police. As the member for the area in which last night's bomb outrage occurred at "Wynberg", the residence of Archbishop Rush in New Farm, I preface my question by expressing my personal concern. I now ask the Minister: Will he give an assurance that everything possible will be

done to apprehend the offender or offenders responsible? Further, will he advise the House as to what stage the investigation has reached?

Mr. HODGES: I can give the honourable member the assurance that the police are making every effort to apprehend the crank who perpetrated this outrage on the residence of the archbishop last night. I trust that when he is apprehended, the courts will deal with him to the maximum extent as allowed by law.

TAKE-OVER BY GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY OF
ACTIVITIES OF MT. GRAVATT COLLEGE
OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Mr. POWELL: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: Is he aware of a letter signed by four academics from Griffith University and published in this morning's "Australian" implying that Griffith University may take over the activities of the neighbouring Mt. Gravatt College of Advanced Education? Will he inform the House of any plans in this regard?

Mr. BIRD: I thank the honourable member for bringing this matter to my attention. I am aware of the letter but I know absolutely nothing of a proposal of this nature. I should have thought that the two institutions were established to perform distinctive functions, and that situation certainly has not changed.

Coming from North Queensland, I am aware of a somewhat academic discussion up there that has been going on in certain circles for three or four years about the amalgamation of the James Cook University and the neighbouring College of Advanced Education, Townsville. I am also aware that many people think that, if the activities of the two institutions are merged, the university should be incorporated in the college of advanced education rather than the other way round.

STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
ON TELEVISION FACILITIES AT BLACKWATER

Mr. LESTER: I ask the Premier: In view of the fact that in the Central Queensland media the Leader of the Opposition expressed concern that the people of Blackwater are being denied A.B.C. television

pending a gala National Party opening of the proposed transmitter for political gain, by the Premier, would it be a fact that the Opposition Leader does not know that this is a Federal rather than a State matter, and would it also be a fact that he is mud-raking and, in so doing, seriously under-estimating the intelligence of the Blackwater people and grossly insulting them?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member has summed up the Leader of the Opposition very accurately. The statement to which he refers is in keeping with so many statements that the Leader of the Opposition makes without considering their background or basis. It really concerns me to find the leader of a party so often making statements that are so wide of the truth. There is, of course, no truth in what has been suggested. As the honourable member says, it is a Federal matter, and one would think that the Leader of the Opposition would at least know that. Even the children in the gallery know it. The Leader of the Opposition makes such statements for political purposes. He does not score very well because the people of Blackwater know that what he has said is not true and that it is, in any case, entirely a Federal matter.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND UNION
REFERENDUM

Mr. GYGAR: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: (1) Is the Minister aware that the Left-wing clique currently controlling the University of Queensland students' union is presently conducting a so-called referendum to alter the union's constitution? (2) Is the Minister aware that the object of this referendum is to remove the legal restrictions which have so far limited these radicals in their misuse of union funds to push their own extremist political ideology? (3) Is the Minister aware that these radicals have used union funds to circulate a misleading pamphlet in support of their proposal and demonstrated their complete contempt for the democratic process by stating that no-one could be found to oppose their plot and thereby denied the supporters of sanity an opportunity to present their case? (4) In view of this latest outrage, will the Minister give the House a

clear and unequivocal undertaking that if this stealth succeeds and the referendum is passed, he will take immediate action to ensure that the payment of students' union dues is made non-compulsory and so ensure that decent students are not press-ganged by the university senate into financially supporting the anti-democratic policies of these extremists and radicals?

Mr. BIRD: I advise the House that I am indeed aware of this referendum, if it can be so called, being conducted by the union at the Queensland University to alter the union's constitution. What is being sought is permission to allow the union to engage in party politics. Of course, we know that this would include the expenditure of part of the funds obtained through union fees. Might I say that it is very nice to know that the great majority of students at the University of Queensland—as at the other universities throughout this State—are there to study, to further their knowledge and to improve their status in life and that only a very small minority of the students become involved in party politics. I am going to ask that every possible bit of publicity be given to this so-called referendum by the Press and by anybody else who can possibly do so to make the students aware of what is happening.

I have a copy of the paper that is being sent round by the students' union in which is set out a very strong argument in favour of the proposed amendment to the constitution. On the back of this paper we see the statement—

“Unfortunately, an argument against the proposed change to the constitution has not been received. This is after much soliciting by the Acting Electoral Officer and the Union Secretary.”

I would be very doubtful about how much effort was really put into soliciting an argument against the proposed amendment. Might I say that I believe that when fees in universities were abolished and the Government gave its approval for compulsory unionism of students it was not envisaged that part

of the funds received by way of fees from students would be used for party-political purposes, and I would therefore imagine that if this type of thing is going to be done it will be a breach of faith and that perhaps this Government should relook at the proposal to make the payment of union fees by students compulsory.

BUILDING ACT

Mr. AKERS: In asking the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads this question, I refer to the answer to my question on notice this morning addressed to him. Prior to the removal of the responsible design by-laws from the Building Act schedule, what professional bodies were consulted? Were the Building Owners Association, the Association of Consulting Engineers or the Royal Australian Institute of Architects consulted prior to making a change to the building by-laws that concerned these associations vitally?

