

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 1976

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Clean Waters Act Amendment Bill;
Parliamentary Commissioner Act Amendment Bill;
Constitution Act Amendment Bill;
Primary Producers' Assistance Act Amendment Bill;
Dairy Adjustment Program Agreement Bill;
Forestry Act Amendment Bill;
Medical Act and Other Acts (Administration) Act Amendment Bill;
Hospitals Act Amendment Bill;
Medical Act Amendment Bill.

INVESTIGATION BY OMBUDSMAN OF ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING THE AURUKUN PROJECT

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to advise honourable members that I have received from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations a report on his investigation into the Aurukun project. In a letter dated 6 April he said—

“Dear Mr. Speaker

“In accordance with Section 14 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1974–1976, I submit the Report on my investigation into the facts surrounding the Aurukun people to the proposed mining venture.

“I hand you with this letter the original and three copies of the Report.

“Yours faithfully

“D. W. Longland”.

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

“That the report be printed.”

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under the Metric Conversion Act 1972.

Orders in Council under—

Harbours Act 1955–1972.

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

Art Union Regulation Act 1964–1974.

Public Curator Act 1915–1974.

The Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959–1974.

The City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1967.

Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act 1923–1974.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1973.

The Soil Conservation Act of 1965.

Stock Act 1915–1974.

Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900–1973.

Regulations under—

Brands Act 1915–1975.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1973.

Accounts of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) for the year 1974–75.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. OPEN SEASON FOR DEER

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

(1) With reference to disturbing reports in the "Telegraph" of 31 March and "The Courier-Mail" of 1 April concerning an open hunting season currently applying to deer in the Brisbane Valley region, on whose recommendation was this decision made?

(2) Were local shire councillors and property owners consulted before it was taken and, if so, what were their recommendations?

(3) Has there been any approach from Brisbane Valley residents that the deer population constituted a menace which would justify the present open season?

(4) What precautions have been taken by police so that the open season is not used as the legal excuse for senseless mass slaughter of the animals?

Answers:—

(1) The recommendation from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, approved by the Governor in Council, for an open season on red deer is a genuine attempt to face up to the situation that at least 500 deer were being shot illegally in Queensland each year. They are not native animals and were introduced for hunting purposes. Properly controlled hunting seasons will assist the service to stamp out illegal poaching and uncontrolled destruction of the animals.

(2) Traditionally local authorities are not consulted concerning hunting seasons. In this case over 100 property owners were visited during the three-year survey which led to the recommendation for a hunting season. The response from property owners ranged from lack of interest to enthusiasm.

(3) Although many property owners regard deer as pests, the hunting season is not being held specifically for that reason. See answer to (1).

(4) This deer season will be the most rigidly policed hunting season Queensland has known. My colleague the honourable Minister for Police has made special police officers available to work with officers of my own service. He has also made the Police Department plane available for almost daily flights over the area. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that every means possible is being taken to ensure that native fauna is not interfered with, that the culling of the deer is undertaken responsibly by licensed hunters and that there is no disturbance to property owners.

2. NEW PORT OF BRISBANE AS COAL-EXPORT TERMINAL

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services—

(1) Has he seen the newspaper article indicating that the new port of Fisherman Island will be used as a major coal-export terminal?

(2) If this area is to be used for coal export, will bulk coal be stored in the new filled area or on the mainland?

(3) If the coal is to be exported from this site, has his department determined what method of transport will be used to bring coal to the new port?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) There has been no decision taken to export coal through the port of Brisbane. However, planning of Fisherman Islands will include a site for a coal terminal and stockpile area at the port site. Depending upon the facilities available, movement of coal to the port terminal could be handled by barge or railway.

3. SAND-MINING LEASES, AGNES WATERS

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

(1) In relation to what has become known as the "Agnes Waters Case", why was it decided to go ahead and grant the leases a few days before the Full Court was to hear an appeal on a mining warden's recommendation for the granting of the leases?

(2) Is the National Trust correct in its claim that the Government promised that the trust would be consulted and shown a copy of the mining company's environmental study before any decision was made and that this promise was not honoured?

(3) As both these questions not only involve conservation issues but throw

into doubt the Government's good faith, will he give a clear and concise explanation as to his action in these matters?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The question from the Leader of the Opposition has taken him a long time to draft, seeing it is based almost word for word on a newspaper article of 16 February.

In the matter of the granting of these sand-mining leases at Agnes Waters, my decision was not based on the recommendation of the mining warden alone. I had the benefit of the results of a comprehensive environmental impact study which had been prepared for the applicant by independent consultants. This was also referred to various advisory bodies for comment in terms of the Government's Procedural Manual for Environmental Studies.

My decision to proceed with a recommendation to Cabinet to grant the leases was taken before the Queensland Conservation Council sought the issue of a writ of mandamus challenging the warden's actions from the Supreme Court. I should point out that this action by the council was taken nearly six months after the warden's hearing. This challenge to the warden's hearing, which was only part of the administrative procedure in considering the lease applications, was in no way binding on the Government and provided no justification for delaying my recommendation to Cabinet.

The claim of the National Trust that it was denied an opportunity to be shown a copy of the environmental impact study is false. The history of the matter in relation to the trust's interest is well documented in the records of my department. This has been pointed out to the secretary of the trust, in writing, by letter of 17 February, one day after the newspaper article was published, but to date he has not been sufficiently courteous to reply.

4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE IN WOOL INDUSTRY

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

As the industrial dispute within the wool industry has produced the most serious situation that has ever confronted the industry, wool sales having been cancelled for an indefinite period resulting in wool-growers not receiving proceeds as would normally be anticipated and lending institutions such as pastoral houses also being very seriously affected as it would clearly be beyond their resources to provide funds of the extent required for an increasing number of wool-grower clients to carry on, will urgent consideration be given to an approach to the Commonwealth Government for a special allocation of funds to be made available

for distribution to wool-growers against wool shorn, to enable them to continue with their normal operations until the dispute is settled and sales can recommence, any special funds so provided to be directed through the traditional lending institutions?

Answer:—

One can only deplore the actions of the Storemen and Packers' Union in the current dispute, but I trust that good sense will soon prevail and that it will be settled quickly.

Since the commencement of the dispute five wool sales, including one in Brisbane, have been deferred indefinitely, and as a consequence approximately 193,000 bales of wool valued at over \$40,000,000 have been held up at various stages along the marketing chain. However, as the Australian Wool Corporation is holding large stocks of wool, it is doubtful whether the Commonwealth would give serious consideration to making special financial assistance to wool-growers at the present juncture.

In passing, I observe from this morning's Press that some wool-growers are contemplating a repetition of action taken by producers on previous similar occasions—that of loading their own product. I recall a similar instance a number of years ago when pig producers took this type of action at Murarrie and it achieved the desired result.

5. SHUNTING OF WAGONS AT WOOL-DEPOT SIDINGS

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

(1) Is he aware of injuries to workers who push grain wagons on uneven and subsidised tracks at wheat-depot sidings?

(2) How many such injuries were there in the last financial year?

(3) Will he take steps to have railway sidings at all wheat depots re-laid on an incline to obviate the need for men to shunt laden and unladen wagons by brute human force?

(4) If this is not feasible, will he provide tractors to shunt the wagons?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) I am informed that in the financial year 1974-75 there were nine cases in which men were injured during the movement of rail wagons at State Wheat Board installations when manpower was used. Claims were made in all cases for workers' compensation.

(3) Sidings normally have a grade one way or the other.

(4) The provision of mechanical means for moving wagons is the responsibility of the State Wheat Board. I understand that

winches are provided at many country sidings. Tractors are used permanently at port installations, and occasionally at country depots.

6. TRANSPORT OF TOOWOOMBA STATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dr. Lockwood, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Has he considered subsidising all school fares for trips of more than two miles from the Wilsonton and Rockville areas to Toowoomba State High School, Mt. Lofty, until a fourth high school is located in this developing area of Toowoomba and, if so, what was his decision?

(2) What effect will the granting of such a subsidy have on the State Budget?

(3) What weekly fares are paid by students travelling by bus from Gowrie Junction, Hermitage Road, Wilsonton and Rockville areas to the Toowoomba State High School at Mt. Lofty?

(4) What is the farthest distance which these or other children travel to school by bus, by private car, by bicycle or on foot?

Answers:—

(1) This particular case has not been brought to my notice previously and no consideration has been given to the matter. The question of reducing the present distance limitations has been refused on a number of occasions owing to lack of funds. Any reduction must apply for all children throughout the State.

(2) It would considerably increase expenditure on transport to school.

(3) Weekly fares paid by students travelling by bus from Gowrie Junction, Hermitage Road, Wilsonton and Rockville areas of Toowoomba to the Toowoomba State High School, Mt. Lofty, would be in the range \$1.40 to \$1.90.

(4) My department has no detailed figures but inquiries have shown that the greatest distance travelled by students would be eight kilometres. These students travel from their home to the city by bus and then another bus to school.

7. SALE OF SUGAR TO CHINA

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

(1) What amount of sugar has been sold by the Queensland Sugar Board to China in each of the last five years and what amount has been shipped to that country so far this year?

(2) Has the Government-to-Government agreement on the sale of sugar to China, which was negotiated almost two years ago, been ratified by refineries in China and the Queensland Sugar Board and,

if so, what are the details of that agreement and when will shipments under the agreement commence?

Answers:—

(1) The following were the sales of raw sugar to China in each of the last five years:—

1971, Nil;
1972, 36,000 metric tons;
1973, 64,000 metric tons;
1974, 30,000 metric tons;
1975, 36,000 metric tons.

To date, no sugar has been shipped to that country this year. There have been widespread market reports that significant quantities of sugar have been sold for 1976 shipment, but the Sugar Board and its marketing agent have refrained from commenting on these reports. Sales to China are customarily made on a confidential basis.

(2) No. Negotiations to implement a long-term agreement on a commercial basis with China were held in Peking in the first half of 1974, but talks were suspended at the suggestion of the Chinese authorities in June of that year. The Sugar Board's marketing agent has continued to maintain commercial contact with China with a view to resuming discussions on a long-term agreement at an appropriate time.

8. ATTITUDE OF COUNTRY PEOPLE TO CITY CULTURAL CENTRE

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Lamont**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

In view of criticism by some sections of the country community against the proposed expenditure of approximately \$5,000,000 a year to establish a cultural centre in Brisbane, which will be for the benefit of all Queenslanders, what contributions have been received over the past five years from stock owners towards the cost of veterinary services, etc., provided to them by the Department of Primary Industries and what additional contributions have been made to the Stock Fund from Consolidated Revenue and other sources of revenue provided by the dwellers of cities, towns and country areas?

Answer:—

As the honourable member is aware, the costs of the veterinary services to which he refers are met from the Stock Fund. This fund receives its credits from levies on the graziers, grants from Consolidated Revenue and very minor receipt items from some other sources. In the last five years from 1971-72 to 1975-76 inclusive, receipts to the fund to finance the service have amounted to \$26,100,000. Of this amount \$6,500,000, or about 25 per cent, has been contributed by the graziers with practically all the remaining 75 per cent

of \$19,600,000 coming from Consolidated Revenue—an average of nearly \$4,000,000 a year. This is one example of State revenues generally which are derived from all sources, city and country alike, being applied to a sectional service in supplementation of funds derived from the beneficiaries of the services which are, for various reasons including concessional treatment by the Government in times of depression in the industry, far below the level that is necessary to finance the service.

It contrasts sharply with the situation applicable to the proposed cultural centre, which was mentioned by the honourable member. In this case the funds for the construction will be derived largely from the proceeds of the Golden Casket. People from all over the State and beyond contribute to this and people from all over the State and beyond will have access to and enjoy the facilities of the new State cultural centre, which is, logically and appropriately, I believe, to be established in the capital city of the State, where about half of the population lives. Funds from this same source are available towards the cost of cultural centres constructed by local government authorities and community bodies in city and country areas.

9. CONTRACT FOR STEEL PIPES, PORT OF CAIRNS

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services—

In view of the conflicting information currently circulating regarding the manufacture, supply and delivery of tubular steel pipes for the A.N.L. roll-on, roll-off terminal in the Port of Cairns, tenders for the construction of which closed on 17 November 1975, can he give an assurance that local preference to Queensland industry will be extended, as recommended by the Cairns Harbour Board, or has the letting of the contract been deferred to allow the use of Japanese imported and manufactured pipe?

Answer:—

The honourable member will be aware that Cabinet has set down standards, which are reviewed from time to time and which shall be applied when evaluating tenders involving Government or Government-guaranteed funds. These standards include the extent of preference which shall be applied to Queensland, interstate and overseas industry and would be used to evaluate the tenders to which the honourable member refers. The letting of a contract in this case has been deferred by the Cairns Harbour Board pending the negotiation of a satisfactory agreement with A.N.L. concerning the operation and financing of the terminal ramp.

10. METHOD OF VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS

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

As Mr. P. Tucker of the A.L.P. was elected mayor and seven A.L.P. aldermen were elected in the recent council elections at Townsville with only 35 per cent of the vote, is any action contemplated to alter the method of voting at local authority elections to prevent, in future, any party receiving only 35 per cent of the vote from having 70 per cent of the aldermen elected?

Answer:—

The matter raised by the honourable member is under consideration.

11. UNION MEMBERSHIP FOR TEACHER AIDES

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

Will he investigate and comment on the demands frequently made on some teacher aides that they should join a union within one month, presumably under threat of dismissal if they fail to comply?

Answer:—

It is Government policy that Crown employees should be members of a registered industrial union. New employees are advised that they should join a registered industrial union within one month of taking up duty. Pay increases granted under industrial awards may be withheld from employees who are not members of a union.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ASSISTANCE TO INVESTORS IN SUSPENDED BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. BURNS: I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. In view of his reply to a question from me last week that he hoped to be in a position within a few days to report on suspended building societies and the fact that some societies told depositors during the last few days of last week that a statement would be made over the week-end, I ask: Can he now provide further information about those societies and, in particular, is he able to say whether investors who are facing ever-worsening financial hardship will be able to withdraw small amounts to relieve their urgent economic commitments?

Sir GORDON CHALK: Yesterday afternoon I indicated to the Press—and publicity has been given to it today—that it is proposed to introduce a Bill in the House tomorrow afternoon dealing with building societies. I indicated also that, during the introduction of that Bill, a statement would

be made relative to those societies which are suspended. I am not in a position to add any more at this point in time.

CAUSE OF GROCERY COST INCREASES

Mr. BURNS: I draw the attention of the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs to a newspaper statement—and I am sure he has read it—of Mr. Jack Butler of Butler and Staff that his company will be able to cut grocery prices by 3 per cent because of its low overhead. In view of Mr. Butler's statement, "Competition can only be stimulated because of our entry into what is virtually a monopolised area.", I ask the Minister: Does he agree that that statement by Mr. Butler refutes the claims frequently made by business interests that wages are the main sources of price rises and that in fact the continuance of monopolies and uneconomic management procedures are major factors in rising grocery costs?

Mr. CAMPBELL: There is no question but that the tremendous upsurge in wages in the year before last caused tremendous and concurrent increases in the cost of goods and services throughout the nation. That has been confirmed by official statistics and statements by responsible people in the trade union movement. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to draw a red herring across the trail by referring to monopolistic control of the distribution of grocery items. I welcome the advent of a further distributor in this very important realm. I am sure that the consumers will benefit as a result. That is the very essence of what we understand as free enterprise—something about which the socialists have no comprehension.

ACCESS TO NARANGBA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Mr. FRAWLEY: I ask the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs: In view of the fact that the Bald Hills-Burpengary bypass road separates the eastern and western sectors of the Narangba Industrial Estate near Kallangur, and that direct entry to the estate cannot be gained from the new highway, which is a limited access road, will he inform the House what steps are being taken to ensure that industrial expansion on the estate is not impeded?

Mr. CAMPBELL: This question is important because the State's development and acquisition costs to date have totalled over \$700,000 and the State has an additional interest by reason of the fact that it has built under the pioneer industries scheme three factory buildings worth almost \$250,000. It is also important to note that there are now seven industries on the estate. Another seven leases have been approved and many inquiries are under consideration. I am sure the honourable member will be pleased to know that a contract worth approximately \$221,000 for the construction

of an overpass bridge at Narangba has been awarded to a Brisbane company named Doval Constructions of Nundah. This overpass will link the two sections of the estate and it will be completed in January of next year. It will contain two spans of pre-stressed reinforced concrete. Its completion will allow a start in the 1976-77 financial year of developmental works on the eastern sector bordered by the new highway. To date most of the development on the 466 ha estate has taken place, as the honourable member is no doubt aware, on the western portion which has a frontage to the present Bruce Highway.

PREMIER'S PROMISES ON LAW AND ORDER

Mr. MARGINSON: I ask the Premier: With regard to his many promises, particularly the ones made to the electors of Queensland in his policy speech of 1972, to establish law and order in Queensland, and to his various statements on this matter since that time, and in view of the increase in the number of murders, bashings, rapes, robberies and other acts of violence, will he inform the House when he proposes to take the first step to carry out these promises that he made to the electors of Queensland?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The first thing I do, if the honourable member really wants to know, is plead with him and his colleagues to try to influence and restrain members of his own organisation who promote demonstrations and sit-downs and who have done everything they could to disrupt law and order. I am not sure whether the honourable member has himself been involved in some of these activities but there are others of his party who certainly have been. The first thing the honourable member should do is have a good look at himself and his organisation that promotes this type of conduct. That is where prevention should start and it is up to the honourable member to give a lead.

Mr. Marginson: You're a liar! You're not throwing accusations like that around. You're a dirty rotten liar!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw those remarks and apologise to the Premier.

Mr. Marginson: I was attacked by the Premier.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remarks and apologise to the Premier.

Mr. MARGINSON: Out of courtesy to you, Mr. Speaker, I do so.

COMPENSATION CLAIM BY DAIRY FARMERS AGAINST ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION

Mr. HARTWIG: No doubt the Minister for Mines and Energy is aware that, because of an electrical fault in the Rossmoya area of my electorate, many dairy farmers were

without electricity for 36 hours and, therefore, could not milk their cows or separate milk for that period, thereby suffering heavy loss of income. I ask the Minister:

1. Will he inform the Parliament if the dairy farmers so affected can claim compensation from members of the union involved, that is, the Electrical Trades Union, for that loss of income?

2. If not, is it not time that we as a Government gave some protection to vulnerable primary producers against militant trade unions?

Mr. CAMM: I, too, deplore the action of militant trade unions in holding a certain section of the community to ransom. By virtue of their occupation, these unionists are obliged to provide a service to the public during the week-end and at odd hours, and their award includes special payments to cover that. However, they have taken it upon themselves to impose an overtime ban, thus causing distress to many people in country areas. I know of instances in which people have had to unload deep freezers and transfer to another area in order to preserve foodstuffs. I was pleased to read in the newspaper this morning that the Federal Government is considering introducing a measure under which the provisions of the Trade Practices Act can be brought to bear on militant unions that are now causing so much distress in this State.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR SALE OF SECTION OF MACKAY-NETHERDALE BRANCH RAILWAY LINE

Mr. CASEY: I ask the Minister for Transport: Has the Railway Department entered into negotiations with the Marian Mill Co-operative Society Limited to sell to that mill the section of the Mackay-Netherdale branch railway line from Marian to Gargett? If such negotiations are successful, will the department close the remainder of the line from Gargett to Netherdale, and will sugar from Cattle Creek Mill at Finch Hatton have to be transported by road to Mackay Harbour?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: The matter is no further than being investigated.

EFFECT ON BUILDING SOCIETIES OF INTEREST RATE ON COMMONWEALTH BONDS

Mr. JENSEN: I ask the Premier: Is it not a fact that the Fraser Government's bond issue at 10.5 per cent and the recent bond issue at 9.5 per cent interest caused the present trouble with some of the building societies?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member would not expect me to be judge and jury in a situation which has caused a lot of harm and hurt to many people. No-one could say that. A number of factors brought about the situation that has been raised here. One was that the Leader of the

Opposition brought it out in the House. By ventilating it in the way he did, the problem escalated very greatly. Many of the ultimate consequences rest on his head.

IMPROVED NUTRITION PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOL-CHILDREN

Mr. DOUMANY: I ask the Minister for Health: Will he follow up his recent efforts in the area of improved nutrition programmes for Queensland school students by (1) investigating possible ways to encourage school tuck-shops to offer properly balanced menus, and (2) undertaking intensive promotion of the concept through visual aids, brochures, posters and other appropriate means?

Dr. EDWARDS: The food and nutrition programme of the Queensland Health Education Council has, I am delighted to say, been very well accepted throughout the State by parents and school-teachers as well as by the children themselves. I appreciate the honourable member's interest in this area and I assure him that we shall continue to implement this programme. We are offering to the whole State as well as to all parents and citizens associations suggested menus for tuckshops together with any other information that may be of value to them. I thank the honourable member for his support for this programme.

WORKS DEPARTMENT DEPOT, IPSWICH ROAD

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Is it a fact that the Ipswich Road depot of the Works Department will close down on 30 June 1976?

Mr. LEE: No.

ALLEGED INDEBTEDNESS OF RUSSELL J. HINZE

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Is he able to say whether the Russell J. Hinze, of Upper Coomera Road, Oxenford, who is listed in the White Mercantile Gazette of Saturday, 3 April, as having had a Supreme Court writ taken out against him by a company known as Reide (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. for a sum of \$20,307 plus interest is the same Russell J. Hinze who is the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads in this Parliament?

Mr. KNOX: I am not in a position to say.

TREATMENT OF LEUKAEMIA

Mr. LINDSAY: I ask the Minister for Health: With regard to the treatment of the disease leukaemia (a) is consideration being given to the installation of machines which will assist in the treatment of leukaemia and (b) how effective are these machines and do they represent a major breakthrough for leukaemia sufferers?

Dr. EDWARDS: I think that the honourable member is referring to a machine called

a celltrifuge. These machines are used in one aspect of the treatment of leukaemia. They have been released recently in other parts of the world. I think one of them is in operation in Sydney at the present time.

It is available for use in only certain types of leukaemia and certain phases of that treatment. For this reason I had my department look into this matter some time ago. I have since approved the ordering of two small machines, one each for the Royal Children's Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital. There are two other models of the machine and the Lions Leukaemia Foundation has assisted in the purchase of a machine which will be used at the Mater Hospital. There is a third more expensive type of machine, which my department is investigating at the present time.

I assure the honourable member that this machine is used in some phases of the treatment of certain types of leukaemia, that the department is well aware of the advances made in this particular activity and that the treatment given to our patients is equal in standard to that of any other treatment in Australia.

ALLEGED INSTRUCTIONS TO POLICE ON TRAFFIC BREACHES

Mr. MELLOY: I ask the Minister for Police: With reference to his call in "The Sunday Mail" of Sunday last for specific instances of pressure being put on police officers to record large numbers of traffic breaches, what guarantee is there that those who come forward will not be discriminated against in any way?

Mr. HODGES: No such order was issued. I have asked Mr. Callaghan to give me some information concerning the charge that he has laid. I am waiting for that information.

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

SUBCONTRACTORS' CHARGES 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 Subcontractors' Charges Act 1974 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

JURY ACT AND OTHER ACTS 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 Jury Act 1929-1972, the District Courts Act 1967-1976 and The Criminal Code each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

STATUS OF CHILDREN 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 remove the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock."

Motion agreed to.

SPORTING BODIES' PROPERTY HOLDING 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 Sporting Bodies' Property Holdings Act 1975 in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

ART UNIONS AND AMUSEMENTS 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 and regulate the conduct of art unions and the provision and conduct of commercial amusements, entertainment machines and billiard tables and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing): 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 Building Societies Act 1886-1975 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

PORT OF BRISBANE AUTHORITY 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 provide for the constitution of a Port of Brisbane Authority and its powers and functions; to provide for vesting in the Authority of assets and assumption by the Authority of liabilities and obligations, the establishment of a Compensation Reference Tribunal and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

CORONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.10 p.m.): I move—

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

The principal amendments proposed by this Bill and the reasons for those amendments have already been explained in some detail when this Bill was introduced. The provisions of the Bill which will empower a coroner to commit a person for trial on a charge of dangerous driving of a motor vehicle causing death will close the gap which has become apparent in the existing Act. Where the coroner is of the opinion that the evidence taken before him is sufficient to put a person upon his trial for such an offence, he will now have the power to commit for trial.

The proposed provisions which will prohibit the taking of photographs within the Coroners' Court or within the court precincts in cases where the consent of the coroner has not been obtained will equip coroners with the necessary powers to ensure that witnesses and relatives of a deceased person are not harassed or embarrassed whilst attending an inquest. I might mention that the Act already provides that the room or place in which an inquest is held shall be open to all members of the public. However, the coroner has power, if he considers it desirable in the interests of public morality, to exclude members of the public and he may also prohibit the publication in any newspaper of all or any evidence given at an inquest.

Although the functions, duties and responsibilities of the coroners throughout this State may not be fully appreciated by the vast majority of people, the role of the coroner is a very important one. The main characteristics of a coronial inquest is that it is a factual inquiry which is directed towards establishing when, where and how a death occurred. It is not directed to any specific criminal or civil purpose. The amendments contained in the Bill will ensure that

coroners have the necessary powers to fulfil their functions for the purposes of the Act and for the benefit of the community.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.12 p.m.): During the introductory stage I stated that I would be very interested to see the Bill printed because I wished to make a comparison between the Minister's recommendations and those of the Broderick committee, which brought down its report in 1971.

The Minister has proposed a number of changes here which are completely acceptable to the Opposition. The main amendment relates to the extension of the coroner's power under section 41 of the principal Act, which refers to committal for trial. It is in line with previous amendments to the Criminal Code in that the offence of wilful murder is to be deleted, but the important change is the inclusion of dangerous driving of a motor vehicle causing death as an offence for which the coroner will now be able to order a person to be committed for trial before a court of competent jurisdiction. This amendment is supported wholeheartedly by the Opposition because the offence can be likened to the existing provisions and because we believe it is a necessary requirement to seeing that justice is done.

Other amendments relate to:—

(a) The prevention of photographs being taken at inquest without official permission;

(b) The service of summons by registered post; and

(c) The extension of the definition of "medical practitioner" to cover all medical practitioners and specialists irrespective of where they practise.

These amendments also have the general backing of members on this side of the Assembly.

The existing section 52 of the principal Act gives power to the coroner to prohibit the publication of the whole or part of any proceedings at an inquest should he feel the circumstances require such prohibition. But one notes that section 52 does not specifically cover the aspect of photographs or the latest sophisticated machines used by the media, including television, so it is understandable why this clause is being proposed.

The other proposal to allow the service of a summons by registered post is generally in line with other amendments we have seen come before this Chamber where court documents may now be served by way of the post rather than personally. I note that this is not in line with section 56 of the Act as it relates to the service of other notices, orders and documents. It states that these documents are to be served by certified mail whereas the proposed amendment provides for service by registered mail. I admit that registered mail gives greater protection because it means that the summons will go

in a sealed bag. Every person who handles that summons must sign a receipt for it, so there is an on-going check.

One might wonder, Mr. Speaker, why the provision was not extended to include other notices, orders and documents covered by section 56, and the Minister may wish to comment on that. Admittedly, the cost of registered mail is about four times the cost of certified mail—I believe it is \$2, as compared with 50c—but it is important that the person involved actually gets the document. As all honourable members realise, any person may sign a receipt for certified mail; on the other hand, the addressee must sign for registered mail.

The extension of the definition of “medical practitioner” will overcome many of the problems that have been mentioned by me and by the Minister. Members of the Opposition do not see any cause for worry in the proposed provision. They believe that it is necessary in the light of cases that have been cited in the House.

Although the Opposition supports the amendment, as this is the first major review of the Act since 1958, I regret that the Minister did not give more consideration to other changes that have been recommended by the Broderick Committee and by other persons interested in law reform in Queensland.

It is to be noted that a Coroner's Court is constituted by a coroner or deputy coroner appointed under section 6 of the Coroners Act. Under the provisions of the Act, a justice of the peace may sometimes be called upon to act as a coroner and, therefore, have the responsibility to inquire into the cause of death in certain circumstances. I will not enumerate those circumstances; they were mentioned at the introductory stage. Admittedly, it is usually the stipendiary magistrate or the clerk of the court who acts in the capacity of coroner, but the Act states quite clearly that each of those persons has the power to appoint a justice of the peace as his deputy. A quick glance through the Coroners Act, Mr. Speaker, is enough to convince anyone that the function of the coroner is not a simple task, and I doubt very much whether many justices of the peace would voluntarily accept appointment as deputy coroner. If that is the case—and I believe it is—the Act should be amended to remove any reference to justices of the peace.

It is very interesting to note that in the recent departmental publication titled “Duties, powers and responsibilities of a Justice of the Peace”, not even a passing reference is made to the functions of justices under the Coroners Act. So, although I realise, of course, that it is only a very small document and does not cover the complete role of justices, it would seem that the officers of the Department of Justice think that the role of a justice of the peace as it relates to the Coroner's Court is not a major

one and that the department itself does not expect justices of the peace to perform coronial duties.

It could be argued that the Coroner's Court is really a community court, and although I adhere to that argument, I do not think there is very much merit in having legislative provisions that are never applied. The Broderick Committee, to which I referred earlier, also looked at this question, and it recommended that coroners should be full-time officers with legal qualifications. In Queensland, in the main that requirements is met, because in this State clerks of the court and stipendiary magistrates, all of whom, with the exception of one person, are qualified solicitors, are used as coroners.

The committee went further and suggested that it must be recognised that coronial inquiries are based on what is known as equisitorial procedure, as opposed to the normal legal process which involves the procedure of advocacy. After all, the coroner must commence and conduct the inquiry by summoning witnesses and calling evidence; moreover, he must have some expert legal knowledge. That would certainly be of benefit, and those persons who have appeared in the Coroner's Court realise how beneficial it is to have legal expert knowledge, especially when legal representatives of interested parties are also assisting at the inquest. Even though that is the situation, the suggestion still is that justices of the peace should be in a position to act as a coroner's deputy. I do not believe that they should, and the Broderick Committee came down very hard against that suggestion.

It is time to again review the role of justices of the peace. Because of the points that I have made, they should not be involved in coronial inquiries. It is important that coroners should be full-time officers and have legal qualifications.

At the introductory stage I also raised the question of appeal, because it is an area in which relatives of a deceased person face some difficulty. If they firmly believe that some type of coronial inquiry should be carried out, they have the right to ask the coroner to carry out such an inquiry, but he may refuse if he believes the grounds are unreasonable. Under the Act those persons can go to the Minister. As we know, the Minister is usually advised by the coroner, and so we come to this impasse.

It would seem that there is one easy way out of it. When a request for a coronial inquiry has been refused, or a request for a reopening of an inquest has been refused, there should be some right of appeal. It would seem to me that such a right of appeal could lie to the District Court. That could cover all instances of refusal of reopening or of original inquiry. The District Court could be the area for hearing appeals when there is *prima facie* evidence of substantial error in the proceedings or serious misconduct which may have affected the findings.

There is a need for some type of appeal. If we had that we would overcome many of the complaints about coronial inquiries.

My final point relates to another suggestion brought down by the Broderick Committee. It is a very important proposal. The suggestion is that if at any point in an inquest a coroner perceives that the evidence is incriminating an identifiable individual, he should terminate the inquest and announce in neutral terms that he will refer the papers in the case (in England) to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the equivalent of the Crown Law Office in Queensland.

Section 41 (i) of the Queensland Act gives the coroner power to commit a person for trial in the following matters if the evidence is sufficient: murder, manslaughter, aiding suicide, an indictable offence relating to a fire or any indictable offence in connection with the disappearance of a person.

That procedure can be very damaging to the defence of a person charged with an offence, and it could prejudice that person's having a fair trial. Under section 34 the coroner is not bound by the rules of evidence. It was mentioned in the introductory debate that he can accept hearsay evidence, or what would otherwise be inadmissible evidence. Consequently a person could be committed who would not normally be committed for trial in an ordinary Magistrates Court hearing. It is important that we realise that at a normal committal hearing the Crown has an obligation to present all the evidence which will be presented at the trial. However, that is not so at a coronial inquiry. It would seem that there needs to be a review of the procedure when evidence is brought forward.

The Broderick Committee report recommends that some announcement should be made in neutral terms and the papers handed over to the Crown Law Office. Admittedly, in Queensland when this circumstance does arise, the matter is taken up by the Crown and the coronial inquiry is held over or suspended until the person concerned has been committed for trial. That is an important recommendation. I do not know whether it has been considered by the Crown Law Office. It would seem that now that we are reviewing the Coroners Act, we should do it properly. I recommend that the Minister look into the points I have raised.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.24 p.m.), in reply: The suggestions made by the honourable member, which came from the report he referred to, are under continuous review. There are still some administrative problems in implementing some of those suggestions, but they will be considered further.

Mr. Wright: What about the right of appeal? That seems to be a reasonable one.

Mr. KNOX: I must confess that in my limited experience the need for any appeal has not arisen. It is true that people have been concerned and have wanted to have inquiries reopened or inquiries held when it

had been decided not to hold them. I have seriously considered all those requests, not that there has been a great number of them—

Mr. Wright: On what do you base your judgment?

Mr. KNOX: I obtain from various quarters all the advice that I think is necessary to obtain. Usually the request comes through a solicitor, who supports it with information that he feels is relevant. On a number of occasions I have granted the request. Many matters have to be taken into consideration. It would seem to me that at face value it would be clumsy to have some sort of appeal which would perhaps involve relatives in distressed circumstances in a lot of extra costs in having to go through a form of appeal which may not give them the satisfaction they are seeking, anyway.

I feel that the present procedures are quite humane. They are also discreet, and the people concerned are not placed in any difficulty. The information is provided for me after exhaustive investigation, and the decision ultimately made by me as to whether the matter should be reopened or not is arrived at after careful consideration. I know of no circumstances where an appeal to a District Court would have led to a different decision, and I am sure that in a number of circumstances such an appeal could have led to a lot of distress and extra costs to the people concerned.

As to the difference between registered post and certified mail, I bring to the attention of the House the fact that under the Acts Interpretation Act the term "registered post", when used in any Act, includes the words "certified mail". The terms are to all intents and purposes synonymous.

Motion (Mr. Knox) 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.

Bill reported, without amendment.

PICTURE THEATRES AND FILMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.28 p.m.): I move—

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

During the introduction of this Bill the honourable member for Rockhampton made a request that I examine and consider the interpretation of section 8 of the Act to see whether the Picture Theatres and Films Commission can determine the frequency and type of films that are shown to people in Queensland theatres.

I would again point out to the honourable member that the Picture Theatres and Films Act is not concerned with the types of films shown in picture theatres. The commission, in making its determination upon an application for the establishment of new or additional picture theatres, may specify in that determination that the applicant will exhibit films in the picture theatre with such frequency of exhibition as the commission may so specify. This provision is not directed towards the frequency of a particular type of film but is directed towards the frequency or number of nights per week that films are required to be exhibited in that picture theatre.

It will of course be realised that it might be reasonable to require a picture theatre in a small country town to exhibit films perhaps on only two nights per week but to require a theatre in a city to exhibit films for morning and afternoon sessions as well as night sessions for six days per week.

The honourable member for Rockhampton has also raised the question of the standard of services provided by picture theatres. In 1974 the Act was amended to equip the commission with the necessary powers to require repairs and the like to picture theatres, the furniture and fittings and the projection equipment. All complaints which are received by the commission concerning these matters are thoroughly investigated and action taken where necessary. Picture theatres are required to be licensed by local authorities and the local authorities also exercise some supervision and control over picture theatres. The standard of food is a matter which is controlled by local authority health inspectors.

An examination of the Bill will show that most of the provisions are simply tidying-up amendments and the necessary amendments following the transfer of the administration of the Act from one Minister to another.

It is considered reasonable for the costs of advertising applications under the Act to be paid by the applicant. The Bill will give effect to this proposal.

Members of the Picture Theatres and Films Commission will now be appointed by the Governor in Council for a term not exceeding three years. It will be noted that other boards, tribunals and committees performing similar functions are now appointed by the Governor in Council and not by commission in Her Majesty's name. The present members of the commission will be deemed to have been appointed for a term of three years from the date of the commencement of this Bill.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.31 p.m.): Opposition members accept the Minister's explanation about the intent of the legislation before us. It is machinery in nature. We do not oppose limiting the term of commission members to three years; nor do we oppose their appointment by the Governor in Council.

The Minister made some reply to remarks of mine at the introductory stage about the frequency of films. I certainly hope we can do something about this. The previous Minister for Local Government said that it did not come within the ambit of the Censorship of Films Act. Now we are told that it does not come within the ambit of the Picture Theatres and Films Act. It must surely be subject to the provisions of some Act. I hope that somewhere along the line there is some type of authority to govern the frequency of exhibiting certain types of films.

I could add that there is a need for controlling the theatre monopoly in the State. While an investor has the right to buy as many theatres as he might desire in order to improve his output and therefore increase his profits, such action is not always in the interest of consumers. In Brisbane at the moment a perusal of the papers reveals that as many as nine theatres in the area are showing the same film, because they are all part of a chain. I am not sure that the community is receiving an adequate service. However, that is outside the amendments mentioned. We support the amendments proposed by the Minister.

Motion (Mr. Knox) 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.

Bill reported, without amendment.

DISTRICT COURTS' AND MAGISTRATES COURTS' JURISDICTION BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.33 p.m.): I move—

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

The object of this Bill is to increase the civil jurisdiction of the District Courts and Magistrates Courts.

The honourable member for Rockhampton has expressed some concern that the proposed increase in the Magistrates Courts jurisdiction may be a little too high. The present civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts is \$1,200 and has remained unchanged since 30 September 1954. From 30 September 1954 to the present time the Queensland male basic wage has increased by 150.2 per cent and the Brisbane Consumer Price Index has increased by 168.1 per cent. The proposed increase to \$2,500 represents an increase of 108.3 per cent and is considered to be justified and reasonable. It is interesting to note that late in 1975 New South Wales increased the jurisdiction of their Courts of Petty Sessions from \$500 to \$2,000.

The increases proposed in both the District Courts and the Magistrates Courts are based on the inflation which has taken place since the last increases. The proposed increases therefore do nothing more than take care of the greater part of the loss of money value through inflation.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.35 p.m.): No-one doubts that the inflationary spiral has created a need for an increase in the jurisdictions of the Magistrates Court and of the District Courts. It was mentioned prior to this debate that there was a need for uniformity, especially as it relates to the District Courts where civil jurisdiction in all actions will now extend up to the \$15,000 limit. This is certainly warranted.

I was hoping that the honourable member for Ashgrove would speak to this debate because we discussed the problems that arose with certain actions that were limited. This came back to industrial and other actions. The Bill is welcomed generally by the members of the legal profession to whom I have spoken and it should be in the interest of plaintiffs.

The Minister said that I expressed concern about the jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts. My concern dealt not only with the increase from \$1,200 to \$2,500 (which is in excess of a 100 per cent increase) but also with the greater load being placed on the Magistrates Courts. Admittedly the inflationary spiral has a bearing on keeping some things in perspective; but it must be realised that a magistrate acts also as a coroner and in the Small Debts Court, which the Minister introduced with our whole-hearted support. The magistrate also deals with local government problems. Indeed he carries a huge work-load. It concerns me that, in increasing the civil jurisdiction to the amount mentioned, we will really load down the magistrate. The obvious answer is to increase the number of magistrates. Whether this will be done I do not know but it should exercise the minds of the Minister and his departmental officers.

We should do something about the District Courts work-load, too. It has been mentioned before; I have read it in the newspapers and I have heard it mentioned here by District Court judges that they have a huge load to carry. Legislation was introduced to allow the number of District Court judges to be increased without the Minister having to come back to this Parliament. This was supported at the time because we considered that it should be incumbent upon the Minister to look at the situation existing at any time and determine whether an increase in the number of judges was required.

We have two things done here. We have made the provision for increasing the number of District Court judges open-ended, as it were, and we are now increasing the civil jurisdiction of the Magistrates Courts. I wonder whether in protecting Peter we will prejudice Paul. This should be looked at

and if any problem arises, no doubt the Minister will find ways to overcome it. One would surely be to increase the number of magistrates.

Other than that, the Opposition supports the proposals although it expresses some concern about the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Courts.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.38 p.m.): This Bill is one of, shall I say, a continuing number. At one time a magistrate had virtually no jurisdiction at all. He could fine a person £10 and that was the limit. He could send someone to gaol for about a month. Since those days, from time to time, the law has been amended to give magistrates more power.

Unfortunately, we have not acted as we should have done. We have not ensured that magistrates were free to exercise the power we have given them because, over the head of every magistrate there is a cloud of fear. No matter what he does in the exercise of his duties, acting sincerely, honestly and in accordance with his knowledge and reading of the law, over him hangs the spectre of a District Court judge completely nullifying all that the magistrate is doing. That is an absolutely monstrous state of affairs and I am astonished that members of this Assembly who consider themselves to be champions of freedom should allow this situation to be perpetuated.

Mr. Wright: But you agree with the right of appeal?

Mr. AIKENS: There is no right of appeal against the judge.

Mr. Wright: You agree that there should be freedom to appeal?

Mr. AIKENS: Of course there should be. But I shall take it a little further.

We are discussing the District Courts' and Magistrates Courts' Jurisdiction Bill. It would needs weeks and weeks of research to find out just what this Bill does amend. All that honourable members get is the notation that a number of sections are to be amended. We have to look up the sections and work out how the amendments alter the sections.

I shall try to see whether I can initiate some thought processes in the minds of some of the new members about Magistrates Courts and District Courts. A person goes before the Magistrates Court on a charge of, let us say, driving under the influence of liquor. That is one of the most prevalent offences today. The magistrate hears the case, judges him on the police evidence, the breathalyser test and the demeanour of the witnesses in the witness-box, and decides, in accordance with the law as passed by this Parliament, that he is guilty. He punishes him with a stiff fine and, of course, the suspension of his licence to drive. Most people then really believe that the job has been done. Most Government members of this

Parliament, of course, seem to be more concerned with stabbing in the back members of the other party to the coalition than with getting on with the job and making this State a better and safer place in which to live.

What most people do not know, and what is one of the great travesties of the law, is that a person convicted, fined and punished, with his licence suspended, can immediately go round the corner to the nearest District Court and ask a District Court judge to quash the conviction, fine and suspension and, in addition, award substantial damages or costs against the Crown. In such a situation, can a magistrate feel secure in his position? Can he feel that he has a responsible job that he must carry out honestly and sincerely?

There was a case in point recently in Townsville. A fellow drove round a corner on two wheels, right off the bitumen, spraying gravel to the four winds of heaven. A policeman stopped him and made him take a breathalyser test, the result of which was way up in the stratosphere. This fellow appeared before the magistrate and, in view of the breathalyser test and the policeman's evidence that he virtually fell out of the car, he fined him what appeared to him to be the pretty substantial sum of \$350 and suspended his licence for 15 months.

That drunk immediately went round the corner to a District Court judge who said, "I'm not a bit interested in what happened after the policeman pulled up this motorist." He was, of course, obviously as full as a boot. The judge said, "I'm not interested in the fact that the breathalyser test was up in the stratosphere. I'm not interested in anything that happened after the policeman pulled up this motorist. I'm backed in my opinion by the opinion of another District Court judge in a case on the South Coast on one occasion." I think we can guess what would happen there.

