

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1976**

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**TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1976**

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1975-76**

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from the Deputy Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1975-76.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

**VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1977-78**

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from the Deputy Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June 1978—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account), the sum of two hundred and fifty million dollars;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of three hundred million dollars;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of twenty-six million dollars.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

**PAPERS**

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Builders' Registration Board of Queensland for the year 1975-76.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council reconstituting the Committee of Inquiry—Future Land Use, Moreton Island.

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1965.

The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1964.

The Northern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1963 to 1964.

Harbours Act 1955-1976.

Forestry Act 1959-1976.

State Housing Act 1945-1974.

Regulations under the Public Service Act 1922-1973.

Report of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council, South and Central Queensland, for the year 1975-76.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

PETITION CIRCULATED BY BRISBANE CITY  
COUNCIL AGAINST ELECTRICITY BILL

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (11.6 a.m.): The Brisbane City Council is presently actively engaged in promoting a petition to itself for an expression of an opinion on whether the city council should retain its present powers in relation to the supply of electricity through the operation of its electricity undertaking. Many people may be induced to sign the petition on the basis that it has some legal significance—a state of mind which is fostered by the attitude of the Lord Mayor and aldermen. However, the practical effect of the exercise will have the same legal validity as any public opinion poll such as, for instance, a Gallup Poll—about as effective as a cockatoo in a biscuit tin.

The Government has sought legal advice on the matter, which is to the effect that section 53 of the Local Government Act, on which the council seeks to rely, is not relevant in the present circumstances where Parliament is considering a rationalisation of electricity undertakings throughout Queensland. It is basic constitutional law that Parliament is the supreme law-making body in the State, and the council is itself one of the Parliament's creations through the City of Brisbane Act.

The council has only such powers as are given to it by its statute. The powers of Parliament are plenary and Parliament may, if it chooses, divest the council of all or any of its powers by appropriate legislation. This is a statement of fact, and one which the electors should bear in mind in assessing the merits of this petition.

Section 53 is designed to enable electors to have an opinion, through a poll, on the desirability of a local authority's exercise of its powers. If the issue in the present case were, for instance, whether a powerhouse should be sited in a particular locality, section 53 could have some relevance. In such a case, the question would be whether the council should be allowed to proceed on what normally would be within its powers. The section allows the Governor in Council, at his discretion and contingent upon the result of the poll, to direct the council to refrain from doing some particular matter, even though the council could otherwise legitimately carry out that operation.

In the present case, what is in issue is not the exercise of any power but the fundamental question of policy of whether local authorities, including the Brisbane City Council, should retain the privilege of supplying electricity within their areas. I emphasise that this is a matter for Parliament, and one which can be exercised by Parliament independently of any outcome of the present action of the council.

The council's actions are clearly politically motivated. It should be apparent to the council that this essay in public relations can in no way legally bind the Parliament, which is competent to express its will, as the elected voice of the people of the State, on a matter of State-wide significance, irrespective of any poll or canvass of public opinion which the council wishes to undertake.

The Electricity Bill is a Bill intended to benefit the State as a whole; it has been placed before the representatives of the people, who are the only ones to have the prerogative to determine the wisdom or otherwise of its provisions. Members of the city council would be well advised to have regard to the provisions of the City of Brisbane Act which create personal liability in relation to voting for expenditure on matters which are not within the scope of the Act.

## BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL BUS SHORTAGES

**Hon. K. W. HOOPER** (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (11.10 a.m.): In the past three days, there have been accusations in the media about so-called State Government incompetence in handling Queensland's transport difficulties. These groundless allegations were dreamed up and propagated by the honourable member for Cairns, some minor Federal Labor parliamentarians wasting taxpayers' money on a flying visit to Brisbane and the Brisbane City Council's Transport Committee chairman.

It was further alleged that the State Government was refusing to assist the city council to obtain Federal funds for buses. This is nothing more than A.L.P.-inspired propaganda—cheap and petty, but only to be expected from the out-of-touch Labor machine.