Mr. HINZE: The bodies referred to were not consulted directly about the alteration to the standard building code. As the honourable member will appreciate, a problem arose whereby people who have been employed as draughtsmen—there are some 150 of these people who have had practical experience in the State of Queensland for 10 to 15 years—would have had their businesses placed in jeopardy.

As I said at the outset, the purpose of introducing the standard building code to Queensland was not designed to have that effect. We suggested to the draftsman that there could be a transitional period. However, after all the factors were taken into consideration, it was decided that the regulations would take effect. The short answer to the honourable member is: no, but I am prepared to meet representatives of the various bodies at their convenience.

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

INVASION OF PRIVACY ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

REAL PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to provide for the registration and the validation of the registration of certain plans of subdivision of land in the office of the Registrar of Titles and to amend the Real Property Act 1861–1974 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

EVIDENCE BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to consolidate, amend and reform the law of evidence and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

RURAL MACHINERY SAFETY 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 provide with respect to the safety and welfare of persons using rural machinery and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND
ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN FROM ITINERANT FAMILIES

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (12.9 p.m.): I wish to raise a matter today which I believe ought to be of importance to every member of the Chamber because it relates to the education of a certain sector of school-children in our community.

On 24 October last year I asked the Minister for Education whether he was aware that many State schools were subject to a floating population of pupils owing to their location near caravan parks; whether his department had any special provisions to cater for pupils who, because of the occupations or economic circumstances of their parents, found themselves shunted from school to school and often fell behind or never gained an established base for their educational growth; and, further, whether any special provisions could be made.

In reply to that question he said at that time that pupil attendance was affected by a number of factors. A caravan park may well have been one of those factors but no research was available which establishes a causative link between such residential conditions and pupil attendance. He further said that no special provision was being made for schools just because they had a high turnover. I wish to establish today that there is indeed a very great need for the department to do the research necessary

in order that special provisions can be made for such schools. I speak particularly of the Carina State School.

I appreciate the fact that the Minister has remained in the Chamber while I am making my speech. I asked him another question. The figures explain a great deal. It read as follows—

“(1) What have been the numbers of enrolments and departures from the Carina State School so far this year?

“(2) What numbers of these enrolments and departures were children from the Carina Caravan Park?”

Honourable members may be interested to know that the Minister replied—

“(1) So far this year the admissions to Carina State School have been 190 pupils, while 162 pupils have received transfers from the school.

“(2) Of the 190 pupils admitted, 120 came from the caravan park, as did 111 of the 162 pupils who were issued transfers from the school.”

I seek leave to table three very brief tables.

(Leave granted.)

Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.

I also seek leave to have them incorporated in “Hansard”. They cover the periods of attendance of children at that school and also the admissions and departures at the Carina State School.

(Leave granted.)

By School Total

PERIOD OF ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL ACCORDING TO YEAR OF ADMISSION

Year	Number Admitted	Less than 3 Months		3-6 Months		7-12 Months	
		Number	*Percentage	Number	*Percentage	Number	*Percentage
1972	246	110	44.7	46	18.6	23	9.3
1973	248	68	27.4	55	22.1	43	17.3
1974	179	53	29.6	39	21.7	34	18.9
1975	192	58	30.2	49	25.5	15	7.8
Totals ..	865	289	33.4	189	21.8	115	13.2

* All Percentages are expressed as a percentage of the number admitted.

By School Total

PERIOD OF ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL ACCORDING TO YEAR OF ADMISSION

Year	Number Admitted	More than 1 Year		Still at School or Left at End of Grade 7	
		Number	*Per-centage	Number	*Per-centage
1972	246	30	12.1	37	15
1973	248	30	12	52	20.9
1974	179	14	7.8	39	21.7
1975	192	0	..	70	36.4
Totals ..	865	74	8.5	198	22.8

* All Percentages are expressed as a percentage of the number admitted.

By Grades

CARINA PUPILS ENROLLED; ADMISSIONS; DEPARTURES

1975

Grade	No. on Roll at Start of Term	No. Admitted	†% Admitted	‡No. Departures	†% Departures
*1 ..	56	27	48	41	73
2 ..	45	25	55.5	36	80
3 ..	45	19	42	26	57.7
4 ..	37	20	54	26	70
5 ..	50	12	24	17	34
6 ..	55	21	38	23	41.8
7 ..	51	12	23.5	7	13.7
Total	339	136	40%	176	51.9%

By Grades

CARINA PUPILS ENROLLED; ADMISSIONS; DEPARTURES

1976 TO MID-MARCH

Grade	No. on Roll at Start of Term	No. Admitted	†% Admitted	‡No. Departures	†% Departures
*1 ..	57	11	19	7	12
2 ..	40	9	22.5	4	10
3 ..	28	14	50	3	10.7
4 ..	41	9	21.9	5	12.1
5 ..	33	8	24	0	..
6 ..	48	4	8.3	0	..
7 ..	54	6	11	5	9.2
Total	301	61	20.2%	24	7.9%

SEVEN HILLS

Comparison	291	23 Excluding Gr. 1	9.9%	44 Excluding Gr. 7	15.1%
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SEVEN HILLS

Comparison	264	9 Excluding Gr. 1	3.4%	6	2.2%
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* Admissions for Grade 1 are only those who have been admitted since the start of term.