Even though this motorist drove round a corner on two wheels, going right off the bitumen and spreading gravel to the four winds of heaven, the District Court judge considered that that was not sufficient justification for the policeman's suspicion that he might have been under the influence of liquor. The District Court judge said, "In my opinion the policeman had no right to pull this man up, because he obviously was not driving as a drunken man would drive." That is what he said despite the fact that the policeman's action was amply justified by the breathalyser test and the man's actions after he was pulled up.

A District Court judge gave that decision. He quashed the conviction and fine and awarded costs of \$140 against the Crown which the Minister for Justice, as the responsible Minister, will have to pay. There is no appeal against the decision of a District Court judge; like the law of the Medes and the Persians, it stands immutable, and magistrates must follow it. A District Court

judge can say, "I don't care how the motorist drove round a corner, how he was driving his car or what he did after a policeman pulled him up. I'm not interested in anything that transpired after he was pulled up." What a monstrous state of affairs that is! In that situation, how can we expect magistrates to carry out their duties as we expect them to be carried out? How do honourable members expect magistrates to go onto the bench and say, "Well, I am going to do my duty honestly and sincerely in accordance with the law as made by the Queensland Parliament?"

They do not have a chance to do their job in accordance with the law as made by this Parliament. They have to do their job in accordance with the queer mental quirks and idiosyncracies of a District Court judge before whom the convicted man will go on appeal. I put that case up, although perhaps I am wasting my time.

I have watched the new members of this Parliament over the past 12 or 15 months. Some of them appear superficially to be quite eager. A few of them appear superficially to be intelligent, and for all I know they might be—I have not had an opportunity to judge them fully on that particular point—but I know that they are more concerned with the opportunity to run the dagger in between the shoulder-blades of a member of the National Party or the Liberal Party, depending entirely upon which party they themselves belong to, than they are with getting on with the job of protecting the people of Queensland against monstrous decisions such as the one I have referred to. For all I know, the Minister for Justice might feel that this is not quite right. He might believe—I hope he does—that it is his duty to protect his magistrates against this sort of thing, but I know just how far the Minister for Justice would go if he wanted to do something about it in his own party. I know that the lawyers in his own party would not let him, for a start, and I know that the back-room lawyers in his own party would not let him, for a start. I know that the back-room lawyers in the National Party—if there are any—would not let him and I know that the lawyers of the D.D.P.—the drunken-drivers' party, the A.L.P.—would not let him do anything about it.

What about ordinary citizens of Queensland who are run down and maimed and killed on the roads? What about the little kids who are spreadeagled all over the road? I saw one a little while ago. His leg was in one place, part of his hand was in another place and his stomach, entrails and brains were splattered all over the bitumen. What about people like that? Those are the people I want to protect, if I possibly can.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to raise this matter. We will never get the justice from magistrates

that they want to give us and that we are entitled to until we remove from them the threat that is always hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles in the shape of a District Court judge who can, and unfortunately often does, upset, with no appeal against him, all the honest and sincere decisions and judgments that they make.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.48 p.m.), in reply: First I want to deal with the matter that the honourable member for Rockhampton raised regarding the extra work-load of magistrates. In relative terms, of course, since 1954 the work-load in the Magistrates Courts should have been declining but, with all the new types of offences, particularly motor vehicle driving offences, in absolute terms the work-load has been increasing. But, indeed, if each year since 1954 to the present time the jurisdiction had been changed in order to keep pace with changing money values—in other words, to keep the type of work in the Magistrates Courts consistent—then, of course, in absolute terms there would have been an increase in the work-load. But the situation has been changing similarly in the District Courts because of the lack of change of the jurisdiction and I think it would be fair to say that many District Court judges would be dealing with—I am using this term in its context—trivial cases today which in 1954 were dealt with in the Magistrates Courts.

Mr. Aikens: I hope the bloke you sent up to North Queensland works a lot better than he looks.

Mr. KNOX: I am pleased that the honourable member thinks he might excel himself in North Queensland. I presume that he will.

Mr. Aikens: We will wait and see.

Mr. KNOX: And will the honourable member be good enough to give us an annual report on his progress up there?

Mr. Aikens: I will be looking after the little people while you look after the toffs.

Mr. KNOX: Let me deal with the little people and with the question raised by the honourable member for Townsville South. I have a great deal of respect for his judgment and also for his great experience. The House would be the poorer without him, because from time to time he is able to unburden his soul and give honourable members the benefit of his experience.

I wish to speak particularly about the little people. The honourable member for Townsville South referred to the spectre of the District Courts hanging over the magistrates. Let us assume, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one of the people about whom the honourable member for Townsville South is concerned believes that the proceedings in the Magistrates Court have been prejudicial to him and that in fact he believes himself to be either innocent of the charge or not

entitled to receive such a severe punishment as he has received in the Magistrates Court. Because of the existence of superior courts, that little person, if I may use the words used by the honourable member for Townsville South, has the opportunity of having his situation reviewed in another place.

Mr. Aikens: Don't you think that if there were an appeal against District Court judgments in these cases, District Courts would not act as stupidly as they do?

Mr. KNOX: I do not believe that District Courts act stupidly. Merely because one court decides that there should be an alteration in the punishment should not lead one to assume that the first court acted incorrectly; other matters have to be considered. After all, we are talking about the rights of the little people—the rights of citizens—not the rights of judges, and I am somewhat surprised that the honourable member does not support the existing judicial system instead of attempting to throw cold water on it. Indeed, its very existence protects the rights of little people in the community when they are faced with what can be, for them, the rather serious consequences of their social indiscretions. That must be kept in mind. Indeed, in some countries of the world magistrates' decisions are absolute and not subject to any review. The absence from our system of the check and balance now in it would lead to what I believe would be gross injustices, and I am sure that, on reflection, the honourable member for Townsville South would agree with that, too. The mere existence of a superior court leads those who have jurisdiction in the lower courts to keep in mind that they are subject to check and balance in the same way as many other institutions in the community are subject to it.

Mr. Aikens: When District Courts are concerned, you think the sky is the limit; they can do what they like, when they like and how they like.

Mr. KNOX: That is a view with which I do not agree. I realise that the honourable member has a fixation about judges, but there is no way in the world that, after all these years, I am going to change—

Mr. Aikens: I rise to a point of order. Believe it or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all the years that I have been serving the people—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member will state his point of order.

Mr. Aikens: I have actually known three or four good judges.

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

Mr. KNOX: If the honourable member took a little more trouble and got to know the remainder of the judges—apart from

the three he knows—he would find that they are all excellent people.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 24, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (12.56 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I wish to assure honourable members that when I rose to reply at the introductory stage, I did so only after being informed that there were no other speakers, and I understand there was an agreement between the Government and Opposition that honourable members were desirous of studying the Bill before debating its ramifications at length. Now that honourable members have had the opportunity to study the Bill in detail, I am sure the second-reading debate will raise a number of interesting issues.

I want to stress that this Government is not bent on denying the public the use of their private motor vehicles, but recognises the need for constraint at certain times and in certain places, namely, peak periods in the central business district and nearby areas. The private motor vehicle has had a significant impact on our life-style, but at the same time there is a growing need for better-integrated public transport—public transport that will serve the needs of all members of the community. The Metropolitan Transit Authority will work in the interests of the community to ensure the provision of this efficient system of public transport.

Through sheer necessity to put the record straight, I find that I must contest much of what was said in the introductory debate by the honourable member for Lytton. As the honourable member for Merthyr pointed out, he came into the Chamber armed with a batch of Press clippings, and it was unfortunate that some of what he quoted appeared to contradict rather than support the case he was attempting to argue. With great respect to members of the Press, some of the sources the honourable member quoted from were newspapers, which from time to time tend to engage in speculation.

The honourable member for Lytton mentioned that this Government had at one time promised to take over the Brisbane City Council buses. I have been advised by the Commissioner for Transport that a thorough search of Transport Department files failed

to produce any such reference to a Government take-over of the city council buses—it just does not exist! It would appear that the honourable member obtained his information from a speculative newspaper article published on 22 June 1972. The Government is quite prepared to answer statements made by Ministers and to face up to public debate on such issues, but we cannot possibly accept the responsibility for every speculative statement which appears in the Press.

The Opposition Leader made a belated but unsuccessful attempt to score political points by referring to unfulfilled promises. He said we could not blame the former Labor Government for broken promises, because when these promises were made the A.L.P. had not been elected.

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

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: Before the luncheon adjournment I pointed out that the Leader of the Opposition, in his speech at the introductory stage, had attacked the Government and relied on speculative newspaper articles. I also said that he had made a belated and unsuccessful attempt to score political points by referring to what he termed unfulfilled promises. He said that we could not blame the former Federal Labor Government for broken promises, because when those promises were made the A.L.P. had not been elected.

This is where the honourable member's argument back-fires, because as a result of the A.L.P. gaining the Federal Treasury benches in 1972 the promises which had been made in good faith became impossible to implement.

In the 1972 Federal election campaign, both the Liberal and Labor parties promised in their platforms financial assistance to the States for urban public transport, yet we had to wait until August 1974 before the A.L.P. Government passed the States Grants (Urban Public Transport) Act, which ratified the State-Commonwealth agreement for the programme of public transport upgrading. It was the late date at which this agreement was ratified that caused the delay in start of these works.

Furthermore, the decision by the A.L.P. Government not to authorise any additional new projects for the 1975-76 financial year has meant a further delay to the programme. It is not possible to plan such a massive public transport programme as ours on a stop-go basis; we must plan several years in advance and it is essential to have continuity of funding. These are the reasons why all the plans made by this Government in the early 1970s cannot be achieved overnight.

Considering that this Government only had confirmation of the Commonwealth's intention to support the programme as late as August 1974, I believe that much has been achieved in the intervening months.

For the benefit of honourable members opposite, let me reiterate what I said when introducing the Bill—the construction of the

cross-river rail link is progressing steadily; interchange facilities at a number of suburban stations have been completed or are nearing completion; essential preliminary electrification works are under way and new buses are now being added to the Brisbane City Council's fleet.

Again, the honourable member for Lytton raised our shelving of the previous State Government's hotch-potch electrification proposals. And again I find myself in a position where I must repeat for his benefit that what we inherited on coming to office in 1957 was nothing more than a piecemeal collection of capital works, without even a hundred yards of overhead wiring in evidence.

The former A.L.P. State Government had no scheme completed which would benefit the public let alone result in an effective electrified system—and that was after considerable funds had been expended.

In reviewing this piecemeal collection, the Government decided to utilise available resources to dieselise the entire Queensland railway system instead of pouring more money into our predecessors' so-called electrification scheme. This decision was not taken lightly—in fact the decision was made on the advice of internationally acclaimed consultants.

Perhaps the most significant comments the honourable member for Lytton made concerned the suggestion that the new authority is nothing more than existing organisations in a new guise.

I do realise, of course, that the honourable member did not have the opportunity to study the Bill before he spoke.

However, full marks must go to the honourable member for Merthyr, who fully appreciates that the proposed authority will be able to exercise wider powers than any of the existing bodies or departments.

In particular, the Metropolitan Transit Authority will have powers and responsibilities in respect of transport planning and will consult with other planning authorities in formulating its plans. The authority will be empowered to consider the various modes of public transport in the declared region, both in relation to one another and in relation to private transport. It will also have the responsibility of co-ordinating these various modes in a way which is not conferred on any of the existing instrumentalities. It is the Government's intention to give the authority these wider powers so it will be able to develop more economical and efficient systems of public transport not possible at present by existing bodies.

The Leader of the Opposition made a special point of comparing the Metropolitan Transit Authority with the State Transport Department. In this respect, the functions of the two are distinctly different. The new authority will be responsible for formulating and recommending programmes to develop public transport and will be empowered to enter into agreements with operators. On

the other hand, the responsibilities of the Commissioner for Transport are more of a semi-judicial nature and relate to a greater extent to the regulation of transport operators.

I believe I should reiterate that one of the underlying considerations in the drafting of this Bill was the Government's awareness of the contribution made by different public transport operators to the over-all public transport scene and the need for future flexibility rather than strict adherence to any rigid policy.

As I previously outlined, the Government is today providing considerable financial support for public transport in and around Brisbane, and it is prepared to continue this policy. However, this does not necessarily mean that it will accept financial responsibility for every service which happens to be operating at present. In particular, we as a responsible Government do not believe taxpayers' funds should be used in subsidising public transport services where there is wasteful competition.

For these reasons, the Bill has been deliberately drafted in a way that requires the authority to formulate programmes with recommendations to the Government and to implement such programmes as are considered acceptable and beneficial to the public.

The honourable member for Lytton also suggested that there might be limitations on the types of recommendations that the authority can make. I wish to assure him that there will be no such limitations on the proposals which the authority may put forward. I make no apologies for saying that neither the authority nor the Government is committed to pick up the deficit on any public transport service without being satisfied that the service is operating efficiently and economically and fulfilling a public requirement.

I thank the honourable member for Merthyr for his references to the public transport role of ferry services on the Brisbane River. I share his view that this mode of public transport is important in the over-all transport scene and I wish to acknowledge his efforts in promoting ferry travel.

At the introductory stage I gave a very comprehensive outline of the Bill. In moving its introduction I covered most of the important aspects of the proposed Metropolitan Transit Authority and outlined why such an authority is necessary. I had hoped that more than two speakers would be available at the introductory stage; but I have since learned that several honourable members desired to comment at this stage. However, as I said earlier in my speech, I understand there was an arrangement between the Government and the Opposition that the Bill be printed as quickly as possible. It was my desire to allow it to lie on the table until the second-reading stage. I have done that for as long as possible.

Mr. JONES: (Cairns) (2.24 p.m.): If legislation could cast shadows and if the ghosts of proponents of measures such as this could be heard, I am sure raucous and ribald laughter would assuredly be heard in the corridors of this Parliament—laughter that we would recognise as coming from Jack Duggan, for surely it was his foresight over a long period that led to the formulation of this legislation, even at such a late stage. The design and concept of the measure we are now debating were undoubtedly initiated by him during his term as Minister for Transport.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: There is no record whatsoever of what Mr. Duggan proposed.

Mr. JONES: I will now get back to the Bill. Let us take, for example, the Merivale Bridge. Perhaps the Minister would look into who recommended the resumptions in that area and the resumptions for the corridors in and around Brisbane; into who proposed the quadruplication of the line and the original electrification plan. If the Minister looked a little deeper, he would pay tribute to a former Minister for Transport.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I have given you the answer to that. It was piecemeal.

Mr. JONES: I do not think that the Minister wants to remember. At a later stage of this debate he will have an opportunity to rebuke me, Mr. Duggan, or anybody else.

In his introductory speech, the Minister said that his Government had consistently supported the provision of an efficient system of public transport. That is not true. History shows that between 1957 and today only lip-service has been paid to the idea of a public transport system and its efficient operation in the metropolitan area.

The record of the Government is tragic. The fact that this legislation is being enacted as late as 1976 is sufficient evidence on which to condemn the Government for procrastination. It represents a dismal response to the needs of the most populous area of the State. I am not even taking into consideration the failure of the Government to supply and maintain an adequate and efficient transport system in the meantime not only in the metropolitan area but right throughout the State. I am sure that every Queenslander is aware of the over-all inadequacies of our transport system.

I wonder how long other areas of the State will be subjected to poor transportation and whether this scheme will make major inroads into the finance available for transportation, to the detriment of the needs in other areas of this vast and far-flung State. I do not know whether this scheme will bleed the finance that should have been directed to country rail transportation. That remains to be seen. While the country

areas wait for an efficient transport service, apparently some provision is at last being made for the planning operation and for the authority to operate a metropolitan transport system.

No mode of transport other than the railways can handle all the traffic generated by the population growth in this area. The railways are accepted as being the only adequate solution to the movement of large numbers of city people during peak hours. We have reached the stage where the population growth in the metropolitan area demands that something be done.

The matter has been investigated in depth. There have been many and varied investigations and myriad reports. Recently this inquiry was expanded beyond our borders when the Australian Transport Advisory Council and the Bureau of Transport Economics finally got the matter off the ground and tried to assist the States with their problems. The plan evolved as the Urban Public Transport Program. The agreement was sealed and the Grants Urban Public Transport Act of 1974 was passed. The Minister made some reference to it.

I shall revert to it later on and outline why it took the former Federal Labor Government from 1972 to 1974 to get that proposition off the ground after 23 years of inactivity in the Federal sphere during which no Commonwealth money was designated or appropriated for the transport facilities of this State.

Sir Thomas Hiley, a former State Treasurer, is reported as saying on 28 October 1960 that he pressed the Railway Department for a real figure on the proposed quadruplication and electrification. The figure was then £20,014,300. At that time \$9,000,000 had been spent and only another \$11,000,000 was required for the quadruplication and electrification of Brisbane railways. That is all it would have cost to complete the plan evolved by Jack Duggan for rail electrification and quadruplication in 1960. On 20 August 1972 Mr. Wilbur Smith said on a return visit to Brisbane that the electrification of railway services in the Brisbane metropolitan area that was estimated to cost \$300,000,000 in 1968 would then cost, only four years later, \$750,000,000. That was, of course, an answer to claims of inflated costs even prior to the coming to office of the Federal Labor Government.

Those facts indicate the Government's attitude of putting things off and then screaming about cost. The Government talks about costs and how the Australian Labor Government took two years to have propositions and policies incorporated in statutes. This State Government has taken from the time of the election promise in 1972 to the present to set up a metropolitan transport authority. It has therefore taken this Government four years to place its proposals on the Statute Book.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: Haven't you heard of the Metropolitan Transit Project Board?

Mr. JONES: We have a copy of its report that was presented to the House. The Opposition will have something to say about that at a later stage of the debate.

I believe that the Government is responsible for procrastination and delay. This highlights a disjointed approach to the problem from the time the coalition parties took over the Treasury benches back in 1957. The whole concept has proceeded haphazardly. In the Brisbane "Telegraph" of 13 March 1958 it was reported that it was not likely that the Government would proceed with electrification of the Brisbane suburban railways for a number of years. The then Premier was quoted as the author of that statement. He also mentioned the problems in metropolitan transport that were facing the Queensland Government and he referred to the bottlenecks on both sides of the river. He also said that quadruplication work would continue to the fullest extent. They have proved to be very hollow words indeed. On 2 June 1971 the then Minister for Transport said that the Government would that year set up a Brisbane area transit authority. It has therefore taken five years to bring about today's debate.

The Deputy Premier (Sir Gordon Chalk) was still saying in "The Courier-Mail" on 29 March 1972 that electric trains were certain to be running in the city. Of course, the words "to come in the future" appeared beneath that statement. All of these statements seem to have been made at times immediately preceding elections. The Metropolitan Transit Project Board was not formally constituted by Order in Council until 5 September 1974, just before the next election in December. Session after session promises were made of the introduction of legislation to set up an authority such as the one which is the subject of the Bill now under discussion.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You know only too well that it was working as a committee for two years before that.

Mr. JONES: Very well. The Government has had the advantage of that committee, the Wilbur Smith plan, the Ford, Bacon and Davis report and the 1947 plan. All this legislation seems to do is make provision for another plan that will be presented in another two years' time. We are debating not what will happen now, tomorrow, or next year, but a plan that will be formulated and presented in two years' time. We are still talking about it.

The Minister made specific reference to a duly constituted authority when the Estimates for the Department of Transport last came before this House, stating that this authority would be "charged with the important task of providing the metropolitan area with an

efficient, adequate, co-ordinated system utilising all forms of transport." He continued—

"The biggest project in our programme is the electrification of the suburban network."

All we have seen so far has followed the usual procedures of this Government, rather than a continual process of planning and review. If the Government was fair dinkum about it, we would not mind. With a continual process of planning and review, there is generally a projected plan over a 15-year period called a provisional plan. But we have not seen a specific provisional plan. The next stage ought to be a five-year rolling programme, and in one year the implementation of a detailed programme. This planning exercise is something that is accepted in all major programmes and projects.

Nobody in this House can deny that there has been a growing demand for a clean, efficient, cheap and fast public transport system or, as it is called overseas, a rapid transit system. The world has seen this sort of system develop over the past 50 years, and one must remember that New South Wales, our sister State, this year is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the inaugural electric train service back in 1926. That was the electrification of a modest 18 km of line from Central to Oakleigh. Over the past 50 years that service has been extended to the stage where there is a line some 80 km north to Gosford and 154 km west to Lithgow.

I am sure that this Government, like previous Governments, must have some knowledge of the changing attitude of the public towards public transport. But in no way has Queensland followed the New South Wales or world pattern in railway electrification or, indeed, a metropolitan transit authority. Perhaps the intentions in each State were different. The methods adopted in modernising our public transport system have not been in the best interests of the State. They have not encouraged increased patronage. I think that what we have done in Queensland in public transport has been inadequate and a decidedly poor attempt at modernisation.

The latest attempt in this Bill is really another delay in planning for a further two years. Assuming that we have a plan in two years' time, this still does not mean that the plan will be implemented. It will be another five years after that before the results of the plan materialise. I suppose we can say that in 1978 a pre-election Budget will be brought down by the Australian Government and we might perhaps get another allocation of funds in this area.

Cognisance should have been taken of overseas experience over a long period. The smooth introduction and continued operation of methods such as those now proposed depend very largely on consultation with all concerned from the earliest stages, and it is to be hoped that difficulties that may arise

in future will be avoided by early consultation. There should be totally uninhibited consultation between all authorities concerned, unions and the public, and that should continue at different levels over a period. It is understandable that the unions concerned might have certain inhibitions.

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not only reading his speech but he is making it as exciting as a re-run of the Donna Reed show.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! There is no valid point of order.

Mr. JONES: The authority should advise all those involved and all interested parties of its intentions. The type of consultation and negotiation that I have in mind cannot be achieved by correspondence or by one meeting. In my opinion, the intentions of the authority should not be the subject of unwieldy conferences between operators, unions and the authorities directly concerned, whether they be the Southern Electric Authority, the Brisbane City Council or local authorities in the declared areas. Some guide-lines should be laid down for conferences, get-togethers or talks that take place between all parties.

The proposals should be put forward in their entirety so that they may be discussed in advance with the full confidence of all the parties involved. If that is done, there will be mutual trust between the parties and it will be possible to find solutions and reach compromises. The authority has a very big job in front of it, and all its undertakings should be understood and appreciated fully so that its goals can be achieved through assistance accorded by consultation. I believe that these goals could be achieved without major disruptions and disabilities if that were done. There may be dramatic changes in conditions of operation, work, or duties, and at all stages members of the authority should exploit and embrace all opportunities for consultation in planning.

A comprehensive urban transportation plan of co-ordination and co-operation must be designed to identify both existing and potential transport problems, to develop alternative solutions to those problems and to recommend programmes for establishing a balanced transport system. Unfortunately, time has already been lost—time that cannot easily be made up—and the people of Queensland are paying very dearly indeed for the abandonment of, for example, the 1947 rail electrification programme. The delays that have occurred and the plans that have been put forward in the past 29 years indicate a very negative approach to this problem, and a reading of the Bill shows that one should not expect constructive action before two years have elapsed.

Jack Duggan began to implement the 1947 report, but work on it was stopped in 1957 after approximately £9,000,000 (or \$18,000,000) had been spent. In 1962 we had the Ford, Bacon & Davis report, which was followed in 1969 by the Wilbur Smith report. Now there is the suggestion of a further plan for the development of public passenger transport.

The Bill implies that it may be years before we see anything positive being done by the Government about the upgrading and co-ordinating of public transport. That is understandable when one realises that the cost of the Merivale Street cross-river link has increased 500 per cent since the former Minister for Transport (Mr. Knox) announced Cabinet approval for the expenditure of \$2,500,000 on that project in 1970. Because the A.L.P. Australian Government was prepared to underwrite that project to the extent of two-thirds of its cost, the State Government was forced into doing something about it, and that is why it is now under way.

It is significant that, although the Government has purchased rolling-stock and constructed more track for the movement of minerals and livestock, it has not bought any new passenger carriages but has merely taken delivery of the steel passenger carriages that we now see operating between Ipswich and the northern suburbs and which were ordered when Mr. Jack Duggan was Minister for Transport. It is to be regretted that the Government regards the requirements of the people as being secondary to the movement of minerals and stock.

The Bill appears to be loosely and badly drafted legislation which contains many inaccuracies and contradictory statements. It is rather undemocratic in that the plan can be decided on without any of the conditions being ratified. This Parliament will probably not even see a report. Conditions applying to local government in respect of town-planning matters do not apply under the proposed Bill to the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The Bill is undemocratic in that the plan can be decided on by bureaucracy alone. It is indicative of the Government's consistent inconsistency. It appears that the Bill is only a front to conceal the Government's hollow promises made at election-time.

I ask the Minister whether this Bill intends to create the Metropolitan Transit Authority as an instrument authority coming under the shield of the Crown or will it be protected by the Crown in that it is an isolated instrumentality in that regard?

Mr. Porter: What does that mean?

Mr. JONES: It is not going to be a Government department, but it will have the protection of the Crown. It will be answerable only to itself. It has very wide powers. No form of appeal is provided. No course of redress is provided for the

citizen or for this Parliament. It is not even required that the reports be tabled in this Parliament and printed; they will be merely submitted to the Minister. If it is under the shield of the Crown it is not answerable to anyone but itself and the Minister.

Mr. Porter: It is a statutory authority. Don't you understand what that means?

Mr. JONES: A statutory authority! It is answerable only to itself. Any statutory authority should be answerable to this Parliament.

Mr. LINDSAY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Cairns is saying—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! What is the point of order?

Mr. LINDSAY: I reject the honourable member's statement, which is untrue.

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

Mr. JONES: I will be happy to debate the clauses with the honourable member, but at the present time we are discussing only the principles of the Bill.

Mr. Lindsay: Why don't you read it?

Mr. JONES: What is the clause?

Mr. Lindsay: Clause 4.

Mr. JONES: We are not debating the clauses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish you would draw the attention of the honourable member for Everton to the fact that we are not allowed to debate clauses at this stage and that we are allowed to debate only the principles of the Bill. I realise that the honourable member is impatient; nevertheless, this is an important piece of legislation and I intend to debate it fully. Standing Orders allow me to do so.

Mr. Lamont: The children in the public gallery are not allowed to sleep in school hours, but you are putting them to sleep.

Mr. JONES: I should hope that they would be able to have some rest and recreation.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for South Brisbane will cease frivolous interjections.

Mr. JONES: Perhaps the school-children are also being enlightened, and amused by the honourable member for South Brisbane. I am sure that if he chose to go to sleep during the course of this debate no-one would object to his doing so. The school-children would probably be brighter and more alert than he is.

I was about to say that many local factors enter into the shaping of any satisfactory transportation system in a particular area.

Each urban area in such a system should reflect the individual needs of its community and should be commensurate with its resources. Such factors as topography, density, culture and the area of future growth potential should be taken into consideration in assessing the requirements of a transportation scheme. It is necessary, therefore, that democracy and not bureaucracy should be exercised in the preparation of this plan. Its success depends on a host of factors affecting people and a host of factors affecting decisions that may be arrived at by various levels of Government.

Unlike a town plan, this transportation scheme is not required to be submitted to Parliament for approval. While the better utilisation and co-ordination of transport, whether private or public, is 30 years overdue, we question whether the Bill, if implemented, will achieve the desired results.

As to town-planning—this Parliament has insisted that—

(1) A local authority town plan must be placed on public exhibition with heavy detailed information attached;

(2) The same must be readily available and open for public inspection for a period of 60 days;

(3) Such advice of public exhibit must be published in the Press;

(4) Copies must be made available for purchase at a price not to exceed reproduction costs;

(5) The public are entitled to lodge objections in writing;

(6) The council must consider such objections primarily;

(7) The council must notify the objector of what decision it has arrived at and what it shall be representing to the Minister with reference to that person's objection;

(8) The council must send the plan to the Minister, together with objections, and the council's representation relevant to the objections;

(9) Any objectors may make fresh and direct representations to the Minister.

A Government Member: Who wrote this?

Mr. JONES: I am reading this because it is quite important and a little technical—

(10) The Minister can hold an inquiry into part or the whole of the plan;

(11) The Minister considers the plan;

(12) The Minister then submits it to the Governor in Council, together with his recommendations;

(13) The Governor in Council considers such plan and may approve it wholly or in part, or amend it;

(14) It must be published in the Government Gazette.

There is no such referral in this plan. There is no such redress for the citizenry. I cannot read it into the Bill that that sort of public perusal of the plan is allowed.

It is not to be placed before Parliament. Until the approved plan is replaced by another plan, it must be kept readily available by the authority. That is one concrete requirement.

The Bill displays a complete disregard for any authority, whether it be a local authority, an electrical authority, a local council or even one of our Government instrumentalities such as the State Transport Commission.

Turning to the function of authorities—the Bill refers to powers assigned to the authority by the Act or the Minister, thus permitting the authority to act outside the provisions of the Bill. It gives ultimate authority to the Minister. He has an uncontrolled, unfettered authority. I wonder whether that is good for parliamentary government. I believe such actions will eventually lead to government by regulation.

The Bill states that assistance may be given by the provision of such monetary assistance as the authority thinks fit to prescribed persons in the operation of a public transport service between places within the declared region or a place within and a place without the declared region. Again, there is no requirement for the Minister's approval; there is no requirement for anybody else's approval. It will be at the behest of the authority whether or not monetary assistance will be granted.

Another provision allows that, apart from carrying passengers, luggage and other property, the vehicle may also carry "any other thing" in the vehicle for delivery en route. It could well be that under the Act we will be financially assisting or subsidising the transport of goods by road whilst at the same time competing with other sections of road transport as well as with rail operations. When it talks about "any other thing", what are we going to carry in the vehicles? Are we going to carry bags of cement, perishables or explosives? According to the wording of the Bill, anything may be carried.

Sections in the Bill relate to road works, which are normally controlled by the respective local authorities under their by-laws and their authorities as councils operating within their own provisions. This authority will be able to overrule them. I am sure that eventually conflict will arise between the local authority and the Metropolitan Transit Authority in this regard.

I turn now to the fare structure. The authority will have the right to prescribe fares. I shall go into further detail at the Committee stage. The fare structure has to be looked at considering existing operators because the fares could be made applicable to private operators and it could be impossible for them to operate under the fares prescribed by the authority. This matter will have to be looked at very closely indeed.

I hope that the Minister can assure the Assembly that no-one will be forced from one mode of transport to another. Who will decide whether it is to be a thorough service

or a co-ordinated service? Will it be decided by what is granted by the authority or by what is required to make the operation viable? Can the Minister assure us that, through the structure of the co-ordinated fare, he will entice public patronage by choice and that compensation for fare adjustments will be borne by the Government and not placed directly or indirectly on other operators, whether they be private or public?

The superannuation provision is very important to employees of existing transport authorities and they will be looking very closely at this provision. The conditions set down in the Bill refer to the State Service Superannuation Scheme but there is a need to cover employees of other authorities. All persons whose employment is taken over by the authority must be assured of continuity of service, conditions of employment and entitlements. The portability of sick leave and long service leave is very important and should be considered in setting up this authority. For example an employee of the Brisbane City Council or of the Southern Electric Authority for eight or nine years who may be seconded to this authority will want to know where he stands on those matters. The Bill contains nothing specific and employees will want to know about these matters before they offer their services to this statutory authority.

One proposal deals with the conditions of acceptability for appointment of Government nominees to the planning and advisory committee. Some strange provisions are contained in the Bill. One provides that a person duly nominated on behalf of the Commonwealth Government shall not be an elected member of the Brisbane City Council. That needs some explanation.

Another proposal deals with the exhibition of the plan. Is it meant that each five years the authority will review the approved plan or will it be that not exceeding five years from publication of the approved plan the authority will have to prepare and submit to the Minister another plan to replace the approved plan? This makes it even more necessary for such a plan to be dealt with similarly to what is demanded by the Government concerning other plans, particularly as the Minister has absolute discretionary power on the region application. It will apply to air, land and sea transport operating within or beyond a region.

The miscellaneous provisions of the Bill provide an example of bureaucracy which I believe is rather regrettable. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other Act, the transit authority intends to take policy decisions with respect to the siting, inauguration and operation of any public transport service within a declared region. It can require, permit or carry out any construction or demolition of a transport facility, roadway, workshop or overhead power line and it shall be answerable only to itself. All it has to do is direct a written advice to the

authority concerned. No period of time is prescribed. The transit authority can do as it wishes and other authorities have to comply.

Another section of the Bill provides that, notwithstanding the provision of any other Act, the authority will have the power to make decisions appertaining to areas for public parking of motor vehicles and the periods for which motor vehicles may be publicly parked at any place within a region. The point is that the proposed authority will be able to control parking within a declared area from Noosa to the Gold Coast.

I believe that honourable members should be looking closely at the Bill. I am sure that it will precipitate quite a lot of debate. I hope that when the authority is duly constituted it will recognise that this State, particularly the metropolitan area of Brisbane, has been subjected over the year to plans, plans and yet more plans, which is indicative of the hollowness of the promises contained in the policies of the National and Liberal Parties. Their implementation has been delayed by Government inaction since 1957. It is now nearly 20 years since the Government attained office, and it is 30 years since the inaugural plan spelt out the present intentions in 1947. I believe that what is now being submitted to the people is a proposal for another plan to be presented in two years' time. I believe the intention of the Government should be submitted to the people today. What they are looking for is a realistic approach to public transport in the State of Queensland, not hollow promises.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (3.9 p.m.): It is a very important responsibility of Governments not to tie themselves down to the preparation of transport plans for yesterday or today. It appears to me that the previous speaker, whilst having his facts rather confused in certain places, failed to grasp that a transport authority must look into the future and that the preparation of proposals for transport must be of a very far-reaching consequence.

Transport in Australia has many forms: the private motor-car, buses, trains, ferries and the like and it is indeed most important that these methods of transport be planned in relation to development of the city. Brisbane finds itself in an almost unique position amongst the Australian capital cities because of its enormous spread and its decentralised capacity. Because it has spread so rapidly and is so far flung, much longer distances have to be covered in transporting fewer people than is the case in other capital cities and this obviously imposes an additional cost factor on public transport. But I would point out that the problems facing transport and communication generally in Australia follow that line, Australia being a vast continent with small populations over all and

large populations centred in a few areas. This causes very great costs in providing transport and communication.

I believe that it is the responsibility of the Government in overcoming these problems in transport and communications not to impose unfair economic burdens upon the people by way of taxes, but to subsidise them. In other words, because it is that specific area of inequality in the community, that specific area where the inequity needs to be overcome, it is important that the concept of subsidy be looked at so that people in outlying areas of the city do not find themselves pinned down by these difficulties.

So an important principle in relation to transport—I speak here on the provision in this Bill covering fares—is that the Government not only has a responsibility to provide for the transport of the people of Brisbane and the people of Queensland, and specifically, in this instance the people of Brisbane, in this decade and the next and into the 21st Century, but also to take into account the cost factors involved. Indeed, cost has been one of the contributing factors in the difficulty experienced in providing broader and more comprehensive transport programmes in Brisbane.

The honourable member for Cairns said that the authority was in no wise responsible to the Parliament. I would draw his attention, however, to clause 9 (3) where he will note that—

“The Minister shall lay the report before the Legislative Assembly.”

Similarly, if he looks at clause 75 (2) he might become more informed in relation to the concept of by-laws and regulations coming before the Parliament in the usual manner and form. I point out that this report will be somewhat like the town plan. The town plan itself is not presented to this Parliament, and the plans of the Metropolitan Transit Authority will be treated in a similar manner.

One of the functions of the Bill is to provide for the declared region a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport. It is most important that, in looking at the concept of transport in the city, we do not tie ourselves down to the circumstances as they already exist; that we do not simply say in relation to the further provision of rail facilities—and this is a point that I think needs to be made very strongly—“Someone has been promising the electrification of the railways in Brisbane for so long that we must do it.” We must look at the realities of the situation, and if the expenditure to be incurred is going to mean that with the available funds we are going to be able to electrify only the lines we already have, without being able to provide broader transport capacities for the whole of Brisbane, I would have to say that I believe the efficiency of the rail transit

system on the lines which presently exist should be updated and co-ordinated so as not to prejudice the other parts of the city that do not have any rail service at all.

The proposition I put forward is that it is surely better, and surely most important, that this authority should try to equalise the availability of public transport to all urban areas and not just to upgrade certain transport areas which presently exist, and I would hope that a cost-benefit analysis would be made of the present railway system. It does provide an efficient service, but there are so many areas of the city which are not provided with any service.

I mentioned earlier the necessity for Governments to be far-sighted and look into the future, and in this context I point out that there used to be a railway line running out to the electorate of Belmont. Many people in the area probably do not realise that. But the Government of the day decided that it was inefficient or that it was not necessary and the line was removed, and as a consequence the people of Belmont no longer have the convenience of a rail service.

If the authority's proposal in relation to railways is simply to electrify the existing lines and extend them slightly because costs will not enable it to go any further, the people of the southern suburbs of Brisbane will find themselves greatly prejudiced. The whole concept must be to provide all the people of Brisbane with as equitable a system of public transport as is possible.

That is relevant not only from the point of view of trying to upgrade buses or electrify railway services but also from the point of view of utilising the natural advantages of the city. Brisbane is in a unique position because of the waterway it has available—the Brisbane River—but it has not been used to any extent for the carriage of passengers.

The people of this city have been limited to the use of the roads and the freeways that now exist. It should not be forgotten that the waterway serves many suburbs; in fact, it goes right round the city area. If use is not made of the waterway as the city develops, we will be wasting a resource that nature herself has given us. The concept of the introduction of hydrofoils and special ferry systems must be assessed and investigated by the authority on a cost-analysis basis, so that it may provide the broadest possible public-transit system.

The authority must take into account also the provision of things such as car-parking stations. At present, there is enormous congestion on the streets in the city and in many suburban areas. The slowness of public transport is the result not of the cars travelling on the roads but of the cars being parked along them. If it were possible to provide off-road car-parking stations not only in the city area but also in the more

congested suburban areas, one problem would be overcome. In my opinion, the speed and efficiency of public transport could be improved if that specific area was looked at more closely.

Labour costs are one of the major factors in bus transport. It has been stated—and I state it again—that many buses which travel late at night carry perhaps only two or three, or half a dozen passengers. The cost is high not only because a large bus with high fuel costs is used but also because of the specific labour costs. The proposal that I put forward is that it may be possible for the authority to co-ordinate a more efficient bus transport system, utilising not only large buses but also small buses that can provide a speedy means of transport and carry the few passengers who desire to travel at later hours and thereby decrease the overhead costs.

I was in Western Australia recently and noted that in Perth one of the ways in which the problems posed for public transport by peak-hour traffic and congestion in the streets were overcome was to have, just as we have a central railway station, a bus station just off the second principal street in Perth. As Brisbane has its Central Railway Station, in Perth an area is set aside as a public transport station. People go downstairs to catch trains and upstairs to catch buses. The effect is to co-ordinate in one place the existing transport facilities without clogging up the streets with buses parking in peak hour and private vehicles trying to use the roads at the same time. That increases the efficiency of the public transport system, and I believe it is something else that the authority should look at.

The authority must have a twofold objective—efficiency and economics—and if it works towards those two objectives, I think that a great deal will be achieved for the future development of transit systems in Brisbane.

Because of the present tie-up in the transport system, one finds an enormous degree of bureaucracy. Individuals are forgotten; people become simply units using passenger services. The economic and social difficulties and hardships that a person experiences because of the pooriness of the transport system are not taken into account.

Elderly people in the Seville Road area in my electorate catch a bus into the city. Sometimes they find it difficult to board some of the older buses. When buses break down, those people are left waiting at bus stops for hours on end simply because bureaucracy is not sufficiently aware of the problems and hardship that can occur to send someone out to tell people waiting at bus stops that a bus will not be along for, say, another two hours. It is things like that that we must look at to ensure that the structures we set up in any authority will not maintain that same bureaucratic level

which is detrimental to the welfare of the individual and does not take into account the rights of the private person.

Unfortunately many decisions of Governments and council bodies are made across the board. It was unfortunate that several years ago in Brisbane it was decided to abolish the tramway system. From an economic point of view, and the point of view that trams created safety problems and clogged some roads, it was possibly a good idea to remove them from many areas; but I firmly believe that the maintenance of a circular tram system in the city, and perhaps the Valley, would be an efficient, economic and pollution-free means of transporting people within that area. It would facilitate the introduction of pedestrian malls. These are matters that the authority must look at. It should consider the possibility of the reintroduction of some form of electric passenger transport within the city area, perhaps around Queen Street and Adelaide Street and down into the Valley. Perhaps that would be a way to tie together those business and commercial areas by efficient and pollution-free transport. That would be one way the city could look forward to a much cleaner form of transport.

Mr. Lindsay: Are you aware that the Brisbane City Council is still paying for the trams?

Mr. BYRNE: That could be true. I would hope that the authority would take into account such problems as presently exist. I said the two things to be looked at were economics and efficiency.

I would hope that the authority would look at the difficulties that exist because of the trucks that clog streets in the business and commercial centres in the city and Valley. They so clog the streets that the economy and efficiency of public transport is greatly affected. Some form of prohibition or restriction during peak hours of large vehicular transport in the main streets of the city should be encouraged. I would hope that the authority would look at it in that light, in an endeavour to provide the efficiency required in all city areas.

Mr. Houston: Isn't it just a public transport authority? It doesn't come into goods and services.

Mr. BYRNE: Of course it is a public transport authority, but it must deal with the efficient and economic running of public transport in the city. If the honourable member reads the Bill, he will find that it does have that power in the latter part where the authority's powers are determined.

One of the most obvious things about public transport in Brisbane is that for some reason it is believed that the major goal of public transport is to provide for the carriage of workers to work; once that function is finished, the effective use of public

transport is finished. During the working hours of the week, buses take workers to commercial and business centres; but when the main working hours are over the public transport system virtually dies. It does not appear to be a priority for public transport to provide transport for people for leisure purposes. If people decide to travel for leisure purposes, over the week-end, for example, they are prohibited from doing so because the transport system seems to have as a priority the movement of people to their work places rather than to leisure places. People can go virtually nowhere by public transport at those times; they either stay in their homes or use their own private transport.

One suggestion that I would put forward is the possibility of implementing some form of private contract taxi commuter bus service. By this I mean that, just as a taxi takes one person into the city, it might be possible for an individual to contract with a certain number of persons to pick them up from their homes and take them to their places of employment in the city and return them to their homes in the afternoon. By this means the public would be provided with a personalised service and would be guaranteed a service. Such a scheme would not only encourage private enterprise in bus transit but also induce the public not to use their vehicles during peak hours and for work purposes. It would overcome the problem of the clogging of our streets and our highways and freeways, particularly during peak hours. I hope that the transport authority considers this suggestion.

I offer one major criticism of the Bill, in relation to the composition of the authority. As this Government has long been a supporter of the private-enterprise system, I find it surprising and unfortunate that there is not specific reference in the Bill to the great service done by the many private bus companies and private transport authorities. It would be suitable for them to have representation on the authority, not merely within the five members nominated by the Minister but in someone specifically chosen by them as their representative. I hope that the Minister examines this aspect, because we must pay due recognition to the services that have been and will be provided by these bodies.

The Bill enables what are termed as "prescribed" persons to operate under the provisions of the Bill and to be able to co-operate with the authority for the broader provision of transport within the metropolitan area.