As long ago as October 1974, the Brisbane City Council received approval of Federal finance for the purchase of seven new buses, followed by approval for a further 23. To date, the council has obtained eight of these 30 buses. That, Mr. Speaker, is a magnificent achievement—eight buses in two years! If the Brisbane City Council is as short of buses for the Cribb Island service as it claims, surely the first logical step would appear to be a thorough overhaul of the council's own purchasing procedures so it can secure the remaining 22 buses as quickly as possible. The city council is also complaining that the State Government will not assist in purchasing an additional 75 buses. This is not so. The State Government has submitted the purchase of these buses several times to the Commonwealth as part of the Public Transport Capital Works Programme for Queensland. Yet despite all concerted pressure by this Government, no new public transport projects were approved by either the former Federal Labor Government in 1975-76 or by the present administration in the current financial year.

The Brisbane City Council went ahead and ordered the 75 buses knowing full well that Federal funding would not be forthcoming. How the city council can blame the Queensland Government for this situation leaves me baffled!

However, the State Government has sincerely attempted to aid the city council by a special allocation of debenture loan funds. Likewise, this Government has done everything possible to have the Federal Government approve finance for the additional buses, along with other vital urban transport projects for which Federal assistance was needed. These included several bus support facilities in the form of depots, automatic ticketing systems, modern bus cleaning equipment and passenger waiting sheds.

It appears to me that the State Government must revert to conjuring if it is to satisfy City Hall for the simple reason that on one hand it is accused of not doing enough to help the council, and on the other of being apparently obsessed with fighting Canberra.

The facts regarding these 75 buses are straightforward. The city council dived in head first and ordered these buses with the prior knowledge that Canberra would not approve funding. This information was conveyed to the former Lord Mayor, Alderman Jones, who was a member of the Metropolitan Transit Policy Committee. The information was also conveyed by me to the council and, in fact, I was so disturbed at the council's action in ordering these unapproved buses that I advised the firm it contracted with of the situation. It is not this Government that stands indicted but rather the inept A.L.P. City Hall administration, which has bungled its way into another dilemma.

#### LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.14 a.m.): I wish to announce that the honourable member for Bulimba (Mr. J. W. Houston) has been elected Deputy Leader of the Opposition in place of the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr. J. Melloy), who has resigned that position.

#### PETITION

##### ELECTRICITY BILL

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) presented a petition from 45 electors of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will reject the proposed electricity legislation and immediately appoint an independent electrical supply industry organisation consultant group to investigate all aspects of the electricity supply industry within the State and furnish a report to Parliament as soon as possible.

Petition read and received.

#### COMMUNICATIONS FROM BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

##### ELECTRICITY BILL

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I inform honourable members that on Friday evening last I received a telegram reading as follows:—

“Suggest you consider real issues involved in Electricity Bill. This council is not against proposed generation and transmission authority. Is not against equalisation of tariff objective. However the council is for local democracy and therefore considers the electricity distribution should be controlled by local government if possible rather than by ad hoc bodies. It has been proven that no other statutory body in Australia distributes electricity more economically than Brisbane City Council. The council already shares the benefit of the efficiency with country consumers through bulk supply tariff. If this efficiency is lost everybody loses. This is no last minute protest. Up till now we have exhausted every other avenue possible without any result.

“ . . . Frank Sleeman Lord Mayor.”

I also advise honourable members that, as I came into the Chamber this morning, I received the following letter:—

“Lord Mayor's Office

“Brisbane

“16th November, 1976.

“Dear Mr. Speaker,

“re: Electricity Bill

“I have to inform you that at a Special Meeting of my Council held at 10 a.m. today, the Council unanimously passed the resolutions on the page attached hereto marked ‘A’.

“I should be pleased if you would bring this matter to the attention of Parliament.”

The resolutions read—

“1. That the petition presented by the Town Clerk lodged pursuant to s. 53 of the Local Government Act 1936–1976 be received.

“2. That the Council take a poll of the electors of the Area upon the question relating to local government, viz.:

whether Brisbane City Council should retain those powers it has had and possessed since its initial constitution in 1925 in relation to light and power and continue to operate its electricity undertaking, upon which not less than ten per centum of the electors of the Area have petitioned for an expression of opinion.