† Percentages are a percentage of the number enrolled at start of term.

‡ Number Departures column includes those who left at the end of the year (excluding Grade 7).

* Admissions for Grade 1 are only those who have been admitted since the start of term.

† Percentages are a percentage of the number enrolled at start of term.

‡ Number Departures column includes those who left at the end of the year (excluding Grade 7).

PUPILS WHO HAVE SPENT A CONTINUOUS
PERIOD SINCE GRADE ONE AT CARINA
1976

Grade	Number on Roll	Those who have been Continuously at Carina	
		Number	*Percentage
7	50	25	50
6	53	25	47.1
5	38	17	44.7
4	41	26	63.4
3	36	17	47.2
2	41	25	60.9
Totals ..	259	135	52.1

* Percentage is of number on roll.

I refer to those tables. In relation to the period of attendance at schools by these children, in 1972, of the 246 children who were admitted, 110, or 44.7 per cent of the student population, stayed at the school for less than three months; 18.6 per cent stayed for between three and six months; 9.3 per cent for between seven and 12 months and 12.1 per cent for more than a year. In 1972, those children who were still at that school or left at the end of grade 7 represented only 15 per cent of the children who were admitted to that school.

In 1975, although the situation had improved somewhat, it is getting worse again compared with what it was in 1973 and 1974. Of the 192 pupils who came to that school, 30.2 per cent remained there for less than three months and 25.5 per cent for less than six months. That means that over 50 per cent of the student enrolment at that school in that year was at the school for less than six months. The situation is very serious and it affects not only the children who attend similar schools from caravan parks but also the static population.

In relation to those same factors I shall deal with the situation by grades. It is an important consideration that the worst area of turnover is in grades 1, 2 and 3, when it is so difficult to establish in children in those grades the very basis that they need for the remainder of their education.

In 1975, the number in grade 1 on the roll at the start of the term was 56. The number admitted was 27. So during the year the number of pupils admitted increased by 48 per cent. The number who left in that 12-month period was 41—out of the original 56 plus the 27. From 1st grade, 73 per cent of the enrolment left in that year. Those children falling into the same category of the change-over and turnover of pupils could not but lose the very basis and the central foundation for their education.

Finally in relation to the pupils who have spent a continuous period since grade 1 at

that school, 50 were on the roll in grade 7 while those who have been continuously at the school number only 25. In grade 3, of the class of 36 pupils, those who have been continuously at the school number only 17. The situation is that 50 per cent of 7th grade and often even more than that percentage in some grades have left that school. The effect is considerable. It means that there is a continual turnover and change-over of pupils, affecting the psychological and social development of children who stay at that school. We also seem to ignore the effect that this has on children in these turnover situations. No research seems to have been carried out in this field.

The effects on the children are not only in the area of education but also in the areas of health and social development. On some occasions 14 or 15 children turn up at the school on Monday to be enrolled. They do not say, nor is the school able to ascertain, where they have come from. Sometimes this could well be because their parents do not want their previous whereabouts known. They may have left behind something that they do not want discovered. So the children suffer.

I raise this matter because children should not suffer because of the circumstances in which their parents find themselves. It is absolutely essential that some research into this problem be carried out by the department, and I ask specifically that it be carried out at the Carina State School. The teachers at the school are themselves very concerned. They have formed a group for the discussion of the problem in the hope of finding ways of overcoming it. There are at times children from transient families who are 10 or 12 years of age but still in grade 1. Because of the occupations followed by their parents they have moved from school to school almost fortnightly and never have they had a foundation for their studies.

Such a child enrolls in a school and, because there is no provision within the system to deal with his problems, the principal has to assess him and endeavour to determine his standard in maths and reading. He is then placed in an ordinary class among children who may have been at the school for years and who have followed a definite programme of work. His teacher has to spend time trying to sort out his problems, and this is time that is lost to the remainder of the children. After two or three weeks it may be found that he has specific problems and special education is needed for him. By the time this is done, which could be perhaps three or four months, perhaps 40 per cent of such children have already left. If those children continue in that way they will never be able to overcome their problems.

The Carina State School is not the only school where this problem exists, but it is one in which I want to see change come about. There is a need for additional

teachers to deal specifically with the problems of these children, to try to assess their standard of performance and to draw up programmes for their education.

Both the State and Federal Governments need to look at this problem on an over-all basis because it also exists in other States. Perhaps there could be some form of transfer record so that a child leaving one school could go to another and be able to say, "I have achieved this standard in maths and this in reading."

At the present time, economic difficulties and problems with housing and employment are accentuating the plight of these children. The tables right back to 1972 show that these problems have existed and at the specific schools mentioned. Research into the matter by the Education Department is therefore very much needed.