Finally, I whole-heartedly endorse the Minister's comments. This measure represents a far-sighted approach to the solution of the many transport problems that arise in Brisbane. I would point out once again to members of the Opposition who find complaint with the Bill that it must be far-sighted and look to the future and that we

must be preparing not only for the later decades of this century but also for the 21st Century and for an efficient and economic means of transport for the general public.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (3.28 p.m.): When replying at the introductory stage, the Minister mentioned the paucity of speakers and said that at the second-reading stage the debate would be quite a wide-ranging one. I thank him for that. I will surprise him by telling him I agree with him that a fully integrated urban transport system is necessary. Everybody would agree with me that the present system is both wasteful and inefficient.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable member is speaking under some difficulty and he is entitled to some consideration.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In 1972 the Government said that it supported the establishment of an efficient means of transportation in the metropolitan area, and it undertook to provide a Metropolitan Transit Authority. I am sure that all honourable members would agree that this is long overdue. Many trains and buses now run side by side, resulting in poor service and, more importantly, large deficits.

An efficient public transport system is the life-blood of a city. Brisbane is said to be a major tourist centre, so it should provide a good transportation service to tourists. Tourists who visit Brisbane are entitled to an efficient and rapid transportation service. However, the State Government has shirked its responsibility for too long. The National Party, the senior partner in the coalition, is certainly not interested in providing public transport for Brisbane. The Liberals, of course, have shown a complete lack of intestinal fortitude. They always bow to the whim of the National Party. They have just let them get away with it.

Every National Party member who gets up in the House wants a rail link put through to Woop Woop or somewhere else out in the sticks.

Mr. Frawley: What about Redcliffe? Don't you think we need one at Redcliffe?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I agree that Redcliffe should have a rail line. It is long overdue. However, as I have repeatedly said in this Chamber, while Redcliffe has an undisputed claim for a rail link, I am sure it will be agreed that Inala has a far greater claim—and a prior claim—to a rail link. I know that the Minister agrees with me.

Electrification of the rail line in the metropolitan area? I will believe that when I see it! Many promises have been made over the years by this Government that the Brisbane rail lines will be electrified. Of course, in the 19 years since the Labor Party lost office

in 1957, nothing has been done. It is also a fact of life, as my colleague the honourable member for Cairns has said, that a previous Labor Minister for Transport, Jack Duggan, had set up plans to electrify the whole of the metropolitan rail system. Of course, when this Government came to power it scrapped electrification and brought in dieselisation. Not only has it paid the penalty; the citizens of Brisbane have suffered also.

I agree with what my leader said at the introductory stage—it is taken for granted that the average worker spends an extra two hours travelling to complete an eight-hour day. I am sure it would be agreed that most workers consider that their working day begins when they step onto the footpath in the morning and ends when they return home at night. It is the desire of most people to travel easily and quickly between their homes and their employment. The only way that can be done is by an efficient means of transportation.

I make it quite clear at the outset that the only way to transport large numbers of people rapidly and efficiently, particularly from outer suburbs, is by the use of rail.

Mr. Casey: Make them walk!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If we were to compare Mackay with the suburb of Inala, Mackay could be put in the horse paddock.

Mr. Frawley: Would you agree with the Minister for Main Roads that there should be a rail link down to the South Coast?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have said before that there should be a rail link to the Gold Coast. Of course the line should not have been pulled up!

While I am at it—one of the most stupid decisions made by this Government was to remove the rail link from Lota to Cleveland. I am sure the Minister would agree with me. I am sure if he had been a Minister at the time, he would have protested most vigorously and possibly the rail link between Lota and Cleveland would have been retained. That should get me a rail link to Inala!

Brisbane is the only capital city in Australia whose taxpayers are required to subsidise their transport system. I have said all along that the metropolitan transport system should be the responsibility of the State Government. I make it quite clear that public transport is a public utility and it should not be controlled by private enterprise. That is the difference between the Labor Party and the Tories. The Tories believe that, if there is a profit in it, it should be given to private enterprise; but, if there is no profit in it, let the Government run it. I say quite clearly that public transport in Brisbane should be controlled by the State Government.

People today are becoming more conscious of the environment, too. They are becoming concerned at the pollution caused by the motor-car. I am sure all honourable members agree with me on that.

The Leader of the Federal National Country Party (Mr. Doug Anthony) stated during the 1974 election campaign that in his opinion the price of petrol in Australia was far too low. He said that it should be at least \$1 a gallon. If Mr. Anthony had his way, that would certainly force people back to public transport. If this Government were doing its job correctly, it would be encouraging people to leave their cars at home and travel by public transport.

While I am on the subject of public transport, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the near-metropolitan area of Beenleigh, some 22 miles from Brisbane. Everybody will agree that there has been a rapid growth in the Beenleigh area during the past 10 years. Nevertheless, it takes one hour 15 minutes to travel by train from South Brisbane to Beenleigh. In most cases, particularly during peak hours, people stand six deep in the carriages. The lighting is so bad that they can scarcely read in the corridors. The conditions would not even be as good as those in the cattle trucks used by Hitler during World War II. A decent alternative transport system is needed in the metropolitan area to enable people to travel to and from their places of employment rapidly, comfortably and efficiently.

The time is long overdue for restricting heavy vehicular traffic during peak hours. I say this advisedly. One of the problems in the metropolitan area is that the roads are clogged up by heavy vehicles. Any driver need only travel from Inala or any other of the south-western suburbs during peak hours to see how true this is.

Mr. Byrne: Would you be in favour of staggered hours to overcome this problem?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Provided the truck drivers get a suitable shift penalty.

One only needs to get behind a big semi-trailer of a morning to discover that it cannot be passed between Oxley and the Dutton Park cemetery. Legislation to restrict heavy vehicular traffic during peak hours is long overdue. The other day I noticed a big semi-trailer with a jinker travelling down Queen Street. I understood this to be illegal. Out on the road police officers operating radar machines pick up unsuspecting citizens who are driving 4 or 5 km/h over the speed limit, yet the driver of this heavy truck could drive down Queen Street with impunity, and nothing was done.

Peak-hour bus lanes should be provided along major roads in the near-city areas, particularly out as far as Annerley. If ever a road lent itself to the introduction of a clearway, it is Ipswich Road. People in

Sydney can travel in buses that use clearways so for the life of me I cannot understand why this system has not been introduced in Brisbane. The Minister should have considered it long ago.

I hope I do not get offside with some of my colleagues, but at the moment river transport is a pipe dream. It is fine idea and would certainly be a pleasant mode of travel, but it would be far too slow.

Mr. Dean interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As my colleague said, the river is congested and river transport would be too slow. Brisbane is too spread out and has no really high-density blocks along the river-front to make river transport an economic proposition. It certainly cannot be compared with Sydney where ferries tap high-density areas such as Mosman, Cremorne and Manly.

I am sure the Minister would agree that more cross-river bridges are needed in Brisbane, particularly as the river cuts Brisbane in two. One bridge to which I should like to draw the Minister's attention, although it is probably more a matter for the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, is the one at Indooroopilly. It is inadequate for the traffic it carries. I get an uneasy feeling whenever I travel over it; I have the impression it could collapse at any moment. It was built very cheaply during the depression years. It has far outlived its usefulness and the Government should consider building a new bridge there.

Mr. Frawley: Would you agree that a new Hornibrook Highway is needed?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I suppose that is needed, too. I have previously agreed with the honourable member that a new bridge is needed and that a rail link should be provided.

I need only mention in passing the need for a rail link to Inala. Inala is the largest suburb in Brisbane and is situated some 12 miles from the G.P.O. It has probably one of the worst transport systems in Brisbane. On two occasions during the debate on the Transport Estimates towards the end of the previous sitting, the Minister agreed with me and said that I had a very good point in mentioning the rail link to Inala. He assured me that he would give earnest consideration to my suggestion. I know he is very busy, but to date I have received no communication from him. I do not want to dwell on the rail link to Inala because my colleague the honourable member for Bundaberg says that he has heard me make this speech so often that he could make it for me. Nevertheless there is an urgent need for a rail link to Inala, and the longer this is delayed the more costly it will be to make the necessary land resumptions. I therefore ask the Minister to give this matter his earnest consideration.

More provision should be made for transport corridors in the outer suburbs because the rapid development in the next 10, 15 or 20 years will take place in the south-western suburbs of Brisbane, particularly Doolandella, Carole Park and Ellen Grove adjacent to Inala.

One thing that I should like to draw to the Minister's attention is the public transport available to the people of Acacia Ridge. I should like the Press, too, to take particular note of what I am about to say. The present transport service to Acacia Ridge is nothing short of scandalous. At the week-end the last bus to Acacia Ridge is at 1 p.m. on Saturday; there is no bus from then till 6 o'clock on Monday morning. That means that the residents of Acacia Ridge, which is a large suburb of some 10,000 to 12,000 people, are virtually prisoners in their own suburb. Furthermore, what compounds the felony is that over the forthcoming Easter period the last bus will be at 6 p.m. on Thursday and the next will not run till the following Tuesday morning. I think the Minister would agree that that is a scandalous state of affairs. The Government should move in this matter because it is the Government which allocates franchises to private bus operators. If people at Acacia Ridge do not have their own transport, they will have to walk to the city—and it is quite a long way.

The unsuccessful Liberal lord mayoral candidate in the recent local authority election in Brisbane said that he would involve private transport more in the city's transport system. As I have just shown, the Acacia Ridge bus service is a classic example of a service run for profit rather than convenience. If there is not a quid in it, private bus operators do not run their buses. I ask the Minister to bear this situation in mind and do something about the shocking service to Acacia Ridge.

If the proprietor of the Sunnybank bus service has been granted a franchise for the next two or three years, I think it should be taken off him. I feel that the needs of the people of Acacia Ridge should come before the financial needs of a private bus proprietor. When Mr. Poggoli, the proprietor of the Sunnybank bus service, was running his buses to Sunnybank and he found that it was not an economic proposition, he was loud and long in his complaints to the Minister and in his request to have the Brisbane City Council take over the Sunnybank end of his route. But, of course, he did not want to relinquish the Acacia Ridge service because that is where the profit was. I feel that the needs of the people of Acacia Ridge should certainly come before the financial interest of the Sunnybank bus proprietor.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (3.43 p.m.): It is remarkable that whenever the Government takes a big step forward in any direction, which quite often, as in this case, is one

of which the Opposition approves, Opposition members can never find in themselves the generosity to say, "Good on you. You have done a good thing. We are pleased about it and we applaud you." They always take a mean and petty attitude and say, "Why didn't you do this years ago?" That is always accompanied by the peculiar line of trying to establish a little political folklore.

What they are trying to establish here (the honourable member for Cairns was strong in his attempts to establish the myth) is that there was an enormous programme to provide a modern transport system in the city of Brisbane when this Government came to office in 1957 and that we scrapped it. The fact is, as the Minister said in his second-reading speech, that all we had in 1957 were plans on paper and an odd collection of miscellaneous capital works. Not 100 yards of overhead wiring had been erected. It was just pie in the sky, as usual.

The suggestion that there was something there and we scrapped it, and that if we had proceeded we would now have been years ahead of the present stage, is so much rubbish. It is part of the myth-making system that the Labor Party seeks to use. It is rather reminiscent of the Federal sphere where Labor is trying to sell the myth that the Whitlam Government was not really dismissed by the people; that what happened to it was that it was thrown out improperly by the Governor-General; and that if one repeats this sort of thing often enough, people will eventually believe it.

That is what Opposition members are trying to do with this peculiar story about the transport system in the metropolitan area of Brisbane. The various Opposition speakers, of course, completely failed to mention the abysmal record of their party in office in the Brisbane City Council for the past 15 years. They have had control of that council for all of that period, and they had have the most abysmal record of failure in public transport that one could imagine.

We have the worst inner-city services of any State capital of Australia and I think it was my colleague the honourable member for Belmont who remarked that the prime achievement of the Labor city council was to bury the tram tracks and burn the trams—the only paying part of the transport system—and it did it at the very time that other great cities throughout the world were bringing back their tramway systems. Great geniuses, those Labor Party fellows in the city council! No wonder they came within an ace of losing the city council and now have only 12 members whereas previously they were 20 out of 21.

We are setting up a Metropolitan Transit Authority, and I for one am very glad to see it. This is a subject on which I have expressed a great deal of interest over many years. In May 1967, which was my first year after entering this Parliament, after studying the various metropolitan transit

arrangements in the various capital cities in Australia, I reported to the then Minister for Transport and said that the accelerating rate of urban growth was presenting all the Australian cities, particularly Brisbane, with a common transport problem and that was the provision of an adequate service which would promote the community's social and economic well-being and, at the same time, establish a basis for planning for a minimum of at least 20 years ahead.

Without doubt it is obvious that any plan that aims at co-ordinated metropolitan transport has to embrace all forms of passenger transport. It has to take into account private cars, buses, trams, ferries and other river craft, and pedestrians, and an acceptable balance has to be struck between public and private transport. The great difficulty in this area is discovering how we can effectively integrate all those factors, with their individual problems which demand urgent and immediate solution, and at the same time make decisions which have long-range effects.

Clearly, if Brisbane is to realise its enormous potential (and enormous it is), we must plan now. Before too long it will be a city of 1,500,000 people. I understand there are just about 1,000,000 people in the metropolitan area at the present time. Brisbane could be one of the great subtropical cities of the world. It is the gateway to one of the most fabulous tourist areas in the world, so the potential here is enormous, and the traffic problems that have got to be solved to realise that potential are equally enormous.

So I say that if there is to be a solution of the problems which have been manifest and manifold in Brisbane for many years, we must have a shuttle bus service which covers the business centre and inner-city circuit and distributes people to and from the various city transport terminals, and it may well be that this has to be provided without charge to the passengers. I do not lay that down as a dictum, but I think it is something that has to be considered. We must have, I would say, the introduction of automatic fare systems, even though this might mean union opposition, and certainly in this climate we must have air-conditioning on our buses.

We must use on our river hydrofoils, hovercraft and so on. Without doubt, we must progressively replace kerbside parking in most of the city with off-street parking facilities. We must aim at keeping cars outside the city, and we must redevelop our over-all transport system affecting the suburban areas by using much more bus-train interchange than, apparently, we have thought of up to the present, with adequate parking facilities at suburban stations.

Mr. Jensen: You said this in 1967 and they took no notice of you.

Mr. PORTER: The honourable gentleman is one of those who expect things to happen overnight. It may well be that change

which takes place gradually and is built on a good, solid basis will be better for that incubation period.

I believe that the Bill is a good one, and undoubtedly it ushers Brisbane into a new era. The powers and the responsibilities of the authority are enormous; let there be no doubt about that. What we are setting up is a very big authority indeed. Its powers are far-ranging; they are fraught with many possibilities. Because of that, the authority will determine the shape, form and direction of traffic development in Brisbane, and it will irrevocably and inevitably determine where suburban and other development is to occur and the rate and intensity of that development. I should say that it will determine very major aspects of town-planning, since quite clearly transportation corridors must be major factors in determining how, where and when changes in planning occur.

For me, the key to the success of this proposal lies in the calibre and the quality of the authority itself. The authority must be composed of very good men if it, in its turn, is to do a good job. I think it was the honourable member for Belmont who asked why there was not a representative of the private sector on the authority, and I believe that he made a good point. The Brisbane City Council has a representative on the authority, and the fact is, of course, that the Brisbane City Council handles less than half of the city's bus transport. If we look at the total metropolitan transport, we see that it handles less than a quarter of that. So there is a very good case for including a representative of the private sector on the authority. The Minister has to appoint four of the seven members on the authority, so I hope he will bear in mind what seems to some of us to be an omission.

The authority must inevitably become a huge undertaking. It has massive financial responsibilities; it has even more massive social responsibilities. It requires little imagination, when one thinks of the job that it has to do, to see a Brisbane that is linked in transport terms at least to Caboolture in the north, Coolangatta in the south, Ipswich in the west, and perhaps even farther back than that. As I said earlier, the success of the proposal is very directly linked with the capacity of the authority to plan imaginatively, intelligently and with a due sense of practicality.

I venture to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the capacity of the authority in all these important areas will depend to a very great degree on the expertise that is made available to it. There is provision in the Bill for the authority to consult the Commissioners for Railways, Transport and Main Roads, and also the Brisbane City Council and other local authorities, and so become informed of what is happening, and what is likely to happen, when it is about to make decisions. I think it may well be that experience will persuade us that we should

formalise this relationship, this pattern of expert consultation and advice, by setting up a transport advisory committee, because that has been done in several other States.

For example, in New South Wales there is an advisory committee supporting the authority, and that advisory committee comprises the Commissioners for Transport, Main Roads and Motor Transport, and also the Commissioner for Police, the Chairman of the State Planning Authority, and the Under Secretary of the Treasury. When one thinks about it, there is very real merit in adding those latter three categories to the sources the authority can tap when it looks for advice, help and guidance. I make that suggestion and hope that the Minister will bear it in mind, because the size, scope and requirements of the authority are undoubtedly going to mean that it will want the very best assistance it can get.

Despite the pathetic and pedestrian strictures of honourable members opposite, this Bill is a huge step forward towards transforming Brisbane into a city fit for the closing decades of the 20th Century. It will open up a new era of city development, and Brisbane may at long last become the handsome city that it is entitled to be but which, unfortunately, it has not been through all these long years of Labor control in the municipal sphere.

I believe that new vistas are opening up for the citizens of Brisbane. We can have an efficient inner-city shuttle service; adequate suburban interchange services; fast rail services to outer suburbs, even to the limits of Caboolture and Coolangatta; pedestrian malls in the city proper as we keep private cars restricted to off-street parking facilities outside the city's heart; down-river and up-river, as well as cross-river, transport providing fast and quiet utilisation of the city's magnificent river highway that already exists and costs so little in terms of maintenance.

We have had 15 years of solo control by an A.L.P. council. I say "solo control" in quite literal terms because the past Lord Mayor was in fact the council in toto in all these matters. After this control for so many years by one man, Brisbane almost reached the point of no return in its steady degeneration into being a dirty, untidy, muddled, fifth-rate city with the worst urban transport system in Australia. This Bill provides the prospect that the tide will be turned and that Brisbane will become the city that its position as the gateway to Queensland entitles it to become.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (3.58 p.m.): I have listened with great interest to the submissions made at both stages of the Bill by the Ministers and others. I am deeply disturbed about some aspects of what is going to occur in Queensland with the setting up of the Metropolitan Transit Authority. It is not that the structure of the authority is going to be any worse or any better than many of the

other authorities already set up in Queensland. I did note that the members appointed to the authority would be there to represent the interests of the public. Unfortunately that is not so with many authorities in Queensland today. If the Bill goes through I hope that when the Minister chooses those persons to represent the people of Queensland on the authority, he will take due note that that is exactly what they should do, and not be there merely as puppets of some outside influence or some sectional interest in the community. On many boards and authorities in Queensland there are some persons who will do absolutely nothing for the people generally. They are merely there so that they can occupy a nice cushy, prestige job, and their main interest is the maintaining of that job. I hope that the Minister will note well those words in the Bill when choosing the personnel to represent the public on the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

I suppose in many ways I should feel sorry for the people in the metropolitan area, and that I should feel the same way as honourable members representing metropolitan electorates who have spoken in this debate. They have referred to the problem of getting from point A to point B, and back, in this great, wonderful and beautiful developing city of Brisbane.

The honourable member for Toowong referred to the outlets to the tourist areas of the State. I would remind him that those areas are between 600 and 1,000 miles to the north of Brisbane, in a far better part of the State, and they enjoy a far more pleasant climate than the metropolitan area. They are, of course, well and truly outside the scope of Metropolitan Transit Authority. This is the whole point; so much of Queensland lies outside the south-eastern corner of the State.

If the people of Brisbane are prepared to continue to put up with all the problems associated with getting from point A to point B, if they are mugs enough to live here, they should put up with the consequences.

As far as I can see, the Metropolitan Transit Authority is being set up to take the money out of the pockets of the real workers of the State—those who live outside Brisbane, in the vast areas that produce the real wealth of the State. As we see in so many other pieces of legislation, the money derived from the workers in those areas will benefit only those people who live in Brisbane. While Brisbane waxes fat, many parts of the State are reaching stagnation point.

We hear a good deal about the so-called service industries and the white-collar service industries in the metropolitan area. We in North Queensland refer to them by another name—the no-sweat, all-profit industries. That is indeed what they are.

Today concern has been expressed for the workers in the metropolitan area, who find difficulty in travelling between their homes

and places of employment. Not one word has been said of the difficulties confronting the man who lives in Goondiwindi and works in Hebel; no concern has been expressed for the man who rears his family in our South-west and earns his living some 80, 90 or 100 miles away, thereby remaining separated from his family for the week; no thought has been given to the man who works in the sparsely populated areas of the State and thereby helps develop them. These are the important areas of Queensland. We should consider the plight of those persons who live and work in those places instead of joining the crowds in the metropolitan area.

Has anyone thought about the man who travels from Jericho to Lake Buchanan to earn his living, or the man who travels from Cooktown to Laura to work? Probably he does not have a decent road to drive over, so the maintenance costs on his car are very high indeed. Some people in the remote areas believe that the only means of getting back and forth is a camel train.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Where do they catch a camel?

Mr. CASEY: I am told that quite a few camels are pasturing out at Inala these days. It is well known for camels, mules and donkeys. If I were uncharitable, I could say that they are represented by one of their number—but, of course, I won't.

It is quite clear that the operations of the Metropolitan Transit Authority will be paid for not by the people who will be serviced by it but by everyone throughout the whole of the State. No provision is made in the Bill to ensure that the authority will be a financially viable organisation. In fact, if we examine the Bill in detail we will see that the opposite is the case.

We find a very bad example of the same thing in one of the Minister's own departments—the Railway Department. The profits made from lines outside the metropolitan area meet the cost of transportation within the metropolitan area. I think the Minister would agree, because that can clearly be assessed from the tables published with the Railway Department's report each year. The most unprofitable railway services in Queensland are the metropolitan passenger transport services. The Government has a policy, so it claims, of closing unprofitable railway lines. If it were to adhere strictly to its policy, the first lines to be closed would be the suburban lines in Brisbane, where passenger operations are completely unprofitable.

There is no provision in the Bill to make the transit authority financially viable. There is no provision to ensure that it will be able to pay its own way. In fact, to the contrary, the Bill contains explicit provisions for the Treasurer to make specific grants to the Metropolitan Transit Authority, whether for special purposes or general purposes, each and every year. There is no

corollary between this and other statutory authorities in Queensland such as the State Electricity Commission. They have had to become financially viable and pay their own way. They must charge tariffs on such a scale to meet the repayment of loan moneys. There is none of that whatsoever in this Bill—merely a straight-out provision for the payment of grants by the Treasurer.

Because of that, I feel there will be an extension of the principle that people in country areas of Queensland will be called on to subsidise metropolitan transport. People in North Queensland have to pay a dollar in order to get a library book. They are not served with adequate library services such as those enjoyed by people in the metropolitan area. The State Library is not situated at their backdoor. They have to meet that cost themselves. I use the treatment of country people in a parallel type of service to highlight the injustice of calling upon them to subsidise metropolitan transport.

I return to the matter of the closure of lines. This morning the Minister virtually admitted to me that the Railway Department is to consider the closure of the Mackay to Netherdale branch line. The sugar industry is the most profitable industry for the Railway Department, on the admission of the Treasurer himself recently in this House. He does not have to subsidise sugar transport, such as he will under the proposed Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The closure of that line would have nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. CASEY: No, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am just drawing a parallel. I know that you are concerned with the financial matters of the State, and I am sure that it would interest you to know that that is a most profitable line.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that reference to that line has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. CASEY: In actual fact, there is no provision whatsoever under this Bill to ensure that the operations of the Metropolitan Transit Authority will be economically viable. That is the point I was attempting to make. The Government is demonstrating complete inconsistency.

I refer to another point of inconsistency. Along with many other members, I have attended several meetings, conducted by the planning group of the Co-ordinator-General's Department on the Moreton Regional Study. I have been quite interested to see what is being considered for people in the south-eastern corner of the State. Because of the development in this part of the State, there is a need for a rapid transportation of workers along the lines suggested by the

honourable members for Archerfield, Too-wong and Belmont, where rapidly expanding suburbs need new railway lines provided. At the last planning meeting that I attended of the Moreton Regional Study, because I knew of the discussions about a transit authority for the south-eastern corner of the State, I asked what specific consideration was being given to the matter of railway extensions in and around the metropolitan area to allow for the efficient flow of passenger and goods traffic. After all, if there will be more people in the area, as has been mentioned by the Minister and other honourable members, and that is the reason why we will need this authority, there must be a coinciding increase in industry within the area and the product of industry. It is important to have this proper movement of both goods and passengers in and out of the new and proposed industrial areas.

The direct answer given to me was that no provision has been made at this stage for additional railway planning within the Moreton region. Roadways are being planned. Many honourable members have indicated that, so far as the authority is concerned, rail is the quickest way of moving vast bodies of people back and forth. I go along with that. But if the authority is properly structured it should get down to the job with the people conducting the Moreton regional study to ensure that adequate provision is made for railway expansion in the area.

Those are some of the points that must be taken into account if we are to have this colossus growing in Brisbane. Other considerations must be taken into account. It behoves the authority, if one of its concerns is the increase in population and the number of people who move back and forth each day, to consider the methods of treating both the effect and the cause. If, under the Bill, grants are to be made by the Treasurer to the authority to overcome the effects, some consideration should be given to the cause.

I really mean that the grants should be made available to decentralise industry in Queensland. This would enable a splitting-up of the growth in this vast metropolis. Money so spent would be far better spent. It would give a better quality of life to the people if they moved out into the provincial areas rather than live in the metropolis. As I have said, in many respects I feel sorry for the people who live here. If they are mugs enough to live here, they have to put up with the consequences.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.13 p.m.): I do not think anyone would deny that over the years the public transport system of Brisbane and surrounding areas has deteriorated. There are many reasons for it. One of them is the popularity of the motor-car. Many families now own more than one motor-car. Other reasons are the improvement

in our roads and the improvement in car performances. This does not take into account motor-bikes and pushbikes.

It is true to say that more and more people are relying on their own transport. One has only to drive to work at the normal starting time to see the number of motor-cars containing only the driver. Many people prefer to use their own transport to go to work although it would be dearer than using public transport. Also, people who are shopping and going about their ordinary business without going to work have decided to use other than public transport. These factors have contributed to public transport failing to pay its own way. Because of the economics of our system, if some facility fails to pay its way we cut something out. We have seen the removal of railway lines that linked areas just outside Brisbane. I do not want to go into removal of the lines that linked Brisbane with Cleveland and the Gold Coast. Those, however, are the facts.

Over a period of time we have also seen a decrease in the bus services provided for the people. As the honourable member for Archerfield said, there is no service at all in some parts of his electorate at week-ends. This situation has been brought about, in the main, by the failure of people to patronise public transport services. My view, however, is that lack of patronage of a service should not be the only reason for its elimination. I believe that public transport should be encouraged, and people cannot be encouraged to use a service that does not exist. Patronage is encouraged by a service that is both available and good. I regret that the authorities have seen fit to cut out some services in our city and surrounding areas although I can quite understand their reasons for doing so.

The main reason for the change from trams to buses in Brisbane was the decision of the Government of the day to make no provision for tramlines in the construction of the new Victoria Bridge. It is also true to some extent that a tram service meant heavy financial commitments in the laying of lines and there were also those who thought that trams running down the middle of streets did not make for the best running of a mixed public and private transport system.

Dr. Crawford: They could have been retained in peripheral areas.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. Provision could have been made for trams to run virtually as trains now run except in smaller units. I think that the decision to remove trams was wrong. Expediency was allowed to overcome planning. If there had been in those days an authority similar to the one that is now to be set up, I feel that a lot of good could have come at that time. The fact is, of course, that trams were removed and replaced by buses that contribute heavily to pollution and use a fuel that could be

even more expensive in the future. However, we have to consider not so much what happened in the past as what is to happen in the future.

Operational losses on buses make it easy to understand why the council has reduced its services, as all such losses have to be paid from rates. I do not think it right that the people of Brisbane should be required to pay the losses sustained on a public transport system that is used by not only the citizens of Brisbane but, especially in off-peak periods, by visitors to this city. If the railways, for instance, make a loss, it is met out of Consolidated Revenue and the people of Queensland as a whole contribute to any rail losses sustained in the metropolitan area. For that reason the honourable member for Mackay made a valid point when he spoke about State money being used in the State itself. If private transport operators make a loss, they simply close the service. There is no-one to foot the bill for them.

One point to which I do want to draw the Government's attention is the fact that when we suffer losses in our public transport systems, they should be the last to be considered. The first consideration with public transport is the service to the people and the possibility of building that service up. I have mentioned before the concern of the honourable member for Archerfield for the people of Inala, and I think he has a very valid point. What we have to remember is that there are a lot of necessary Government activities which in themselves would show a financial loss if a balance sheet were compiled. I have particularly in mind the police. No-one suggests that the police should make so many arrests and impose so many fines that the money we receive will pay for the administration of the Police Force, the salary of the man on the beat, the replacement of motor vehicles and so on. No-one would suggest that. No-one would suggest that the health inspectors and other inspectors required to police our various laws should impose so many fines that these services will show a profit. I look at public transport in the same vein; it is a service to the community, and if losses are incurred they should be paid for by the community as a whole because not only the people of Brisbane but all people throughout the State use them. That does not mean to say I endorse any inefficiency in the service at all. I believe it has to be efficient.

As I said right at the outset, I support the concept of a co-ordinating authority. That does not mean to say I support the concept contained in this Bill. Many of the provisions in this Bill are too one-sided. When we go through it in detail, as I intend to now without going through the clauses, there are a lot of points to be answered by the Minister. I heard his introductory speech, and I read his remarks again to make sure that I followed all the points he wanted to make. I hope that in his reply before we go on to the Committee stage he will give us

some answers to these points, such as where the various clauses fit and whether they dovetail.

The first query I have is about the name of the Bill. This is not a Metropolitan Transit Authority Bill; in the interpretation clause reference is made to entry into other local authority areas. The areas of Redcliffe, Pine Rivers, the Gold Coast, Beenleigh and Caboolture would not be included in the normal concept of the metropolitan area of Brisbane. So in the first instance the name of the Bill should refer to the metropolitan and outside areas. The Minister can call it what he likes, but it is not the Metropolitan Transit Authority Bill.

Mr. Jones: What did you call it in 1972? You had a scheme then.

Mr. HOUSTON: We suggested the Brisbane and Surrounding Areas Transport Authority, which, I think, covered the situation. That name came into being in answer to Liberal Party criticism in 1969, when we first formulated and put to the people of Brisbane a plan to establish an authority which we would call the Metropolitan Transport Authority. I was severely criticised at that time by Liberal Party candidates who said, "Aren't you going to talk about outside Brisbane?", and I agreed that they were dead right in their criticism of the name. I think the name of the authority is the first thing we should have a look at.

In my view this Bill is designed as another link in the long chain of Government delays in really doing something about public transport in Brisbane. We have already mentioned the delay by this Government of the electrification of Brisbane railways. The honourable member for Toowong made a pathetic attempt to justify what took place. Of course, he did not mention the fact that quadruplication was going on as part of the electrification scheme, and if he cares to read the statements made by the people involved at the time the decision was made, particularly the Minister for Railways, who made it very clear it was a Government policy decision, he will find that it was not because of any fragmentation or anything like that because everyone knew that it was all part of a co-ordinated plan within the limits of the money available at that time. The point I want to make is that even with this Bill we are, unfortunately, still only talking about getting things done.

The authority that the Bill sets up will comprise seven people—five Government nominees, one from the Brisbane City Council and one from the other local authorities. The Minister said that in the field of public transport in Brisbane, the Brisbane City Council was the authority that carried most people—I think his words were that it was the "biggest people-mover" in the metropolitan area. I am not arguing about that; naturally, that would be correct. The point is that the honourable member for

Toowong, in his usual style, expects everyone to believe his off-the-cuff statement that not even a quarter of the people are moved by the Brisbane City Council. Although the Minister said that it was the largest authority moving people, it is to have only one representative on the authority. There will be five Government appointees, one representative from the Brisbane City Council and one from the other local authorities, and the area it covers could extend from Caboolture to Beenleigh and even to the Gold Coast. It will not take in only Brisbane and perhaps Park Ridge, Brown's Plains, or somewhere such as that, just outside the metropolitan area. If this is to be a transport authority, let us use the experts and take it away from being only a subdepartment of the Government.

As I see it, one clause of the Bill says that the authority will do exactly as the Minister tells it to do. It will not be a free agent. The Bill does not even say that the authority shall consider recommendations from Cabinet. It says distinctly that if the Minister tells it to do something, that is what it will do. There will be a complete dictatorship by bureaucracy. If the Government wants something popular done, the Minister will say, "I did that. I told the authority to do it." On the other hand, if something is done that the public does not like, the Government will say, "Blame the authority". There will be no opportunity to complain, because the authority is not an elected body. It will be the old story—

"If there is any praise, give it to me; if there is any blame, give it to the other fellow."

Mr. Frawley: No; you are wrong.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course, the honourable member for Murrumbidgee does not even know what is in the Bill.

Mr. Frawley: I am on the Minister's committee. I know what is in it.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is on the Minister's committee? Well, I would be ashamed to admit that I was on the Minister's committee if this is the best it can do.

Mr. Frawley: He's a damn good Minister.

Mr. HOUSTON: That's right, and you haven't even got up and backed him.

Mr. Frawley: He doesn't need any help.

Mr. HOUSTON: Oh, does he ever! The authority will not work as it is being set up now. It will work in the way I am suggesting. It will be a tool in the hands of the Government for the things it can get praise for, and it will be the fall guy to take any backlash from the public when things do not go well.

As an authority, it should have its accounts examined by the Auditor-General. However, other authorities that the Government has

set up to deal with the public and handle vast sums of money—I have in mind the Totalisator Administration Board—do not have their accounts audited by the Auditor-General. I do not suggest that there is anything wrong with the accounts of the T.A.B., but the fact is that they are not audited by the Auditor-General. The Bill now before the House makes a point of having the accounts of this authority audited by the Auditor-General. Whenever one asks questions about one of the other authorities—for example, electric authorities—one is told, "No, you can't interfere with that. It is a statutory body." If one asks a question about hospital boards, one receives the same answer. In my opinion, this is an extraordinary situation.

Honourable members are now discussing a co-ordinated transport system including bus, rail and road transport, both privately and publicly operated, and the matters that I am mentioning are important. As I said, obviously the Minister intends to control the authority—when it suits him to do so.

The early part of the Bill sets out all the things that the authority may do. Without going into the clauses, I point out that it says that the authority will implement such programmes as are submitted to it by the Minister and as are approved by the Governor in Council, and that in the discharge of its functions the authority shall adhere to any directions that the Minister may give from time to time as they affect policy. It can operate any services it wants to. It can get finance. If it wants to, it can take over, finance and run the whole transport system of Brisbane once the Bill becomes law.

Then another part of the Bill provides that it will carry out an investigation. It can take two years to do that. That part of the Bill deals with the plan for the development of public passenger transport. It is all very nice in theory. A plan is going to be prepared, and that plan will be published in one or more newspapers. The public will be allowed to look at the plan, and the public will be told, "If you don't like it, you can object." The Bill goes into great detail to point out how the public can object. The authority virtually can do what it wants to do during that period of two years. I should like the Minister to tell us in clear and concise terms the co-ordination between Part II and Part V. If he tells us that when he replies at this stage, it could save time at the Committee stage when the clauses are being debated. He cannot have it both ways. On the one hand he cannot have the authority doing all the things set out in the early part of the Bill—borrow money, spend money, run buses, run trains and run ferries, or tell other people how to run them and how to co-ordinate them—and at the same time set down towards the end of the Bill provision for a plan for the development of public passenger transport. To my way of thinking, that should be done first. Once the plan is

lined up it should be implemented. I do not see why it should take two years. The Minister has had an authority operating now for quite some time.

If the Metropolitan Transit Authority is run properly it could make a tremendous difference to the operation of Brisbane's transport, as long as the Government is prepared to make the necessary money available for a public transport system with public service as its main object. I do not mean "public service" in the sense that I am opposed to private enterprise having certain sections of it. I see no reason why the job should be taken off those who are doing it, but, like other honourable members, I object strongly to private enterprise running the paying ones if they are not prepared to assume responsibility for developing services in new areas. I want to see service in the sense of help to those who need public transport, particularly in off-peak times, so that they do not have to go to the expense of taxis.

Mr. Frawley: You misled the people of Redcliffe in 1972 when you promised a new highway.

Mr. HOUSTON: If Labor had got in, the people would have had the highway and a railway line. The honourable member cannot disprove that.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, I went down into Mr. Speaker's area and told the people, as I went into the honourable member's area and told them. Unfortunately the people there were prepared to believe the honourable member. What has he got? He's got nothing—nothing at all!

Mr. Frawley: They've got me.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is a liability to the people down there. He had better make the most of his 18 months here, because that is all he has left. All that got him into Parliament was the boundaries. The same boundaries will get him out, too. However, I am not here to argue with the honourable member. I will do that at a more appropriate time.

I ask the Minister to define clearly the relationship between Part II of the Bill, an operative part of the Bill which deals with things which appear to be required to be done immediately, and Part V of the Bill, which requires that a plan be submitted for public scrutiny within a period of two years. Those are the two major points I should like cleared up.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (4.35 p.m.): In addressing myself to this Bill, I stress at the outset that my thoughts are for the city of Brisbane. I can remember that some years ago the term "co-ordination" was widely used in respect of our transport system. I agree with the previous speaker, who claimed that the term "co-ordination" would have

been far more appropriate than "metropolitan" in the title of this Bill. The main purpose of the Bill is, after all, the co-ordination and improvement of the present services in the metropolitan area. And, my goodness, don't they need some improvement! One word can be used to describe them—*atrocious!*

I do not, however, blame the Brisbane City Council for all this. For years it has struggled with this great octopus. It is quite beyond the council's means to provide an efficient co-ordinated public transport system. It simply does not have sufficient resources at its disposal.

Particularly in the outer suburbs, people are herded into buses in the morning like cattle. The previous speaker referred to the two-year period. This is another weakness in the Bill. If nothing is done within two years, the whole of the city's transport system will grind to a halt. Anyone who tries to drive up George Street in the morning, say, at 10 o'clock, will be lucky to go half way without being brought to a stop. The traffic congestion is particularly bad near the exits from the freeway into the city. It has to be seen to be believed.

We must, however, be fair. We know that transport problems confront all the major capital cities throughout the world. However, if we compare our transport system with those in other cities in Australia, we realise that ours has many shortcomings. The honourable member for Belmont referred to Western Australia. Recently I visited that State, and there I found the public transport system to be outstanding.

Mr. Jensen: Excellent.

Mr. DEAN: It is indeed excellent. It is maintained even at the late hours of the night. One of the drawbacks of Brisbane's public transport system is that very few late-night services are available. The outer suburbs, of course, suffer the most. There are practically no late-night services to my own area of Sandgate. In fact, I think that the only service is provided by one train that leaves the city for Sandgate at a late hour. This is totally inadequate to meet the needs of a large population who live only 12 miles from the centre of the city.

Suggestions were put forward as to the use of the Brisbane River for public transport services. The river is already heavily congested and this further use would pose tremendous problems. Certainly the waters of the bay are clear of traffic, but the river is clogged with the movement of shipping and river craft. I cannot for one moment imagine the Brisbane River being suitable for public transport, unless, of course, a large number of vessels that presently use the river are precluded from doing so. It may be able to be used by cross-river ferries.

Mr. Moore: What a lot of rot. You have been to Hong Kong. You know what it is like there.

Mr. DEAN: It is not a lot of rot, Mr. Speaker. You know the river as well as I do. You realise what it would be like if an attempt was made to use it for public transport, especially from our electorates. There would certainly be some congestion then. Or is it intended that it should be like Hong Kong? I am sure the people of Brisbane would not put up with the congestion and the conglomeration of craft experienced there.

It is disappointing that electrification will not take place until the 1980s. The salvation of our transport system lies in the provision of fast, clean, efficient railway services. The people will use them. They are now, as the Minister knows. The service to my own area is all right in the day-time. I feel that an extension of the railway system would help solve public transport problems in the metropolitan area.

For years we have discussed and argued about a rail link to the Redcliffe Peninsula. Although that is not in my electorate, I am very interested in it. It is adjacent to the Sandgate electorate, and a rail link there would relieve much of the congestion in my electorate. I cannot understand the reason for the delay. With today's modern methods of laying rail line, it is not now necessary, as it was years ago, to have hundreds of men to manhandle rails. With modern machines, it is quite simple to put down rails and ballast, compared with the procedure 50 years ago.

Mr. Houston: Tell them there's some coal down there and a Japanese company wants it.

Mr. DEAN: If we had a foreign company down there, perhaps we would get it. I feel sure, Mr. Speaker, that you would agree with me that a rail link to Redcliffe is long overdue.

The Hornibrook Bridge is another instance of lack of foresight. For years I have said, as you have, Mr. Speaker—I am only echoing your words—that a new bridge should have been built there. We all know that, because of the franchise on the Hornibrook Bridge, it has not been possible to build a new highway. However, a new bridge could have been built and it would have been ready for immediate use when the franchise on the Hornibrook Bridge expired. Instead, what do we see today? The Clontarf extension goes through my area and then stops. Once the new area through Brighton and Nashville is opened up, I do not know what is going to happen when all that traffic tries to get onto the present highway. With the condition the bridge is in at the moment, I think it will collapse unless we spend a tremendous amount of money on it.

A new bridge should have been constructed long ago, further up the Pine River and certainly nowhere near where I believe it is going to be built. The result of the new Hornibrook Highway will be a concentration

of the traffic at Woody Point—or Clontarf, as we know it. There will be enormous congestion and, as far as I can see, it will not provide the relief that many people are expecting. However, a rail link is of prime importance for Redcliffe. My interest in that is relief of the pressure in my own area. It would no doubt make a great difference to Redcliffe and its nearby areas and open up a lot of new suburbs on the way to the city.

I have made a close study of public transport in the city of Adelaide. It has a truly wonderful service. It experimented with a free transport system across the city, from the Adelaide railway across to Victoria Place. When I asked the authorities for information, they said that it had paid handsome dividends. There was no need for conductors and the driver was free to concentrate on driving. That cross-city transport relieved the other services, especially in peak hour. It is a full-time service, extending through till about midnight, if I remember correctly.

There is a lot to be said for the provision of free transport within the city itself. Brisbane could support such a scheme. What about the people who walk across the Victoria Bridge in the morning? I believe they should be provided with free transport. The ratepayers are entitled to some consideration. They pay enough taxes and surely we should have a free transport system in the inner-city area. It would pay because it would require less labour and would add to the comfort of people and the speed of getting them in and out of the city area.

Many commercial shopping interests have moved to the outer areas of Brisbane, and no doubt more stores will be built as the population increases. The public transport system could be improved by providing free transport to the large shopping complexes in the outer suburbs of Brisbane. Many people would then be encouraged to stay out of the inner-city area.

We should learn from what other people are doing. Engineers are sent overseas. During the past few years a good many of them from both the Government and the council have gone overseas and returned with all the data on public transport, but all of their suggestions must have been shelved; not much notice has been taken of them. It costs a lot of money to send these people overseas. They do a lot of hard work and return with many good ideas and think that they should be implemented. We should be learning from what is going on in other parts of the world and of Australia. We should avoid their mistakes but should quickly adopt their successes.