“3. That the Council requests that the Governor in Council make such modifications of the provisions referred to in s. 53 (6) of the Local Government Act as are necessary for the taking of the poll of the electors of the Area upon that question and that the Town Clerk convey that request, through the Director of Local Government, to the Governor in Council.

"4. That this meeting be adjourned to 11.00 a.m. on that day which is the first Tuesday at least two clear days after the Town Clerk has transmitted by post to or otherwise left for or delivered to each alderman at his usual or last known place of abode or business, or to such other address as any alderman may request by notice in writing addressed to the Town Clerk, a notice that the Council has received advice as to the intentions with regard to that request."

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

##### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

**Hon. T. G. NEWBERY** (Mirani—Leader of the House): I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of Resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

#### GRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION BILL

##### INITIATION

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill relating to the promotion of research in the Queensland grain industries; to provide for the constitution of a Grain Research Foundation; and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

#### SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

##### INITIATION

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries): 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 Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900-1973 in certain particulars and for another purpose."

Motion agreed to.

#### PHARMACY BILL

##### INITIATION

**Hon. T. G. NEWBERY** (Mirani—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill relating to the qualifications and registration of

pharmacists and for the regulation of the practice of pharmacy and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

#### PSYCHOLOGISTS BILL

##### INITIATION

**Hon. T. G. NEWBERY** (Mirani—Leader of the House): 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 Psychologists Board, the establishment of a register of psychologists, the regulation of the practice of psychology and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

#### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

##### 1. INJURIES AND DEATHS FROM ACCIDENTS AT ROMA STREET RAILWAY GOODS YARD

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

(1) What is the number of deaths caused by accidents to workers in the Roma Street Goods Yard and what were the causes of the deaths and the date on which each took place?

(2) What is the number of injuries serious or otherwise caused by accident and what was the cause of each accident, the nature of the injuries and the date on which each took place?

*Answers:—*

(1) During the past five years there has been one death, a checker having died from head injuries sustained in a fall from a motor truck on 22 November 1973.

(2) During the same period there were 34 instances of serious injuries having been sustained in accidents at Roma Street and 801 instances of minor injuries. I am tabling relevant details for the information of the honourable member.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the details on the table.*

##### 2. FORESTRY AND COUNCIL DAMAGE TO COOLOOLA NATIONAL PARK

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

(1) Is he aware of recent reports of alleged damage to the Cooloolo National Park by a Forestry Department burn-off of the Noosa Plain and by the construction by the Widgee Shire Council of a water pipeline from Tewah Creek to Bayside development near the township of Tin Can Bay?

(2) Does he have first-hand knowledge of these matters and, if so, are the reports correct?

(3) Is the Widgee Shire being asked to spend an extra \$40,000 to provide underground power rather than overhead wires to the pump site?

(4) What are the conditions under which the Widgee Shire may take water from the Cooloola National Park?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes, I am aware of the reports.

(2) Following my visit to the Cooloola area last week, I satisfied myself that the joint Forestry Department-National Parks and Wildlife Service burn-off on the Noosa Plain was carried out effectively and efficiently without any so-called "ravaging" of the national park. From my inspection it was quite obvious that the prescribed burn on the Noosa Plain area resulted only in a low intensity fire, and the burnt area is already lush and green with numerous wild flowers blooming profusely.

It was equally obvious that the fire had achieved its aim of reducing the risk of a devastating wildfire occurring later in the summer, and that the burnt area was less than 10 per cent of the area of the Noosa Plain. This is directly opposed to grossly inaccurate and misleading statements made in the media that between 50 to 80 per cent of the Noosa Plain had been burnt, and I can only say that such statements are to be deplored.

The water pipeline from Tewah Creek to the Bayside development near the township of Tin Can Bay is in the course of construction, and I saw no evidence of any damage to the forestry area or the national park as a result of the installation.

(3) Originally, the Widgee Shire Council did agree to provide underground power through the national park area, but this has now been altered to provide overhead wiring in order to reduce costs, and also to facilitate maintenance.