I also ask the Minister whether the position at Carina can be investigated as a case study. Perhaps additional remedial teachers could be appointed and a system instituted under which a child enrolling in the school would be placed in what would be virtually a one-teacher set-up. If 14 children enrolled one day, they could be placed for assessment in a special class. Their problems could be sorted out by a teacher whose specific task that was, and a decision could then be made on which children could enter the ordinary class stream. But there is a problem to be overcome and that is the difficulty of setting up special programmes.

The effect of these children on the whole school community is also very great, especially when up to 70 per cent or even more are children of what I might call the transient population. The problems created for p. and c. associations are enormous and the economic difficulties are great. I seek great assistance in this area.

(Time expired.)

T.A.B. OPERATIONS

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.19 p.m.): I wish to speak for a few minutes on a matter that I believe to be of public interest, namely, the activities and operations of the Queensland T.A.B. I want to make some reference to the return to the Government from that source, the service it provides to the punter and its contribution to racing. Let me make it very clear right at the outset that the idea of the Government of the day in 1961 in creating the T.A.B. was to eliminate the scourge of S.P. betting. I would like to quote from "Hansard" to give honourable members some idea of the feeling of the Government at that time. I take it the Honourable T. A. Hiley, who introduced the Bill, expressed the Government's feeling when he said—

"The Government cannot accept a situation in which vast numbers of citizens knowingly break the law. If many of us

regard gambling as unwise and excessive gambling as wrong, we all consider that widespread disregard for the law is completely evil. Consequently, we are seeking a way in which this illegal trade can be harnessed and carried on within the framework of the law."

Mr. Moore: Who are you quoting?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Honourable Tom Hiley said that, and I have no fight with his right to say it. But the point is that during that debate many members on this side of the House accused the Government of double standards. We believed that the main purpose of introducing the Bill was to obtain another source of revenue for the Government. That was the main purpose, irrespective of what the Honourable Tom Hiley said at that time on behalf of the Government. If we have a look at subsequent events we see that that is exactly what the T.A.B. has turned out to be.

If we look at the Treasurer's Financial Statement for 1975-1976, we find that in 1965-66 the return to the Consolidated Revenue Fund from the totalisator and betting tax was \$2,241,909. The return gradually increased until in 1969-70 it was \$5,230,684. In 1972-73 it was \$8,957,593; in 1973-74, \$10,442,524; in 1974-75, \$12,835,730; and in this financial year the estimated return is \$15,500,000. The Government is not doing too bad, because for the half year ended 31 December the income from that same totalisator and betting tax was \$7,070,000 compared with \$6,500,000 for the same period the year before. So the indications are that the Government is doing very well out of what was supposedly a measure designed to do away with S.P. betting.

As we know, earlier in the session a Bill was introduced to amend the Racing and Betting Act. During the debate it was clearly stated that S.P. betting was rife in the State, and appropriate action, according to the Government, was then taken to control it by increasing the penalties. The totalisator and betting tax is one of the fastest growing sources of revenue for the Government. No other source of revenue has increased more than six-fold in the past nine years and it is anticipated that the increase will be even higher this year. It has certainly turned out to be a golden egg for the Government.

I would like to quote a statement made by a Labor colleague Mr. Eric Lloyd at the time of the original debate. I think it is quite appropriate. He said in his opening remarks in the second-reading debate—

"It is obvious that the Bill could be called the second part of Tom Hiley's Gold Rush."

The then Speaker said—

“Order! The honourable gentleman is out of order. He must refer to an honourable member in this Parliament as such.”

So Mr. Lloyd then said—

“I apologise. I should have said the Honourable the Treasurer’s Gold Rush.”

Back in 1961 that was quite an appropriate statement, and Eric Lloyd certainly saw the main reason behind the introduction of this legislation.

The point I want to make is that the racing industry is the industry out of which the T.A.B. makes its money, and this industry is in a very sorry financial plight. There have been many statements concerning the problems confronting the racing industry. Just recently a television programme was produced about them. It is obvious that the racing industry—galloping, trotting and greyhound-racing combined—employs thousands of people in this State. It is a very worthwhile industry when one takes into account the breeding of the animals, the training of them, the employment of jockeys, drivers and stable-hands, the produce required as feed for the horses and the food required for greyhounds. Time is very limited in this debate and, without going into great detail, I state as a fact that it is a very worthwhile industry.

The success of the industry depends on whether people attend the racetrack and support racing generally. They will support it while they believe racing is clean. I believe that the administration of the racing industry in Queensland is very good. What is needed, of course, is a better cut for the race clubs from the T.A.B. After all, that is partly why the T.A.B. was created. The State Government has to put more money back into the industry from the \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 it is getting each year. More of that money has to go back to the industry to help it through this period. If the clubs received additional money, it would be reflected in increased prize-money, and some of it in due course would go to the owners, trainers, stable-hands, produce merchants and everyone else connected with the industry.