I sincerely hope that something will be done earlier than years hence. The traffic congestion that any person from the northern suburbs encounters during peak hours makes it difficult for him to drive to the city. The position is getting worse because more cars

are coming onto the road every day. This is only natural because we do not live in the horse-and-buggy age; we live in a highly mechanised era. There will be an increase, not a reduction, in the number of cars on the roads. That is the age in which we live.

I certainly support the idea of car parks or holding areas in the outer suburbs. Because it would lessen strain in driving, I, for one, would be only too willing to leave my car at Lutwyche or Chermide and travel by bus to the House each day. Every other honourable member would no doubt be happy to do that. That suggestion has a lot to commend it, but a very frequent bus service must be provided.

I am told that buses travel from the Gold Coast to Brisbane hourly. Even the residents of Brisbane do not enjoy such a frequency of service.

Mr. Moore: That's right—because we have the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. DEAN: I said earlier that it is unfair to blame the council; its resources are limited. It has done remarkably well. It certainly did well in my own area when the private bus owner ceased operation at about one hour's notice. The service just collapsed. We had to work very quickly and I give credit to the Commissioner for Transport (Mr. Seeney) and his officers for the way they worked in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council. They did a magnificent job on that occasion to give the Sandgate people a service following very short notice of the collapse of the private bus service. Within a matter of a few days printed time-tables were available. Although the service was limited, it was very much appreciated. The private bus owner closed the company down with very little notice to the public.

The people of Sandgate and similar areas—especially those who have no private transport and must depend on public transport—are suffering more than others in travelling to work each day. I repeat my hope that something will happen earlier than two years hence to relieve the present problem by providing a satisfactory public transport system in Brisbane and outer suburbs. It is getting worse every day. The number of vehicles on the road is increasing. All it needs is one breakdown on Lutwyche Road, and the flow of traffic stops. The traffic piles up while the details of the accident are being taken, and before anyone who is caught knows what is going on an hour has been lost.

It is good, I suppose, to have this Bill. It is certainly belated but it is better late than never. The concern of Opposition members is the early implementation of its provisions. Surely we do not have to wait for two years before any action flows from it. There are already pigeon-holes full of plans and they cannot all be obsolete. I know that the officers of the Transport

Department and others in the Public Service are quite capable of working out a plan of action that could be acted on quickly if only they were assisted and allowed to work without interference. If that were done, I am quite sure that we would have a very efficient public transport system in the city of Brisbane.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (4.51 p.m.): This is one of scores of Bills that I have seen presented to the House by both Labor and anti-Labor Governments since I became a member of Parliament which I would describe as “BBB”—Beloved Brisbane Bills. When such Bills are introduced, we see the remarkable accord, amity, almost loving tenderness with which members of the Liberal and Labor Parties acclaim them. I am a little sympathetic with members of the Labor Party. I used to be very sympathetic towards them when there were more of them here. Now that they have been reduced to a few little political rags and tags, it is difficult to feel as much sympathy as I did before. Nevertheless, I would like to hear the honest and considered opinions of the honourable member for Cairns, the two members from Rockhampton and the honourable member for Bundaberg. I cannot include any other member of the Labor Party because those are the only ones who represent electorates outside Brisbane.

Mr. Jones: If you had been in the House earlier, you would have heard what I had to say.

Mr. AIKENS: I would have heard what the honourable member had been told to say. But that is not the question that I asked; I want to know what those members honestly think about the Bill.

The whole gravamen of the Bill is found on pages 5 and 6. The clauses on those pages set up some of the machinery to allow the authority to be established under the Bill to conduct any business it likes, or do anything it likes, with regard to transport in beloved Brisbane. On page 11 provision is made for the payment of remuneration to the chairman and members of the authority which will administer the provisions of the Bill. All will be Brisbaneites. On page 17 it will be found that the Treasurer, acting on behalf of the Government, is to be authorised to give grants, hand-outs and what-have-you, with the reckless abandon of a drunken sailor, to this authority. He will get that money from the people outside Brisbane in the great Outback—the salt of the earth. Those who grow and produce things and are responsible for the real wealth of Queensland will have their pockets picked by the Government in order to boost transport facilities for beloved Brisbane. I have seen it all so often before.

On page 18 provision is made for the authority to borrow an unlimited amount in order to keep the authority running and

to provide the people of beloved Brisbane with all the transport facilities that they need and demand. All those demands will be supported whole-heartedly by A.L.P. and Liberal Party members so that they will get everything they want. Interest and redemption payments on those loans will all be met by the people in the back country who produce the wealth of this State. The loans will also be guaranteed by the Government, which means that there is no fear of loss. The people of Brisbane never have anything to lose.

If I spoke for three hours I could not say anything more derogatory of this Bill than I have said. I could not say anything that would eviscerate and scarify the members of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party on this Bill any more than I have said because once again it is a question of the people of the country areas being bled white in order to boost the people of Brisbane and their facilities.

For several years, of course, we have heard the story about how much Clem Jones did for Brisbane. As a matter of fact, the taxi driver who drove us in from Eagle Farm this morning said, "What a wonderful job Clem Jones has done for Brisbane." I did not argue the point with him. I know what a wonderful job Clem Jones has done for Brisbane because he did it all with money provided by the Liberal Treasurers of this State. First of all it was the Honourable T. A. Hiley and later Sir Gordon Chalk. In order to keep the, shall we say, electoral prospects of the Liberal Party members in Brisbane electorates alive, Sir Gordon Chalk had to pour money into the pockets of Clem Jones—not personally, although I feel some of it stayed there. I would be surprised at Clem if it did not.

Sir Gordon Chalk poured money into the Brisbane City Council; Clem Jones spent it, and every municipal polling day Clem Jones came out and claimed credit for what wonderful work he had done for Brisbane—the sewerage he had installed, the roads he had built, the magnificent buildings that had been erected and all the facilities and amenities that had been provided—without telling the people of Brisbane that that money had come not from the pockets of the ratepayers but from the State Treasurer, who took it from the pockets of the people of Queensland over all. Then, of course, before each State election, Sir Gordon Chalk, as Leader of the Liberal Party, was able to go out and say, "What a wonderful Treasurer I am. What a wonderful party the Liberal Party is. Look at what we have done for Brisbane. Look at the money we have shovelled out to Clem Jones so he could do something for Brisbane, and in doing something for Brisbane he could do it for you."

I suppose if I were a member of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party I would not be as bitter about these things as I am, but I am a member representing the great northern areas of this State, or perhaps the

hub of the universe in the great northern areas of this State and I know how those people work. I know what they have to go without. I know the type of transport services they have got up there. I have been in Townsville long enough to see all the rail-motor services and all the little suburban train services cut out. I have seen the bus services cut down and cut down until they are almost non-existent. Every day as I pedal my bike into town, I pass the people either walking or pedalling into town. It will not be long, of course, before they are going in in their sulkies or buckboards or riding horses. I know what a raw transport deal the people in the country areas are getting from the Government of this State.

There is no Townsville transit authority Bill; there is no Rockhampton transit authority Bill; there is no Mackay transit authority Bill, no Cairns transit authority Bill—I can see the honourable member for Cairns wincing; at least he has a guilty conscience and that is one thing—there is no Bundaberg transit authority Bill and no Toowoomba transit authority Bill coming before this House, only a Beloved Brisbane Metropolitan Transit Authority Bill financed by the people of this State and so, Mr. Speaker, if I am in the Chamber when the vote is taken I will vote against this Bill purely as an indication of my protest against a system that has continued over the 30 years I have been in this House. It does not matter whether we have an A.L.P. Government or a National-Liberal Party Government, the first thought when it comes to providing amenities, facilities, and comfortable, convenient living for the people is for the people of beloved Brisbane. I do not know how the National Party members of this Parliament are going to stand up to it. I suppose they will be just as pliable, just as malleable, just as amenable, just as weak and just as spineless as they are in many other matters when the interests of their areas are affected. But here we have another Beloved Brisbane Bill and, if I might use an old northern expression, "It stinks! It stinks as much as a dead dingo!"

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (5 p.m.), in reply: Unfortunately, it has become par for the course for me to prefix my reply to comments by the honourable member for Cairns by saying that they lack any real form of substance. I believe he used the words "dis-mal response", and I do not believe I can find a better term to describe his speech.

He spoke of this Government's so called lip-service to public transport. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hasn't he opened his eyes and seen the numerous capital works programmes already under way?

The honourable member talked about "the Merivale Bridge". Apart from the fact that this project has been known for some time

as the Brisbane cross-river rail link, isn't he aware that work on this project is well under way, and has been since last August?

Again, for his benefit, I will repeat that new interchange facilities and car parks have been built or are being built at suburban railway stations, there is track work in hand on several sections of the suburban line and new buses are being added to the council's fleet.

He claimed that £9,000,000 had been spent on electrification works in 1960, and that only another £11,000,000 was needed to complete a so-called electrified system. I understand that the former State A.L.P. Government estimated electrification to cost only £2,500,000. However, here we have an admission by an honourable member opposite that £9,000,000 was spent on quadruplication without any tangible benefit to the public.

The honourable member for Cairns repeatedly referred to the proposed plan for the development of public transport incorporated in the Bill. In this regard he is needlessly stressing one small section of the Bill. Surely he must be aware that this Bill deals with wider-reaching proposals than just a plan to develop public transport.

He also spoke about the need for the authority to consult with local authorities, Government departments, etc. Naturally, these consultations are provided for in the Bill—in fact, the authority will be required to consult with these bodies. I might venture to say that I wonder whether the honourable member for Cairns has even in fact studied the Bill in any depth.

The honourable member went on to talk about the authority's responsibility to Parliament. If he had studied the Bill he would have seen that the authority must prepare an annual report to be laid on the table of the House.

The honourable member for Cairns asked whether the Bill created an authority as an instrument under the Crown or whether it would be protected by the Crown. In answer to this, let me say that the authority will, in exercising its powers, adhere to any directions which the Minister for Transport may give on policy.

He claimed that this Bill disregarded local authorities and the transport commission. Local authorities will be represented on the authority, as he would have seen if he had studied the section pertaining to the authority's composition.

The honourable member for Cairns raised a number of other points to which, if he goes back to the Bill and studies it at length, he will find the answers that time does not permit me to give now.

All in all, I found his contribution to the debate sadly lacking. I wonder whether he took cognisance of what the honourable member for Belmont said.

I would refer the honourable member for Belmont to an earlier comment I made in the House, namely, that our Brisbane River is a very curvaceous and indirect route to travel to the city. Cross-river ferries do play an important role in our public transport and some up and down-river services are being studied by the University of Queensland now.

I agree entirely with the honourable member that our public transport services must be based on a summation of individual needs—we cannot have an overall bureaucratic, fixed, inflexible system. We have Wilbur Smith and Associates studying a series of new inner-city bus distribution circuits right now for the board. This will include the Valley and central business district areas.

We do not believe that public transport "dies" after work trips. We will be looking at school transport, more services to shopping centres and more lateral or cross-town services as opposed to central business district services only.

I wish to thank the honourable member for Archerfield for his contribution. At present there is a study of bus priority lanes and measures from Logan Road to Nudgee Road and towards Clayfield. There is a bus priority lane in existence outside and along South Brisbane Station.

The Government recognises that Inala has a transport problem, and the honourable member will note my immediate plans for bus/rail measures at both Oxley and Darra—the two adjacent stations where buses co-ordinate right now for Inala.

The honourable member would have us build a new line. His justification for this is not yet forthcoming, but I am sure it will be.

As usual, the honourable member for Toowong was spot on with his comments. I agree with him that the A.L.P. Brisbane City Council has a shocking track record. It cancelled trams; it has taken the two steps which always torpedo public transport. Firstly, it has increased fares above personal rejection levels and, secondly, it has changed and cut services. It has continued to cut and change bus services, which is confusing and leads to an unacceptable situation. People will not accept such changes.

Look at its attitude to the morning peak carriage of school-children. For the sake of saving operating costs, the Brisbane City Council decided children should travel at full cost. Nowhere else in the world has this sort of thing been done. The children fled to the trains and will never return to bus transport.

And look at the mess with bus stops in the city. Have honourable members ever seen any other city with peak and off-peak bus stops? It's a mess!

I do not agree with the honourable member for Mackay that my Government has

ignored other areas. As I said a little earlier, transport is a major consideration over three major regional subdivisions.

I think he, with the honourable member for Townsville South, would do well to note the northern, central and southern regions.

The honourable member for Mackay does not accept the facts of life in all major cities in the world. Regardless of what we do, we have such an intermix of transport that transport problems are created. The Moreton Region Study is a study for the structured development of land use in the Moreton Region. The Director of Transport Planning and Development of the Metropolitan Transit Project Board's staff, represents both the Department of Transport and the Transit Project Board on this study. The detailed study of transport is an ongoing detailed study based on the land usage determined in the Moreton Region Strategic Study. Of course this is now being done and carefully watched by the board.

The honourable member for Bulimba made a contribution that was a little bit both ways. First, he supported the legislation and then he was fairly critical of it. We accept that public transport will be recognised as a valid and necessary public service—and it should be. The authority's prime concern will be the levels of service provided and the fares to be charged. We recognise that not all of the costs of operating all services will be met by the fare box. The Bill makes provision for meeting extra costs for necessary services where they may be required but not always an economic proposition.

The honourable member for Sandgate was critical of the Bill; then he supported it, and then he was critical of it again. He made many remarks, but at least he said some very laudatory things about the railways, and for that I thank him.

I want to remind him of a couple of things. Free transport is a myth. We still have to pay for drivers; we still have to pay for fuel; we still have to pay for the running costs of buses. Every dollar that goes into free transport lessens the opportunity for new services and new transport development. It is quite obvious that services cannot be extended unless they obtain at least some return. The honourable member should travel occasionally on public transport. Probably he does. I am sure that if he does he will see that things are improving. In fact, only today I handed him a letter telling him of the improvements in his own area; but he didn't see fit to mention that; he must have overlooked it, and I shall forgive him on this occasion.

It was interesting to hear the hatred expressed by the honourable member for Townsville South for the metropolitan area and the surrounding areas. He is, of course, entitled to his belief and to express it. But I remind him that the Commissioner for Transport has in hand and is conducting a public transport study in Townsville.

Hasn't the honourable member heard about it? This study will be for the ultimate benefit of the city of Townsville. We have to carry out such studies to get the facts. You would be amazed, Mr. Speaker, how little firm fact exists in the transport field—rather like the honourable member for Townsville South. We must obtain the facts from everyone concerned, including the Opposition. Only opinions are expressed here. We have to go right into the operating aspects that are so necessary in any such services. I remind the honourable member that Townsville is receiving a grant from the State Government.

Mr. Aikens: You are doing a lot better for Townsville than the A.L.P. did, but you still aren't doing as much as you are for Brisbane.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: O.K.; but Townsville is not forgotten. The situation there is being looked into.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr. Hooper's motion)—put; and the House divided.

Resolved in the affirmative under Standing Order No. 148.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

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

Clause 4—Incorporation of Authority—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.16 p.m.): I regret that the Minister is suffering under the misapprehension that I have not studied the Bill in detail. In fact, he said that I had not read the Bill. As I have left the sting in the tail, perhaps his misconception will become apparent as we proceed through the clauses.

Obviously the Metropolitan Transit Authority is not a constructing authority for the purposes of the Acquisition of Land Act. I ask the Minister whether the provision relating to "taking, acquiring, holding and disposing of land and other property" will give the authority the power of resumption. When land is taken or acquired, will that be under a power of resumption, purchase or some other means? If the authority does not have the power to resume, will the Coordinator-General resume on the authority's behalf, if the necessity arises?

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (5.17 p.m.): The answer is that the authority will have that power. It will have the power to negotiate as well.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Composition of Authority—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.18 p.m.): Of the seven members of the authority, only one is a representative of the general public. All the others could technically be termed bureaucrats. They are not answerable to

the people; they are not elected. The passengers—the voters—will have no means of redress. If the travelling public are to become units of an impersonal consideration, that will be a matter for regret. Under the provisions of this clause, it is possible for the authority to sit aloof in judgment, making decisions beyond the pale. The citizens will have no recourse against appointments; nor will the Parliament. They will have no right to elicit information or be informed of planning and decisions; nor will the Parliament—except for a report being laid on the table. I will refer to that at a later stage.

I believe that some members of the authority should be there as a result of direct or indirect popular election. There should be somebody on the authority who could be held responsible, as an elected representative of his peers. At the present moment, the Minister elects, selects, recommends or nominates the majority of the board. In view of the ramifications of this authority, the supreme powers it will have and the fact that it could come into confrontation with bus operators and other authorities, those operators and authorities should be represented on the board. So should unions. There could be future conflict if this does not prevail.

A union representative on the board could make a very valuable contribution and could participate usefully in the work of such a body. A precedent has been set in having union representation on boards such as Qantas. Union or worker participation at this level would be a forward-thinking type of arrangement and should be given every consideration by the Minister.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.21 p.m.): I have a couple of queries I should like to put to the Minister concerning clause 5. Why does it provide for five Government nominees against one from the Brisbane City Council and one from the other local authorities? I ask the Minister to give the Committee some explanation as to why the clause designates five Government members, what type of people he envisages they will be and what qualifications they will possess. If the Government is to have five nominees, the public should know what they are to represent. When the Minister decided to make it five, I am sure he had something in mind; it would not have been a number just picked out of the hat.

The Minister will have power to direct the authority to do certain things. Although he will not sit in on meetings, an elected member of Parliament will have the power to influence that authority directly, not through another person. In the same clause we are providing that an alderman or councillor must not be a member of the authority. To me, this is completely wrong. If it is good enough for a member of Parliament to have direct access to the authority, to have power to veto and power to direct the authority, it is equally good enough to allow local authori-

ties, should they think fit, to elect an alderman. It should be left to the local authority or authorities. I do not see why Parliament should be able to direct another body as to the person it appoints. The clause certainly nominates the people that the local authorities cannot have as their representative. An elected member of the council or a local authority could have been an expert in this field prior to his election. I see no reason why councils should be tied down and told that their members cannot be appointed to the authority.

I ask the Minister to explain those two further points.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (5.23 p.m.): I wish to raise a point that I mentioned in my second-reading speech, which the Minister does not appear to have replied to. In his opening remarks the Minister pointed out that the Government recognised the very great service that private contractors and private transport operators had given to the public. I asked why, in view of that fact, somebody from that section of the industry might not be specifically appointed to that authority. If such a person is not to be included, could the Minister assure the Committee that at least one of the people nominated will come from that sector of the industry, because it has played such a major role in the past and will continue to play such a role in the future?

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (5.24 p.m.): The three honourable members who have spoken to this clause have done so more or less along the same lines. Firstly, let me assure the honourable member for Bulimba, who hoped that one of the Government nominees would represent the public, that I hope that they will all represent the general public. That is the way we will be looking at it. Replying to the question about the type of people, I think the honourable member for Belmont, by referring to this particular provision, made it very clear why I did not answer him in my second-reading speech. Although he has asked the question, I think that he knows the reason. I am presently examining the type of people whom private industry has to offer. Surely there are some people in this field who would be of suitable calibre to represent the private passenger transport industry.

With respect to the exclusion of elected members of local authorities, I say here and now that this was done deliberately because, if a Minister or a Government has to control any legislation, most certainly elected members from outside Parliament would make such a body unworkable. In fairness to those who will be members of the authority, the Government felt that it was better to have people who were experts in this field, some of whom could perhaps be aldermen. There

is nothing to prevent me or the Government from nominating them among the five other persons.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Effect of Authority's constitution on existing rights—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.27 p.m.): The Metropolitan Transit Project Board is to be continued in existence and constituted as the Metropolitan Transit Authority in a transitional exercise to give legislative weight to the existing Metropolitan Transit Project Board which is to be superseded. Will the Metropolitan Transit Project Board members be sacked or transferred to the Metropolitan Transit Authority in the transition? Does the change in name simply mean that they will be the nominal appointees?

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Declaration of region—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.28 p.m.): The declaration of regions is apparently the sole prerogative of the Minister, and this power is granted to him without any referral. As the clause contains the words "as he thinks fit", he is not bound to undertake any form of inquiry. He does not have to consult any authority. These are very wide provisions indeed. I suggest that the Minister should refer these matters to those local authorities whose areas may be included in the declared regions. There may be many features—topography, for instance—that should be taken into consideration. Yet the Minister, as he thinks fit, can include an area and a section of the community within a declared region.

It is a wide power and the responsibility in exercising it should weigh heavily on the Minister. The Opposition would like an assurance from the Minister that local authorities whose areas are to be included in declared regions will be taken into consultation and fully advised before decisions affecting them are made.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Prescribing persons—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.30 p.m.): This is a very loosely worded and badly drafted clause. In my opinion it contradicts clause 9 (1) (b) and (c) and also some of the provisions of clause 10. Technically the clause has very wide provisions and could cover any person who operates a public passenger transport service within a declared region. This service could operate on land, on water or in the air. Clause 3 defines a prescribed person in these terms—

"'prescribed person' means a person duly declared by the Governor in Council pursuant to section 8 to be a prescribed person for the purposes of this Act;"

The provisions of clause 9 conflict with this interpretation because they state that the authority or the Minister can deal with anybody and can decide how much should be given by way of assistance, and in this

regard a "prescribed person" is very loosely defined. The clause has very wide ramifications in respect of a prescribed person who can receive Government assistance through this authority. I think these people should be more definitely defined and that the provision should be made more intelligible.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Functions of Authority—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.32 p.m.): The purpose of this clause is obviously to formulate and implement programmes. There is no direct public involvement. The clause appears to show a complete disregard for local authorities or the effect those programmes might have on local authorities. The clause refers to submissions to the Minister relating to programmes for a declared region. As with clause 7, there is no consultation with any local authority and the Minister has supreme power. The Minister can take any course he sees fit, and technically he has *carte blanche*. The Bill says in effect, "Within or outside of the Act", which gives the Minister absolute power. I do not like absolute power in anybody's hands. I am not referring specifically to the Minister. He will not always be Minister for Transport, but this Bill will remain on the Statute Book and it confers absolute power. I think the Bill displays a complete disregard of other authorities, councils, electricity authorities and even Government departments. Reference is made to the functions of the authority and subclause (e) reads—

"to perform such other acts and discharge such other functions—

- (i) as are incidental to the discharge of the foregoing functions; or
- (ii) as are assigned to the Authority by this Act or by the Minister."

This permits the authority to act outside the provisions of the Act at the direction of the Minister. It seems to me that this gives an uncontrolled and unfettered authority to the Minister. The question I ask is this: Is this provision good for parliamentary government? Is it going to be government by regulation? This Bill confirms and assigns powers to the Minister, without referral to Parliament or anybody else, to do any job, take any action or make any decision. It gives him an open cheque. The Bill directs that the authority shall adhere to any directions that the Minister may give and in effect grants the Minister dictatorial power which should not be granted in any democratic society. The honourable member for Belmont and the Minister have said that there is a referral to Parliament. The clause says, "The Minister shall lay the report before the Legislative Assembly." However, the clause does not say that it shall be printed and distributed to members. We have seen in this Chamber previously, Mr. Miller, reports laid on the table but not printed; instead they have been stacked away in the

archives of the Clerk of the Parliament and not brought to the notice or attention of members.

Mr. Byrne: Any member can move that they be printed.

Mr. JONES: I do not believe that the Minister has noted that. In my opinion, he should add after the words, "The Minister shall lay the report before the Legislative Assembly", appearing on line 45, the words, "and order that it be printed". That should be done so that Parliament will at least be informed. Although I have been condemned for my previous comments in this Chamber, they have proved to be true, because reports can come before this Assembly and honourable members may not take cognisance of them. If the honourable member for Clayfield were here, he would be the first to support me. I have seen reports come before the Parliament and slip through. Although there is now a Committee of Subordinate Legislation, reports can still slide through. In my opinion, the Act should contain a requirement for printing of the report. This is the time to discuss the matter and ask the Minister why the Bill does not include such a provision and why it should not be included.

Mr. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove) (5.37 p.m.): The honourable member for Cairns has criticised the provisions of clause 9 (2), which says—

"In the discharge of its functions the Authority shall adhere to any directions which the Minister may give from time to time as respects policy."

He has indicated that that provision is wrong in that it gives the Minister supreme power. I applaud that provision, and I applaud it particularly because it puts the power precisely where it should be—in a Minister, someone who is answerable to Parliament.

There is great confusion nowadays—one reads it in the Press, and one sometimes even hears it expressed in this Chamber—about the virtue of giving power to independent commissions. It is said that one should set up bodies that are independent of Parliament and of politicians, and it is thought that such independent bodies have some special virtue. One thing that such independent bodies do possess is power which, if it is independent of politicians, is also independent of the people, and it is only through politicians, it is only through members of this Assembly and through a Ministry that is responsible to this Assembly, that we have the freedoms that we enjoy today.

Mr. Ahern: The operative word is "policy".

Mr. GREENWOOD: Yes. The Minister retains that direction and, indeed, I would wish that the Minister retained even more power.

Certainly, when one reads the Bill, one sees in clause after clause that the power

of the Minister is preserved. I applaud that it should be so, because while we retain power in Ministers we retain power in people who are responsible to Parliament. Our people have fought for many hundreds of years against irresponsible power, and I think it would be a retrograde step to go any further than the Bill goes in conferring power on independent authorities that are not responsible to the people's representatives.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (5.39 p.m.): In my opinion, the point raised by the honourable member for Cairns relative to the report's being laid before the Legislative Assembly is quite a valid one. I therefore move the following amendment:—

"On page 4, line 45, after the word 'Assembly' add the words—

'and move that it be printed.'"

I think it is well understood by honourable members that in the Bill there is no desire to hide anything. It would be fully appreciated by all honourable members if when the report is laid before the Legislative Assembly, the means for the distribution of such information be as wide as possible for the benefit of members. I think that is the point of the authority. I would hope that the amendment would receive a favourable hearing and would be carried.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.41 p.m.): Naturally I support the amendment. As a matter of fact it was foreshadowed by the honourable member for Cairns. I have no fight with the honourable member for Belmont for moving it, and naturally we support it.

I realise that the honourable member for Ashgrove is an eminent barrister, but I point out to him that sometimes law can be put into Bills and law can be taken out of Bills depending on which barrister is employed. On this occasion the honourable member for Ashgrove is all for direction; he is all for virtually stand-over tactics. I would be happier if he had told the Committee what some of the words in the clause really mean.

Mr. Lane: Is it too complicated for Burns? Did he have to leave and let you handle it?

Mr. HOUSTON: No. He does not have to speak. He is quite happy to leave it to others.

Mr. Moore: He can't speak unless your hand is up his back.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am afraid that some people on the Government side should spend more time in the Chamber and less outside. I wish to refer particularly to the following words in the clause—

"(1) The function of the Authority is to provide for the declared region a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport."

How wide is that? It covers everything. All kinds of interpretations can be put on it. No matter how far one went, it could be covered by those words.

The point we are really talking about is that the Minister's right to direct is not like a regulation. Later on the Bill provides that regulations can be made. I have no fight with that. If honourable members do not like a regulation that has been made, they can move for its disallowance and then the Government has to justify that regulation on behalf of the authority.

As to the report to Parliament—the honourable member for Ashgrove is getting confused between this Parliament and the Federal Parliament. When something is tabled by a Minister in the Federal Parliament it can be debated, but it can't in this Parliament. Our Standing Orders do not allow a report to be debated. If a Minister lays a report on the table which a member wants to do something about, that honourable member has to get photostat copies made of it; he has to study it, and then he has to find an appropriate time to talk about it.

Mr. Jones: Probably under privilege.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. If the report is printed, honourable members can look at it. There would be many important facets of such a report. When the chairman submits his report, I hope it will contain the authority's recommendations and superimposed on them details about any matter that the Minister directed the authority to do. That is very important. I am sure the Minister would not argue with that. I am not suggesting in any way that the Minister is running away from responsibility. As the honourable member for Cairns said, it is one thing for a Minister to say that he will do something but it is another to have something contained in legislation. After all, there might be five or six different Ministers responsible for the legislation before anything has to be challenged.

Mr. Moore: You don't take the responsibility away from the Minister and give it to some other body—

Mr. HOUSTON: On the other hand, these people will be appointed by this Minister. The five men on the authority, the five Government appointees, are appointed by the Minister.

Mr. Greenwood: And he has been appointed by the people.

Mr. HOUSTON: No, he hasn't. He is appointed by a few people in the Government parties. In fact, in the Liberal Party he is appointed by the leader.

Mr. Lane: And who elected them?

Mr. HOUSTON: Simply because a man is elected does not mean that he has all the brains. In fact it is clearly indicated

that many Government members have not many brains at all. In the honourable member's case, his mouth is so big that there is no room left for brains.

To return to the clause—my concern is that the Minister can override five men or women whom he has appointed. That is not right at all. By all means let the Government give them advice and tell them what its policy is; I have no quarrel with that at all. But it is wrong to say to those five people—including only two outsiders at the most—what their policy will be. More than the mere tabling of the report in the House is required. I support the amendment.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (5.46 p.m.): The acting Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Bulimba, is up to his old tactics of climbing on the band wagon. He would wish to claim this amendment as his. It is well known to those of us who have been in this Assembly for a few years that he has never had a fresh thought or a progressive idea in his life. The young and new member for Belmont is to be commended for his amendment, and I support it.

The amendment, if accepted, will facilitate debate in this Chamber and will allow members to prepare themselves more easily for questioning the actions of this very important authority. The amendment is a worth-while one. The Labor Party does not have the intestinal fortitude or the capacity to take a step such as this. It is incapable of drawing up such worth-while amendments in its own right.

It is typical of the man who holds the title of Leader of the Opposition in this place to flee the Chamber whenever any controversial matter arises. Whenever a matter calling for a knowledge of our Standing Orders is discussed, the Leader of the Opposition is absent from the Chamber; his seat is empty. I would suggest to him that he go to Tangalooma and spend a few hours studying Standing Orders so that he can learn something about our parliamentary process. As leader of the rag-tag bunch on the Opposition benches he should be able to put forward some progressive or worth-while suggestion, such as that put forward by the honourable member for Belmont in moving this amendment. But instead of doing that, he leaves his dirty work to the honourable member for Bulimba. He is the one who has to carry the burden for the Opposition. Today we have seen ample demonstration of the inadequacy of the Opposition and, more particularly, of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.48 p.m.): The honourable member for Ashgrove misinterpreted my criticism of this clause. I refer to paragraph (1) (e), which reads—

"The function of the Authority is to provide for the declared region a properly

integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport and to that end—

(e) to perform such other acts and discharge such other functions—

(i) as are incidental to the discharge of the foregoing functions; or”.

To me that is, in effect, a C.I.A. clause. It contains very wide provisions indeed and gives legal authority. He can do anything at any time within or outside the Act. He can order anything. That is one of the reasons I indicated that, when a report was placed before the House, it should be printed. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (5.51 pm.): I am very grateful to honourable members—and particularly to the honourable member for Belmont—for drawing our attention to this point. I assure the Committee that it was intended to print the report. When this amendment is agreed to, that will be definite. I am grateful to the honourable member for Ashgrove for wising up our friend from Cairns about what this clause really means. I had intended to say in the debate on a previous clause when there was criticism of the Bill's drafting that I would refer the honourable member's criticism to the Parliamentary Counsel, knowing full well the wide bush legal knowledge of the honourable member for Cairns.

Amendment (Mr. Byrne) agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—Powers to discharge functions—

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (5.52 p.m.): In the second-reading debate the Minister said that it is intended that the Metropolitan Transit Authority be created as an instrument coming under the shield of the Crown. That makes it a statutory body—an instrumentality separate and apart from anything else.

Clause 10 (2) (a) grants discretionary powers as to whether it shall or shall not act, and it overrides the power of the State Transport Commission. I ask one question about clause 10 (2) (b). The honourable member for Ashgrove might be of assistance here. Does that clause come within the ambit of the ejusdem generis rule? Does that mean, as I said at the second-reading stage, that under this authority a method of transport can be authorised to carry and deliver “any other thing”—freight, explosives, bags of cement, cattle hides, offensive-smelling goods or anything else? Having been on the running staff and having had to adhere to time-tables, working within the limits of specified times and unloading roadside, I want to know what will happen to time-tables. If passenger-carrying vehicles are to be loaded with goods and freights, where will we finish up with our time-tables? The position will be a nightmare. With a metropolitan transport system, I hesitate to attempt to foreshadow the conglomeration of confusion that would be

caused. Except on special freight trains, running to special time-tables, nobody can gauge the amount of roadside that might be carried at any given time. We will get to the stage where a vehicle will have two passenger seats with the remainder of the space being used, at some time or another, to hold a box of butter, a carton of ice cream or a pig in a crate. The end result will be that we will have all sorts of troubles and utter confusion.

Clause 10 (2) (c) provides that the authority may—

“assist a prescribed person in his or its operations of a public passenger transport service between places within the declared region or between a place within and a place outside the declared region by the provision of monetary assistance . . . or otherwise as the Authority thinks fit”.

I point out to the honourable member for Ashgrove that there is no mention of the Minister's approval.

Mr. Burns: “Or otherwise as the Authority thinks fit.”

Mr. JONES: Yes.

We could have an operator working within a declared area or between a point within a declared area and a place outside the declared area. Outside where? Would it be within the State of Queensland or interstate? Will the authority control interstate operators coming into this area? What happens if an operator within a declared area comes from, say, the Gold Coast and picks up passengers as far as Mt. Gravatt? Will he not be able to pick up passengers between Mt. Gravatt and the central city area? All sorts of confusion will arise on eligibility for assistance to a transport service. Will the Minister provide assistance to all of the operators within the declared area and call them prescribed persons and will they be eligible for monetary assistance under this provision? We will have to look at that aspect, surely.

Clause 10 (2) (b) provides that apart from carrying passengers, luggage and other property, an operator might carry any other thing for delivery on that particular route. I shall leave that matter in abeyance because its ramifications are very wide indeed.

Under clause 10 (2) (d) the authority can acquire any land or facility as it sees fit or needs. That covers anything needed or thought to be needed for its undertaking. I trust that this acquisition will be defined more clearly and that we are told how the acquisition will be achieved and the methods that will be adopted. Already the Minister has indicated that the authority can resume land or purchase land. The Minister for Survey, Valuation, Urban and Regional Affairs is in the Chamber. How will the price be determined? The Bill does not indicate how the purchase price or valuation will be determined. We want to know how it will be arrived at.

This exercise is a very wide one that is fraught with dangerous implications. It is very loosely defined. Perhaps it will be defined more clearly in the regulations. The Minister may be able to enlighten us on some of the matters that I have raised. Possibly they will be covered in the by-laws. The authority can make its own by-laws. What happens if a particular by-law conflicts with a railway by-law? Which one will have precedence in those circumstances?

The authority may manufacture, produce or purchase anything from rolling-stock to workshops or from pins to aeroplanes. It could even produce rockets. The paragraph refers to "anything". That is the description in the Bill. It has a wide interpretation and the authority can do all of these things.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (6 p.m.): I support the remarks of the honourable member for Cairns on clause 10 (2) (b). It reads—

"on a route serviced by a public passenger transport service operated by it, carry luggage and other property of the passengers carried in a vehicle operated on that route and carry in that vehicle any other thing for delivery on the route;". That is a fairly wide coverage.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It's meant to be wide.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! Can the honourable member indicate whether his point will take much longer?

Mr. BURNS: I shall be only another minute or two, Mr. Miller.

There are many small owner-drivers in Brisbane, and it seems to me that buses running in the area of the Brisbane City Council, or any other area in which small operators are earning a living by delivering parcels, can be authorised to deliver parcels or any other goods. We have not been told what is meant by "public passenger transport service."

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It is very difficult to give a complete answer. It is designed to cover such items as strollers. It cannot be definitely defined.

Mr. BURNS: It is too wide. It could cover petrol, explosives and similar items. Let the Minister not try to tell me that "any other thing" means other than just that. Anything at all could be carried on a vehicle on this wording.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: If you read the end of the clause, you will see the answer.

[*Sitting suspended from 6.2 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. BURNS: Before the dinner recess I was speaking on clause 10 (2) (b). It has been pointed out to me by people who operate small carrying businesses that if authority were given for goods to be carried on buses, they would be competing unfairly

with the small operators and putting them out of business. They feel that this provision is a danger to them.

During the recess the Minister answered my question concerning the carriage of dangerous goods such as inflammables and explosives on passenger buses. He said that this is covered by the Traffic Act and I accept his explanation.

My point is that it is dangerous to include in such clauses words that have such a wide meaning as "any other thing." Any person who picked up the Act and read what is now clause 10 (2) (b) could say, "I can carry anything at all as long as I have the authority of the Metropolitan Transit Authority." I think the provision is too wide and dangerous and for that reason I am opposed to it.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (7.17 p.m.): There appears to be some need for protection and redress, particularly in relation to clause 10 (2) (k) (iii). It is not readily discernible in the Bill that other authorities are to be given the same access to the processes of negotiation, arbitration and appeal. Clause 10 (3) provides that the presentation of a letter is sufficient for the granting of authority at any time. There is no provision for discussion or negotiation, nor is any time limit prescribed. A notice in writing seems scant approval before the laying of cables and power-lines or the demolition or destruction of plant, machinery or workshops.

Clause 10 (3) (b) contains in line 25 the words, "under this section." I contend that this power is not under this section but is granted under clause 10 (2) (k) (iv). Perhaps it should be made a subsection of its own as subsection (6). It seems to be a badly drafted clause. There are specific but not limited powers. Line 45, which is part of clause 10 (4) (c), is confusing. The words "continues to subside" designate a continuation for 12 months, not a subsidence within 12 months. I suggest that the words "continues to subside" be deleted and in their stead the word "subsides" be inserted. It would then read, "... during which the soil opened and broken up subsides." This would then refer to the period during which the subsidence takes place.

I think it could be said that the whole of the section related to road works normally controlled by local authorities by virtue of their street-opening provisions could be in conflict with the last line of clause 10 (4) (c). I repeat that it needs amending. I think it could be done in the way that I suggested previously or by deletion of the word "continues". Instead of reading, "which the soil opened and broken up continues to subside", it should provide for intermittent subsidence that may take place after heavy rains in any period after 12 months. Perhaps it should read, "... during which any subsidence may take place."

I bring those matters to the notice of the Committee and trust that the Minister will see fit to amend the clause in this way.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (7.19 p.m.): I thank honourable members for drawing attention to matters that concern them in clause 10. I refer in the first place to clause 10 (2) (b). I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter during the dinner recess. This is covered under another Act. The honourable member mentioned the Traffic Act specifically. I think it comes under another Act as well, but certainly it is covered.

In relation to clause 10 (2) (c), I would like to assure the honourable member that the Lands Acquisition Act applies in this area. I would also like to remind honourable members that I said earlier in the debate that these powers were purposely left very wide because it is very difficult to define what people can take on public transport as against what they cannot take on. Most certainly this will be looked after in some by-laws, but the point is most important and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing it to my attention.

If the honourable member looks at clause 10 (5) he will see again that the Minister may give directions from time to time. I think that covers all the matters within the subclause. I know there are honourable members opposite who feel that the Minister has too much power under this legislation, but I can assure them that this was deliberately placed in the legislation. As they know, there are other Acts under which the Minister can be severely embarrassed because this provision is not included.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (7.21 p.m.): I raised this point during the debate on the second reading, but I am still not clear when this part of the Bill is going to become effective. I do not mean the day or the week, but I think the Minister should indicate very shortly when the authority will be appointed, when these powers will be operative and when the authority will start to do all the things it can do under the Bill, that is, the investigations and the reports, so when we come to a later clause we can tie in the two things that are contained in the Bill.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (7.22 p.m.): There is no designated time in the Bill, as the honourable member for Bulimba knows. It is our intention to set up the authority as quickly as possible after the Bill is proclaimed and then to phase out the Metropolitan Transit Project Board, which will be superseded.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (7.23 p.m.): Clause 10 (5) of the Bill states—

“In the exercise of its powers the Authority shall adhere to any directions

which the Minister may give from time to time as respects policy.”

This is subject to the dictates of the Minister from time to time as respects policy. This is a loose way to define policy decisions, particularly political decisions, and it is again at the direction of the Minister. He can do or undo things as a supremo, as it were, and I believe that the functions of a Bill such as this must be more specifically spelt out. I believe that it should be abundantly clear to everybody who is going to be involved what the authority is, what it means to do and what its functions are. When the authority is helping a prescribed person, is it helping the transport disadvantaged, is it going to promote urban development, is it going to centralise research information or is it going to alleviate peak-hour congestion? What does it do to help a prescribed person in that respect? Clause 10 is an operative clause and it is very important that it is made abundantly clear just exactly what it means to everybody who is going to be involved with the operations of the authority.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Progress reported.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATES FINANCIAL AGREEMENT FURTHER VARIATION BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (7.26 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to authorize the execution of and to ratify and approve an agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the several States of the Commonwealth further varying the Commonwealth and States Financial Agreement, and for other incidental purposes.”

The purpose of the Bill is to provide legislative approval for an agreement dated 5 February 1976 entered into by the Commonwealth and the States to amend the Financial Agreement in certain particulars. A copy of the agreement will be set out in the schedule to the Bill.

Honourable members are aware that under section 105A of the Constitution, the Commonwealth may enter into agreements with the States with regard to the public debts of the States. Pursuant to this provision in the Constitution, the Commonwealth and the States entered into a Financial Agreement in 1927 which provided for assumption by the Commonwealth, on certain terms and conditions, of debt issued on behalf of the States and for the establishment of the Australian Loan Council to co-ordinate future public borrowings. It also made provision for sinking funds to provide for the redemption of the debt. This agreement, with minor amendments, has operated since that time.

In 1970, the Commonwealth Government agreed to provide financial assistance to the States to meet interest and sinking fund contributions on \$200,000,000 of the States' debt in 1970-71, and on an additional \$200,000,000 each year until 1974-75, when the Commonwealth Government would be providing an annual grant to meet the debt charges on \$1,000 million of the States' debt. Queensland's portion of this was \$132,600,000, with the amount of debt-charges assistance in respect of it being \$7,627,152 in 1974-75.

When the Australian Loan Council met in June 1974 it was agreed that the assumption of liability by the Commonwealth of this amount of \$1,000 million should be formally effected by an amendment to the Financial Agreement, and a working party of Commonwealth and State officers was convened to prepare a draft amending agreement to cover the take-over and to incorporate other amendments to the agreement, particularly with regard to simplification of the operations of the National Debt Sinking Fund. The provisions of the agreement formally effect transfer of the debt. The securities to be taken over are set out in the schedule to the agreement.

The provisions of the amending agreement also change the present procedures regarding payment of sinking fund contributions to the Commonwealth in respect of loan raisings by the Commonwealth on behalf of the States. Under the present provisions of the Financial Agreement, the Commonwealth and the States, in respect of all new loans, are each required to contribute to the National Debt Sinking Fund an amount equal to 25 cents per \$100 of the amount of the new loan. This contribution was to continue for a period of 53 years, after which, assuming that the sinking fund earned an average interest rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the amount in the sinking fund would in theory be sufficient to redeem the loan entirely. Where an amount of debt had been redeemed from the sinking fund, an additional annual contribution of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was payable by the State.