(4) Concerning the water pipeline, I am also satisfied that my National Parks and Wildlife Service has taken the necessary steps to ensure that the pipeline will be laid with minimum disturbance and the natural character of the Cooloola landscape will be preserved.

The conditions agreed to by the Widgee Shire Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are summarised as follows:—

Access—existing tracks to be used where possible.

Water lines to be laid underground.

Pumping station to be electrically operated with housing location and design approved by the service.

Treatment plants to be located outside the park.

Restoration—the service to assist the council to ensure maximum preservation of park value.

### 3. REFLECTORISED NUMBER-PLATES FOR MOTOR VEHICLES

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

Now that the new number-plate system is to be introduced in Queensland, will his department consider introducing reflectorised number-plates to facilitate safety and identification of vehicles at night?

*Answer:—*

Evidence has not yet been produced that reflectorised number-plates have contributed to the reduction of accidents. In fact, if more reflective surface were needed, it could be more cheaply and effectively provided by larger reflectors. It is not proposed to use reflectorised plates at present, but the matter will be kept under consideration.

### 4. GREATER BRISBANE AREA MODIFIED TOWN PLAN

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

(1) Is he aware that the Brisbane City Council is, by inference, placing the responsibility on him and the Government for any change in the modified town plan?

(2) Has the council both the authority and the responsibility to make changes in the plan to accommodate all or any of the 6,000 or so objections that the council has received?

(3) What criteria will he use to determine whether the council has adequately considered all objections and has not merely passed the buck to the Government?

*Answers:—*

(1) No.

(2) The Brisbane City Council has no authority to make any changes to the modified plan once it has been placed on public exhibition. However, after considering objections received, it is required to make representations to the Governor in Council through me in respect of all objections made and lodged as prescribed, including representations on each ground of objection.

(3) The objections and the council's representations thereon will be carefully studied by officers of the Department of Local Government and inspections will be made on the site.

5. IMPROVEMENTS TO HIGHWAY,  
TOWNSVILLE-CHARTERS TOWERS

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

(1) In view of the volume of traffic on the highway between Charters Towers and Townsville and as sections of this road are less than one lane wide, for what work on this highway is his department committed?

(2) How much money will be spent on this highway (a) between now and Christmas and (b) in 1977 or the next financial year?

**Mr. HINZE:** The honourable member for Flinders is one of the happiest members in the House because next week the Premier, together with the honourable member for Mt. Isa, will be visiting his electorate to celebrate the completion of the sealing of the connecting link between Townsville and Darwin. The completion of this work means that there is an all-bitumen-sealed road from Darwin to the east coast of Queensland, down through the southern States and around to Perth, then back up to Broome. Such a project has been the subject of talk for a long time, and we are proud of its completion. I commend the honourable member for Flinders, a young member, for the work that he has done in the couple of years that he represented his electorate.

The answers to the questions are as follows:—

*Answers:—*

(1) Resources have been concentrated on the completion of the Flinders Highway west of Charters Towers. However two schemes totalling \$420,000 will be released on this section of the highway early in 1977, with \$210,000 expenditure before 30 June.

(2) Routine maintenance repairs are in progress at present and will be completed by Christmas. It is hoped next financial year to lift expenditure to about \$850,000 on the Charters Towers-Townsville section and progressively reconstruct the road.

I am sure that with treatment such as that, the honourable member's electors will keep him there for ever.

6. RIGHT TO SUE UNIONS FOR LOSSES  
THROUGH INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

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

(1) May a private person or group of persons sue for personal loss any striking unions or unionists whose abuse of the right to strike in North Queensland recently has deprived many of their fellow workers of the right to work?

(2) Is there any legal way that other unions or unionists can protect themselves now or in the future against such industrial excesses?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) The law in relation to this matter is, I am advised, very complex. Because of sections 70, 71 and 72 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the employees recently on strike in North Queensland could not be sued for damages by reason only of the fact that they participated in a strike which directly or indirectly caused financial loss to another person. Whilst an Order in Council under section 72A would remove the protection afforded by sections 70, 71 and 72, it still would be a most difficult action in civil law for any particular plaintiff to succeed in, as he would have to prove that there was a conspiracy by the employees recently on strike to injure him. Two other practical problems of major significance would be for a particular plaintiff to establish locus standi and, assuming that any action taken was successful and damages were awarded, to recover any of those damages. I do not propose to make any other comments on this matter as the merits of the employees' claims are now the subject of an inquiry by a Full Bench of the State Industrial Commission.