The service offered to the public by the T.A.B. is not good enough. It has been suggested that a punter’s representative should be on the controlling board. Such a representative would perhaps bring new thoughts into the administration of the T.A.B. Someone who was in no way connected with the administration of any type of racing club would be an asset on the board because he would not have any side thoughts about any particular activities in the racing industry. I have nothing against the administration of the T.A.B. or the personnel on the board. The only problem I see is that I think they are trying to conduct the T.A.B. as a commercial enterprise with its main purpose

being profit-making. I do not see the T.A.B. that way; I see it virtually as an industry to give service to those who want to gamble legally off the racecourse. The whole emphasis should be on keeping the racing industry viable and ensuring that the T.A.B. gives service to the public.

Surely it is ridiculous these days to have a 40-minute delay between the close of betting on gallopers at the T.A.B. and the advertised starting time of the race. I make it clear that I am talking about people who want to gamble; I am not trying to encourage people to gamble. For those who want to gamble surely we should provide a service equal to that available in other States. The first race at night-trotting meetings starts at 7.20 p.m. In country areas the T.A.B. closes at 6 p.m. and in the city at 6.40 p.m. I do not know whether the T.A.B. administration has looked at the advisability of closing agencies so early. Many people have told me that they would like the opportunity to be able to make later bets. Surely that should be looked at.

Mr. Jensen: The board doesn’t care about the punters.

Mr. HOUSTON: I have suggested that a punter’s representative should be added to the board. He could bring new thoughts to the board.

At greyhound meetings the first race starts at 7.30 p.m. Betting in country T.A.B. agencies closes at 6 p.m. and in city agencies at 6.50 p.m. People are being forced to place their bets well before they know the full facts, including whether there are any late scratchings. That information is very important to the followers of greyhound-racing.

The Government’s take has increased over the years from the original 12½ per cent. Indeed, it has now reached 20 per cent for the trebles. As a result there has been a reduction in dividends paid to punters. The punters are the ones who are finding the \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 that goes into the coffers of the State Government. It seems ridiculous that so much public money is going into Consolidated Revenue from that source.

(Time expired).

REMOVAL OF BY-LAW 8.12 FROM QUEENSLAND STANDARD BUILDING BY-LAWS

Mr. AKERS (Pine Rivers) (12.29 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of honourable members the danger inherent in the action taken by the State Government over the past few days to remove from the Standard Building By-laws for Queensland by-law No. 8.12, which calls for responsible design. The removal of this by-law will allow unqualified or untrained individuals to be responsible for both structural and aesthetic design of

any building in Queensland—I emphasise “any” building—no matter what its size may be.

No longer will it be necessary for a building or a structure to receive qualified attention; no longer will persons who design buildings need to undertake engineering or architectural studies or become skilled in design, construction, specifications and contracts in order to carry out the design and documentation of buildings; and no longer will the public be protected by the use of accredited expertise.

Architects are required by law to be registered, and their registration calls for the equivalent of six years' wide and detailed study, a minimum of one year's certified experience and success in an examination set by the Board of Architects. That body, which was set up by the State Government, requires an indemnity insurance of a minimum of \$50,000, but most practitioners carry professional liability insurance far in excess of that sum and pay high premiums. Draughtsmen cannot obtain that insurance. Architects who fail to meet the standards of the board are subject to disciplinary measures or deregistration. These requirements are laid down to protect the public; yet draughtsmen are not covered by them.

Against this background the Queensland Government has seen fit to remove from the Building Act, without reference to architects or engineers—this was admitted by the Minister this morning in answer to a question—the by-law calling for buildings to be designed and documented by qualified persons.

Mr. Tenni: Don't you feel that draughtsmen who have done capable work in the past should have the opportunity of being registered in a similar way to builders?

An Opposition Member: Who's making the speech?

Mr. AKERS: The interjection is an excellent one. It highlights the stupidity of the Government's actions, which has eliminated the whole of the by-law, not merely part of it.

It is interesting to note that many professional people are required to be registered in Queensland. For example, builders, architects, engineers and valuers are registered; surveyors are authorised; drainers, plumbers, gas-fitters and electricians are licensed; and scaffolders, dogmen, explosive-power-tool operators, hoist operators, riggers and crane drivers are certified. Groups outside the construction industry include chiropodists, dentists, medical practitioners, nurses, optometrists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, ships' masters, veterinarians, surgeons and pawnbrokers. Even pawnbrokers must be registered; yet a person who deals with the design of buildings and is thereby responsible for the lives of thousands of people is no longer required to be registered. The practice of all the professions to which

I have referred is controlled, and the practitioners within them must qualify by passing recognised examinations. Now that the Government has taken this action, architects and engineers will be the exception.

Honourable members should be made aware of the fact that several building by-laws of many of the local authorities in Queensland require this form of responsible design. Some of these local authorities are the Brisbane City Council, which is responsible for most of the building carried out in Queensland, the Townsville City Council, the Gold Coast City Council, the Landsborough Shire Council and Pine Rivers Shire Council. All of them require that buildings in excess of a certain size should be designed in a responsible way. That requirement has now been removed.

When the Brisbane Building Ordinances were gazetted I did not see the offices of many effective draughtsmen closing. Many such draughtsmen are still working in Brisbane, and they would have been able to continue working if the Building Act had been amended in a way that I shall outline later. Even as the Act was worded, draughtsmen could work on buildings up to 400 square metres, which is about 4,000 square feet.