However, in practice, because of the number of new loans raised and the fact that they are being converted, partly converted, matured, refinanced and so on, the administration of the National Debt Sinking Fund is unable to identify the sinking fund payments and currently held loans against each original loan raising so as to know to what extent sinking fund payments are to cease as the period of 53 years from the original borrowing expires. Apart from this problem, the determination of the annual amounts payable by the States has involved voluminous and complex calculations. It was desirable that these procedures be simplified, providing the contributions required from the States would not be markedly different from what they would otherwise have had to pay.

Under the provisions of the new agreement, the States and the Commonwealth will be required to contribute a fixed amount as a base figure in 1975-76, and in each year thereafter until 1984-85 this base amount plus or minus a specified percentage of the variation in the public debt in the preceding financial year. The specified percentages of the variation in debt to be taken into account until 1984-85 will be 1.2 per cent State and 0.28 per cent Commonwealth. After 1984-85, the Commonwealth and State contributions will be a fixed percentage of State debt at the end of the preceding year, the percentages being 0.28 per cent Commonwealth and 0.85 per cent State.

The change in procedures in 1984-85 is to take account of the fact that the original State debt assumed by the Commonwealth in 1927 will have been fully repaid, with a consequent reduction in the amount of contributions that would have followed.

The new procedures will greatly simplify the workings of the National Debt Commission and, I stress, will involve the State in approximately the same contributions it would otherwise be required to make under the old provisions. I would also stress that there will continue to be an effective sinking fund for the retirement of the State debt.

Other provisions of the 1927 agreement with regard to sinking funds will remain substantially the same. The State may make additional contributions if it wishes, for example, to extinguish the debt incurred on a wasting asset over the life of the asset. The National Debt Commission will continue to control the State sinking funds but can arrange with the State to act as its agent in making payments to bondholders.

The amending agreement also contains two minor alterations to the Financial Agreement designed to expedite proceedings of the Australian Loan Council. One provides that the nomination by a nominal member of the Loan Council of a substitute Minister as his representative will now include any person acting in the capacity of that Minister. The other provides that decisions by the Loan Council on the variation of the amount and allocation of Government loan programmes and the allocation of loan proceeds can now be made by correspondence without the necessity to have these approved at a formal meeting.

The amending agreement also provides for the omission of several clauses in the Financial Agreement which no longer have any force or effect. These relate to interim arrangements while the 1927 agreement was being ratified, exemption of the Commonwealth from certain sinking fund contributions on State debt, and the provisions relating to the change-over to decimal currency.

The amending agreement is to have retrospective effect from 30 June 1975.

The agreement has been signed by all State Premiers and the Prime Minister on

behalf of the Commonwealth but cannot become operative until it has been ratified by the various Parliaments of the States and the Commonwealth. The provisions of the Bill will achieve this so far as Queensland is concerned, and I commend it to honourable members.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (7.35 p.m.): A Bill of this type brings to mind two thoughts. The first is that, as it concerns an agreement already entered into by the Treasurers of all the States and the Treasurer of the Commonwealth, the State Government is duty bound to ensure that it is passed. On earlier occasions I have criticised certain Bills that merely ratified agreements entered into. On those occasions this Parliament was asked simply to ratify agreements when I believe the matters involved were not so important or so technical as to preclude this Parliament from debating them and arriving at a considered opinion before the agreements were entered into. However, this financial matter is one not only for theorists but also for practical experts.

I appreciate the point that Governments are elected to govern and to control the finances of the State. Although we might not always agree with the Government's handling of the finances and with its implementation of taxation principles, we as a Parliament are caught in the position of having to ratify any arrangements made on behalf of the State by the Treasurer. If for some reason or another this Bill were defeated the Government itself would be defeated, too. As a practical politician I can well imagine that, in view of the relative strength of the political parties in this Chamber and the fact that the Treasurer now has the assistance of a Deputy Whip as well as a Whip, he will not see this legislation defeated. On the practical side, therefore, we must let it through.

The other matter as to whether the arrangement is a good or bad one is altogether different. The Treasurer has said that the agreement is set out in the schedule to the Bill, so naturally I shall not endeavour to debate the good and bad points of a schedule whose contents were dealt with briefly while the Treasurer was on his feet. Our assessment of the schedule will have to wait until the Bill is printed.

We must realise that although arrangements can be made with the Commonwealth Government for the payment of certain interest charges and payments into sinking funds and other funds, no Commonwealth Government is so sympathetic as to lend the State money and inform it that it does not have to pay any of it back. I am sure that when we analyse the schedule we will find that the State Government is committed to certain payments.

This brings me to the point that the financing of the agreement will need to be examined. This, I believe, is the main issue involved. It is true that over recent years

no great change has occurred in the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States. Certain debate took place in this Chamber when the State Government decided that Queensland should become a claimant State. Some of the fears expressed at that time are proved to be well founded; others were quite unfounded. The aspect that concerns me most is the payment through Consolidated Revenue of the money required to enable us to meet our obligations. I notice that last year over \$110,000,000 out of Consolidated Revenue was required for payments authorised by special Acts to cover the servicing of the Public Debt, and the amount required for sinking funds was over \$16,000,000. So we are dealing with quite substantial amounts. Without going deeply into some aspects of State financing, I am sure the Treasurer will agree that, if certain attitudes are persevered with on death duties and other tax rebates and tax concessions that the Premier wants to introduce, it will throw open some of the other charges that will have to be made on the public to service debts and to service repayments that are required through Commonwealth-State agreements.

Having made those remarks, I affirm that we will study the schedule in detail and look at the agreement as it affects Queensland.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (7.41 p.m.): I take the opportunity to rise in this debate not specifically to speak on the financial agreement referred to by the Treasurer but to consider the financial difficulties that States have.

This is a subject of great debate. Since 2 December 1972 considerable criticism has been levelled at the difficulties all States have in financing their functions. There has also been considerable criticism about the powers that should rest with the States as against those that it is desirable that the Australian Government should hold. However, if we go back into history, we find that that debate did not really start on 2 December 1972. It has been continuing for in the vicinity of seven decades. It goes right back to the establishment of the Commonwealth.

There has been a series of financial conflicts. When I was studying public administration, a paper was presented on this topic in which it was explained that in the very first instance the States had trouble because the Commonwealth until 1910 decided on an arrangement under which two-thirds or three-quarters of the funds from excise duties and custom duties would be returned to the States. However, the Commonwealth soon realised that that was not going to be sufficient; so it was decided to do something about it.

In the early years of the Commonwealth it was realised that the powers a Government has depends on its purse. So we have had this fiscal war, which will continue to rage until we come to a better agreement. While tonight we are simply standing by

the financial agreement as it relates to debts, it is time we looked at the financial agreement that exists. I readily accept that the agreement, which was initiated in 1927, continues until 1985; so there is little chance of amending that agreement. However, we need to look at how the agreement arose.

In those early days there was considerable debate about the revenue-raising rights of the Commonwealth and of the States. Yet what we have seen over a long period of time is the erosion of State rights. The Treasurer realises this. In fact, I have often heard him speak on the subject of the difficulties he has in budgeting to carry out the functions of his Government.

So it is not good enough that we simply stand by these agreements without some opposition. I decided to go back in history and see just who has forced these problems on us. Being a student of history, I noted that over the last 75 years in the main it has been the anti-Labor or conservative Governments that have foisted this financial situation on us.

Mr. Ahern: Would that be an objective assessment?

Mr. WRIGHT: Let us have a look at the situation. From 1901 till 1909 the anti-Labor Governments were in power for 8½ years. Between 1910 and 1927, which is the year in which the agreement we are talking about was entered into, anti-Labor Governments were in power for something like 13 of the 17 years. That has been the situation ever since. The only period when Labor had some say was the Chifley-Curtin era. Admittedly, that was the time when the States took on income-taxing power. In the main it has been the anti-Labor Governments that have had the say and have enforced the financial conditions that we face today.

The decision has now been made that there will be a new type of financial agreement. This seems to be what Mr. Fraser is saying. He has intimated—and no doubt the Premier will back up his claims—that we now need to bury the financial arrangements (not the agreement) that exist between the State and the Commonwealth. Now we are turning the clock back to the 1942 era and allowing the States to enter the income-taxing field again. I do not believe that this will overcome the problems. In fact it will place heavier burdens on the small States—Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland. It is notable that the Treasurer has voiced some disapproval or concern about this, as has the Premier of South Australia (Mr. Dunstan).

Whoever is in power in Canberra, the States are always at the mercy of the Commonwealth Government. Because of its fiscal power it will be the Commonwealth Government that will decide who rules the nation. It will determine the functions of the States. Whether we like it or not, there will always be special purpose grants. The Common-

wealth Government will determine what will happen directly or indirectly to the various States. The answer comes back to the States' having to seek other means of raising revenue to avoid being totally dependent on the Commonwealth Government. This idea of entering the income-tax field again is not the solution. We are simply placing the burden back on the ordinary people.

Mr. Moore: Who else will pay the bill?

Mr. WRIGHT: That is what I am coming to. There are other ways. If we are interested in good government and have persons with financial expertise, such as we have in the person of the Treasurer and the Treasury Department experts, surely we can come up with new systems of management and let the State get involved in revenue-raising propositions.

An ideal one that I have raised before but have never seemed to get any support from Government members for is the idea of a State bank. Surely it is time that we looked at this again.

Mr. Moore: How about a State mint?

Mr. WRIGHT: As a numismatist, or coin collector, I would be interested if we came into that.

We should look at revenue-raising areas. Even though we have the Commonwealth Savings Bank Agreement that was re-entered into in 1966 and runs for another 25 years I advocate again that we start screaming about this agreement. If we really want to overcome our financial problems we need some type of credit-creation power.

Mr. McKechnie: Did you get this from the League of Rights?

Mr. WRIGHT: No. I have always been an advocate of the State bank system. If the honourable member gives some thought to it he will agree with me. We do not want to be forced to depend on grants or repayable loans or ask people to bring forward the revenue all of the time. We need to come up with some way of earning that revenue, and surely a State bank is the ideal system for doing that.

It has been suggested that, with the use of \$10,000,000, credit of something like 4.4 times that amount can be created. This was given to me by members of the university who said that that would be the average onflow ratio that could be used safely without having an inflationary spiral. Let us come back to only three times the amount. The S.G.I.O. makes a profit of \$20,000,000 in one year. If that were put into a State bank and the factor of three used, it would mean the sudden creation of something like \$60,000,000 credit. Instead of giving moneys to the rural industries and saying to put it into the private banks, why not use a State bank system?

Mr. Moore: Where do you get the \$60,000,000?

Mr. WRIGHT: I shall talk to the honourable member later in my office. I have no doubt that the Treasurer will talk to him about it. He should look at how the banking system works. I have not the time to go into deficit budgeting, but I assure the honourable member that it does work.

We need the ability to create this credit. We need to look at this matter because there is a lot of money around in the community that is in fact handled by the States and could be in a State bank. It would be an incentive for people to invest in a State bank and in State Government loans through a State bank. So there we have an excellent avenue.

As part of this State bank system we could overcome many of the other problems that exist in the community. I think of the housing problems and the real difficulty there. No doubt this will be discussed at length tomorrow. Look at what has happened to the building societies and the resultant effect on the housing industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Bill before the Committee is to ratify an agreement and does not touch upon those matters.

Mr. WRIGHT: It does in this way, Mr. Hewitt: we are dependent upon the Commonwealth for finance and I suggest that we should look at the present system and consider alternatives. My suggestion is that we consider revenue-raising enterprises, the first of which should surely be a State bank. If we were to establish one, we could incorporate the present Housing Commission and the Agricultural Bank, and, in doing so, create a massive financial enterprise that would overcome many of the difficulties that we face now. I accept your point, Mr. Hewitt, but I believe that this is a matter that the Treasurer should consider. There are only a few years before the Commonwealth Savings Bank agreement is to be revised and it will be re-endorsed if we do not have a definite policy in this State.

I believe that if members consider this question they will accept the value of having such an enterprise. I take every opportunity to push these views in this Assembly.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (7.51 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity provided by a Bill of this nature to talk about the proposed new Commonwealth-State tax-sharing scheme that was sold to the people of Queensland and accepted on our behalf by the Premier in September last year at a meeting in Melbourne of Liberal and National Party leaders, with the exception of the Treasurer, the Liberal leader in Queensland. A decision was made at that meeting that a new agreement called the new Fraser federalism plan would be implemented on the election of a Liberal Government.

We now have a Liberal Government and we are still not clear on what sort of a plan the people of Queensland can expect or what sort of a deal this State can expect.

Mr. Wright: We've been sold a pup.

Mr. BURNS: I, too, think we have been sold a pup.

The Treasurer is in the Chamber tonight. I wonder if he can answer some of the questions that are starting to bedevil all of us. It is quite apparent on a reading of the report of the February Premiers' Conference that the Prime Minister himself had not yet made up his mind on what sort of a deal he was going to give the States as a result of the new Fraser federalism plan. Quite clearly the Premier of New South Wales did not know on 6 February what the tax plan was, because he was reported in the Press as saying—

"I don't know what we are starting. If I knew precisely I could answer your question more precisely."

That was said on 6 February. Sir Eric Willis, Premier of Australia's largest State, still did not know what was going on.

But the Premier of Queensland did, because early in September last year he voiced his approval of the scheme. The day before Sir Eric Willis admitted his ignorance, the Queensland Premier said—

"My Government has no reservation in accepting the new federalism proposal and all Australians should welcome the move."

On the same day that that was said by the Queensland Premier, the Premier of South Australia said that he was worried and concerned about the scheme. Our own Treasurer also expressed concern about the proposal.

Passing on, four or five days after Sir Eric Willis, on behalf of New South Wales, expressed his doubt, we find on the monthly "Joh Show", the \$20,000 extravaganza that we all pay for, the Premier saying—

"Queenslanders can be well pleased at the outcome of the Premiers' Conference in Canberra. The highlight of the conference was the new financial proposal. There have been claims by defeated Federal and State Labor politicians that you are going to pay some horrendous double tax."

He then went on to say that there will be only a single tax.

I want to quote the statement of the Prime Minister of Australia at that conference. The report and documents are available for people to read. He said—

"However, once the scheme is in full operation each State will be able to legislate to impose tax in the State additional to that imposed by the Commonwealth, or to give (at cost to the State) a rebate on income tax payable under Commonwealth law and to authorise the Commonwealth to collect the tax or grant the rebate as its agent. The rebates or surcharges would be expressed in percentage terms. The level of these surcharges or rebates would be a matter for consideration by each State, but

relevant decisions would be taken within an appropriate framework of consultation with the Commonwealth and other States."

Here is a proposal under which the State can levy surcharges. Let me say this: if the Prime Minister goes ahead with his tax indexation scheme of 5 per cent across the board, and if he continues to attack the Budget deficit to the extent of thousands of millions of dollars, he will not have sufficient money to give to the States increases similar to what they received last year. If we are to continue our services with the reduced money available from the Commonwealth, we will then have to levy a tax.

Whether the Premier likes to call it a surcharge, whether Mr. Fraser likes to call it a surcharge, the Treasurer will be in the unenviable position of levying the first State tax in Queensland in many, many years. Might I say that the introduction of a 5 per cent across-the-board tax indexation scheme by Mr. Fraser will mean a 10 per cent or 15 per cent tax for Queensland. That is the sort of scheme we are looking at, a scheme that will be pushed down our throats this Friday when we send the Premier and the Treasurer off to the Premiers' Conference. The Premier has endorsed the scheme promised by the Prime Minister without knowing what it is. This is so because his own State Liberal and National Party colleagues and the Liberal leaders in New South Wales, Victoria and elsewhere have said they still do not know, and I think as recently as a week or 10 days ago in this Parliament in answer to a question our own Treasurer—the longest-serving State Treasurer in Australia today—said he does not know. So how can we say other than that we were sold a pig in a poke by the Premier when he accepted this proposal in September last year.

Perhaps this is the last time we will be endorsing some of these proposals because of the answers we got on some of the other matters we have raised by way of questions in this Parliament. This question was asked—

"What guarantee has the Commonwealth Government given to the States that it will not alter the rate structures or assessment provisions and thereby adversely affect the revenues of the States?"

We received from the Treasurer the inadequate answer that we expected. But let us find out what the Prime Minister said at the Premiers' Conference in February 1976. I quote from the official documents which were attached to the Prime Minister's speech that was handed out. It reads—

"Assessment provisions and the basic rate structure would remain at all stages uniform throughout Australia and it will be clearly understood that these are matters for the Commonwealth to determine."

So the Commonwealth will decide what the assessment provisions will be. The Commonwealth will decide what the basic rate structure will be. It is out of our hands; it is going to be left in the Prime Minister's hands. He will determine what sort of money comes back to the State; so if he and his Government are going to determine that, where does that leave us? Where does that leave us as a smaller State, large in area, large in that we have many miles of railways and roads to service and small in population? I heard the Treasurer say before that if he had to raise \$1,000,000 in New South Wales he would charge the taxpayers about 33 cents a head but if he had to raise \$1,000,000 in Queensland we would be paying \$1 a head.

Mr. Moore: Joh would write out a cheque.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, he probably could. As I see it, we are facing a major problem and we have been told since September last year that the Premier knows about this scheme and that he fully endorses it. It is time this Parliament was told how this scheme will operate. It is time the people of Queensland were told whether we were sold down the drain in September last year, because no one has yet come before this Parliament and explained clearly how it will operate.

I charge the Premier with doing a deal with his colleagues in the Commonwealth for sheer political motives. He was not worried about the future of Queensland. He was not worried about the tax scales we might have to pay. All he was worried about was his obsession with Whitlam and Canberra and all the other charges he lays from time to time. It is time he came back and started thinking about the people of this State. It is time he forgot his hypocrisy and his stunting around the State and started to worry about you and me, and the other people of this State, who are going to pay for those stunts. It is too late for the people of Queensland now to argue, or even to vote to say, "We don't want the Fraser federalism scheme. It is very clear that we have been sold a pig in a poke." Now we need to know very clearly so that in future the people of Queensland will be able to say, "Well, as a result of what the Premier told us at the last election when he shoved Malcolm Fraser down our throats, we were forced into a position where we will pay dearly for the Premier's stunts."

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (8 p.m.), in reply: I really omitted when introducing this Bill to use a phrase that is very often used. On many occasions I have heard a member rise and say, "This is just a simple little Bill." Quite candidly, from a general point of view this is just a simple little Bill. Its purpose is to ratify the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to a variation of the Financial Agreement.

The honourable member for Bulimba, in his usual courteous way, indicated that he would await the printing of the Bill, and then examine it and make any comments that he wished to make on behalf of the Opposition at the second-reading stage, which would be the appropriate time. So I thought we were going to get the Bill through in what might be termed the normal way for a simple little Bill.

Then the honourable member for Rockhampton took the opportunity to raise certain issues that have been raised in parts of this State in recent times. I have read quite a number of articles in the Toowoomba "Chronicle" written by a man named Chresby, who has been advocating a State bank. It is true, as the honourable member for Carnarvon interjected, that that particular philosophy is also being followed by the League of Rights.

The point is that I do not know what additional purpose would be served by the establishment of a State bank. It is simple enough to say that one can establish a State bank. Constitutionally, there is nothing that would prevent a State from doing that. However, the question of the availability of funds arises. The State cannot print its own money. Because of the agreement that exists between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to the operations of the Commonwealth Savings Bank, money in savings banks today are accessible to the State on certain conditions.

The honourable member also referred to the possibility of taking \$30,000,000 from the profits of the State Government Insurance Office and putting that into a bank. First, I want to see profitability of \$30,000,000 from the State Government Insurance Office. It is true that that office has control of considerable funds that are the property of policyholders, which it has invested in local government and other undertakings to ensure that the return on that money will be in keeping with the value of money at the time when the particular insurance policy or investment matures. If perchance we took the policyholders' money, put it into a State savings bank and then lent it on the present-day basis of State savings bank lending, we would not only be restricting the S.G.I.O. in its endeavour to protect the funds of its policyholders but also preventing the use of those funds for other purposes for which they are now used. So, in spite of the advocacy of some people, it is quite possible that the establishment of a State bank would not achieve anything.

Now I come to the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition. I am not unmindful that the Bill is wide enough to permit the Leader of the Opposition to enter the debate in the way that he did. It is true that problems face the States of the Commonwealth of Australia at the moment relative to the proposal put forward by the present Commonwealth Government and endorsed by the return of that Government in December. It

is a proposal whereby in future there will be a new financial arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States so that first of all a particular sum of money will be allocated from the total personal income tax pool, not taking into consideration company tax. That certain percentage of the total personal income tax pool will be made available to the States. In other words that will be the total amount of money that the States will be able to obtain from the Commonwealth from personal income tax.

While that portion of the proposal as advanced has been given approval in broad principle by this Government and other Governments in the Commonwealth so far we have not had an indication of the basis on which the total sum will be divided among the States. From my personal point of view, I have expressed concern at what I describe as the fine print in this agreement. As we know it at the moment, the fine print has not been spelt out. After discussions between the Prime Minister and the Premiers of all the States, it was agreed that the Under Treasurers of all the States and the Commonwealth meet so that a proposal could be presented which it was hoped would be acceptable to all States. That conference has been held. A document has been prepared. Although that document is not public information at the moment, because it is nothing more than a report prepared by each Under Treasurer and made available to his State Treasurer or the Commonwealth Treasurer, it will be debated in Canberra on Friday next.

So I say to the Leader of the Opposition that it is not a case of withholding from the people of Queensland any information that is readily available. What we have done is indicate acceptance in broad principle of the policy of the present Federal Government. On the other hand, we have sought an explanation and a determination as to how the funds will be distributed. Until such time as we have that, and agreement is reached between the Commonwealth and the States, there is nothing further I can add.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (8.10 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Stamp Act 1894–1975 in certain particulars."

The provisions contained in the Bill are brief, merely substituting new definitions for the previous ones contained in section 42B of the Act. However, they are very important and necessary.

When introducing the amending legislation to insert section 42B into the Stamp Act, I pointed out to honourable members that the operations of Bankcard in Queensland would mean a loss of revenue to the State if the then existing provisions of the Stamp Act did not apply. It was considered that Bankcard would very much reduce the necessity to draw cheques in settlement of accounts.

Senior counsel's opinion at the time was that the existing provisions of section 42A dealing with accounts clearing transactions did not apply, and that an amendment to the Act was necessary if the Government was to successfully claim duty on Bankcard transactions.

The new section 42B sought to impose a duty equivalent to the stamp duty that would have been paid had the cardholder paid by cheque each merchant with whom a transaction was had during a billing period, less an amount of 10c, on the assumption that the settlement of the credit card account may be by a stamped cheque.

The legislation provided for the section to operate from 1 December 1975, with the first monthly return due by 28 January 1976. However, solicitors acting on behalf of the Australian Bankers Association have now submitted legal argument to the Commissioner of Stamp Duties to the effect that the provisions of the new section 42B do not apply to Bankcards on the grounds that a Bankcard is not a "credit card" as it was defined in the section. Returns have consequently not been lodged by banks, nor has the duty been paid.

Following examination of the legal arguments submitted, the Government has decided that, rather than test the argument at law—which could take many months and involve heavy legal expense—it is a simpler process to amend the definitions and so remove any uncertainty in the legislation.

The amendments to the legislation are not proposed to operate retrospectively to 1 December 1975, when the credit card provisions first commenced to apply. The question of accountability for duty on Bankcards in the period 1 December 1975 to the effective date of operation of the amendments will be determined in the light of the law which has applied during this period.

The provisions contained in the Bill substitute new definitions for "active account", "billing period", "cardholder", "cardholder's bank", and "credit card", in place of those previously existing. The principal change is that made to the definition of "credit card", which eliminates reference to the fact that the issuing bank accepts an obligation to pay the merchant. The argument has been that, under the Bankcard system, the merchant is

paid by the merchant's bank whose arrangements are made with other banks rather than the cardholder.

The new provisions will first apply to returns required to be lodged by 28 May 1976 in respect of all active accounts whose billing periods end in the month of April.

Some other credit card organisations have also refused to account for duty under the existing provisions of the legislation. Action in respect of these organisations has been postponed until the Act has been amended, so that any such action which may still be found necessary can be taken under the new provisions. It is obviously in the interests of these organisations to meet the stamp duty obligation on behalf of their clients rather than inconvenience them by making them liable to submit individual returns.

The provisions contained in the Bill are brief, but are necessary to ensure that the revenue of this State is protected. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.16 p.m.): This is a case of "I told you so." When this legislation was before us last year, quite a few members on this side pointed out to the Treasurer that it was very clumsy. We all understood what the Treasurer was trying to do; but, because of the wording of the provisions, I and other colleagues of mine contended that the banks associated with Bankcard would naturally look for legal ways of getting round the tax. Time has shown that we were quite right in our assertion.

Unfortunately, the State always seems to be looking for more money. One of the ways of getting that money is the imposition of stamp duty. Over the years we in this Chamber have heard Treasurers—not only this Treasurer but others—tell the people of Queensland how they were going to reduce stamp duties.

Mr. Wright: Indirect taxes.

Mr. HOUSTON: They were going to reduce indirect tax, as my colleague says.

It is interesting to look at the position over a few years. In 1965-1966, \$14,400,000 was collected in stamp duty. In 1969-70 the had risen to \$28,000,000. In 1971-72 the collection was \$33,900,000. Then we had another increase in 1972-73 to \$52,800,000. In 1973-74 it rose further to \$63,200,000. In 1974-75, we had a State election. The Treasurer very generously told the people of Queensland on behalf of the Government that he was going to reduce certain stamp duty charges. The people of Queensland doubtless took that into account when they voted the present Government back in. True, the Act was amended and the stamp duty collected by the Government fell from \$63,290,000 to \$48,680,000. However, this year, with no election pending, stamp duty is expected to increase to \$69,400,000.

Therefore, if the banks, or any others for that matter, find a legal way of avoiding the payment of stamp duty, the Treasurer will certainly face a major problem in balancing his Budget. Before the next Budget is brought down later on this year, there will be pressures on him for the elimination of death duties and variations in other tax provisions that the Treasurer is so happy to impose on the people of Queensland.

My concern is first of all whether the Bankcard system should be encouraged. I think it is true to say that the Bankcard system or credit cards is not new to Queenslanders. Many people have operated under various systems, for instance, Diners' Club and American Express, which are world-renowned and respected organisations.

For convenience and in order to avoid carrying travellers' cheques or large sums of money, and having in mind the ever-present problem of identification when it comes to cashing ordinary cheques, many people have seen fit to operate under this system. Certainly they did not do it with any idea of saving so many cents in the stamp duty payable on a cheque. I believe they did it for pure convenience, particularly when they were away from their home town or home State.

I do not know who started it, but eventually the banks saw the advantages of this type of credit. The banks are issuing credit to people provided they have the wherewithal. That is what Bankcard means. Perhaps this is the only difference between this system and the other form of credit under which people have not ready finance and someone believes that they will eventually pay. That system has been in operation in trading stores for many years. They run monthly accounts, weekly accounts, time-payment accounts and other forms of credit. In all of those cases the person concerned does not necessarily have the ready cash at the time to clear the debt. Under the Bankcard system the bank hopes that the money is in the bank before the person purchases the goods.

I can see why the banks decided to introduce this system and why people believe that it is a good form of operation. I do not believe that many people use this system with the idea of saving the stamp duty payable on cheques. It is true that in some advertisements banks indicated to the public that by means of this system people would not have to worry about having ready cash or the inconvenience of having a cheque account and a cheque book.

The main point is that the people who wanted to operate with a Bankcard believed that the advantage was that they did not need to have the cash or a cheque and could deal not only with the firm with which they normally dealt but also with other firms. I have seen people with a handful of credit cards covering McWhirters, Myers, David Jones and McDonnell and East,

whereas the one Bankcard serves the purpose. In that sense the public quite readily accepted the Bankcard system.

That being so, the Government looked at it from an entirely different angle. It did not look at it as a service to the people or in the light that the people were getting a simplified deal in their business operations—it is their belief that it is a simplified deal in any case—but as a system under which it was losing money in the form of stamp duty.

To me there is a complete conflict between the Premier's idea and the Treasurer's idea. Only the other day, in answer to a question from the honourable member for Rockhampton, the Premier rose and said proudly, "Let us reduce all sales tax." I think he even said he wanted to eliminate sales tax. He said he wanted to eliminate all indirect taxation. I do not know what stamp duty is if it is not straight-out indirect taxation. The Government is not only attacking the ordinary, legitimate trading payments but also is presupposing that the person would pay his accounts by cheque.

Mr. Frawley: How do you expect the State to be run—with a few tram tickets or something?

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not know. I have seen the honourable member playing around with tickets like that. I do not want to be unkind to him. In any case, rather than save tram tickets, he goes around picking up betting tickets hoping that there is a dollar left in them. He presents them and lets the bookmaker tell him they are no good. The honourable member says, "I can't see. I haven't got my glasses on." It is not a bad way of doing it.

I think that the main thing to be decided is whether or not this is merely a means of allowing the State Government to obtain more indirect taxes from everyone. In addition to catching those who might have felt that they would be making a saving on cheques, the Treasurer will also catch those who want to use this method of buying as a matter of convenience. People who previously used credit cards issued by various organisations paid their accounts with one cheque and were quite happy to do so. They could now find themselves up for quite substantial amounts.

Again I ask how the Government will be able to enforce these laws against organisations that are not registered and domiciled in Queensland. I believe that the Bill will do nothing but cause further trouble. I foresee this legislation being brought back to the Chamber time and again in attempts to close further loop-holes that are found in it. In the meantime the person who does not operate a cheque account suffers. I have in mind the case of a person who has a Bankcard and who previously paid cash for all purchases. A person who preferred to pay cash would draw out of the bank a large sum of money and go away to

do his or her shopping. Such people would operate by means of bank passbooks and would not have to pay any duty on cheques. They would go to five or six shops in a short period of time and do their shopping in cash. Bankcard appealed to them because it meant that they did not have to carry large sums of cash with them. With all the bashings and assaults that are common today, having to carry large sums of money is always a worry.

I do not know how such people will now get on. It appears to me, however, that they will be charged a certain amount by the bank for every Bankcard entry. That means that people who did not previously have to pay this amount will now have to pay it.

Mr. Wright: It all goes back to the consumer, anyway.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. The banks had made arrangements with the various companies before they started the scheme, otherwise one would not see the notices in shop windows. The shops have to be registered with the banks.

My view, which I am sure is also the view of the Opposition, is that it is a matter for the people themselves to decide if they want or do not want to use the Bankcard system. But I do not see any real reason why the Government should be entering this field and taxing people who previously did not pay this tax. This is what the Government is in effect doing to those who operated on a bank pass-book, because it believes that some people are using the new scheme and not paying 10c on every cheque.

Mr. Wright: There is no such duty on American Express cards or Diners' Club cards, yet we single out the Bankcard system.

Mr. HOUSTON: I think it will be found that the others, too, were covered in the original legislation. Because a new system has been introduced, the Treasurer has now incorporated the lot. Many of them are operated from outside Queensland and I can still see that there are those who will get away with it and those who will have to pay. In principle, I do not think that is right. We should encourage people to use their money wisely. I know that some people will say that Bankcards encourage people not to use their money wisely. But that is up to the people themselves. I do not think I have a right to tell people what to do with their money. I may be able to advise, but I do not think I should try to dictate. If people want to gamble or use their money on unwise purchases, that is a matter for their decision. I can advise but not force my will on them.

The reality of the situation is that the Budget has been approved and the Treasurer set out to obtain \$69,400,000 in stamp duty. There is, therefore, not much that one can

do about it. I say to the Treasurer, however, that I am not at all happy with this type of tax.

Mr. Jensen: It will escalate like company pay-roll tax.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Government expects to obtain nearly \$180,000,000 from that tax. It talks on the one hand of encouraging small businesses, yet on the other hand it takes from them \$180,000,000. So what the Treasurer loses in one direction he is trying to pick up in another. As I said, the Opposition is not at all happy with the general principle involved in the Bill and can see further problems associated with the collection of this tax.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (8.30 p.m.), in reply: I listened with interest to the remarks of the honourable member for Bulimba. It is true that nobody likes taxation. It is equally true that a State cannot survive unless it has sufficient funds to provide the amenities that are expected by the people, and so when one comes to analyse the areas from which taxation might be gathered so that one can present a Budget to provide the essentials that a State has to provide, then one has to look at various avenues for that taxation.

It is true that in the Budget that was presented it was necessary to raise certain taxes and charges. No-one got any delight out of doing it, but I believe that every member of Parliament and his constituents have benefited because of the fact that the Government has found funds to provide services in certain areas, and if we did not have the source from which the funds have been derived then there would have to be a curtailment, whether it be in the provision of amenities such as schools, hospitals or something of that nature or in our works and building programme, possibly creating greater hardship on people in that direction. So this Parliament approved of the Budget as it was presented. It is also true that the Parliament approved of the amendment to this Act which I indicated on the previous occasion had become necessary because of the introduction of the Bankcard system.

I point out to the Committee that, before Bankcards were introduced to Queensland, I had discussions with a delegation from the Australian Bankers Association. When they came to see me they indicated that they proposed to operate on the same principle as they had been operating on in New South Wales and Victoria. I asked the delegation then if they had read our Act and studied section 42A of it dealing with accounts clearing and operations of that nature. I was surprised, and so were they. First of all, I was surprised that they did not know about the Act and, secondly, they were surprised that there was anything about this in the Act. So they left me and went away to study the Act. I saw them at a later date

and indicated that the State intended to endeavour to collect revenue from the operation of Bankcards in Queensland. With that knowledge they went ahead and, after receiving legal advice tendered to us by a Queen's Counsel, we then inserted section 42B in the Act.

It is true that, after the Act became operative, the banks sought a legal interpretation of the Act and finally advised me some little time ago that, while they could not oppose the principle, they felt that if they made payment of the stamp duty, it could be challenged by the customers. So in a very modest way they put it to me that it was not the banks who were opposing this; it was simply that they would not take the risk of paying the duty because they themselves could be challenged. Therefore, my purpose in amending the Act is to give the banks the opportunity to fulfil their obligation in accordance with the Act, and I believe that the proposed amendments will overcome what the banks have told me is their objection to making the payments.

It is true that the Government has lost quite an amount of revenue in stamp duty because of the introduction of Bankcard. It is equally true, as the honourable member for Bulimba said, that perhaps we are bringing into the net some people who previously paid cash. Nine times out of 10 people involved in the Bankcard system would have funds in a particular bank. They would have to withdraw those funds and then have what I would describe as the inconvenience of going from shop to shop making cash purchases and handling money. From a State point of view, all that the Government is asking for is some small recompense which collectively, across the State, can add quite a reasonable sum to the revenue of the State. We are asking for some small recompense for the type of security that people derive from the operation of the Bankcard system.

Honourable members should not believe for one moment that the banks are doing this for what one might describe as love. They have laid down certain conditions under which there is no charge for a certain period; but immediately the account goes beyond that period, the rate of interest charged is fairly high. I do not intend to become involved in the question of whether or not it is fair and just.

Mr. Houston: Members of the public are paying twice.

Sir GORDON CHALK: If members of the public who make use of Bankcard pay within the first 25 days, the bank really has provided a service for love; but if it goes beyond that, the bank receives what I regard as quite a reasonable return.

All that the proposed amendment does is tidy up something that this Assembly approved previously and on which the preparation of part of my Budget for this year was based. So I believe that I am quite

justified in bringing the amendment forward in the hope that it will clarify the position, that the banks will then honour their obligation, as I see it, in law, and that the State will receive a benefit which, in turn, will be of benefit to all the people of Queensland.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (8.40 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Insurance Act 1960–1975 in certain particulars.”

Under the provisions of the Commonwealth Insurance Act 1973 the Commonwealth Insurance Commissioner is now effectively taking over the responsibility for supervision of general and marine insurance in Queensland.

The Commonwealth Insurance Commissioner has much wider powers than his State counterpart to investigate and supervise the operations of insurance companies. It is worthy of note that the first steps to have the Commonwealth enter this field were taken by Queensland.

Every insurer must now obtain a Commonwealth authority to carry on insurance business and, having done so, is no longer legally obliged to take out a State licence to operate in Queensland. Consequently, it is necessary to amend the Queensland Act inasmuch as parts of it cannot now be enforced and other parts must of necessity be revised. It is proposed to abandon the Queensland system of licensing insurers as this control is adequately provided for in the Commonwealth Act. We will, however, continue to license insurers for the purposes of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Act, that is to say, motor vehicle third-party insurance. This Act is still valid and the necessary machinery is in force.

With the cessation of the licensing of insurers, it is clearly impracticable to continue to license their agents as the Act currently requires. This requirement can be abandoned without any detriment to the public, and it is proposed to do so.

The Act also requires Lloyds brokers to be licensed, but in practice no such licences have been issued. It is now an opportune time to delete this unnecessary requirement, and the Bill provides accordingly.

Under the Act licensed insurance brokers can be paid a maximum commission of 10

per cent of the premium by the insurer. This maximum commission system is closely allied to the licensing of insurers, agents and brokers and could not be administered in practice without such a system. In various ways it is possible for insurers to circumvent the limits imposed, and to this extent it cannot be enforced. Brokers are critical of the system as they are restricted to the same commission rates as agents yet they do much more work for insurers. Once insurers and agents cease to be licensed, it will be impossible to supervise the restriction. In the circumstances, the Bill provides for the maximum commission rates for brokers to be abandoned.

Although premium rates are no longer subject to price control, the competition which exists between insurers will tend to prevent any undue increase in the percentage they allow as broker's commission. One area to which Commonwealth supervision does not yet extend is the licensing of brokers. It is therefore proposed to continue State licensing until such time as the Commonwealth legislates to ensure adequate control.

In certain other States many agents call themselves insurance brokers for reasons of prestige. Such people are not in a position to give independent advice, and several have failed financially. Our Queensland licensing system has prevented such a situation here, but it is proposed to tighten the provisions of the Act in this regard to protect even further the interests of the insuring public.

Finally, it is proposed to delete from the Act the limitations imposed upon the amounts an insurer may pay a director. The sums specified are out of date, having remained unchanged since 1916, and furthermore it is totally inequitable that insurance directors have fees limited by legislation when no other types of directors' fees are in any way controlled.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.46 p.m.): Occasionally strange things happen in this Chamber. Rarely do we see the impossible. Tonight we have witnessed a strange set of circumstances, in which the Treasurer, quite happily, said that his Government encourages the Commonwealth Government to take over insurance. I am sure the Premier is nowhere in the building or anywhere within earshot. I certainly hope that for the Treasurer's sake the Premier does not read his statement in "Hansard". It runs completely contrary to the Premier's outbursts against the Commonwealth Government.

An even more remarkable feature is that the Treasurer's statement refers to legislation passed by the Commonwealth in 1973, while Mr. Whitlam was Prime Minister of this nation. We see the extraordinary situation of the State Government saying to the Commonwealth Government, "You have our blessing to take over responsibility for insurance."

It is a pity that the Treasurer did not tell us how much the State is losing by way of licence fees. Perhaps this loss is one of the reasons why he was so intent on getting some money from the little old lady who formerly operated on a bank pass-book. Perhaps the money now to be collected from her will compensate him for the money that he will lose by way of insurance companies' registration fees.

Most insurance matters are common to all Australians. We seem to have a love for our own home as well as a desire to provide for our family and our future. We like to know that any debts we might incur will be repaid, so we insure against accident and damage. That feeling is part of the Australian way of life.

I have no argument at all against the Commonwealth's operating in this sphere, but there are, of course, certain shortcomings associated with Commonwealth control. Provided such control is correctly decentralised and the managers in the various States are given the necessary power to enable them to meet their obligations and to make necessary adjustments between State and State, the system should operate successfully. As we know, the type of home built in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia is quite different from that built in Queensland. I trust that the insurance companies, which have for a long time been centralising their activities, will see fit to give their local managers the responsibility and autonomy that will enable them to make any adjustments that are found necessary.

The Commonwealth has not as yet come into the field of motor vehicle insurance. Perhaps the Treasurer will tell us whether or not such a move will be made at a later stage by the Commonwealth or whether the State said, "No, we will not pass motor vehicle insurance over. We wish to retain it as of right."

There is one matter that constantly arises in third-party motor vehicle insurance. In Queensland we have an Act providing for compulsory third-party insurance. I imagine that would be one of the reasons why the Commonwealth did not wish to enter that field. However, it appears to me that that should be covered so that, wherever a person happens to be injured in a motor vehicle accident, his redress will be the same irrespective of the State in which he happens to be, whoever the driver happens to be and wherever the car happens to be registered. It is the compulsory aspect that makes the difference. However, I believe comprehensive insurance should be a straight-out Commonwealth matter.

One facet of insurance in Queensland that amounts to an imposition is the loading placed on people who live in so-called cyclone areas. I know that, when a loading is taken off one section of policyholders, it has to

be paid for by another section if the company is to achieve the same return. However, to me it is wrong that, because a couple of bad cyclones hit North Queensland at a particular time, those places had an extra loading placed on their insurance. There is no evidence to suggest that they will be hit by another cyclone for any number of years.

We have had what appeared to be cyclones, although they have been called other names. Just recently Bundaberg received a thrashing. The weather bureau said it was only a storm. Toowoomba was thrashed. Again, it was said to be only a storm. People who lose roofs, ceilings, and furniture through wind, rain or water are very hard to convince that there is some difference between a cyclone and what struck them. However, people living in another town or area are faced with this excess. If companies imposing the levy are not registered, the Treasurer cannot do anything about it through the normal channels. However, I believe that he would be well advised to make representations on behalf of those people in the Federal field to ensure that the companies amend their requirements from time to time to fit in with local conditions and act with equality towards all of our people.

In regard to insurance brokers and their fees, the Treasurer mentioned that competition will keep prices down. I have heard that on thousands of occasions but I have yet to see it really work. What happens in fact is that insurance companies have their insurance organisations just as other groups of people have their organisations.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Unions have the organisations.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course they do; but the point is that, if unions suggested something like this, the Treasurer would be down on them like a ton of bricks, and so would his colleagues. But because insurance brokers happen to be in a different calling, collectively they will cut each other's throats and bring the prices down. What a lot of nonsense! They will be just as human as anyone else.

Because of other things they want to achieve unison about—things that will be to their advantage and, in some cases, to the public's advantage—when they meet to talk about their problems, I believe they will do exactly the same about this. They will have a current rate, which will vary according to whatever their organisation says at any time. So, although I am not arguing about the rights or wrongs of deleting a specific figure, I cannot accept the argument that competition will keep down the charges to the public.

This is another Bill that depends on the wording of the clauses. The Opposition will study the Bill to see what effect it is

likely to have on the public. After all, it is their welfare that we are most interested in.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (8.55 p.m.): I also am disturbed at the legislation. We hear that further control is now moving from the State to the Commonwealth in this sphere of insurance. I realise that this is the result of the passage of Commonwealth legislation in 1973. It has only been during the past 12 months that more and more insurance companies have been availing themselves of the provisions of the Commonwealth legislation and are no longer registering in Queensland for various actions and activities.

I am concerned at one aspect that has been going on during this period. Information has been given to us in answer to questions that I and other honourable members have asked over the past couple of years. I think the first information I received from the Premier was in 1973. He told me that a general review of insurance and of our over-all insurance legislation in Queensland was being conducted and that problems being raised from time to time by honourable members and presented to the Government, particularly through the Treasurer as Minister in charge of insurance, were to be answered as a result of this general review of insurance.