7. ACTIVITIES OF VOLVO MOTOR VEHICLE  
COMPANY IN QUEENSLAND

**Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Following the purchase of a Volvo 264 car as one of the impressive transport fleet for his personal use in the electorate of Barambah, did he, in a Press statement in "The Courier-Mail" of 25 June, state that he would invite Volvo to Queensland as a car manufacturer to establish its headquarters?

(2) Was he correctly reported as stating that during his following overseas trip in July he would have talks with the Volvo Company in Sweden and urge a decision for expansion of Volvo operations in Queensland?

(3) Despite his assurances and/or because of his personal representations in Sweden and assistance in Brisbane, is Volvo closing its Queensland regional retail division as of 31 December?

(4) If so, how successful has he been in encouraging the firm to expand its operations in Queensland?

(5) In view of his statements, is this now considered to be a winding-down or an apparent restriction of Volvo's activities in this State?

(6) What is the degree of the scale-down and what will it mean to the metropolitan bus transport contracts and the supply of buses to the Brisbane City Council through this outlet?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 6) The honourable member is becoming just another A.L.P. knocker of everything this Government is doing to advance the prosperity and employment opportunities of Queenslanders.

The facts of the matter are that, following negotiations with the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development in 1970, Volvo Australia Pty. Ltd. acquired the British Motor Corporation property of 3.2 hectares on the Wacol Industrial Estate, with factory premises of 8 900 square metres.

Since then Volvo has virtually been engaged in a continuous expansion programme and now has a building area of 22 326 sq m on a 7.9 ha site. In addition, adjacent sites on the estate totalling 4.8 ha have been leased to the company and it recently commenced construction of a 3 000 sq m building to cater for further expansion.

It will be apparent that there is no winding-down or retraction of Volvo's activities in Queensland; indeed the reverse is the case. The company is expanding its truck and bus production facilities and in so doing will be adding to its already substantial work-force.

Contrary to what the honourable member has suggested, I am informed the company is not closing down its regional retail division but is restructuring its organisation to cater for its expanding operations.

Apart from a plant in Belgium servicing the European Economic Community, the Volvo establishment at Wacol is the company's largest truck production facility outside of Sweden and supplies not only the Australian market but also New Zealand and South-East Asia.

In addition to what it has already achieved, the company is looking to the future and any assistance or encouragement I and my Government can give in this regard will most certainly be forthcoming. I hope that information adds to the honourable member's general knowledge.

#### 8. MR. JOHN SINCLAIR, ADULT EDUCATION OFFICER, MARYBOROUGH

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to Press reports in "The Courier-Mail" of 11 November that Mr. John Sinclair, an adult education officer from Maryborough, was in Canberra approaching the Commonwealth Government on projects for work for Maryborough people shortly to be out of work owing largely to his activities?

(2) Who authorised this time off for Mr. Sinclair or may Mr. Sinclair authorise time off for himself?

(3) Has his attention been drawn to an admission by Mr. Sinclair in the "Sunday Sun" of 31 October that he spends 40 hours per week on conservation issues?

(4) For how many days will Mr. Sinclair be in Canberra this week and how many hours will he actually spend on adult education work?

(5) Does Mr. Sinclair still actually carry out some adult education work or has he at last given up any pretext of earning his salary?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes.

(2) The district organiser, with due regard to the centre's programme and service to the public.

Officers are entitled to take time off in lieu of overtime worked. This time off should be taken within 28 days of the overtime being worked provided that no dislocation occurs in respect to working arrangements and attention to the public. The district organiser has the responsibility of deciding when time off can be taken in accordance with the centre's programme. The month's programme is drawn up in advance and suitable periods when time off can be taken can be decided.