The by-law, as framed, was too rigid; it was not carefully worded. Under it, any building, including a house, that had a steel beam in it had to be designed by an architect or an engineer. I accept that that had to be changed. However, the Government acted far too hastily. The problem could have been overcome by simply adding a clause to the by-law. I have drafted a clause that I suggest is appropriate. It is in these terms—

“For minor structural alterations and for minor structural members, this clause shall not prevent a registered builder from submitting dimension details of such members based on sound practice. The local authority may request submission of further details before approving the application.”

If that clause had been added, draughtsmen and builders would have been able to continue with complete safety doing the work they are now doing. As I said, the Government acted far too hastily and took out the whole of the clause requiring responsible design. Through its ignorance, Queensland building is now subject to low standards, untrained design and documentation, and there are likely to be more failures in structure and greater hardship for members of the public, who will suffer through having no recourse to law or insurance if construction is faulty.

Many people have said that architects do not accept responsibility for design. They are responsible under law, and the law requires them to be insured against that.

Any unqualified person will now be able to work on the design of a multi-storey building. No engineer will have to certify that

the structure of a building is safe, no architect or engineer will have to certify that the cladding of a building will stay on it, that it will not fall off into the middle of Queen Street. That demonstrates the absurdity of the change.

I urge the Government, or, if not the Government, the regulations committee, to investigate this matter in great detail. If the Government will not act, I hope that the regulations committee will move for the disallowance of the relevant Order in Council that was gazetted last Saturday. I hope that the matter can be fixed up very quickly, because I visualise great danger and hardship to many people in Queensland as a result of a lack of responsible design.

ADDITIONAL RIVER CROSSINGS, MACKAY

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.38 p.m.): In 1971, the Mackay Regional Study was completed. It was the first of its type in Queensland. One of its main purposes was not only to study the whole of the future urban environment of the area and the way it tied in with the topography of surrounding shire districts, but also to provide a road plan for the future of Mackay and districts. Included in that road plan was to be the solving of one of the biggest problems Mackay faced—and is continuing to face—namely, the problem of river crossings.

The first priority of that regional study, apart from work under way at that stage, was the building of a new roadway to be called Rocleigh Road, with the approaches to, and construction of, a new bridge to be called Rocleigh Bridge, as an additional crossing over the Pioneer River from the city of Mackay to the North Mackay area, at a then estimated cost of \$1,900,000.

One of the first questions that I asked in this Parliament in 1969 when I was initially elected related to additional crossings of the Pioneer River. I was told that a study would be set up to give the answers to this question. Again in 1971 the same answer came forward: crossings for the Pioneer River are under consideration in the regional study.

Between 1960 and 1970 the daily cross-river vehicular trips virtually doubled, from 10,000 to almost 20,000. Since that time, the number has almost doubled again. The stage has been reached in the city of Mackay where the peak-hour traffic on and off the Forgan Bridge, which is the only major river crossing in the area, is choking up every city intersection daily. Access between Mackay and the northern suburbs, including the harbour and port area and the industrial areas developing there, is being virtually blocked twice each day. It is becoming almost impossible for police, ambulance, fire and other rescue services to get to and from North Mackay from the city, where they are based, if an emergency arises.

The very economic life of businesses in the community of Mackay is now being affected by the traffic congestion resulting from the problems of our river crossings. The northern suburbs of Mackay are expanding five times faster than the Mackay city area. I refer to it as the Mackay city area because it is a very, very small local authority area. The expanding suburbs are in the Pioneer Shire Council. Mackay now has the worst local authority boundary problem in Queensland.

Certainly there are alternative river crossings. We have the Hospital Bridge, which is situated near the Mackay Base Hospital. It is a small, low-level bridge, which incidentally was broken before Christmas by the foolhardiness and foolishness of the Queensland Government; they completely put it out of action for six weeks when they put a 170 tonne weight on it, and destroyed it. That happened only a matter of weeks after the Minister for Main Roads introduced legislation in the House, at which time he said he would get square with all the people round the State who were breaking up main roads and breaking up bridges. Very soon after that, a load carried by the State Electricity Commission fairly belted up the Hospital Bridge!

Worse was to happen. The wet season set in. I compliment Main Roads workers for the way in which they set to and repaired that bridge. With the onset of an early wet season, within a matter of weeks three major crossings of the Pioneer River upstream from Mackay were damaged, some sections irreparably, and major traffic hold-ups are still being caused. I refer to the Balnagowan Bridge and the Marian Bridge. In addition, the Cattle Creek Bridge—Cattle Creek is the major tributary of the Pioneer River, further up the Pioneer Valley—was damaged also and is currently under repair.

The Pioneer River is very fast flowing—a very dangerous river during periods of high flow. It causes considerable damage to bridges crossing it.

If something happens to the Forgan Bridge at a time when the river is high and covering the Hospital Bridge, the alternative for people is to go some 25 miles upstream, if they can, in order to cross to the southern suburbs of Mackay. In fact, Mackay is even worse off than Hobart, which had its main bridge damaged fairly recently.