I should like the Treasurer to indicate at this stage whether the review is not now continuing—whether it has been cancelled—and whether the intention of the State Government to review the problems of insurance in Queensland has been abandoned. If this is the case, I am seriously concerned, even though Commonwealth legislation may exist—and the Commonwealth of course availed itself of the constitutional powers in this sphere—that we will drift out of the sphere of legislative cover in this regard.

The Treasurer has indicated that because the Commonwealth Government has not already legislated to cover insurance brokers, this Bill will strengthen legislative control over them. How long will it be before the association representing insurance brokers throughout Australia brings pressure to bear on the Commonwealth Government to increase the scope of its legislation to cover that sphere of activities? Again, in this Bill, we might be introducing something that will be a complete waste in the months that lie ahead.

As the State Government, and virtually all other States, are so heavily involved in insurance matters—in Queensland through the State Government Insurance Office—there should be some form of co-operation between the States on this matter. The States should be looking for some type of legislation complementary to the Commonwealth legislation to ensure the protection of policyholders in Queensland because there is so much variation.

The honourable member for Bulimba introduced one matter that has been of great concern to honourable members. Because of susceptibility to cyclones in certain areas of Queensland we are more concerned with storm and tempest cover than people in most of the other States. We have found that in the cyclone area that has been declared in Queensland by the insurance companies—I think the area north of the 22nd parallel and 200 miles inland is regarded as the major storm and tempest zone—the storm and tempest premium on the majority of household dwellings is up to three times the rate applicable in the metropolitan area, the south-east corner of the State, Toowoomba and Killarney, which have been affected badly by storm and tempest in recent years resulting in huge payouts. Also, Bundaberg has suffered in recent times. It is on the coast and is similar to Mackay. Similar business activities are carried out and similar types of people live there, yet they pay approximately one-third of the storm and tempest loading paid in Mackay, despite the fact that devastating cyclones can hit those areas and cause as much damage as is caused in Mackay, Cairns or Townsville. I know that this has been a matter of concern to many members for some considerable time.

In answer to correspondence and questions that I have asked in the House I have been informed by the Treasurer that 86 per cent of holders of S.G.I.O. policies in Queensland have storm and tempest cover. The amount of insurance written by the S.G.I.O. in northern areas is increasing because the major overseas companies that originated in the United States and the United Kingdom are dropping out of the North and confining their business to the more profitable areas of the capital cities.

There are other serious anomalies that arise in the North and I have written to the Treasurer in relation to one in particular. Insurance premiums in the North include a fire brigade levy. The premiums are already heavily loaded by virtue of the storm and tempest component—up to three times higher than they are in most other areas of Queensland—and the 15 per cent fire brigade levy is imposed also on the additional storm and tempest component. Surely this is a gross anomaly and should be given consideration when the Insurance Act is being reviewed.

If the Insurance Commissioner is correct that there is a need in certain areas for higher insurance premiums because of the risk of cyclone damage, surely there must be a lower risk of fire because heavy rainfall is associated with cyclones. Surely in North Queensland we cannot be expected to pay an extra loading because of the risk of storms and, in addition, another loading because of the risk of fire. This must be one of the greatest anomalies in insurance business in Queensland today, and it is one that has been perpetrated on the ordinary householder in coastal North Queensland. When considering the Insurance Act this is one very serious

problem that is crying out for attention. The Treasurer should give early consideration to it.

With the handing over of powers to the Commonwealth Government we can expect to receive less and less sympathy because those in Canberra know even less about North Queensland than those in Brisbane—and they do not know very much. This matter should be looked at closely.

Another insurance problem for the people of the North is that no insurer in Queensland will cover the ordinary householder against damage caused by tidal surge. Surely a tidal surge associated with a cyclone or low-pressure system moving down the coast is just as much an offshoot of a storm or cyclone as strong wind and heavy rain. If wind and rain cause damage to a person's house he is covered by storm and tempest insurance. But if he sustains tidal-surge damage to his house as a result of a cyclone or storm, he is not covered. The Treasurer has informed me that fire policies contain a standard clause that excludes tidal surge. It states as an exclusion—

“Destruction or damage caused directly or indirectly by the sea.”

Then again, householders and household policies have a similar exclusion which simply states—

“Loss or damage by the sea, tidal wave, high water, . . .”

Yet if we have a flood which is caused by water that escapes from the normal confines of any natural or artificial watercourse—this would include the bursting of a dam which would be considered as a natural disaster—and floods a valley and causes and creates serious damage that would not otherwise occur under normal flooding conditions, if a person has flood insurance he would be covered.

Mr. Jones: It's stupid. One is freshwater and one is saltwater.

Mr. CASEY: That is quite correct. I know the honourable member for Cairns is also very concerned about the problems of the cyclone area in the North. He has raised them a considerable number of times in the Chamber. He has also raised them with the Treasurer but received virtually the same negative replies. That is it; if it is freshwater escaping from, say, a burst dam, people can be covered but if it occurs as a result of some natural disaster such as a cyclone surge people are not covered.

If we are handing this insurance over to the Commonwealth, we will get less from Canberra than we did from Brisbane. This matter seriously concerns the people of the northern areas of our State. One other thing I might mention is that my people, particularly in cyclone areas, spend a lot of money building their houses to proper cyclone standards and above cyclone standards. I made mention of this by way of a question this morning on the code of the

Standards Association of Australia that is adopted in the Building Act for buildings in cyclone areas.

Many local authorities will inform honourable members that the Australian standard code does not go far enough. This was the experience in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, that we have to have a much higher standard of building to withstand wind loadings of the type experienced during Cyclone Tracy in Darwin. But any person in North Queensland who goes to the additional trouble and expense of building his home well enough to protect it from a very, very high wind velocity receives no consideration whatsoever in the form of lower premiums for storm and tempest insurance. He has to pay the additional loading to which I referred earlier even though he has incurred this additional expense. In fact, again the reverse applies. Because he has had to spend a lot more money on building a structure that will withstand a cyclone he has to insure for a higher value and thus pay a higher premium and, because of the "three times" loading we have in northern areas he is in actual fact being penalised because he has taken out a much higher cover.

When it is all boiled down, when we are talking about adequate safeguards in cyclone areas, the way our Insurance Act is written and the way insurance policies are written in this State, a person is better off putting up a cheapskate dwelling and covering it with the normal storm and tempest insurance cover, and if it gets blown down then the State will pay the full cost of rebuilding it, and, if the person is lucky, he might get a little bit of money from the Commonwealth to add to it as well. Surely this is not good economics for the State and the Commonwealth. Surely we can sort out the problems and correct these anomalies and try to get some sort of control in Queensland to ensure the protection of those areas of our State outside the metropolitan area. More than half of coastal Queensland has to face this problem, and it is a very serious one for the people living in those areas.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.10 p.m.): Like the shadow Treasurer, I, too, was surprised to see that this Government was willingly handing over any type of power to the Commonwealth, because over the past three years we have heard so many violent speeches on how we must stop centralisation.

I am not quite sure, but I believe that the Treasurer said that we were not handing over motor insurance. I ask the Treasurer through you, Mr. Hewitt, whether that is correct.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Yes.

Mr. WRIGHT: We are not. I am very pleased to hear that.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I will tell you why afterwards.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is good. In that case, I hope that we might be able to come to grips with some of the problems in the motor insurance industry, because it is an industry that certainly needs real investigation.

It was not so long ago that I looked at some of the premiums that had been made known to me by consumers in my own area, and I made the comment publicly that some of our consumers were being ripped off and that there was not the real competition that is supposed to exist. One of the spokesmen for the insurance industry said that that was totally untrue and that there is real competition. So I took it upon myself to get in touch with some of the insurance companies, and I picked five—the S.G.I.O., A.A.M.I., Greater Pacific General Insurance, V.I.P. Insurance and R.A.C.Q. Insurance. I took four categories, the first of which was the person starting off with a vehicle under hire-purchase, and the premiums with four of the companies were—

			\$
S.G.I.O.	..	..	289
A.A.M.I.	..	..	292
V.I.P.	..	..	294
R.A.C.Q.	..	..	289

Those premiums were for the same type of vehicle, and there was a variation of \$5 over about \$300.

Then I took a person who had had no claims over the past four years and who was buying a car under hire-purchase. The premiums were—

			\$
S.G.I.O.	..	..	116
A.A.M.I.	..	..	112
V.I.P.	..	..	118
R.A.C.Q.	..	..	116

Again, there was a real lack of competition.

I then took the cash car buyer starting off. The premiums were—

			\$
S.G.I.O.	..	..	216
A.A.M.I.	..	..	218
V.I.P.	..	..	221
R.A.C.Q.	..	..	215

Again the variation is only a matter of three or four dollars.

Then I took a cash buyer who had not made a claim in four years. The premiums were—

			\$
S.G.I.O.	..	..	86
A.A.M.I.	..	..	76
V.I.P.	..	..	88
R.A.C.Q.	..	..	86

So where the competition is supposed to be, I do not know.

The only one of the five companies that stood out was the Greater Pacific General Insurance Company. For a person starting off with a vehicle under hire-purchase, its

premium was \$357; in the second category it was \$160, in the third \$256 and in the fourth, \$120. I can only assume that that company did not want any car insurance business. I think that was its approach to the matter.

It seems to me to be false to say that true competition exists in the motor insurance industry, and it is wrong that we should allow this so-called free-enterprise approach to exist. The consumer is suffering because there is no such thing as competition.

Mr. Miller: Have you compared those premiums with premiums in South Australia or in other Australian States?

Mr. WRIGHT: No, I have not bothered to do that. I investigated the matter because of the claims made by the insurance industry in this State, and bearing in mind that the Insurance Commissioner in Queensland at that time no longer had any control and could not designate any maximum premium.

I think it is time we began getting competition here. The moment some firm tries to create competition, as the V.I.P. group did, there are all sorts of rumours in the industry that this one will fail. That could well be so—it could fail—but that is the way they attack it. As the honourable member for Bulimba said, there seems to be a gentlemen's agreement about keeping within certain levels of variation and anyone who does not do that is not a member of the club, so to speak.

We need to look at this very closely, Mr. Hewitt, because it is the person who can least afford to pay who is coping it. The person who has to buy a car on hire-purchase is the one who incurs the huge debt. In addition to paying the massive interest charges imposed by the finance company, he has to pay almost twice the amount of insurance paid by the person who pays cash. One fellow came to me—admittedly he had had a claim; he might even have had more than one—whose insurance premium was going to be just on \$500. Surely that is exorbitant. Surely we are not helping the people who are least able to pay.

I think it is wrong also that the first-year insured pays the top premium. There seems to be some sort of philosophy in the insurance industry, "Because we have received no money from you before, you will start paying at the top rate." When a person has had no previous claim, surely the insurance company should say, "As you have had no claim before, we should give you some special type of low premium."

Mr. Chinchin: He has no history if it is his first premium.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is right. If a person has had no claim on the company, why should he be paying the top rate? That person, by the way, might be 30 years old.

He may well not be the young driver who is accident prone. The person who suffers is usually the person who can least afford it.

People also suffer indirectly. I am not sure how the Minister can overcome it, but there is a racket with accident repairs. The price for repairs to an insured motor vehicle can be almost anything, but if the owner says, "There is no insurance cover on this vehicle", he is likely to save himself \$200 or \$300 on repairs. Surely that must come in the over-all ambit of the insurance industry. No longer is top quality workmanship being carried out. Filling in and painting over seems to be the policy of repairers today. If they do not do that, they go to the other extreme of making replacements with brand new parts instead of repairing. Again the consumer has to pay. It is the nation that suffers because our resources are not being used as they should be.

Another aspect I wish to raise relates directly to the insurance industry. I had a case recently of a person who was in the right in an accident. The other driver was convicted of driving without due care and attention. The insurance company was prepared to settle the claim only on an 80:20 basis. The driver in the right was going to sell his car about a week or so before the accident, and had been offered \$500 for it. It was not a very expensive vehicle. The final settlement from the company was \$200 because the car that caused the accident was a very expensive model.

Another case was given to me by an insurance person, who was most disturbed about the example. Say an accident occurred between an old Mini Minor or some other vehicle worth \$1,000 and a brand new Holden worth \$5,000, with the person owning the Mini Minor being in the right. Among themselves the companies might decide to settle on an 80:20 agreement. That would mean that the person in the right would have to pay 20 per cent of \$5,000 (\$1,000), and the person in the wrong would have to pay 80 per cent of \$1,000 (\$800). Surely that is not fair.

There is another side to it. The moment the claims are made, both parties lose their no-claim bonus. I should imagine that the insurance companies are saving millions upon millions of dollars under the system they are using. There is no such thing as no-fault insurance. According to the insurance companies both drivers are at fault and must have contributed in some way to the accident.

Mr. Moore: Do you know that to be right?

Mr. WRIGHT: That is what they say. I have taken them on. They say, "All right, if you want to test us, come to the Magistrates Court with us." The magistrate will settle on 80:20, 70:30, or 90:10; rarely is it 100:0. One just doesn't get that.

Mr. Jensen: Yes you do, if you are not in the car.

Mr. WRIGHT: Only if a person is not in the car. A person would need to have parked his car legally and not be in control of it at the time of the accident. How many accidents occur in that way, unless someone runs off the side of the road and hits a parked vehicle? The majority of accidents involve two vehicles and two drivers, yet the person in the right pays. There is need for a review.

One final point I wish to make ties in with the legislation before us. I refer to the over-all personal type of insurance. I have a case before me at the moment involving a constituent. Over \$900 was paid over 10 years on an endowment policy. Even though bonuses are payable in addition to the \$900 paid, the surrender value offered was only \$480.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is a life policy the honourable member is talking about?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: That certainly is not covered by the Bill.

Mr. WRIGHT: I thought the Minister said it was. I thought the only exemption was motor vehicle insurance.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Insurance Act in this State does not cover life assurance.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept that, Mr. Hewitt, so I simply raise this point for the Minister's attention. This is a golden opportunity. As you know, Mr. Hewitt, members of the Opposition have certain limitations placed upon them in the Matters of Public Interest debate, so I take this opportunity to ask the Treasurer to look into it. I do not know whether insurance companies are engaging in rackets or are merely guilty of bad mathematics when assessing surrender values of policies. If a person pays \$900 by way of premiums over 10 years, surely it is wrong that he receives only \$480 back.

Mr. Chinchin: He is given cover on his life for that period.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the honourable gentleman not to talk about life assurance.

Mr. WRIGHT: I shall leave that matter, Mr. Hewitt, but I would ask the Treasurer to examine the other points I have raised.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (9.21 p.m.): I am pleased to enter the debate because approximately a month or so ago I telephoned Mr. Rutherford about an insurance claim in Bundaberg, and I was told by him, "We have no more dealings in insurance. It has been taken over by the Federal Government." As this Bill deals with the take-over by the Federal Government of insurance, I am at a

loss to understand how Mr. Rutherford told me it had then been taken over over three months ago.

The honourable member for Bulimba said that the new Act would be administered from Canberra. He added that he had no objection to that, provided there was some decentralisation. We certainly have no decentralisation at the moment. There is no office in Brisbane that anyone can take his case to.

The incident in Bundaberg involved the burning down of a hotel and a claim by the proprietor for insurance from the insurance company. He did not receive any satisfaction at all from the company, so he asked me would I take up the matter for him in Brisbane. I took it up with Mr. Rutherford, who said he could do nothing and that I should see the Trade Practices people or alternatively the Insurance Commissioner in Canberra. I rang the Trade Practices Office only to be told that it had nothing to do with the matter and that I should contact Canberra.

Will the Federal Government appoint a manager in Queensland to handle such cases? I told this hotel proprietor that he should ask his Federal member to make an appointment for him in Canberra. It was no use flying down to see the Insurance Commissioner, as he could quite easily be in Perth. The hotel proprietor claimed that it was cheaper to fly to Canberra than lose \$400 a week by way of his finance commitments on the hotel. It was costing him \$400 a week while he was receiving no satisfaction at all from the insurance company.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. JENSEN: This matter is an important one. The honourable member's garage might be burnt down one day and he might not get any satisfaction.

As for competition between insurance companies—what a joke! This matter was highlighted quite well by the honourable member for Bulimba. I can remember the time when there was competition between insurance companies. In 1949 I paid £400 for a Prefect motor-car. I insured it with the S.G.I.O. for a premium of £7 a year. When the S.G.I.O. joined with other insurance companies, the premium jumped from £7 to £13 10s. I asked the R.A.C.Q. to insure my vehicle and its premium was much cheaper than that. I have remained with R.A.C.Q. Insurance ever since. In those days there was competition. That was £7 as against £13.10s., but the S.G.I.O. went up to the same figure as the other companies. As the honourable member for Rockhampton said, its figure is still about the same as that of the other companies. In the old days it did compete and its premiums were pretty good.

I have nothing against the S.G.I.O. Someone mentioned the cyclone. The S.G.I.O. in Bundaberg gave every possible assistance to anybody who was affected by the cyclone. The manager said to me, "If anybody comes

complaining to you, give us a ring straight away and we will look after it. There will be no trouble at all." We didn't have any serious complaints. I took one small complaint to him and he fixed it up immediately. There was no doubt about the S.G.I.O. looking after people in Bundaberg after that cyclone—and it was a cyclone, whether the weather bureau agrees or not. It was checked out at the airport. Because it made such a proper mess of the forecast, the weather bureau is trying to get out of it by saying that it was not a cyclone. It has not been able to get out of it.

I appreciate the point raised by the honourable member for Mackay about anomalies in fire insurance. It is pretty disgusting when an insurance company hits a householder for fire insurance three times the amount paid for storm and tempest insurance cover elsewhere. That is just as ridiculous as the problem with Commonwealth sales tax, which is added to the freight component in goods. It is ridiculous that sales tax is imposed on freight, which might be \$1 to my place but \$6 to Mt. Isa.

Mr. Frawley: What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr. JENSEN: It is another anomaly.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Murrumba is quite right. It has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: I am talking about the anomaly with fire insurance, and comparing the two. If I cannot draw comparisons, there is something wrong with this place.

The member for Mackay has a good point. It is about time the Treasurer looked at this. Why should people in Mackay pay three times as much for storm and tempest as we do in Bundaberg? Mackay is no more cyclone-prone than Bundaberg is. Many cyclones have just missed us. However, he says he pays three times as much as we do. I agree with him that that is quite wrong.

I just wanted to raise those points, and illustrate what can happen under the Insurance Act and how people have to go to Canberra to get some satisfaction. There is no decentralisation. There is no manager in Queensland to look after us. We have to go to Canberra. As we are dealing with this matter in the Chamber, it is up to the Treasurer to see that the Commonwealth Government gives us some satisfaction in Queensland by appointing a manager here.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.28 p.m.), in reply: As I outlined in my introductory remarks, this Bill, too, is a simple measure. Of course, its introduction provides an opportunity for honourable members to raise a number of issues. That is the prerogative of any member, whether he be on the side of Government or Opposition.

Consequently, the debate in broad principle has departed from what I outlined as the objectives of the Bill.

A number of other issues have been raised, a few of which I feel bound to reply to. The honourable member for Bulimba, who led the debate for the Opposition, endeavoured to make some capital out of the fact that I said the State of Queensland had approached the Commonwealth Government for the implementation of what is today the Commonwealth Act. That is true. We did it way back in 1962. We did it for a particular purpose. The Seven Seas Insurance Company had got into financial difficulties in this State and, in fact, right throughout the Commonwealth. The fact was that we had no control over a company of this nature. It was felt that, with companies coming from the South and writing insurance in Queensland, it would be better to have an Act which would be applicable Commonwealth-wide than to endeavour to control within the State what we might regard as a foreign company. That was the basis of the approach.

The honourable member also referred to the cyclone area. This matter was touched on also by the honourable member for Mackay. It is true that there is a variation in the premiums paid in the cyclone area and elsewhere. I know that there is a desire in many quarters to overcome this problem. However, insurance companies have the right to choose their business. If insurance companies operated in the South and did not take business in the North, and there was some form of uniform premium, the companies in the South would gain and those in the North would lose. This is an issue that has to be given some attention and regarded with some sympathy for the views of all. Nobody has yet been able to indicate a basis which would overcome the difficulty.

I was asked why we have maintained the Act as it relates to motor vehicle insurance. It is true that the Commonwealth Government has a coverage in relation to motor vehicles. However, it has laid down that, to take insurance in the motor vehicle field, a company needs to have capital of only \$200,000. We consider that that amount is not adequate. We have had quite a deal of experience in this field; consequently we have retained motor vehicle insurance within our Act so that we can insist on higher capital for the companies taking this type of business and being registered in this State.

The honourable member for Mackay raised the question of fire brigades. Over recent weeks we have received details from the committee set up to review insurance and, at Cabinet and Government level, we are examining the recommendations put to us and are endeavouring to bring forward legislation that will clarify some of the problems concerning fire brigades. In certain areas there is allegedly fire brigade protection, yet such protection does not exist. Therefore the

person involved feels that he should not pay the insurance levy relating to fire brigades. On the other hand, one of the matters that must be straightened out is that the protection that is alleged to exist, but admittedly does not exist, provides the basis for a lower premium than could apply in an area that has no fire brigade and consequently has no protection. Whilst we may talk about fire brigade levies, we also have to look at the basic principles on which premiums are fixed.

Mr. Casey: That does not cover the percentage levy on the extra storm and tempest component.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I am looking first of all at what I may call the fire brigade side. I am dealing with the point that the honourable member has raised. I hope that legislation will be brought down in this Chamber shortly which will clarify the fire brigade side of insurance and which, candidly, will give some relief in certain areas.

The honourable member referred to damage from tidal surge. The insurers argue that it is too costly to insure against this risk. Although there may be some who would debate that point, the insurer still has the right to decide the type of insurance that he will accept. Mr. Rutherford and others associated with insurance in this State have been discussing at Commonwealth level the inclusion of tidal surge within the ambit of what might be termed the natural disaster scheme. At present a working party in Canberra is looking into that field. The points that have been raised by the honourable member for Mackay are of some interest. On the other hand, I may say that they have not been overlooked by those who have been administering insurance in this State.

He spoke of a building that had been built in such a way that it incorporated a measure of proofing against cyclones. He referred, in other words, to the person who is prepared to build protection into his home. I lived in North Queensland from 1937 until 1945 and I went through two cyclones there when I was a private citizen. I know some of the actions that were taken after the first cyclone to strap down, as it were, the home that I occupied and I know the amount of money that was spent to make that home fairly cyclone-proof in the future. But those precautions did not have any effect on the premiums that had to be paid. I think the time must come when insurance companies will have to give some form of premium discount to owners who take certain steps to protect their homes against cyclones.

Mr. Casey: That would be on the same basis as the protection given by the use of fireproof materials?

Sir GORDON CHALK: The principle is the same. I instance the home that I

occupied because I know the amount of money that was spent on bolting it down and securing the roof. A lot of money was spent after I went through the 1941 cyclone in the North.

Reference was also made to the registration of insurance brokers throughout Australia. What is being done at the moment is simply a holding exercise. It is true that the Commonwealth is looking at this portion of its Act but in the meantime I believe it is necessary for us to carry on. We have therefore taken the necessary action to try to strengthen our own control while that control is our responsibility.

The honourable member for Rockhampton referred to premiums and also to the workmanship in motor vehicle repairs. He used as his argument a comparison of the premiums of the S.G.I.O., and R.A.C.Q. and one or two other companies. I accept that the figures that he put forward are very similar. Let me say that if we did not have that form of competition between the companies—in other words, if we had something in the nature of a monopoly—I would like to know what the premiums might then increase to. So while there is possibly some degree of, could I call it, “get-togetherness” amongst a number of companies, on the other hand there are the independent insurers and there are those who will keep at least a degree of competition in the industry and, I believe, keep the premium rates down. I believe this would be preferable to having one or two companies where there could perhaps be certain collusion which would not be in the interests of the community generally.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also said that premiums were too high. He might be able to argue that in some instances. We have still retained the right to reintroduce the maximum premium basis—

Mr. Wright: It was the hire-purchase ones I meant.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Yes, I know. But we have some rights still—that is not a pun—and we have retained the right to reintroduce the maximum premium if we so desire. The only other speaker on this subject was the honourable member for Bundaberg. I understand that the point he is raising is the fact that there has not been an office set up here to handle problems at a Commonwealth level. It is true that in recent times the Insurance Commissioner has handled some of this work on what might be called a reciprocal basis. On the other hand, certain things have happened which I believe it would not be right for Mr. Rutherford or others to handle, and consequently those matters have to go south. Whether we can persuade the Commonwealth to do as the honourable member suggests is something which I think he ought to take up with his Federal representative rather than raise it at State level.

The only other point I want to make to the honourable member is that as time goes on he might no longer be the member for Bundaberg, and when that time comes I am sure that, after all he has said about the virtues, the success and the ability of the S.G.I.O. and his words of admiration for it, if he makes application he will be able to get employment selling S.G.I.O. insurance in the same manner as he sold the S.G.I.O. itself this evening.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

QUEENSLAND CULTURAL CENTRE TRUST BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Kaus, Mansfield, in the chair)

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.46 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to provide for the establishment and incorporation of a body to be known as the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust, to make provision with respect to the administration of that body and for purposes incidental thereto.”

The purpose of the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust Bill is to formally establish such a trust so that the new cultural complex, to be sited in South Brisbane, will be constructed on a sound and clear administrative basis.

Basically, the Bill provides for the trust to be a body corporate and, as such, to be vested with the usual rights and obligations which attach to bodies such as this. These include the right to sue, be sued and acquire personal property. In particular, the trust will be given power to let or lease the land and buildings comprising the cultural centre.

The legislation provides that, after an initial period of 12 months, members of the trust shall be appointed by the Governor in Council by notification in the Government Gazette. During the initial period the persons holding office on the planning and establishment committee as officers of Government departments and representatives of various organisations interested in the development will continue as the first members of the trust.

This committee, which was established by Cabinet under the chairmanship of the Director of Industrial Development, Sir David Muir, who is also chairman of the Queensland Theatre Company, is to be congratulated for the work it has already done towards the over-all planning of the project, which will draw credit for the State in its determination to improve the standards of this type of activity.

The legislation does not provide for a set number of trustees, leaving this for decision by the Governor in Council in the light of the interest and availability of persons with links with cultural organisations. Trust members will be appointed initially for three-year terms, with eligibility for re-appointment.

The trust will have a number of functions. It will encourage the pursuit of cultural activity within the State. It will make recommendations to the Minister regarding the buildings and other improvements to be erected at the centre.

The trust will exercise over-all supervision of the centre and maintain the land and buildings in good condition. Autonomy of the respective cultural organisations occupying the centre, however, will be preserved. The trust will maintain the provision of the necessary services and facilities at the centre. These will include air-conditioning, the restaurant and parking facilities.

Honourable members would be aware that the cultural complex to be established on the southern bank of the Brisbane River will be one of the most outstanding projects of its type in Australia. Indeed, it will not be shaded by anything of a similar nature in the southern hemisphere.

The complex will embrace a performing arts centre, the Queensland Art Gallery, the Queensland Museum and the State Library. Based on October 1974 costs, the estimated cost of land and buildings is \$45,000,000. The four proposed constructional stages are—I art gallery; II performing arts centre; III museum; and IV library. It is proposed that an eight-year completion target be set for the total scheme.

At this stage the planned targets for sectional completions are: stage I early 1979; stage II mid-1981; stage III mid-1982; and stage IV late 1983.

The performing arts centre is planned to contain an opera and ballet theatre, proposed to be called the Lyric Theatre, seating 1,800, a concert hall with a capacity of 2,000 and a studio theatre to seat 400.

Public facilities to be shared by all four main sections of the over-all complex will include an auditorium and a restaurant designed for use by 500 and 200 people respectively. The restaurant will also serve as a convention centre. A two-level car park for 500 cars is planned to be located under the art gallery and the museum. A limited number of specialty shops are also included in the total concept.

A fully integrated system of walkways, plazas, stairways, ramps and lifts which will facilitate easy access to all parts of the complex for pedestrians, and for disabled people in particular, is being included in planning.

The architectural designers have carried out work for the initial planning and establishment committee, and have already completed

the conceptual plan. The designers have also been commissioned to prepare the contract documents for stage I—that is the art gallery, the auditorium-restaurant and car park.

It is expected that the first contracts covering roads and earthworks will be let before the end of this financial year, and, hopefully, the main contract for stage I will be let before the end of 1976.

Funds for the new complex will flow from Golden Casket profits. Not only will this Casket money finance the South Brisbane project, but it will provide for cultural facilities in other centres throughout the State. In general terms, the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust will be an umbrella organisation over the entire project.

This legislation, in effect, is the keystone in the establishment of the cultural complex which was promised in the last election policy speech by the Government. The complex, by any means of assessment, will give a new dimension to the character of Brisbane and, indeed, Queensland.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (9.55 p.m.): The proposal put forward by the Treasurer will be accepted by the majority of people in Queensland, particularly those who are interested in the arts. The composition of the trust, as outlined, follows the general lines of bodies of this nature, with representatives of organisations interested in the various types of activity involved.

One of the bright features was the appointment of Sir David Muir as the head of the trust. I think that was an excellent choice. At the same time, he has my sympathy because he will have a job on his hands in attempting to complete a project of such tremendous size in Brisbane.

Culture in Queensland has always been under a bit of a cloud. It has been looked on by people in the rest of Australia and in other parts of the world, and even by some people in this State, as being rather backward. I do not know whether the establishment of this centre at South Brisbane will make any difference; perhaps it will. We cannot legislate for culture. We can promote it and encourage it, but we certainly cannot manufacture it. The provision of a centre of this nature does not necessarily mean that Queensland will be looked upon by the remainder of Australia as a cultural State. The attempt to conduct a Festival of Arts in Queensland fell flat on its face as the result of lack of support. I do not know whether that was any indication of the standard of our cultural development.

It is worth recalling the history of this project. It was announced as part of the Government's policy speech in 1974, when the Treasurer stated that work would be started almost immediately after the election and would be completed in five years, that is,

by 1979. The latest estimate given by the Treasurer is that the completion date will be 1983. In his policy speech no mention was made of stages of the project. He said, in effect, "The Government intends to complete the cultural complex"—not a stage of it—"within five years." But, as I say, it looks as if it will not be completed until 1983.

Quantity surveyors who studied the scheme likewise have expressed the opinion that it will not be completed prior to 1983. This is in sharp contrast to the forecast made by the Treasurer of 1979.

There is a wide discrepancy in costs. At the time of the election the cost was stated to be \$45,000,000. Since that time, however, it has been stated that the cost would escalate at the rate of 15 per cent a year. The Treasurer himself has stated that the final cost will be between \$80,000,000 and \$90,000,000. Alan Underwood is reported in "The Courier-Mail" as having estimated the cost to be as high as \$200,000,000. The project has been criticised as being Brisbane's "opera house" as far as costs are concerned. Although the Treasurer has denied this, the evidence of experts seems to indicate that this could be so and that the cost will be of the order of \$200,000,000. The Treasurer smiles. I think he wants to console himself with a smile, because he probably knows in his own heart that he has no real idea of what the ultimate cost will be by 1983. He knows as well as everybody else in the Chamber that the rate of construction costs is escalating every year. An estimate of \$45,000,000 in 1974 bears no relation to the cost nine years later in 1983.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You overlook one particular thing: we got rid of Whitlam.

Mr. MELLOY: We might have got rid of Whitlam, but it is quite certain the Treasurer is at fault in that we have not got rid of Joh. The Treasurer can take some of the blame for that.

We have to get our priorities right. If this is going to cost us \$200,000,000 by 1983, as has been estimated in some quarters, we have to consider what else we could spend \$200,000,000 on in the same period. What about our roads? What about our schools? Look at the housing situation. We are lagging in all those fields of community life. That is where we need to spend money. Certain it is that we must promote culture in this State; but whether at this stage we can afford to spend \$200,000,000 on it is open to conjecture. The Treasurer, who is always crying poor, should be looking at his purse again if he is to spend so much money on the construction of a cultural centre, however desirable it might be.

I would like to know how the Treasurer relates the expenditure of this money to the loss of income from death duties. The Premier is quite definite that we are going to lose income from death duties.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Don't you die, because we'll get nothing from you.

Mr. MELLOY: They'll get nothing from me, no. But there are bigger fish in the sea than I that the Treasurer has to worry about in the field of death duties. The Treasurer knows full well what is going to happen in his portfolio if he loses income from death duties. In addition, he has to find \$200,000,000 for the cultural centre at South Brisbane.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I didn't think the Opposition were knockers, but now I am convinced that they are.

Mr. MELLOY: We are not knockers. We are just emphasising certain aspects of this proposition that the Treasurer should be vitally interested in. The financial side of it involves substantial sums of money, and construction costs will increase at the rate of 15 per cent per annum. The Treasurer will not get out of the project at a cost of \$45,000,000, as he tried to imply in his introductory speech.

As to the provision of a cultural centre—I think it is desirable if we can afford it.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You're on side now, are you?

Mr. MELLOY: If we can afford it; I am in favour of it if we can afford it. But the vital point is this: are we to involve ourselves in a tremendous outlay instead of doing it piece by piece, as the Treasurer should perhaps do? The Treasurer has said that certain stages will be completed each year. Could the project be abandoned after it has proceeded half way? Will the people of Queensland be told, "We have completed Stage 1. That is all we can do, because the cost has been much greater than we anticipated."?

Sir Gordon Chalk: You should have let your leader handle this.

Mr. MELLOY: This could happen.

Sir Gordon Chalk: He will be ashamed of you.

Mr. MELLOY: He can handle it, too. He probably will.

Sir Gordon Chalk: He'll be ashamed of you.

Mr. MELLOY: No, he won't be ashamed of me. He will be ashamed of the Treasurer.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You wait till I'm finished with you.

Mr. MELLOY: The Treasurer cannot deny anything that I have said.

Sir Gordon Chalk: My oath I can!

Mr. MELLOY: The Treasurer is misleading himself as well as the Committee.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You have misquoted two lots of figures, but I will wait until I have had an opportunity to reply and I will prove that you are a prevaricator.

Mr. MELLOY: We will be anxious to hear it. I am pleased that the Treasurer will take the trouble to explain, as I think he should. Will he deny that there could be a 15 per cent yearly escalation in the cost? He has said through the Press that the cost could reach \$80,000,000 or \$90,000,000 as compared to the original estimate of \$45,000,000. The Treasurer should not say that I am misquoting figures.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You are and I will take the opportunity to reply to you in full.

Mr. MELLOY: I hope that the Treasurer does.

The Opposition accepts the Bill. It is desirable. We want the Treasurer to make it clear that Queensland can afford to undertake this project. I have no doubt that if the State is able to, it will prove to be an asset for the people and for the State.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (10.6 p.m.): Any honourable member who is not prepared to support this proposal to establish the trust and the cultural centre at South Brisbane is lacking in responsibility. Although it is a bold move on the part of the Government to outlay such a large amount of capital on one single project in the capital city, every person with responsibility and a sense of being a Queenslander will support it. Although it will be established in the capital city, it will be of advantage to all people throughout Queensland. Most Queenslanders would at some time during their lives—probably in their student years—visit Brisbane and would have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits that will flow from such a project.

It is a very large and grand scheme. The Treasurer said that there will be a performing arts centre to accommodate something like 2,000 people, with a smaller studio theatre to accommodate some 400 people. This recognises the difference in size of the various organisations in our community. One would hope that policy guide-lines would be laid down firmly by the Government. This is the aspect I should like the Treasurer to deal with in his reply. I should like to know the detailed policy guide-lines that the Government will impose on the trust by this legislation or by regulation and whether the Minister will have an over-riding power in this regard.

Up to now a number of organisations have been denied the use of some Government facilities to encourage what they see as their contributions to the culture of this State. Firstly, I wish to speak about brass bands. I do not want to steal the thunder of the honourable member for Sandgate, who has spoken on this subject so often, but I hope that organisations such as that will be able to use the centre. I also instance

organisations such as the Verdi Choral Society, the large male Italian choir which I have mentioned before in this place. I hope that it will be able to use the centre. I hope that the centre is not set aside as a venue for Grand Opera and ballets, but that it will have a broader function and will encompass all sections of the community.

I hope that the trust will be encouraged under the policy guide-lines to adopt a policy of not pricing out some of the smaller organisations in the use of this centre. The S.G.I.O. Theatre, which is a semi-governmental organisation, is inclined to price out some of the poorer organisations who wish to use that facility. When they saw that wonderful theatre established, many organisations thought that the Government might show a little heart and not try to recoup every last penny spent on it. I know of one organisation that presented a concert in this theatre a couple of years ago and had included in the bill of several hundred dollars that it received for one performance an amount of about \$20 or \$30 for electric light bulbs that either blew or wore out during the period of hire. It seemed to me that such a maintenance charge should not have been included in the account. I thought that that was quite unnecessary. It does little to encourage the activities of smaller organisations.

The larger bodies with strong financial backing from the Government, such as the Queensland Ballet Company and some orchestras, have very large followings and are well enough established in terms of subsidies and community acceptance to withstand such charges. They are able to present concerts in theatres of this type in the knowledge that they will be viable propositions. There are, however, many voluntary organisations that are financed out of their members' pockets and that still give a lot of pleasure to the community at large. I hope that they will be recognised by the trust when it formulates policies for this centre.

The inclusion of an art gallery in the complex will be welcomed by all. I know that many of us have been concerned about the lack of opportunity for members of the public, particularly students and elderly and retired people with time on their hands, to enjoy the fine collection held at present by the Queensland Art Gallery. We have all seen many comments by experts on the effect of bad storage on valuable paintings and other works of art. Those remarks also apply to some of the precious documents and manuscripts held in the various libraries in the State.

Storage facilities have to be designed by experts and I hope that some people with expert knowledge in this field will be brought from overseas and interstate to provide at the centre all the things that are necessary for the preservation of priceless works of art. Some volumes in the Parliamentary Library are stored unashamedly in the old

wooden Bellevue building. I am sure that many members are quite terrified that a fire may break out there or that these volumes will suffer damage from moisture, which does so much more harm to old documents. It is necessary to go to a great deal of expense in the preservation of old paper, even to the extent of special storage rooms that can be kept at a constant temperature, some filled with inert gases and without any humidity. All of these things will have to be planned and built into the complex at South Brisbane.

I hope that proper advice will be sought and put into effect in the establishment of the art gallery and library storage facilities at the centre. The same remarks apply to the museum where a number of priceless artefacts and antiques are presently stored in unsatisfactory conditions in Brisbane.

The centre will have advantages in terms of tourism. It will attract people to the city not only to attend performances but perhaps to attend conferences to be held in the convention centre. The boost to tourism in overseas cities that is provided by large cultural centres is well known. In some of the older cities of the world these buildings are more of historic interest, but even in some of the more modern cities people will visit modern cultural complexes. I hope that full advantage will be taken of tourism. When the trust is set up perhaps consideration might be given to putting a representative of tourism on the trust or creating a position for a representative to advise the trust so there can be co-ordination between what is normally understood to be the function of a cultural centre and the benefits of tourists from interstate and overseas. In this way perhaps we could recoup some of the initial financial outlay.

As I said, it is indeed a bold move and I am sure it is one that will be welcomed by the community. Less than 18 months after the election campaign in which the Treasurer and the Premier made the commitment for this centre to the people of Queensland, the promise is being put into effect and within a very short time we will see the first sod turned on land which is ideal for such a centre. This land has never been put to any great use before. Indeed, it was flood-prone and it is good to see that it will be properly developed in this way and not redeveloped in a residential sense. If this had happened it could have caused havoc later. I am very happy to support the Bill.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (10.17 p.m.): In his Budget speech last year the Treasurer foreshadowed many aspects of the legislation that he has introduced this evening. He will recall, and perhaps other members will, that at that time I had some critical remarks to make about this proposal. I feel that in his reply the Treasurer did take some of my remarks the wrong way when he said that I was endeavouring to knock Brisbane or was being anti-Brisbane in many respects. Firstly, I would like to point out that so

far as this legislation is concerned that is not true. Rather let it be said that I am pro-Queensland, and I believe that this legislation we are introducing should be used to the advantage of Queenslanders as a whole and not the section of Queenslanders who live within the south-eastern corner.

The Treasurer was correct when he described me as a culturally minded person. That is correct. I am very interested in this type of activity for the simple reason that I am interested in people. I believe people are of the utmost importance in our State and anything that can be done by us as parliamentarians to bring about a better and more fruitful way of life for the people of this State will always have my full and whole-hearted support.

The Treasurer also said this evening that after 12 months the trust will be properly set up, but the initial planning and establishment committee will remain as the trust for the time being.

I would like to take this opportunity through you, Mr. Kaus, of congratulating Sir David Muir and the members of the committee for the way they have gone about their work to date on this proposal. Sir David Muir is a very experienced and capable public servant and I believe that his record down through the years as a public servant in this State has no equal. I would like to go on record as saying that I hope his work in setting up this centre and as chairman of the initial trust will be another great feather in his cap.

I was very interested to hear the Treasurer say that one object of the trust will be to encourage pursuit of cultural activities throughout the State. He mentioned that as the first object of the trust. There must be a relationship between the complex that is to be built across the river at South Brisbane and the whole of the State of Queensland. It must not become only a Brisbane centre.

There are many ways in which that can be done. As the Treasurer indicated, the complex will contain not only areas for the performing arts but also the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery, and the State Library and the Queensland Museum will be housed there. I propose that the three latter bodies should look closely for ways in which they can have continuing exhibitions throughout other areas of the State. They could be called sub-branches of the museum, art gallery or library, but something of that sort must be done.

I was very interested recently in seeing what is being done in other Australian States, and I was particularly impressed by museum and art gallery work being done in Western Australia. The Government has set up sub-branches of the museum in every major provincial city of that State, and from time to time it features exhibitions that become tourist attractions in those areas as well as being of benefit to the people of the

areas themselves. In my opinion, it is time that we looked at a similar scheme for Queensland.

I shall deal later with other aspects of the work, but I hope that in future there will be, in particular, ample scope for proper buildings in provincial cities to house works of art and museum exhibitions. We are told that in the exhibition building at Bowen Hills most of the valuable parts of the collection are housed in the lower floor and are not on display. Recently I read an article about the war museum in Canberra which said that about two-thirds of the articles at the museum are not on display as there is no room to display them. I believe that the Queensland Cultural complex could well be asked to gather collections from other areas and send them to provincial cities.

I am interested in this work, and I speak with a reasonable amount of experience because in recent years I have inspected the various complexes in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth and the other major cities of mainland Australia. I agree with the point made by the Treasurer that perhaps the complex in Queensland will have unique features. Certainly no effort is being made to build another opera house in Queensland, and that is a very wise decision. The Sydney Opera House building has already been classed as the eighth wonder of the world, and I am sure that there is no room for another such building in Australia. Certainly there is no room for a building of that type here.

Mr. Bird: The Sydney Opera House does not work inside.

Mr. CASEY: I will not comment on the interjection by the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, but the Sydney Opera House is a magnificent building, one of which we as Australians may be proud. As a Queensland, I certainly would not like to have to pay for it.