The situation becomes even more confusing when we consider a locality or stream known as Goose Ponds and Jane Creek, which divides the middle of the North Mackay area. After rain, if people are able to cross the Pioneer River, they find that they can get no further towards their homes. This is the result of another fiasco by the Main Roads Department. A new bridge was built at the Malcolmsen Street crossing of Goose Ponds some 10 or 15 years ago, but it was built 4 or 5 ft. too

low. After very little rain, the crossing is flooded and traffic flow is completely disrupted.

Last week-end, when the rain came down in buckets in Mackay and we had nearly 500 mm, the whole life-style of everybody in the area was completely disrupted, simply because no work is being done by the Main Roads Department to remedy the situation. Incidentally, at the time we were getting all this rainfall, the weather bureau was forecasting scattered showers and late afternoon thunderstorms! I would hate to see what would happen if rain had been forecast for the area. If the Federal Government is looking for ways to save money it could do so by putting the cleaners through the weather bureau in some respects, because the way it is going it is a complete waste of money.

Following my personal approaches to the Minister for Main Roads in the middle of last year, he gave me some of his time, when he was in Mackay for another purpose, to inspect the new export road which bypasses the Goose Ponds crossing in North Mackay and overcomes that particular problem. I give the Minister credit for supporting my submissions. He has even recommended to the Federal Government that it be declared an export road.

But what has happened to the Rocleigh Bridge? Its construction was to be commenced in 1975-76. When the present Minister for Mines and Energy had the Main Roads portfolio, he gave me that information in reply to a question. There were delays and, at a later stage, he informed me in 1974 that a commencement would be made in 1977. It is rather ironic that two successive Ministers for Main Roads represented the Mackay district for 17 years—I refer to the present Minister for Mines and Energy and his predecessor, Mr. Evans—yet we have some of the worst bridges and road problems anywhere in Queensland. I must say that they certainly did not do the right thing by their constituents. The current Minister for Main Roads is moving very fast to do some good main roads work at the Gold Coast.

It has been alleged that the construction of the Rocleigh Bridge cannot be commenced until a foundation design is prepared. About 12 months ago I visited the university, where a model study is being made of flooding of the Pioneer River. I was told that the foundations could be designed for the bridge and that the only delay concerned the approaches. But we still have further delays.

Because detailed designs and estimates have not been prepared, the cost of the work on the Rocleigh Bridge has not been included in the financial considerations for 1976-77. I cannot anticipate a start before 1978. That means it will not be completed before 1981—four years after what was

promised to be the absolute latest date. Goodness knows what is going to happen to the traffic in the Mackay area by then.

If anything should happen to the Forgan Bridge, which is deteriorating badly because of the additional traffic load it is carrying, we will have nothing by way of crossings between two major urban communities in Mackay. The Forgan Bridge now carries P.M.G. cables and the water. Recently a new P.M.G. cable was laid across it and traffic was disrupted for weeks.

The Minister was to come to Mackay for a meeting. He still has not given me a reply on this matter. He promised me in January that he would come and, fearful of saying that he is welshing on it, I believe that he must give me an answer very quickly for the benefit of the people of Mackay as to when he will be prepared to come and listen to their problems personally.

AMENITIES IN JERICHO SHIRE; RETIREMENT OF MRS. ELSIE LANGSTON, M.B.E.

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (12.48 p.m.): A very great Australian country woman has retired recently from the position of chairman of the Jericho Shire Council. I refer to Mrs. Elsie Langston, M.B.E. It would be very sad indeed if a tribute to her was not voiced from the floor of this House. This very wonderful person came to Jericho many years ago as shire clerk. Later she married the chairman of the Jericho Shire Council and subsequently she, too, became chairman.

Mrs. Langston is known to most country people and many people in the cities as a woman who has fought for the rights of the ordinary working person. I am very happy that I have been associated with this lady in trying to promote a better deal for country people. At all times she had the people and her shire at heart. Often she came to Brisbane to do what she could for the western people.

She was very much instrumental in helping the Jericho Shire Council to provide an open-air picture theatre in Jericho, which is run by the council. The idea was to give the country people somewhere to go on a Saturday night. She was very much behind the establishment of parks and the provision of amenities in the area. In all, she has been a very wonderful Australian. From the floor of the House I should like to wish this lady all the very best in her retirement and to let her know that the work that she has done to help so many people has not gone unnoticed. I wish her the very best of good luck.

The Jericho Shire contains the towns of Alpha and Jericho, the larger of the two being Alpha. The shire has an area of 8,385 square miles and a population of 1,420. Unfortunately, the population of the Jericho Shire has decreased by 5.59 per cent since 1966. That is somewhat disturbing to me because the people in this western area are

really wonderful people. Their hospitality has to be experienced to be believed. Many people in city areas could learn a lot from these wonderful folk.

Alpha has a State school, a hospital, a police station, a railway station, a railway maintenance centre and many other Government amenities. But I would like to see a better deal for the town. It badly needs more accommodation for teachers, a pre-school centre, and a place where school-children can learn some form of manual arts. The problem is, of course, that the area is not very large and it cannot provide the necessary numbers to make these facilities feasible. Something should be done to help the people in this area because it is not fair that children should be denied the opportunity to further their education.