I should like to make one further point about the proposed cultural centre. The Treasurer mentioned that there was to be an opera and ballet theatre to seat 1,800, a concert hall to seat 2,000 and a studio theatre to seat 400 people. He also mentioned an auditorium section, and I should like to study the Bill or perhaps see a plan of the area to find out a little bit more about that. Here in Queensland, particularly on the location of the proposed complex, there is an excellent opportunity to incorporate an area in which outdoor concerts and performances can be held. With its beautiful sunny weather and equable climate even during the winter months, Queensland lends itself more to outdoor performances than do some of the other States. I do not think any honourable member would contend that the band shell in the Botanic Gardens provides an excellent outlet for such activities. In Melbourne the Myer Music Bowl makes better provision, but it is suitable only for certain types of

performances. The site in South Brisbane lends itself to outside performances, and I hope that they can be incorporated in the plans for the auditorium.

I refer back to my point that what is proposed should be a State complex and not just a Brisbane complex. When the trust hands over to certain theatre groups or performing arts or visual arts groups various sections of the complex, I hope it will always keep in mind that adequate opportunity must be provided for theatre workshops and other types of workshops at various times of the year, so that people from country areas can come down here to learn from experienced performers and artists. In that way it will become more of a State complex than merely a Brisbane complex.

The Minister did not mention very much about the activities of the trust or moneys of the trust being spent in other areas of the State, but he did say that one of the objects of the trust was the pursuit of cultural activities in the State. I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Treasurer in his Financial Statement stated that from the fund being set up with Golden Casket moneys a subsidy or 33½ per cent would be made available to local authorities in various areas for capital works to provide the type of cultural activity being undertaken in Brisbane. In the light of what is now happening in local authority areas and the costs to local authorities, 33½ per cent is not enough.

I think the Treasurer should consider providing additional finance through the trust as soon as he sees how the trust is going with finance. I think a much higher percentage has to be provided in country areas. I have already spoken to several local authorities about this matter. Every one is keen to participate in such a scheme, but they are all looking at the costs that will have to be met. After all, 33½ per cent is lower than the 40 per cent subsidy made available to local authorities for sewerage works. I am not saying that cultural projects should be undertaken in preference to sewerage works, but when a local authority is looking at its over-all planning it must keep in mind—

Mr. Doumany: What has that got to do with it?

Mr. CASEY: It has a lot to do with it. If the honourable member lived in a country area, he would realise that. In Kurilpa he will be sitting right alongside this major complex that the people of the whole of Queensland are going to provide.

The State Library is to be incorporated in the complex. Libraries in country areas would have a slightly different set-up. Certainly they can get subsidies through the Queensland Library Board, as do the libraries in the Brisbane City Council area, and the

State Library. For a start I should like to see libraries incorporated in the scheme for country areas so that again we would have an offshoot of the State Library on the same basis as the museum in some of the major provincial centres.

When the complex is built I hope that the John Oxley Library stays in its present location. The existing State Library is the only building that presently features the John Oxley Library. Because matters of historical interest are not the sole prerogative of the people of Brisbane, I should like to see provision made in country library set-ups for the display of historical items made available by the John Oxley Library on loan to provincial cities and small country towns. At the present time historical displays are featured from time to time in the John Oxley Library, and it is impossible for many people in country areas to come to Brisbane to visit them.

Finally, I would hope that once the planning and establishment committee has completed its work in 12 months time and the trust is set up, the planning and establishment committee will not be entirely scrubbed. I would hope that the services of this committee will be made available to country and provincial areas to enable them to undertake their own planning and design work.

As I said before, I have been closely connected with this type of work in Mackay, where I was elected chairman of an integral committee formed by all the cultural groups in the Mackay region. Its main function is the co-ordination of their activities so that something can be built to best serve the interests of the people of the area as a whole instead of one local authority area alone. I would like to think that such a body, which plans to work in with an integrated State system such as I outlined previously, will be given access to a State planning committee, one that possesses experience, knowledge and ability. After all, the committee has on it Sir David Muir, Syd Schubert, and Sir Zelman Cowen as well as other members of their calibre. They could act in an advisory capacity to various country groups. So I should like to see the committee retained as a consultative committee for the country areas of Queensland.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (10.33 p.m.): What I am about to say will probably be misconstrued by a lot of people. I venture to suggest, too, that we will hear the voices of intellectual snobbery and cultural snobbery raised loud and long in this place. I come from North Queensland. My family has lived there for almost 100 years. My area gave Queensland an artist named Hugh Sawrey, who is presently probably Australia's leading artist. The tune "Waltzing Matilda" was written if not in my electorate then extremely close to it. Most certainly it was written in North-west Queensland. Probably one of Queensland's leading poets is

Mr. Richard Magoffin. He, too, comes from my area. Most of what is known as the Queensland vernacular in architecture originated in my area.

Mr. Lamont: You'll be telling us next that we should build the centre in Camooweal.

Mr. KATTER: We hear the voice of intellectual snobbery coming from over on my left.

One of Australia's top recording artists is Slim Dusty, and his major songwriter is Stan Costa, who also lives in my area.

Mr. Chinchin: We are talking about culture.

Mr. KATTER: The honourable member sneers and sniggers at Slim Dusty. It may surprise him to know that some people enjoy his songs. If the honourable member does not enjoy them, I feel sorry for him.

It is regrettable that in the world of the arts and culture there is this terrible snobbery. Anyone who reads the story of Henry Lawson's life would realise that he did not become a famous poet until he left Australia and went overseas. To a lot of people, he sold out. He was determined to go overseas. It just wasn't the cultural in thing in Australia to consider that an Australian could be cultured. We see the same snobbery existing against the northern and western areas now. If a person happens to come from those areas, anything he produces cannot be accepted.

I have seen the same thing with Hugh Sawrey. In fact, I have discussed it with him. He has said again and again that he will not be recognised in Australia until he goes overseas. To me it is painfully obvious. One could use the example of Sidney Nolan, who was never recognised as an artist till he went overseas. He is now numbered among the top five or six artists in the world.

I am talking about cultural snobbery. What is culture to one person is not culture to another. Tonight we are discussing the spending of an enormous sum of money to build a cultural centre for Queensland. A lot of people may object to that in principle. However, if a cultural centre is built, it must inevitably be in Brisbane. Let me state very firmly that I take no umbrage at siting the facility in Brisbane.

In my area—and this has a direct bearing on the Bill—I have some 200 fettlers living along the railway line in huts that no self-respecting pig would set foot in. The temperature inside them is 150°; the fridges don't work; there are no toilet facilities; the sink has a hole in it and the water runs straight out on the floor. Two hundred

human beings in this State have to live in those conditions. I come along and ask the Treasurer—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I ask the honourable member to keep to the provisions of the Bill as outlined.

Mr. KATTER: We are talking about spending a lot of money, and I submit that we must look at the alternatives. I am trying to express what I consider to be one of the alternatives.

The argument is put up that, if we provide other amenities, we will never have a cultural centre, because as one famous man who lived a long time ago said, "The poor will always be with us." While that may be true, we have some Government-created poor in the circumstances of these fettlers, who are forced to live in Government accommodation. We ought to be ashamed of the accommodation that is provided.

Three pensioners in my area live in a galvanised iron house with no interior lining and with a dirt floor. If they could get the money from the Government, they would be able to get decent accommodation. The remedy is simple. If the Government gave them the money to have a home built, the Government could take out a mortgage on the house and, when the pensioners died, the Government could take the house back. If the Government housed those pensioners and gave decent living conditions to the fettlers, I would be quite happy to agree to the spending of a certain amount of money for the building of a cultural centre. That is my first point.

I now come to my second point. People have accused me of being parochial on this Bill. I am here not to represent Brisbane, not to represent Surfers Paradise, but to represent the electorate of Flinders. There are some 20,000 people in my electorate. I must be perfectly honest and say that 95 per cent of those people are hillbillies and yahoos—and I am one of them—and they will never set foot in the cultural centre.

I bring to the minds of honourable members a few facts. The return air fare from anywhere in my electorate to Brisbane is \$300. I must be perfectly honest and say that that includes everything. On the other hand, people in the south-eastern corner will be able to enjoy a centre of this type. Good luck to them. I do not decry it. I am happy to see that at least some people in Queensland have decent facilities.

Half the population in my electorate lives in Charters Towers. There is no hall in Charters Towers. We cannot have a concert. We cannot have a show. We can have absolutely nothing because there is no hall in the town.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I wish the honourable member would keep to the provisions of the Bill. I have spoken to him once already.

Mr. KATTER: Mr. Kaus, what I am saying is that we are to build a cultural centre in Brisbane, but at present in Charters Towers there is not even a dog-house in which to hold a show, yet 12,000 people live there.

A Government Member: You are making us feel embarrassed.

Mr. KATTER: I feel that is what I am doing.

The area is mainly a railway area and I have outlined the conditions under which railwaymen live. It is also a beef area and I am afraid it is very hard to sell this idea of the cultural centre to the beef people of Queensland who are abysmally poverty stricken at the moment.

One reason I wanted to speak tonight was to register that I am opposed to this measure in the particular circumstances at this time. History will judge us. The Sydney Opera House, which is a lovely institution and beautiful to behold, is famous throughout the world. The New South Wales Government that built it was thrown out of office because what was originally mooted as a \$6,000,000 project—I can be corrected if I am wrong—ended up as a \$200,000,000 project. The people of New South Wales thought that that was excessively extravagant. So I say to proceed, but to proceed conscious of the fact that whilst a similar step was applauded in South Australia, another similar act resulted in the annihilation of the Liberal-Country Party Government in New South Wales.

When making decisions of this magnitude we must look back into history and consider all the magnificent edifices—opera houses, pyramids and everything else. Something like 10,000 slaves were used to build a pyramid. Great wealth and good conditions were provided for some people and others had to pay the bill. I conclude on that note and register my opposition to the Bill.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (10.42 p.m.): The depth of the civilisation and culture of a nation can only really be determined by its appreciation of the values of history and beauty and the creative expression of these as represented by the arts and the respect for tradition and artistic creations of the past. Many people will say, as will some honourable members, that things such as cultural centres and art galleries—places that are built for the expression and showing of artistic creations—are a waste of money. People could have said similar things in the past. No doubt in the 1860s similar things were said when this Parliament House was under construction. If the critics had prevailed, we would not today have the architectural beauty of this building and if that same thematic parochialism had existed

in times past we would not in Brisbane have the City Hall, the National Bank, the Customs House and the Treasury Building, which have international fame because of their architectural achievement.

As well, I point to the fact that there is a reason behind art. There is a purpose in art. It is not just because someone sits down and feels like scribbling out something or doodling on a page that we have artistic expression. In all its forms it is the expression of the innate intelligence of man. Whether we look at the pyramids of Egypt or, more importantly and significantly, the Gothic architecture of the 12th and following centuries we can only come to an appreciation and stand in awe and wonderment that a people of that culture and of those civilisations were able to find such artistic expression in their architecture.

There is a relevant point to make about it. Let me take as an example the Gothic spires of the 12th and later centuries and pose the questions: What were they an expression of? Why did they come about? It can only be concluded that the art, the architecture, the paintings and the literature of an era are indeed the expression of the mentality of man at that time.

If people today wish to assume a pseudo materialism and a point of view that to build a cultural centre is a waste of money because there are people living somewhere in tin shacks, they are missing the point. Those people should not be in tin shacks anyway, and, because they are, that is no reason to say that we cannot have an expression of the creative civilisation of man in the 20th Century. Such an approach would build for us in Queensland an empty base for the development of our culture.

The previous speaker does not realise that in his own statements there was an inherent irony. He said that artists in Queensland and Australia have to go overseas for recognition. And why? Because in Australia there has been insufficient recognition of the artistic beauties and creations of the past in European civilisations. It is only by the introduction of these artistic achievements, an understanding of these things and the development of this basis of Australian civilisation, which is indeed a civilisation borrowed from Europe, that it is possible for there to be the fertilised ground for culture and artistic expression to develop. So these things are most important.

Art in all its forms and architecture are the expressions of the society that created them. If I may continue my reference to the Gothic spires of reformation and renaissance times, I wish to point out what it was that was expressed in that development. At that time in history Christianity, coming out of the Dark Ages, had reached a great zenith and the cathedral that was developed, with its spires, was an expression of the intellect and spirituality of a man who was becoming cultivated and more civilised. The spirituality

that was expressed in that architecture was of a vertical nature because it was a relationship, as they saw it, between man and God. The expression of that relationship was borne out in architecture.

As the renaissance made its progress, architecture found itself on a more humane base as the principle of humanism came into the philosophy of man, and the spirituality that developed was of a horizontal nature from man to man and then from man to man to God. This change in the intellectual and spiritual development of man finds its expression in the art and architecture of the times, and indeed similarly into the 18th, 19th and 20th Century two things came out in architecture. One is the appreciation of the beauty that existed in that architecture and the desire to copy it because of its inherent beauty. The other is that as man develops in his appreciation of his position in the world, his expression in artistic forms finds itself in his art, architecture, paintings, sculpture, ballet, music—in every possible artistic and creative expression.

It is indeed important then for us to appreciate the importance of the establishment of a cultural centre. It brings together all those areas and establishes a base for development from which the future of our culture and intellectual development can find its fertilised growth. This indeed is a momentous step in Queensland. It is a step forward for progress, for man's intellect and for the social development of humanity. It is unfortunate that in Queensland and Australia, and in fact in many other countries, there has been a materialistic cultural bereftness and a feeling that has created a starved and uninformed ignorance.

Art in its expression finds many areas. People perhaps forget the many areas in which art expresses itself. In literature it includes poetry, drama, prose and the cinema. Many handicrafts in which man once had great capacity have now for many centuries been lost. If a building such as this Parliament House were desired to be built today it could probably not be built because the talents, the capacities and the abilities in those areas of handicraft have been lost and all man can do is marvel at this building because of its existence and because he no longer possesses the capacity to create something similar. This building was a creation of the past, and without it there would be something less of us, there would be something less of our history and there would be something less of man.

Why is there a value in this cultural centre, even at the expense of certain parochial necessities, as some people might say? First of all, it is indeed an expression of a social pride. It does establish a cultural base and it is the appreciation of the values of man. Who does it serve? We already have our racetracks, we already have large sporting areas and we do have

some areas where amateur drama and theatrical groups can express themselves. But it is indeed pleasing to see a recognition of the intellectual and artistic talents of man finding its expression in the area of a cultural centre. I applaud the formation of the trust and the impetus that this Bill will provide towards the development of a cultural centre in Queensland because it will establish for Queensland a basis for the recording of its history and the possibility for us to receive from overseas many art collections and many visiting artists who presently find themselves unable to be accommodated in the theatres and concert halls we have here, and it is from that base we will be able to see a true expression of Australian culture, a true expression of Australia's artistry and a true expression of the creativity of Queenslanders.

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (10.53 p.m.): I am fully in accord with the introduction of this Bill, which provides for the establishment and incorporation of a body to be known as the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust. At the outset I would like to express my pleasure at the appointment of Sir David Muir as the foundation chairman of this trust, not just because he is Sir David Muir but because he has the talent and ability to be a good chairman and his experience over the years not only in this country but overseas will surely fit him to carry out the task that the Government has allotted him. I have no doubt he will make a success of it.

I was also very pleased to know that the members of the trust will not be limited in number and that the trust will be able to draw members from all sections of the community, which I hope it will do. It will be able to draw on available talent in the community embracing all forms of cultural activity. I am afraid that in that past not only in this State but in other States limitations have been placed on the membership of such associations. If strict limitations are placed on membership, one does not always get the best. The Treasurer did point out that there would be no restriction on the number of members of the trust, and I am very happy about that.

All sections of the cultural world must be considered for membership of the trust if we are going to have a successful cultural centre. It is to be situated on one of the most beautiful parts of the Brisbane River, and as the years go by and the river-bank is improved, as it has been over the past few years with old buildings being removed, the centre will play a very important part not only in the cultural scene of Brisbane but also in beautification of the river-bank, something that has been deserving of recognition for many years.

The Treasurer mentioned that the art gallery is to be included in the cultural complex, and also that the building will contain

a performing arts centre. That is very necessary; it is all part of the cultural world. But I sincerely hope that the musical interests of the city and the State will not be overlooked; in the past there has been a tendency to overlook them when organisations of this type are set up.

Of course, the Queensland Conservatorium of Music has done marvellous work in the short time it has been in existence not far from this building. The training now being received there by young musicians is something of which we as Queenslanders can be very proud, and it is certainly playing its part. The director, Mr. Basil Jones, is to be commended for the tremendous amount of work he has done in a little over 12 months to bring the conservatorium to such a high standard. I go to the conservatorium frequently and, although the concerts and recitals, some of which are held on Sunday, are free, I do not see very many of my colleagues in this Chamber in the audience giving encouragement to the students who are the future musicians of this State. I know that the Treasurer is a very busy man, but if he takes the opportunity to visit the conservatorium he will certainly be proud that it is working so well.

I hope that when the cultural centre at South Brisbane is completed, a very careful watch will be kept to ensure that it caters for all sections of the community. The Treasurer did mention that aged and infirm people will be considered. I am afraid that they were overlooked to a certain extent in the design of the conservatorium. Some of the problems have been overcome and certain work is now being carried out to make things more comfortable for aged and infirm people. Unfortunately, Mr. Kaus, there are many infirm people in the community today—paraplegics and so on, as a result of car accidents and other tragedies—and people in wheelchairs must be catered for so they can have easy entry to and egress from centres such as the one that will be set up at South Brisbane.

I hope that the cultural complex will also contain facilities—and I think that the honourable member for Merthyr mentioned this point—for the band world and the orchestral world. The A.B.C. has done wonderful work in the orchestral field, which is fairly well catered for at the moment. Over the years it has been the mainstay in Queensland and other Australian States in maintaining a high standard of orchestral music, and it is to be commended for its efforts. If it had not been for the efforts of the A.B.C., the people of this State would have been deprived of the opportunity of hearing very good music and high-class playing from a symphony orchestra. It has been responsible for bringing very great artists to this country. Recently a well-known conductor opened the series of A.B.C. concerts,

and I noted his remarks in the Press and I think they are worthy of being put on record.

Queensland and Australian artists now rank among the best in the world. I think that the honourable member who preceded me in the debate made passing reference to Australian artists going overseas to gain recognition. I am pleased to say that that does not happen so frequently today as it did many years ago. Many Australian artists have gained recognition before going overseas, and they can do that very easily now because there are conservatoriums of music in various Australian States. It is not as bad as it was many years ago when a young artist had to go to London, Germany or the United States to gain a name for himself. I should like to refer to what Mr. Cavdarski said in Brisbane recently. He is the opening conductor in the current series of A.B.C. concerts. He said that people all over Europe had no idea of Australia's culture. That is right, too. When people come out here they are surprised at the performance of some of our artists and the vocal talent. He continued—

"They are not to blame for this. Nothing from Australia reaches them. They know about your swimmers and your wool. They have still to learn about achievements in Australia in the field of music and the arts."

The completion of the cultural centre will overcome that weakness overseas. The centre will establish us among the other great centres in Australia. People on the other side of the world will get an opportunity to hear the great artists from Queensland. They will know that they came from the arts centre in Brisbane, where they had an opportunity to display their talent and win a name for themselves before going overseas. I feel sure that when that great conductor returns to Brisbane in few years' time—I hope the centre will be completed by then—he will have a different view.

I hope that the complex will make provision for practising. Many of our local artists, choral groups, band groups and amateur orchestras have great difficulty in finding a place to practise. I hope we do not ever get to the stage of being referred to as being highbrow, which is a bad expression. I hope we never gain that reputation by not providing facilities for practising. Fees for the use of the facilities should be at a rate organisations can afford to pay. We know that the S.G.I.O. Theatre is fulfilling its purpose, but the cost of hiring that theatre is very high. Only an established group or company with good financial backing can afford to hire the S.G.I.O. Theatre for a play or a concert. I hope that the arts centre will make provision for all those people who want to practise their art, whatever form it takes, at a very moderate rate.

A large area is required to accommodate the drama groups, light opera companies and choral groups in Brisbane. The area available in South Brisbane is extensive, and if

the building contemplated is commensurate with the area, there should be no difficulty in accommodating those groups.

I look forward to the turning of the first sod and the laying of the foundations. I know that many people in cultural circles in Brisbane are looking forward to the day when they will have their own arts centre. I hope the complex will encourage the development of the Warana Festival. For some time that festival was struggling, but now it seems to have established itself as the festival for Queensland. It is a Queensland presentation, and does not merely embrace Brisbane. I hope that the Warana Festival can be expanded to the extent of the festivals in Adelaide and elsewhere in Australia which each year are colossal presentations to which overseas artists are invited, in addition to the use of local talent. It is always good to have someone come here from overseas as a star attraction and also as a means of introducing new ideas. I am very happy about the introduction of the Bill and sincerely hope that it will not be long before the cultural centre is completed.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (11.5 p.m.): The establishment of this cultural centre is a bold, imaginative and creative move. Obviously all of us support it, even though some of us have some reservations. Certainly it will put Brisbane on the level that has already been achieved in other States and in their capital cities. I do not think there could be any questioning that it will be an enormous asset to us in terms of the development of the various aspects of the performing arts. It will help to develop the talent of our young people. It must be remembered that Queensland has been a reservoir of some very great talent in the various levels of the performing arts. Without doubt the centre will provide even more of this in the future.

This centre will be a major asset to Brisbane as a tourist city. Just as those of us who live here will be interested in what is done at the various levels of the centre, so, too, will tourists be interested in it and attracted to it. In the aesthetic sense—as the honourable member for Sandgate mentioned, the erection of this fine building on the riverbank will undoubtedly enhance the city as a centre for fine buildings.

None of us should delude ourselves into believing that the centre will be self-supporting. No experience anywhere would suggest that it will be. We must accept that something will have to be paid to keep the show going. The Opera House in Sydney was running at something like a \$5,000,000 deficit a year. Unfortunately the figure has climbed considerably beyond that. It is my guess that this centre will require some funding to keep it operating, no matter how well it is operated.

We accept that we must pay something in terms of annual charges from the public purse to keep the centre going, but we must remember that the prices charged the public

for such advantages should not be too high. We have to be quite sure that the cost does not sky-rocket, as with the Opera House in Sydney, and that the centre is not run in such a way as to tend to discourage audiences rather than encourage them.

We must build in people the habit of attending good shows, good concerts and good performances. What I am saying is that it is important that the control and management of the centre does not fall into the hands of those who think that the only good art, be it drama or music or whatever, is something that is grotesque, ugly and squalid. Once upon a time drama of that type used to be described as “kitchen sink” drama. Nowadays it is described as “toilet” or “septic tank” drama. This is precisely what is happening with the Opera House in Sydney. It has put on a large number of shows that simply did not attract audiences, and it continually raised the prices of its tickets until it was literally put out of business. We certainly do not want that to happen to our cultural centre.

I do not suggest for one moment that whatever is done at our cultural centre should be safe, dull and conservative. That drives audiences away also. However, I do not think that experimentation and modernity necessarily require obscenities, profanities and nudity on stage, or electric squawks, howls and screams in music, or pictures that are to most of us nothing more than garishly coloured blobs and globs.

In so much of our art and drama is the ordinary man conned by the so-called expert that we have to be very careful to ensure that the common sense and good taste are the arbiter in this matter.

Finally, we all appreciate the work that has been done to date by the planning committee. Those who constitute it should be recognised properly by being appointed as the first trustees for a 12-month period.

I regret the suggestion made by some members that this is a Brisbane project and as such has little value for the rest of the State. That is not so. Brisbane is the capital of the whole State. What happens here is a mirror of the whole State. Without doubt, this cultural centre will stimulate more shows, exhibitions and performances going out to provincial cities and other centres. I speak in terms of the performing arts, the pictorial arts, museum displays and so on. It is wrong and short-sighted to divide the community on this issue into Brisbane versus the rest and to see the cultural centre as being for Brisbane only.

Members who draw attention to the deficiencies in their own electorates are wrong in suggesting that they are representing those electorates. In plain fact, of course, they are here because they represent those electorates in the Parliament of Queensland, and the business of this Parliament is the whole State. It is proper that we should

think of the cultural centre in those terms. If we do that, we will all make certain that it will be a success when it arrives.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (11.11 p.m.): I read with interest the Treasurer's speech notes. Unfortunately, I was not in the Chamber when he introduced the Bill. I was at another meeting. I note his observation that the casket money will be used to finance the South Brisbane project, but it will also provide cultural facilities in other centres throughout the State. It is very good that this money will be used for the whole of the State.

However, I wonder—and I hope the Treasurer will clarify this—whether or not the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust will be the umbrella under which all the decisions are made on where the money will be spent in the whole of the State or whether the Department of Cultural Activities will have the say in this matter. I think it is very important to have some clarification on that before we proceed very far with the Bill.

The idea of having a cultural centre in Queensland is no doubt a good one. However, I have a saying, which I hope people never get sick of hearing; it is, "You don't give your children lollies when you can't afford meat and potatoes." I think that Malcolm Fraser has a very hard job to get the economy of this nation going again. I do not knock the idea of a cultural centre, but I do plead with the Treasurer and with the Government to hasten slowly—much more slowly than even the programme outlined by the Treasurer—until the economy of the nation is restored.

Mr. Jensen: That'll be a hundred years.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I do not think it will be 100 years under Malcolm Fraser's Government.

The Treasurer or the Cabinet might say that it will only be a few million dollars in the next year or two. By then, hopefully, the economy of the nation will have recovered. However, I think I can claim with some justification that every million this Government spends on cultural activities at this time is money that could be better spent on giving incentives towards encouraging the recovery of the economy of this State and Australia.

I support the Bill introduced by the Treasurer. However, I hope that he will clarify the first point I have raised. Secondly, I hope that the Government will listen to the other plea I have made, which is to see that we give encouragement to economic recovery before providing money for more hand-outs to help people do things that they are capable of doing very well themselves.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (11.15 p.m.): I am one of those mugs or hillbillies who are rather interested in cultural activities and in the fostering of them throughout the State. It is with some hesitation, however, that I rise

to support the Treasurer in the introduction of this measure, because the cultural centre is to be situated in the south-east corner of this vast State.

Mr. Wright: Do you suggest Rockhampton?

Mr. POWELL: A little farther south than Rockhampton.

I acknowledge the need for some centre in Queensland in which to present culture in a fitting manner and I have no doubt that every honourable member in his own true heart acknowledges that. The centre will cater for the performing arts and accommodate the Queensland Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery and the State Library Board. This is very commendable. I am sure that the Queensland Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery are certainly not in a pleasant setting. It is difficult to get to them and to park near them.

I wonder if the trust should be looking at setting up not one centre for the performing arts, but a number of centres on the edge of the city so that the ordinary mugs and hillbillies like me who live in the suburbs or in the country can have a look at what is presented there. I am not so sure that it is a good idea to locate the centre in the heart of Brisbane, which is difficult to get to. To go there one would have to use public transport of some type, which in Brisbane is probably worse than it is in the city from which I come, or drive to it in a car and try to find somewhere to park the wretched thing. I question the advisability of establishing such a centre in the heart of the city. It would serve the people better if we established more than one centre in less grandiose style on the outskirts of the city.

The honourable member for Belmont suggested that the major reason for having one of these centres is that we already have racetracks, football fields and other sporting centres. But the point is that the Government did not build these amenities; they were built either by private enterprise or by committees who got off their tails and did something about them. Thereby lies a little lesson that some of the so-called culture vultures in our society might study rather seriously.

The fact that we must have a large centre to cater for visiting artists is something of an anathema. I cannot see why we require a grand building to attract overseas artists. If they are any good, surely they can perform anywhere. When the playwrights of old wrote their dramas on which our English literature is based, they did not envisage the performances being presented in an architecturally grand and beautiful building. They envisaged them being performed in the round, in a small place or even in the open. The problem with many of our artists today is that, because they do not know how to project their voices and need electronic devices to assist them, they cannot perform in the open, in an open hall or in an ordinary hall.

I agree with the promotion of the Cultural Activities Department and I agree also that we should be fostering the construction of buildings such as this. But I disagree that there should be only one in an area the size of Queensland. I disagree that all of the money should be spent in one particular part of Queensland. I agree with the member who spoke about getting our priorities right. As I look round the electorate of Isis, I see many areas in which Government expenditure is needed. I am told that, because of lack of funds, these things cannot be done and I understand that completely. But in the next breath a Bill is introduced under which over a period a large amount of money will be spent on a cultural centre at South Brisbane. I have to ask myself if the expenditure is warranted and whether I should agree with it.

The honourable member for Toowong said that it is all very well for members to stand up and be parochial, but the business in this place concerns the whole of the State. I agree entirely with that statement, but surely we as representatives of the people should be looking after the interests of those who elected us. They surely are part of the State. I do not think that there can be any argument against standing up here and saying that there should be more cultural activities in our electorates. Surely we should be standing up for the people in our electorates and surely I should be saying that similar centres should be built in Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Howard, Torbanlea, Childers and other centres in my electorate such as Woodgate.

Mr. Goleby: What about Burrum Heads?

Mr. POWELL: By all means, if enough people could be gathered together in a shed to listen to some of the artists that could perhaps be attracted to that glorious little seaside resort.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. POWELL: If the honourable member had been listening, he would know that I have just expounded the theory that large, grand buildings, with all sorts of fancy things built into them, are not needed if the artists are good.

It has been said that Australian artists have to go overseas to gain recognition. The honourable member for Flinders gave an example of a popular Australian artist who did not have to go overseas to gain recognition. Whether one likes Slim Dusty's type of music or not is beside the point; he is surely one of Australia's best-known artists.

I could continue on the theme of the cultural centre being established in Brisbane and the rightness of that decision.

Mr. Tenni: Only 5 per cent of the people will use it, anyway.

Mr. POWELL: It may be true that only 5 per cent of the people of Brisbane will attend the centre. These are all points on

which the Treasurer has to put up arguments to convince us. At the second-reading stage no doubt he will be advancing his arguments for the spending of this money in Brisbane for the benefit of half the population of the State, also bearing in mind that perhaps only 5 per cent of the people of the immediate area will attend the centre.

I am very much in favour of extending cultural activities and making it possible for all people, irrespective of where they live, to experience a wide band of culture. I do not see why people in country towns and remote areas of the State should have their culture confined to the "idiot box" or the radio. These media do not provide a broad enough cultural spectrum. The only time I get a chance to listen to music is when I am travelling between the various towns in my electorate. Generally speaking, the only music that I hear on my car radio is some cacophony of sound that I usually turn off. I lament that commercial radio and even the A.B.C., with its grand ideas, do not broadcast light classical music that is worth while and easy to listen to because of its tune and harmony. I think that both commercial radio and the A.B.C. are doing a great disservice to country people, especially in the evenings, by playing the type of music that they select.

I am very much in favour of the extension of cultural activities. Perhaps this trust will be the answer—I am yet to be convinced—to making people more aware of other cultures and giving us the opportunity to taste what goes on in other parts of the world. I just hope that the activities of the trust and the edifice that is to be established on the banks of the Brisbane River, which I hope, is above flood level—

Mr. Moore: It isn't.

Mr. POWELL: It isn't? That will be entertaining in flood time! I just hope that when the edifice is built the activities that go on in it will help promote cultural activities throughout this State. To my mind the section of the Education Department which currently looks after cultural activities does an excellent job.

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (11.26 p.m.): I feel it would be remiss of me if I did not rise to express the opinions of the people of my electorate about the building of this complex. Like the honourable member for Flinders, I sound a note of warning from the people of the Mt. Isa electorate because we are not altogether in accord with the opinions that seem to be being put forward here tonight. As has been mentioned, there are certain virtues in building a cultural centre. I must agree that the concept of the cultural centre is exciting and that such a centre is necessary.

Contrary to what other honourable members have said, I believe that the cultural centre should be built in the Brisbane area

because Brisbane is the capital of Queensland. But what I cannot understand is why the Brisbane City Council is not paying a proportion of the cost of building this cultural centre. When local authorities build civic centres the ratepayers have to accept all of the cost apart from what the local authorities receive by way of Government subsidy. If we take the civic centre which was recently completed in Mt. Isa at a cost of approximately \$3,000,000—we received \$500,000 subsidy from the State Government but the ratepayers are still left with the burden of paying off some \$2,500,000 over 40 years. We object to the practice of things being given to Brisbane while the local authorities outside Brisbane have to accept the responsibility of governing their own areas and paying for such centres. I feel that with the increasing burden that is being placed on them local authorities are coming to boiling point. At the moment in Mt. Isa we have a problem with the Julius Dam in that we are having difficulty raising \$7,000,000, which is the ratepayers' proportion of the \$30,000,000 cost of the dam. They cannot find the money for that dam, and it is difficult for me to go back and explain to the people of Mt. Isa that we are prepared to build a \$200,000,000 civic centre in Brisbane to which the ratepayers of the area contribute nothing yet the ratepayers of Mt. Isa have to find \$7,000,000 for a dam. If the Government said that the ratepayers of this area had to contribute some proportion of the cost of the centre, this might make it acceptable.

As I said, I do not disagree with the concept, but I do disagree with the cost, especially when we consider the problems facing the city of Mt. Isa. It is true that the Treasurer did say he is prepared to pay 50 per cent of the cost of similar buildings in local authority areas, but the Government paid only 16½ per cent of the cost of the Mt. Isa civic centre. I did suggest to the Treasurer at a joint party meeting that it might be a good idea if this provision were made retrospective so that Mt. Isa could also receive a subsidy of 50 per cent towards the cost of its civic centre. This would go a long way towards alleviating this problem in country areas. I must agree with the honourable member for Flinders that we do have problems with the railways and in the housing of fettlers along the line. Honourable members would not live under the same conditions; that is the truth. They just would not—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I must remind the honourable member that this Bill does not deal with housing; it deals with a cultural centre.

Mr. BERTONI: Yes, I agree with that, but—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will come back to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. BERTONI: This is related to expenditure, Mr. Kaus, and it is difficult to explain to the people of the Mt. Isa electorate that they will not receive extra financial assistance for dams when this cultural centre is to cost \$200,000,000.

I wish to record my objection to the Bill, and I certainly hope that when I approach the Treasurer for certain items in my area, he will be kind-hearted and show an understanding of the problems that the people there face.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (11.31 p.m.): I support the proposed Bill, and I should like to think that all honourable members would be big enough to look at this proposal on a broad basis and not be too parochial. A nation does not become great simply because of its economic strength or its gross national product. If it is to be great, it must be great in its traditions, its arts and all the other things that go with them.

In common with many other members representing country electorates, I should like to see many things done in my electorate; but I hope that members will not sit back and knock everything that is done in the name of culture. Unfortunately, we have gone through a period in which we have seen a good deal of money wasted on a few items and I for one did not support everything that was done. However, I still believe that we cannot afford to be too parochial on issues such as this. We must take the broader view and make certain that we are at least seen to be supporting the arts and all the matters that come within the portfolio of the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, because I believe that in many instances they are as important as a number of other matters on which a great deal of money is spent. Many country members would not knock the money given for sport, and I remind them that they have had money spent on the provision of facilities in their areas. I will not go into personalities, but I hope that members will look objectively at this proposal and give it the support that it deserves.

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (11.33 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill and defend the development of this cultural centre in South Brisbane. I have deliberately delayed my speech till towards the end of the debate because the centre is to be built in South Brisbane.

We have heard many speeches tonight about how certain members are looking after the needs of their own electorate. It is very pleasing to see members keeping their nose to the grindstone. Unfortunately, they do not appear to have heard the old saying that keeping one's nose to the grindstone can make one short-sighted.

Last week, when we were discussing the proposed Bill amongst ourselves, the honourable member for Warrego—a country member—spoke of a visit he made to Canberra and made a very telling comment. He said, "When you go to Canberra and you look around and see the Federal Parliament, the National Library and other buildings and Lake Burley Griffin, you cannot help having a sense of national pride." It is precisely that feeling that I believe we ought to have about Queensland, and that is the aura that surrounds the concept of building a cultural centre in the capital.

Other cities in Australia have shown that they are coming of age in a cultural sense—Adelaide, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne—yet here are we, the third major city in the country, as far as I am concerned, without a proper museum (the present one is falling apart), without an art gallery to house some of the very fine art treasures that we possess, without an adequate concert hall and without an adequately developed State library. To bring all these together in one place requires an entirely new complex. I believe it is time we came of age and had such a complex.

There has been a lot of talk tonight about priorities. The classic symbol has been taken as the fettlers' shacks in Flinders. It is not a question of priorities, as my colleague from Belmont pointed out. Those fettlers' shacks should not be there, just as there are many other things in our society which shouldn't happen, and it will cost a lot of money to eradicate or improve them. But because these things are true, that does not mean that we should therefore not spend anything on major projects in any part of the State.

The honourable member for Isis said that he was opposed to the building being erected in the south-east corner of Queensland. There is nothing mystical or magical about the south-east corner of Queensland, although members from the Far North may think so. It just so happens that the south-east corner of Queensland is where the capital city lies on the map. That is why the complex is being built in the south-east corner of Queensland. Where else but in the capital city would such a complex be built? It is nonsense to suggest that it should be built anywhere else. Listening to the honourable member for Isis I kept getting the feeling that he was not so much against a cultural centre for Brisbane but apparently wanted them everywhere.

It would seem to me that too many people have taken the attitude that it is a case of Brisbane or the bush. It is not Brisbane or the bush. We do not see metropolitan members speaking against every rural subsidy that comes into the Chamber by way of the Budget or departmental Estimates. We do not attack those things even though some of them are quite socialistic. All we ask is that country members take cognisance that certain things are necessary in a growing

metropolis. I will draw the attention of the Committee to an answer I received from the Treasurer this morning when he pointed out that from 1971-72 to 1975-76 receipts to the Stock Fund to finance veterinary service, etc., had amounted to \$26,100,000 over that period of five years. Do we come into the Chamber and say, "That is being spent on the bush. It does not help the city man who pays his taxes."? Of course we don't.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I ask the honourable member to please come back to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. LAMONT: It is quite clear that a cultural centre is for the good of all Queensland. The capital city is 60 miles away from Australia's major tourist centre. Brisbane is the capital city of the State that has the Great Barrier Reef islands off its coast. Tourists come to Brisbane but they "pass through" Brisbane. The cultural centre will be a tourist attraction for Brisbane itself. There will be a museum, art gallery, concert hall and library, all in one complex. It will also attract performances by ethnic groups residing in Queensland and encourage the development and appreciation of the cultures of other nations that have added to the culture of Australia in an inimitable way, particularly in recent years.

I believe that South Brisbane is a very well-chosen place for the cultural centre. The south-east corner where the capital is situated is the place for it. Let us have an end to nonsense about these priorities in spending. I entirely support the Bill.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (11.39 p.m.): I have listened to the debate tonight, and I think we now have two arguments developing. One argument would certainly support the view of the Treasurer that we need to hasten in this matter because of the need for this facility, but more so because costs are ever increasing. If we look at the over-all complex we realise that it is a multi-purpose complex, but that does not say that it is good. I am starting to wonder whether the main emphasis here is only for theatre-minded people. It seems to be the thing today to be theatre-minded. In Brisbane alone we have the S.G.I.O. Theatre, the Mayne Hall at the University, the City Hall where concerts are held, and the Festival Hall; yet we are going to build in South Brisbane a performing arts centre with a major concert hall to seat 2,000 people, an opera and ballet theatre—or as the honourable member for Windsor says, a "ballot" theatre—to seat 1,800 people, and a studio theatre to seat 300 people.

Mr. Powell: Do you think those other places are not prestigious enough for some of the arts?

Mr. WRIGHT: I am wondering whether it is going to be duplication again.

Surely Brisbane's first and foremost need at the moment is a new museum. The present museum building is beyond repair and the facilities there are stretched to the limit. It is cramped and exhibits are stacked away in boxes all over the place and cannot be put on display. Its area is 5 100 sq m, and the area of the new museum, which is supposed to meet the requirements of this city for many years to come, will be 13 889 sq m. How will the area set aside for the new museum meet the need?

At present the Queensland Art Gallery is housed in the M.I.M. Building and covers an area of approximately 1 600 sq m. Admittedly the proposed area will be approximately eight times that, but there seems to be an imbalance when it is compared with the area set aside for library and museum facilities and with the performing arts centre.

Like some previous speakers, I am not sure that it is worth while putting everything into one big complex. It is centralisation at its worst, and I don't see the advantages in it. In fact, I can foresee a number of problems arising. For example, parking problems will arise. It is possible that up to 4,000 cars will be at the complex at any one time. Will this overcome some of the parking problems that arise in Brisbane? Imagine what will happen when 4,000 cars are parked on the site at any time.

There will be some conflict here in that whilst individual committees will care for their own thing, the over-all trust will have to cater for the whole of the complex. I should think that the emphasis will be on theatre. If that is where the force will be, if that is where the numbers will be, and if that is where the pressure will come from, the needs of the museum and the library will go by the board and be pushed back as far as they possibly can to make room for the needs of the theatre. I am not sure that the State can afford this project at this time. We should start costing out the provision of a separate museum and at least a separate library.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: In 1957 the Sydney Opera House was costed out at \$3,500,000, but by the time it was opened in 1973 the cost was something like \$100,000,000. The Minister has told us that the cost of our complex could be \$80,000,000 to \$90,000,000. I remember reading an article in which it was claimed that the cost could be as high as \$200,000,000. We must be very careful about what we are doing here, because I believe that this money could be spent in better ways.

I should like the Minister to tell us the cost entailed if a separate library and a separate museum were built. It is possible that we will finish up with a huge monstrosity—one that will not cater for the needs of the city or, moreover, for the needs of Queensland.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Mr. Kaus,—

Mr. FRAWLEY: Mr. Kaus,—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): The Treasurer in reply.

Mr. Frawley: This is the second time in a row!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair will decide who is given the call. I have called the Treasurer in reply.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.44 p.m.), in reply: I am disappointed that the honourable member for Murrumbidgee did not have an opportunity to speak, but I assure him that he will be given an opportunity to do so at the second-reading stage. I shall certainly see that he is given one of the first opportunities to speak at that stage.

I am somewhat surprised at the turn of events in this debate. I believe that there is a responsibility on the Government to create in this the capital city of Queensland facilities that are comparable to those that can be seen in any other capital city in Australia.

I was disappointed at the attitude taken by two members of the Opposition who spoke. I cannot reconcile the attitude taken by the honourable member for Nudgee, who was the first speaker. He tried to leave an impression in the minds of the people of Brisbane that some type of monstrosity was going to be built, that the costs would be comparable with those of the Sydney Opera House, and that the centre would not serve what might be described as a really useful purpose in our community.

I challenge him on some of his remarks. He said that I had indicated that the centre could cost \$80,000,000 or \$90,000,000. What I have said and what has been laid down for the committee controlling the project is that the figure of \$45,000,000 would be based on 1974 costs. I have indicated that that is \$45,000,000 plus escalation that has occurred and no doubt will continue to occur until the complex is completed. There has been a clear, concise statement on that.

The honourable member for Nudgee mentioned that Mr. Alan Underwood had said it would cost \$200,000,000. I read Mr. Underwood's article. The figure that has been quoted is \$100,000,000. It is true that the project allows for additional facilities. What we have said is that this is the nature of the programme that we are approving, and that is the basis on which the project will proceed.

The honourable member for Rockhampton, the other speaker from the Opposition side to whom I have referred, painted a picture, as it were, of this not being in the best interests of the State. He said that other facilities are available. That is true; but it is equally true that there is a need for this type of concept. We need a new museum, I agree; we need a new art gallery, I agree;

and we need a new complex that will be suitable for the performance of the arts generally.

The site that has been chosen is, I believe, one of the best that could be obtained in this city. One honourable member said that the area is subject to flooding. Let me correct that immediately. The only part of the complex that is below flood level is the car park. The buildings have been so designed that all the space utilised for storage, display and everything else is above flood level. The location is, as I said, second to none.

I would have thought that the Opposition would have supported this fully. However, we have had an expression of opinion from them, and we must accept that as their criticism on what this State is endeavouring to do.

I want to refer to a point raised by two other speakers. The honourable member for Merthyr referred to other bodies. This was also raised by the honourable member for Sandgate who took an approach that was slightly different to that taken by his colleagues with the same line of political thinking. All organisations engaged in the performing arts which are capable of using the facility of the performing arts centre will be welcome to it. That is one of the things we have laid down. It is not intended that the letting of the facilities should be restricted.

The honourable member for Toowong asked whether it could be self-supporting. Every endeavour will be made by the trustees to make the centre pay its way as much as possible. I am not foolish enough to believe that there will not be times when this State will have to make some contribution. If the facilities are provided for all types of performances, we can justify making a contribution if one has to be made.

The honourable member for Mackay raised one or two issues. I say to him now that under the Bill the functions of the trust, amongst other things, will be to encourage and facilitate activities in artistic, scientific, cultural and performing arts throughout the State.

One other honourable member from the North was critical of this project. I say to him that it is because we have been able to have things established in the city—such as the State Opera Company, the State Ballet Company and the Queensland Theatre Company—that the country people have been able to enjoy and appreciate performances and activities which they would not have seen but for the establishment of those companies in this city.

Reference was made by the honourable member for Mackay to the 33½ per cent subsidy. This was also raised by another honourable member. Where there is erected a project associated with a particular company in an area, a State subsidy of 50 per cent is payable, but where the matter comes within the activities of a local authority,

I look at a figure of 33½ per cent. To a degree, this will be governed by the availability of funds and also the demands that are made upon that particular fund.

Mr. Casey: Would the 50 per cent come from the trust's funds or from the Cultural Activities Department?

Sir GORDON CHALK: One 50 per cent would come from the club's funds and 50 per cent would come from this fund.

Reference was made to the possibility of the trust taking over control of the funds. I have not said that. Nowhere has it been agreed that we would take from the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities the control of the funds at his disposal.

In broad principle, what we are trying to do is establish something in this city which not only will benefit the people of Queensland but will place Queensland in a position comparable to that in the other capital cities. The proposal is one which already has received the approbation of many, many people.

I know that originally the aim was to establish the centre over a period of five years. I am not unmindful of the fact that costs will escalate, and for that reason I have endeavoured to space out the project so that it will not be a constant drain on funds. The programme has been framed in such a way that the centre will be finished in a reasonable period of time and at the same time there will not be a severe drain on funds for other purposes.

I believe that as time goes by not only members of this Parliament but Queenslanders in general will appreciate the action that is being taken now, and that ultimately this cultural complex will prove a great asset to this city and a great benefit to the State as a whole.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

[Wednesday, 7 April 1976]

SOCCER FOOTBALL POOLS BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (12 midnight): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to provide for the promotion, conduct and operation of soccer football pools.”

The object of the Bill is to make provision for the issue of a conditional licence to a promoter for the conduct and operation of

soccer football pools in Queensland. It states how that licence may be revoked or altered. Allowance is made in the Bill for the appointment of approved representatives or agents and its affords them protection against claims. It provides for the gazettal of the rules and the method of changing those rules.

The Bill empowers the appointment of inspectors and defines their authority. It stipulates that the Auditor-General may inspect, examine and audit the accounts of the promoter or licensee when so requested. It applies no less than 37 per cent of subscriptions or entry fees towards a prize fund and provides for the payment of 30 per cent of such subscriptions to the Government. It establishes a Sports and Youth Fund into which two-thirds of the duty on pools shall be placed which shall be used to support and develop sporting and youth facilities and it covers matters relating to the recovery of moneys, offences, the penalties for such offences and the introduction of relevant regulations.

In Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, legislation has been passed granting a licence to Australian Soccer Pools Pty. Ltd., the part Australian-owned subsidiary of Vernons Pools of the United Kingdom, to conduct soccer football pools along similar lines to those applying in England. This company has expressed a definite intention to apply for a licence to extend their national pools operation to this State when this legislation is passed.

The entry, in September 1975, of New South Wales into the national pool system has virtually guaranteed the continuance of the game of soccer pools. Before the entry of that State, the prize fund was heavily subsidised by the promoter under the conditions of his licence. New South Wales entries have been of such magnitude, of the order of \$450,000 per week, that this subsidy has been entirely reimbursed, which means that Queensland, when it joins the established national soccer football pool, can look forward to participation in a stable and well-supported competition.

Broadly, the system of soccer pools is based on the ability of the entrant to correctly forecast the results of weekly specified soccer matches so that his best eight selections provide him with a high points total. Points are awarded according to the final score registered by the teams involved in his selections. Three points are given for a score draw, that is, 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, and so on. Two points are awarded for selections which result in a nil all draw. One-and-a-half points are credited for selecting a team which wins away from home or for a postponed game, while only one point is awarded for the selection of a team which wins on what is regarded as its home ground. Five dividends of prizes are normally paid out and, in the case of the national pool

now operating, these dividends, with certain exceptions, are the same as are paid out on the Vernons U.K. treble chance pool.

The soccer football pool has been and still is a very popular pastime with the public in the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries. It is a relatively low-key game of chance that can be coupled with some form of selection skill. It is considered that the time has now arrived for the operation of soccer pools in Queensland.

The Bill allows for applications to be made for the promotion, conduct and operation of a pools system in this State, and any such applications will be reviewed on their merits. I would be doing a disservice to the Committee if I did not indicate, however, that I find it hard to imagine any other promoter being in a position to offer a deal as attractive as that offered by Australian Soccer Pools Pty. Ltd. Account must be taken also that Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania have already committed themselves to this company for the immediate future. In the course of time the licence granted would come up for re-assessment, and it may be that at that time a different promoter will be chosen.

Management of the pools is a highly mechanised affair. All subscriptions received for the week's pool are microfilmed before the matches are played to prevent the possibility of fraudulent entries being inserted when match results are known. High-speed electronic sensing machines sort out the winning entries, which are then checked in detail against the microfilmed copy before prizes are paid.

The Bill provides that only a licensee may conduct soccer football pools. It excludes persons who enter a pool conducted by the licensee or who are involved in the promotion, operation or conduct of such a soccer pool from being guilty of an offence under other laws. It protects employees by placing the primary responsibility for breaches of the Act on the shoulders of the licensee. As in other gambling legislation, minors are not to participate.

The grant of the licence, its term, the attachment of conditions and the revocation of the licence are detailed. Provision is made for the promoter's activities to be subject to basic rules providing safeguards for the subscribers. He is also required to lodge a bond of \$100,000 in approved form which will cover revocation of licence or his failure to pay duty.

Approved representatives are subject to the approval of the Treasurer. Two principal agents are proposed—the Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland, which can command approximately 328 branches or agents, and the Associated Newsagents Co-operative (Qld.) Ltd., which has about 630 member newsagents. While the bulk of these are also Casket agents, the association will

include, for the pools operation, those Casket agents who wish to become involved but who are not members of the association.

The rules which presently apply in the south would be accepted for a pool operated by Australian Soccer Pools Pty. Ltd. in Queensland. They would be gazetted.

As previously mentioned, provision is made for inspection and, if necessary, an audit by the Auditor-General of the books and accounts associated with the conduct of soccer pools business.

The application of subscriptions are detailed. Not less than 37 per cent is to be set aside for the payment of prizes, while 30 per cent of all subscriptions is payable to the State within seven days of a contest closing but subject to an arrangement being entered into with the appropriate Minister in a participating State to either divide that portion of duty among participating States or to exclude from the Queensland duty calculation those subscriptions which are lodged in other participating States.

The prize fund is represented by the 37 per cent or more of subscriptions that is paid into various bank accounts operated by the promoter.

Mr. Melloy: In Queensland only?

Sir GORDON CHALK: It will be a national pool, and the prize fund portion of the subscription will be held in bank accounts in Queensland and in other participating States.

Regardless of the amount set aside for prizes, the promoter presently operating in southern States is called upon to guarantee to pay to winners prizes based on the dividends paid by Vernons Pools in the United Kingdom converted at a standard exchange rate of two dollars Australian to one pound sterling. Under this arrangement, the fund is sometimes subsidised by the promoter, but he is allowed to recover any such payments should surpluses emerge in later pools.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a Sports and Youth Fund into which two-thirds of the duty will be paid. It is estimated that in the initial year of operation at least \$1,000,000 will be placed to the credit of the fund to support and develop sporting and youth facilities within the State.

The administration of the fund will be in the hands of the Minister for Sport, who will be responsible for submitting proposals for the use of such money for approval by Cabinet. To this end the Minister will be able to give consideration to the views of a committee of five persons drawn from the sporting and youth fraternity, who may make recommendations to him on how they see the best use of the money being made. The establishment of this committee will be an administrative action.

The balance of the State's duty will be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund which presently apportions approximately \$2,400,000 for sport and youth and National Fitness activities. This apportionment will not be withdrawn on the introduction of pools.

In Victoria, two-thirds of the duty from pools is paid into a similar fund. New South Wales pays 50 per cent into such a fund but puts a limit of \$3,000,000 per annum on this transaction. Tasmania pays its duty into Consolidated Revenue.

The legislation, as framed, guarantees the fund a permanent source of income. It is anticipated that the additional money from pools will allow an extension of the subsidy given to clubs towards the net capital cost of new or additional facilities and that the scope of this subsidy will be broadened.

It is also planned that the present support being given to junior coaching at club level be broadened so that State sporting associations may also receive \$ for \$ up to a prescribed maximum, such as would allow the appointment by State sporting associations of qualified coaches in a full-time capacity.

The remaining clauses of the Bill are of a machinery nature relating to the serving of notices, the recovery of debts, the hearing of offences, the general penalties for offences and the making of regulations.

I would like to indicate that the legislation provides a framework within which a private promoter can operate, but the success or otherwise of his operations must inevitably depend upon his efficiency and the support the system receives from the Queensland public.

I have tried to make clear the pools system and the provisions of the Bill which would legalise the promotion of soccer pools in Queensland. I hope I have been successful in that endeavour, and I now commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.13 a.m.): This is a Bill that will have a momentous effect on the community. It represents another venture into the field of gambling and games of chance, although some might refer to the pools as a game of skill.

Mr. Wright: A competition.

Mr. MELLOY: Or as a competition. Without doubt, in England, the pools have had various effects. They have brought tragedy to families and they have brought affluence to families. It is to be hoped in Queensland we will get the better deal. Tremendous sums are sometimes involved—up to \$1,000,000 in some instances. People who were incapable of handling such large sums have destroyed themselves and their families after winning a pool. I hope that sort of thing does not happen here. I doubt whether we will have such huge money as has been won in England. It has been reported that

sums of over \$500,000 have already been won in pools in Victoria and New South Wales. That has happened on rare occasions. So we must be careful in our administration of the pools.

The Treasurer has given a broad outline of the wide ramifications of the Bill, and we will need to study it closely when it is printed. Honourable members should be made aware of many of the aspects of the operation of the pools before they vote on the Bill.

One significant statement made by the Treasurer was that the Auditor-General would be able to audit the books of the soccer pools organisation. This is an extraordinary situation, especially when it is remembered that the Auditor-General does not have the right to audit the books of the T.A.B. I think the Treasurer said that he will be able to audit the books of the private company that conducts the pools.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I said that he could if required. If we are suspicious of something, he will have the right to move in. On the other hand, we will insist on qualified auditors in relation to the auditing of the company's balance sheets and returns that come to us.

Mr. MELLOY: This is certainly not what we do in relation to the T.A.B. It has often been stated in this Chamber that we should receive a report from the Auditor-General on the operations of the T.A.B. in Queensland.

I should like the Treasurer to explain at a later stage what the tie-up is between Queensland and the over-all operation of the pools competition. I would ask him: are the dividends in Queensland based on the Australia-wide figures?

Sir Gordon Chalk: They are based on the English dividends.

Mr. MELLOY: Regardless of the amount invested in Queensland?

Sir Gordon Chalk: That is right.

Mr. MELLOY: That does not seem to be logical to me; but I suppose the company knows what it is doing.

Sir Gordon Chalk: My oath it does!

Mr. MELLOY: If it is able to base its Queensland dividends on the English dividends—

Sir Gordon Chalk: It is an Australian pool, but if you are lucky enough to win it in Queensland, O.K. If you correctly forecast the results so as to win or participate in a prize division, you get the same return as would be paid for that particular division in Britain.

Mr. MELLOY: Does that mean that the funds obtained in Queensland are remitted to England?

Sir Gordon Chalk: No. The funds are in Australia. If money has to be brought out to subsidise the prize fund, Vernons guarantee to provide the extra amount required.

Mr. MELLOY: The stage could be reached where insufficient funds are held in the pool to meet the dividends declared in England.

Sir Gordon Chalk: When it goes broke in England we will start to worry.

Mr. MELLOY: I am referring to funds in Queensland. The Treasurer said they were based on dividends paid in England.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I think you had better get an accountant to explain it to you. I tried to make it as clear as possible that the dividend is the same as the dividend paid in the corresponding U.K. prize divisions. Vernons, or the Australian company, undertakes to pay that. The company ownership is two-thirds English and one-third Australian at present.

Mr. MELLOY: I am sure that we will have a clearer picture of this when we see the Bill and hear the Treasurer's second-reading speech.

It is remarkable to find a measure such as this introduced by this Government. In the past we have seen the introduction of legislation promoting the T.A.B., the Golden Casket and bingo—all from a Government whose leader has, over the past few years, shown a history of being a puritanical person who is not inclined to indulge in any gambling artifices or operations.

I say at this stage that the Opposition supports the Bill. We do so because of the effect it will have on junior sport in Queensland, if we are to accept the word of the Treasurer. That is most important. People will gamble. At present Queenslanders are gambling on the English soccer pools. We believe it is only right that the organisation should operate here to enable the people of Queensland to invest directly in soccer pools in this State.

We agree with the Treasurer's statement that it should not be a revenue earner for the Queensland Treasury. I hope the Treasurer maintains that view and that it will not be used in that way. However, I see that some income will go into consolidated Revenue. The money earned from this new source of gambling introduced by the State Government should be distributed among the various forms of sport, particularly junior sport. From the revenue of a million or more that the Treasurer has promised, we can make Queensland a model—a blueprint—for the rest of Australia in the promotion of junior sport through the administration of the fund. I emphasise the assistance it can give to junior sport in Queensland, because junior sport requires funds more than any other area of sport. The senior clubs have club-houses and various means of

raising funds, and are not in a similar position to that of junior sporting organisations, which have to scramble for funds to see them through every season.

In 1976 there can be no objection to Queensland's introducing soccer pools, which were functioning in Britain before many members were born. The sole matter for our concern must be the disbursement of the money raised. We have a Premier who opposed art unions, opposed chocolate wheels and opposed the Golden Casket. This evening he is conveniently missing from the Chamber. On one occasion he described the Golden Casket as a monster in our midst. He wanted to ban art unions. He spoke of grave sin in people fostering chocolate wheels and listening to radio broadcasts of horse-racing.

I would like to quote some of his statements, because I think they are related to this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not convinced that they are related.

Mr. MELLOY: That may be so. However, this Bill introduces another gambling procedure or organisation into the State. Frequently the Government has eschewed anything of this nature, yet eventually it has come round and introduced forms of gambling. It is only necessary to quote the many statements of the Premier as support for the argument that we advance. In 1950-51 he said—

"... no government can be great or inspire leadership who legislate for or encourage gambling, which helps to destroy the finer traits of human nature. I refer to that monster in our midst, the Golden Casket".

It is no wonder that the Premier is not here tonight to add his contribution to the debate on the introduction of soccer pools. On another occasion—in 1948-49—he said—

"Here we have a Bill to enable a description to be given over the air of certain aspects and angles of racing . . . A description of the position in which a horse is going to start is more or less an encouragement to the public to bet more freely and indulge in a course of conduct that is not conducive to their own interests."

That is our Premier speaking.

Mr. Jensen: Yes, but Chalky has converted him over the years.

Mr. MELLOY: I'll bet he didn't give him a winner!

I could go on quoting instances of the Premier disdaining to introduce anything of the nature of the Bill we are discussing tonight. Let this advocate innocence of gambling come forth and vote with the Government on this Bill and display his attitude to what the Government is doing this evening. I am referring only to the

attitude of the Premier; I am quite sure that 99 per cent of Government members do not agree with him.

What we seek is proper control of the soccer pools and a fair share of the dividends for the advancement of sport in this State. After all, it is a sporting proposition and will be supported by the public on that basis. We want the profits directed to the most worthy forms of sport.

I can only assume from the Treasurer's original statement that football pool coupons will be the property of the T.A.B. and news-agents. Without computerisation, the T.A.B. is inefficient. That has been evidenced by the many letters written to the Press by disgruntled punters who are dissatisfied with T.A.B. dividends. It is inefficient and cannot cope with the needs of its customers. The Opposition believes that agencies should be allocated to selected small suburban businesses so that the task is not given to the already overloaded T.A.B. agencies.

We would like to know from the Treasurer whether more windows will be available in T.A.B. agencies to cope with the demand that will come following the introduction of pools. Or are the racing punters going to have to wait longer than usual to place their bets or collect their winnings? Are they to be frustrated owing to the influx of people who are going to lodge pool coupons in T.A.B. agencies?

What will happen to the computer system? Is it to be updated to handle the soccer coupons? Will the pools be operated through the T.A.B. or the pools organisation, as the Treasurer has suggested? These are the matters the Treasurer can outline at his next opportunity. Long-suffering punters who have been investing through the T.A.B. for so many years should not be deprived of improvements in the system just because the Government has discovered a new source of revenue in soccer pools.

Earlier tonight the Treasurer spoke about the stamp duty payable on Bankcard transactions. Will he introduce stamp duty on soccer pool investment cards? I do not doubt that when the idea comes to him, he will give it every consideration.

At present we have the worst T.A.B. system in Australia for the punters. I can see only more chaos in T.A.B. agencies during the next six months if they are to be loaded with the operation of the soccer pools. Broadcasts in T.A.B. agencies are not permitted, yet those following soccer pools will be allowed the luxury of form guides and they will be able to avail themselves of every facility to help them make their selections. But the poor old punter still will not know which horse won the last race or when he will be able to collect any dividends. He still will not be able to collect his winnings and have a bet with them on the next race.

T.A.B. methods have to be updated. The staff cannot be overloaded with work and facilities for punters cannot be allowed to slip still further. There will be added demands on the workers in T.A.B. agencies. How will they cope with soccer pool entries? This will necessitate additional staff. Or will the Treasurer say that because of lack of finance and the high cost of running T.A.B. agencies, which is the spiel that he hands out to racing clubs, he cannot employ any more? We have to consider the interests of T.A.B. punters and we also have to see that those who subscribe to soccer pools get a fair go in lodging their entries and do not interfere with T.A.B. punters.

The Opposition goes along with the introduction of soccer pools. It is regrettable that we had to wait to see if they operated successfully in the southern States. Now that they have been a success there, they will provide shekels for Consolidated Revenue in this State. The Treasurer smiles every time he thinks of them. Their whole purpose appears to me to be a money-spinner for the Government. Certainly there has been pressure for their introduction by various sporting bodies over the last six months, but I think the Treasurer has his eye on the income that they will produce. I understand that the 37 per cent that will go out in prizes compares favourably with the percentages from other pools. The Government will get 30 per cent of the take and I am sure that that will represent a considerable amount of money. It may make up for the loss of death duties, although I doubt it. I see the Treasurer smiling because—

Sir Gordon Chalk: I'm smiling at you. To be perfectly honest, I've never heard so much twaddle in my life.

Mr. MELLOY: Then the Treasurer has not listened very much to himself. We have listened to twaddle from him for years and years.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I'm still here.

Mr. MELLOY: But only by chance. If the Treasurer had any guts he would be Premier. We had a lot of time for the Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! On that friendly note the honourable member's time has expired.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (12.33 a.m.): I rise to take part in the debate in the knowledge that I risk offending my puritanical peers. I am, however, prepared to stand their judgment. I would possibly also offend my Victorian forebears to some extent in supporting a Bill such as the one now before the Committee.

The time is long past not only in Queensland but in the whole field of human enterprise to stop doing the ostrich act of burying

our heads in the sand and trying to ignore the facts of life. This specific fact of life is that football pools have been so long established and their benefits so well known in other parts of Australia and the world that I have to agree with the honourable member for Nudgee that we might be a little late in introducing this type of legislation.

I appreciate and understand quite well that there are certain moral aspects to all activities connected with gambling or games of chance; but I believe that people these days are broadminded enough to recognise each other's feelings and respect them, and we get along quite well in a spirit of co-operation.

There is no compulsion about this type of thing. A person does not have to indulge in this enterprise in order to survive, but I do believe that many organisations, particularly sporting bodies, are reaching the stage where, because of inflation and other pressures, they certainly do need a boost to their income in order to maintain the facilities that are so necessary in the world of sport, particularly when we realise the potential of our youth in the field of sport. This is something that is never ending and something we all greatly admire. It has always been a source of amazement to me that young people can go on from generation to generation establishing new records. As part of an Olympic team and other teams they become ambassadors for this country and I think that this justifies any measure that can be introduced to increase the income of sporting bodies.

Tied in with this, of course, is human nature. People like to have a bit of a fling. I am thoroughly convinced that up to the present time sport has been prejudiced to some extent in that many illicit gambling enterprises have been carried on under the cover of sport and some of our greatest spectator sports, particularly football, have suffered a stigma from it. I believe that legalising soccer pools in this State will do much to offset this kind of image which has arisen out of the nature of man and his desire not only to participate in and watch sport but to enjoy a little bit of a game of chance in which he can make a few shillings on the side and get some kind of a kick out of it. I do not blame people for that if they are so inclined.

I have found in my electorate that there is a need to encourage sport, particularly with regard to the training of youth, and I am pleased that the Treasurer referred to subsidies for this when introducing this Bill. I believe that the present set-up in this State where we provide a very meagre subsidy for the training of youth needs to be greatly expanded and I think that this is one way in which we can increase the funds available for the training of youth.

Money is constantly required for the provision of new sporting facilities and the improvements which need to be made to

existing facilities. The present method which the Government employs for the improvement of sporting facilities is, I feel, bound up in a rather cumbersome and tightly controlled system which, in many respects, makes it difficult for some sporting bodies to participate fully. They are restricted at the moment by a very limited budget and they also have a limited time in which to apply for assistance. In many cases because of outside pressures they are unable to take full advantage of the finance available under the present arrangements. I think the introduction of a fund financed by soccer pools will allow much more flexibility than is possible under the present provisions.

The development of interest in the general expansion of sporting activities will not only benefit sport but also provide a form of relief from the social strains and increased demands with which people who try to involve themselves fully in all facets of human existence are faced today. I think it will be recognised that legislation such as this is needed and that its benefits will fully offset all the objections that may be raised by certain people. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.41 a.m.): All honourable members were interested in what the Treasurer said; but I am sure that what he did not say will interest them most. What he said tonight has already been said to reporters and published in the Press. However, I am particularly interested in knowing much more about how soccer pools work, which games in Britain will be covered and, perhaps more importantly, which games in Australia will be covered.

Honourable members are aware, of course, that in Brisbane, according to tonight's newspaper, the Soccer Federation is running into certain problems over a game not being played. I have no intention of interfering in the running of the sport, but I point out that it is possible that A grade soccer matches in Queensland will be included in the pool. One club—I believe it is the Lions Club—already has an administrative problem on its hands because it claims it is being told to play a home game on a ground that is not the club's home ground.

I mention that because the Treasurer said in his introduction of the Bill that certain points are to be given for certain games and that there is a variation in the points between a game that is played at home and a game that is not played at home. I take it that fewer points are awarded because the home team is supposed to have certain advantages from crowd participation and so on. If that is the case, and the team is playing not on what is in fact its home ground but on a ground said by an administrative body to be its home ground, that certainly could have an effect on the game and possibly also on the result. In the case in question—again I am going on Press reports—the Lions Club believes that its home ground is at Inala,

whereas it is being asked to play at Perry Park. I mention that because it is significant if the points are to be taken on home and away-from-home games.

It is obvious that the rules used for English pools must apply here, whether we like it or not. The actual rules that will apply were set many years ago, and if we are to participate on a pay-out figure similar to that applied in England, we are duty bound to fall in line. As the Treasurer said, we have come into the system rather late.

The Treasurer has not given the Committee any idea of what the value of the coupon will be, nor has he given any details of when the coupons can be handed in. I think he did suggest that the coupons could be picked up at Casket agents or the T.A.B., and I noted with interest what was said by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the use of the T.A.B.

If the T.A.B. is to continue to function as it does now, with extra work certainly there will be an effect on the smooth running of the T.A.B. and the service given to the public. However, if the premises are to be open for longer hours and more staff is to be employed to give better service to the public, it could be a good combination. Many people say that T.A.B. agencies are not open long enough. Betting on trotting and greyhound racing closes at 6 p.m. in country areas and about 6.50 p.m. in the metropolitan area. If T.A.B. agencies could remain open to provide a better service for those who want to gamble on the trots and the greyhounds, it would be of advantage.

I suggest that the board have another look at covering day-time greyhound meetings. I know that the so-called trial of the Lawnton meeting proved a failure, but if the T.A.B. agencies are going to be open to cater for soccer pools I see no reason why they cannot cater for those who want to gamble on day-time greyhound racing at Lawnton, Beenleigh and Capalaba.

I will be interested to hear how much the agencies for the soccer pools will receive for their services. The Treasurer did not say how much the company was going to get. He said that 37½ per cent would be paid out in prizes and 30 per cent would go to the Government, so apparently 32½ per cent will go to the company. Out of that will have to come the cost of the administration of the agencies. It is obvious that money will be involved whether the pools are handled by the T.A.B., Golden Casket agencies or small shops.

It is obvious that the Treasurer has had quite detailed discussions with the company. He is suggesting that a particular company is virtually to be given a monopoly by being given the first licence. One is not in a position to argue the logic of that decision.

It is interesting to note that every time the Government gets itself into some kind of financial difficulty, and every time it feels

duty bound to take action to assist a community effort, it looks for more income by way of indirect tax, such as an increase in stamp duty, or from gambling. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, the Premier condemns everything associated with gambling but the Treasurer slips in a new gambling activity every time he can. I think this Bill is just one further step towards the introduction into Queensland of one-armed bandits. In about three or four years' time, if the same Premier and Treasurer are here, we will be debating a Bill to justify the introduction of one-armed bandits. Some years ago when there was talk about increasing gambling everyone was saying that that would never occur under this Government. But we have seen how gambling has been increased in various forms. New Golden Caskets were approved; then the T.A.B. was introduced, and then bingo was legalised, followed by approval for pub raffles.

Mr. Row: What about a casino?

Mr. HOUSTON: A casino is only a matter of time. There is no doubt at all that this State will have a casino and one-armed bandits under this Government with its chase for finance. The Treasurer justifies what is being done by saying that two-thirds of the Government's take, or 20 per cent, will go to sporting bodies to help youth, and so on. That is an old cry; it is a sympathetic cry; it is a justification cry. He also said, "We won't interfere with the current amount that we are giving to the sporting bodies." But if we take inflation into account, if it is \$2,400,000 this year, perhaps it should be \$3,500,000 next year. Of course he will not need to make that increase; he will finance it from this new source. The Government is getting something on the side for other expenditure. The additional 10 per cent will come to it as additional expenditure. I do not think there is any doubt as to the real reason behind the Government's action.

As to the pay-out, I was surprised to learn that only 37 per cent of the take will go back to the investors. I have not heard one word of objection to it. Such a percentage is so shockingly low that the Treasurer has a hide to come in here and say, "We will take in all this money and give only 37 per cent back to the investors." I have gone on record in the past as having criticised the T.A.B., but at least it gives 80 per cent back to the investors. The Golden Casket pays out approximately 63 per cent of the money that comes in. It is paid out in prizes ranging from \$500,000 down to \$5.

Mr. Row: There is no spectator benefit from the Golden Casket.

Mr. HOUSTON: I don't think an investor out at Calamathumpa will derive much spectator benefit from a soccer match played in England. He might see the match a week or two later on TV, but probably that won't be the match on which he lodged his entry.

Bingo returns about 75 per cent to the investors, who at least participate in the game. Bingo players derive some pleasure from the game as well as a financial return. As I say, this proposed return of 37 per cent is remarkably low.

It is obvious that the Treasurer is eager to get this money in. I cannot imagine that he is introducing soccer pools simply for the benefit of those who wish to take part in the competition. It is purely and simply a means of obtaining finance, and he justifies it by saying that money will be made available to junior sporting bodies.

Mr. Jones interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Treasurer is a great philanthropist as far as the Government is concerned.

I hope that he takes into account the wonderful job that is done by life-savers. Swimming is a great sport and life-savers provide a most essential service to the community.

Mr. Jensen: All the clubs have nipper clubs, which need support.

Mr. HOUSTON: I whole-heartedly agree. I hope that they will receive some benefit from the operation of the soccer pools.

Many sports have senior divisions that are conducted on either a semi-professional or totally professional basis. I have nothing against Rugby League or other sports that are conducted along those lines. They also cater for their junior players. The life-savers, however, are virtually forced to carry boxes around to collect sufficient money to enable them to provide the service that they have accepted as theirs.

I believe that the public will accept this legislation. There will, of course, be those who claim that no form of gambling is good, but there are also those who like to participate in these games of chance. I suppose a certain amount of skill is involved in assessing the relative merits of certain teams.

Mr. Jensen: What about one-armed bandits? There has been a call for them, but there has been no pressure for this.

Mr. HOUSTON: No. I think the pressure for this has come from the Treasurer himself. He wants the extra money. It is purely a Government decision. One could let one's mind wander a little bit, without being unkind, and suggest that this is the build-up period. This was suggested only when the Premier started to talk about cutting out death duties. This could be the commencement of reaping in some amounts to counteract the loss of death duties.

The Bill lays down that a committee of five will be appointed under the Ministry of Sport to determine where the moneys will be allocated. I hope that committee is

representative of all sports so that those who need most financial help will be the ones to get it.

When we compare the amount to be paid out with the money that is to come in, I hope the Minister explains about any odd amount of money or any unclaimed prizes. Unclaimed dividends and fractions are one of the facets of T.A.B. operations that have always been a matter for concern. Under the T.A.B. set-up, that money goes entirely to the Government. I hope that as far as possible under this legislation the unclaimed prize-money goes back to those who make the investments. After all, they are the ones who should be entitled to the first call on any money. Any money that does not go to them should go to the sporting bodies that we intend helping.

With those remarks, I indicate that, like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am not opposed to the introduction of the Bill. However, I believe that there are many questions to be answered, particularly in relation to the detailed establishment of the operation which the Treasurer surely knows about, because I would imagine that these are the questions that he would ask himself for his own edification. I refer particularly to the cost of coupons, the possibility of payouts, the return to the agencies and the possible opening times of the agencies.

Mr. Jensen: It will be all done by regulation.

Mr. HOUSTON: If it is to be done by regulation, we should know about it here. The Government should not consider telling us about them after the Parliament rises, when complaints start to come in.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (12.58 a.m.): This Bill is an interesting one to me. I have mixed feelings about it. First of all, I am not a gambler—I make that clear—but I do have a little flutter occasionally. I have been a subscriber to the pools for many years, and a very, very interested subscriber.

Mr. Lee: You won't be opposing it?

Mr. MARGINSON: I am not opposing it, no. Certainly not. I am not opposing the Bill at all. I am all for it. One reason I am for it is that it will assist a sport that I played for many years and that is well known in my electorate, where I have three first division clubs competing in the Brisbane competition. I make that quite clear for a start.

Some facets of this proposal appear to be a little different from the organisation in the United Kingdom. I know that the United Kingdom has some very big pools. The Treasurer has mentioned Vernons, which no doubt is the biggest organisation of the lot. However, there is Littlewoods from Liverpool. Tonight the Treasurer has told us that under the system we are adopting,

three points are awarded for a score draw and two points are awarded for a scoreless draw. Naturally the maximum number of points that can be gained is 24.

My experience in the United Kingdom late last year was that the coupon collector expects to have the coupons on the Thursday night. We do not want to be thinking of running into the T.A.B. on Saturday morning. The coupon must be with the head office by Friday night so that the local collector must have the coupon by Thursday night at the latest. The Treasurer has not told us the cost of the coupon. Littlewoods charge 23 new pence for a coupon and a person can buy as many coupons as he likes.

There is some skill in these pools. That is why I have not won one. Winning a big prize of £500,000 calls for some skill and a little luck. The winner has to predict the unexpected interposed with the expected to get into the big money.

To me the whole idea is very good. I did not realise, but I suppose it applies at Vernons, that the contributors receive as prize-money only about 37½ per cent of the amount invested. That is a rather low percentage. But the prizes generally are pretty small unless somebody comes up with unpredicted draws or unpredicted wins.

Another matter we have not heard from the Treasurer is that the pools in England operate on selected games. In the United Kingdom there are about 90 clubs in the four top divisions. That means that 45 games are played each week-end. In the Scottish League, which is also covered by Vernons and Littlewoods, there are another 40 teams which means another 20 matches each week-end. A person is not allowed to choose from all of them; only certain games are selected and the person has to amass 24 points using those games. The pools cannot possibly operate on Queensland top division teams, as we have only 12 of them. Are the pools to operate on New South Wales first division games or Victorian first division games?

Mr. Lee: No.

Mr. MARGINSON: Well, I am asking now.

I like the idea particularly because the sport dear to my heart will be fostered. I believe that this is very good. Above all, I like the idea of a certain amount of money going to youth sport.

I noted that the Treasurer said that the figure would not be changed at the commencement of this new idea. That gave me the impression that it might be changed after the pools have been operating for a while. I would like the Treasurer to put me clear on that point.

I wish that the Treasurer could tell us who are Soccer Pools Association Limited. Are they a subsidiary of the people in England?

Sir Gordon Chalk interjected.

Mr. MARGINSON: Yes. What Australian content have they? Who are the promoters of it? I should like to know that.

I support the move and I think my party will support it. My deputy leader and the honourable member for Bulimba have said that it will and I like the idea immensely.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (1.5 a.m.): I think I learnt more about soccer pools from the honourable member for Wolston than I learnt from the introductory speech of the Treasurer. This is a game of chance that is being introduced to Queensland and we have heard that it requires a fair amount of skill to be successful at it. As I understand it, one needs to have a few flukes before one has a chance of winning a major prize.

There are some questions that I would like answered. What is to be the maximum prize? How much will it cost to enter? Those are things that the average investor, if he can be so called, wants to know. I do not think it matters much in this game of chance which teams we barrack for. It seems to be a matter of luck and the number of flukes one has in putting the numbers down. It seems to be a lot harder to win on the pools than on the treble.

On other occasions we have heard the Treasurer talking about the amount of gambling that is going on in this State and the way in which the gambling cake is being reduced by the number of gambling ventures in the community. How many more slices can be cut from the gambling cake? There is just so much to go round and how much can the ordinary man afford? That is the big question because it is the ordinary fellow who will be the investor and the one who has to fork out on pay day or the following Saturday. He is the one who will hit the kick to underwrite this venture. He has a ticket in the Casket, a little bet on the dogs, another bet on the trots and another one on the gallopers. Then he sends mum to bingo at the week-end. Now he will have a crack at the pools. When he oversteps the mark, who suffers?

Ever since I became interested in politics, I have considered the present Government to be a wowser Government. It has certainly not done too badly for a wowser Government. It has now got round to legalising bingo and soccer pools, and no doubt the next step will be to legalise the one-armed bandits. The battle for the recreation dollar, if it can be so described, is becoming highly competitive. The Government encourages this sort of thing, then denies it and becomes very wowserish about it on the stump. It says quite hypocritically that it has nothing to do with this type of activity and when someone gets flushed down the sink—

Sir Gordon Chalk: How does he do that?

Mr. JONES: By going bust through overstepping the mark. The Treasurer has been

on enough racecourses to know that. When a fellow loses his pay, his wife and kids suffer. Those who operate one-armed bandits have a "contingency" fund—that is an in word at the moment—for this type of welfare situation. It is through the action of this Government, in an inverted sort of way, that these things happen. Some Government members will then go out and call such unfortunate people dole bludgers. I think it has to be realised that these things do happen and that there is no contingency fund here for the benefit of those unfortunates who overstep the mark. I think that is a feature that we should look at, if not now, certainly in the future. The proposed disbursement of the funds sounds quite good. It is proposed that the sports fund will receive two-thirds of the 30 per cent of the money received by the Government. Seen in the proper perspective, that is very commendable provided it is used to promote sport, to provide facilities for sportsmen, to build sports grounds and encourage junior sport in country centres with distribution on an equitable basis for all sports throughout the State.

This measure has merit as an income earner for the Government and it will benefit sport. The promoter, Vernons Pools, will take a share of the profit that will not be exactly chicken feed.

I shall be quite happy to be corrected if I am wrong, but I thought the honourable member for Hinchinbrook implied that the introduction of this measure will overcome some of the evils now existing in sport. If he infers that, because people will now be able to bet on football matches through soccer pools, we will stop side betting on football matches, I do not think he is quite right. I think I would give a sucking pig to every hospital in the northern and southern zone if we could stop a bloke at some of the Foley Shield matches I have attended from betting on whether the next kick will be successful, on who will score the next try, whose team is going to win and how much start one can get before on lays one's money off.

But if the promoters of soccer football pools are granted a conditional licence, and if this measure will help in the provision of sporting fields and facilities in whatever sport our young kids might choose, I will have much pleasure in supporting it. If this is the way round our present dilemma, I am very happy to support the measure before the Committee.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (1.13 a.m.), in reply: The hour is late, or perhaps I should say it is early in the morning, and consequently I do not propose to go over all the remarks that have been made by honourable members.

First of all, the debate was led for the Opposition by the honourable member for Nudgee. I do not want to be disrespectful

in any way but I think we should christen him the honourable member for gloom because he opened his remarks by saying this was a venture into the field of gambling. He made reference to the tragedies of families and then, having expressed himself in that way, he proceeded to say that he supported the Bill. He was very concerned about the fact that this measure was being promoted to increase State revenue. Let me make it quite clear to all members of this Chamber that soccer pools are being brought into operation in Queensland because of the representations that have been made by the Queensland Major Sporting Bodies Association. It is true—

Mr. Jensen: Never heard of it.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member has never heard of it?

Mr. Jensen: Yes.

Sir GORDON CHALK: If the honourable member has never heard of that, then he is further in the dark than even I thought. But the point of the matter is that the requests have been made to us. As I said, when Vernons Pools first arrived in Australia it established itself in Victoria. It survived there, and then moved into Tasmania and finally into New South Wales. It was when it moved into New South Wales that it was ascertained—and I had representatives go to the company and check this—that approximately \$10,000 a week was leaving Queensland and going into the pool operating in the southern States. So the Major Sporting Bodies Association representatives, headed by a man very well known in the soccer world in this State, came to me and indicated that they considered it quite wrong that 30 per cent of funds which would be available to this State, and portion of which would be available for distribution amongst the clubs, should be lying in the hands of the Government of the State to which the entry form and money was sent.

As a result of that, the Government investigated the matter a second time. In the early stages I indicated that the State Government was not prepared to go ahead with the scheme. However, having ascertained what had happened in New South Wales, I believed that there was an opportunity for sporting organisations to get some benefit from an operation of this type. Consequently, after lengthy discussions with the promoters, I recommended to Cabinet that the matter be investigated very carefully. That was done and, as a result, the Bill is now before the Committee.

The honourable member for Nudgee made what might be described as a personal attack upon the Premier because his beliefs are opposed to gambling. Let me say that the Premier is entitled to his beliefs. However, the decisions of the Government are taken on the voices of those who constitute the Government. The Premier recognises it is the wish of the majority of those who

constitute the Government that football pools should be introduced, and there is no reflection upon him because he does not subscribe to gambling.

Mr. Houston: He only loses on the gambling issues; he never loses on the others.

Sir GORDON CHALK: How would the honourable member know? The honourable member for Bulimba is guessing and gambling now. There are many issues on which the Premier has been defeated in argument and on the numbers. However, unlike members of the A.L.P., members of the Government parties stick together and do what they believe is best in the interests of this State.

Let me go a little further. The honourable member sought certain information. If Opposition members are prepared to listen, I will give a brief run-down so that when they study the Bill—I hope it will be available tonight—they will have additional information to assist them.

First, the competition will be based principally on English games. That is the way in which the pools have been conducted in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. Houston: They don't play the whole year, do they?

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member will get all the information he requires if he will only listen. If he is going to talk to his neighbour and ask questions, I prefer to leave the matter and let him guess.

In the United Kingdom, competition soccer is played for nearly nine months of the year, from which 55 games are selected for Vernons pool operations. For the other period of the year the pools will be conducted on Australian games.

A question was asked about the value of the coupons. A proposal has been discussed, but it has yet to be finalised. Although I have indicated that the proposal at the moment favours one particular company, until that company seeks a licence naturally that matter is not completely finalised. The value of the coupon will be 50c on the basis of 11 selections. For 12 selections, \$1.50 would be the value of the coupon.

I compliment the honourable member for Wolston on his knowledge. He has demonstrated that he is one of the few honourable members in the Chamber who really understand the pools system. A person with 11 selections has a reasonable approach to the pool. A person with 12 selections is reducing the field, as it were, and has a much greater winning chance. As I have said, the basis of the coupons will be 50c for 11 selections and \$1.50 for 12 selections. There has been some discussion about a major ticket which would be in the vicinity of \$9. That would bring in 14 selections and give a person a much greater chance of winning than if he invested only 50c.

Mr. Burns: Nine bucks a throw.

Sir GORDON CHALK: Yes. The honourable gentleman put more than nine bucks on a horse the other day. I put mine on, too. It is the same attitude as nine bucks a throw.

It is true that 37 per cent is set aside for prize-money. As I indicated, 30 per cent will come to the State, and two-thirds of that will go into a special sports fund. The agents will get 12½ per cent. It is estimated that the operating costs will be in the vicinity of 15 per cent—15½ per cent is what is allowed. The promoters will get 5 per cent. That is the basis of the breakdown.

A lot was said about the effect on the T.A.B. The honourable member for Bulimba really answered the question that was asked. The pools will not be something that is operating on Saturday morning or Friday night when normal T.A.B. operations are in progress. As I see it, the principal business will be on Thursday and possibly Friday morning. If the T.A.B. is to receive 12½ per cent for handling the coupons, that will be additional revenue for the administration section which could be utilised for the provision of additional workers or employees and they would, to some degree, be of benefit to the T.A.B. generally.

Mr. Houston: If the agencies were open on Thursday night, it would help a lot of people.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member is anticipating something I do not want to say at the moment. We have looked at a number of ways in which the two things could link together.

A number of other matters were raised by honourable members, but in view of the early hour I shall not reply to them at this stage. I will peruse their speeches and endeavour to answer the points that have been raised when the Bill comes before the House at the second-reading stage.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 1.28 a.m. (Wednesday).