I would also like to see a new hospital as the present one is, frankly, quite bad. The problem is that it is not possible for a doctor to go to Alpha, serve at the hospital, and make a lot of money in private practice. I do not know how to overcome this problem but something has to be done to provide better medical facilities for the people. Certainly a doctor at Alpha would not be remunerated as well as if he went to a town of twice the size.

The police station and residence at Alpha will be improved. Quite frankly, I would like to see a new one. It is very old and it needs considerable improvement. I shall be trying hard to bring that about. Only recently I received a deputation from the Jericho Shire Council on this matter.

The shire headquarters are at Jericho. I am very happy with the way in which the Government is trying to help with the education of pre-school children through an isolated parents or disadvantaged schools programme. There is a new railway station at Jericho, which was opened by the Minister for Justice. For those who are sick and need attention there is a bush nursing centre. More amenities definitely are needed at Jericho and whatever can be done to help the people there would certainly be appreciated by me and by them. A new Housing Commission home has also been built in the town.

Generally, the people are very unhappy because a branch of the T.A.B. has not been opened in their town. Certainly a T.A.B. centre may not pay in a town such as Jericho, but surely everybody in Queensland needs a bit of a go. It is a responsibility of the Government to provide the necessary money so that people in western areas can have amenities enjoyed by others. All I seek is a better deal for the people of Alpha and Jericho, although I appreciate what has been done.

I would also appreciate the carrying out of more work on the Drummond Range section of the road so that people are able to get to my area. I ask each Minister who has a

responsibility in these matters for his undivided support in trying to provide a better deal for these people.

PROBLEMS OF BEEF INDUSTRY

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (12.55 p.m.): Unfortunately, I can speak only very briefly about the beef industry as the debate finishes at 1 p.m. Let me commence by saying that during the plebiscite for endorsement for the seat I now hold I visited some 300 houses belonging to station owners, and of those 300 houses only five, I think, had been painted in the last 10 years. In my area there are probably only 10 to 12 families whose children are intending to return to the land after leaving school. Most of the people there whom I know have abandoned their annual holidays. At present it is very seldom, if ever, that one finds a beef producer visiting the local town. Fences are falling down throughout the area. No water improvements have been undertaken, and to my knowledge there is not one single dam sinker working now between Charters Towers and Mt. Isa.

The people themselves are living below what is federally defined as the poverty level in terms of purchasing power. A merchant in one town told me that he had a \$400 account for one of the big stations, which employed 35 or 40 men. He told me to look at the account, and I saw that there was no entry for that month.

Charters Towers is the centre of a big beef-producing area, and at the moment there are 400 people unemployed out of a total work-force of 2,100. That is an unemployment rate of 20 per cent. Honourable members will recall that I have quoted that figure previously in this House, and the reason for that is that the figure has remained constant ever since I entered this Parliament. This will just give honourable members a rough idea of the situation in the beef-cattle industry in this State. It has arisen because the price of beef has now levelled out at 20c per lb. A year ago it was 9c per lb, and five years ago it was 40c per lb. In other words, in the last five years the price has dropped by half. Honourable members should realise that these people were not particularly well off five years ago.

A Government Member: If you can get 20c.

Mr. KATTER: That's right. In fact, the price in the North now has fallen below 20c. During this five-year period there has, of course, been an increase in costs to these people and they have had to face a loss of 50 per cent in the purchasing power of their incomes. I would like anyone to go to a trade unionist, a professional man or a business executive in this town and say, "Will you take a halving of your income?" When honourable members like myself say

these things, people expect us to suddenly start putting our hand out and asking for subsidies and other sorts of help.

We have been told by many of our industry leaders that the situation has been brought about as a result of oversupply in the market, which is true. We lost the British market of 80,000 tonnes a year and the Japanese market of roughly 80,000 tonnes, which made up a third of our export market. In the space of three months, those markets vanished in one hit. Britain joined the Common Market, and Japan, to even up a balance of trade deficit, cut out imports of beef. This is what brought about oversupply. In the meantime, the plight of the producers has been made worse because they increased their herds to try to make a few extra dollars to meet the rent.

Our industry leaders have been telling us, "Sell to meet the market. If you are offered 19c, sell to meet the market, and if we continue selling at this price, because of the increase in consumption in Australia" (and there has been quite a considerable increase of some 60 per cent since the collapse of the beef industry) "then we will get rid of this oversupply problem." It is very important that honourable members appreciate that we have been doing that now for three years and the oversupply problem is far worse than it was three years ago. So all I can say to these so-called industry leaders is, "Go back to your books and look at the statistics and you will realise just how foolish your statements are."

We need more money. It can come from only one place, and that is the pocket of the consumers. All I can ask is that the beef producers of this State and the rest of Australia get themselves a minimum price scheme. They should act like trade-unionists and put a price on their product. This can be done very simply by setting up a marketing authority, and I most strongly urge the people of this State to establish one.

The House adjourned at 1 p.m.