(3) Mr. Sinclair's official duty hours are 36½ per week. How he uses his own time is a matter for him.

(4) Thursday and Friday. At least 21½ hours. Over the past three weeks he has worked overtime more than sufficient to cover this time off.

(5) Yes—Mr. Sinclair still works the 36½ hours per week plus or minus overtime and time off in lieu of overtime.

#### 9. STAFF NUMBERS AND CONDITIONS, H.M. PRISON, BRISBANE

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

(1) Is it a fact that, following demands by prisoners at Brisbane Prison, the administration agreed to replace the luscious pies made at the prison with Wedgewood pies bought from an outside firm and to provide on the menu for prisoners chicken, with frozen vegetables and ice-cream, also bought from an outside firm and, if so, what is the estimated annual cost of these changes?

(2) Are prison officers now entitled to two two-course meals at 31c each during each shift of eight hours?

(3) What are the items on the menu of the two-course meals or will he table a specimen menu?

(4) What is the estimated additional annual cost of the increase in prison staff and the numerous promotions made in the last six months?



(5) What is now the estimated daily cost of keeping a prisoner in Brisbane Prison?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order. Mr. Speaker, can you keep the louts in the A.L.P. quiet so that I can hear the Minister's answer.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn all honourable members that there is far too much noise in the Chamber. I shall have to deal with honourable members if they will not allow answers to be heard in silence. I have warned honourable members previously. I do not want to do the wrong thing by anybody, but I warn all honourable members that if they misbehave I shall have to deal with them.

*Answers:—*

(1) No. I am advised that some time ago large pies were prepared in the kitchens of the Brisbane Prison complex but it was found that pies could be purchased at a general contract rate which was less than the cost to produce in prison. In addition, it enabled a variety of pies to be procured. The pies are purchased at a general contract price of 15.5c each. Poultry and frozen vegetables are also purchased. Poultry is secured at contract rates of \$1.30 per kg and provides variation in the prison diet. Frozen vegetables are only procured for prisoners when supplies of fresh vegetables from the prison gardens are not available. Ice-cream is not purchased for prisoners and is not included on prisoners' menus. A dissection of the estimated annual cost of any change in purchase procedures is not available, but by purchasing frozen pies, chickens and vegetables in bulk, costs are kept to a minimum.

(2) Facilities are available to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for prison officers. If an officer's rostered shift covers a period which enables him to partake of two meals during a shift, then it is possible for the officer to secure two meals. The hours for meal breaks are laid down in the Prison Employees' Award—State.

(3) I am informed that the menu for prison officers at Brisbane Prison is changed from time to time and for the information of the honourable member, I table a copy of a notice to all prison officers in the Brisbane Prison complex from the acting chief superintendent setting out the menu from 8 November 1976 to 14 November 1976, both dates inclusive.

(4) \$112,600.

(5) \$21.37. This figure is based on the approved formula for a recoupment of costs for maintaining Commonwealth prisoners.

*Where upon the honourable gentleman laid the notice on the table.*

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### POLL ON ELECTRICITY BILL

**Mr. BURNS:** I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: As Mr. Speaker indicated to the House this morning that the Brisbane City Council carried a resolution to take a poll of electors of its area after 60,000 electors had signed a petition—upon the question whether the Brisbane City Council should retain those powers it has had and possessed since its initial constitution in 1925 in relation to light and power and continue to operate its electricity undertaking, upon which not less than 10 per cent of the electors of the area have petitioned for an expression of opinion, will he, in the light of this massive petition, and the council's decision, recommit the Electricity Bill for reconsideration in this Chamber, or delay the third reading until the electors have had an opportunity to express their democratic vote on this matter?

**Mr. CAMM:** As the Leader of the Opposition called "Not formal" on the third reading of the Electricity Bill, I take it that he will be initiating debate later this evening on the Bill. I inform him now that I have no intention of deferring the third reading of the Bill. In initiating a petition, the Brisbane City Council engaged in an exercise in futility. Even though it had possession of the Bill for more than five weeks, nothing was done until two days before the second reading of the Bill was moved.

**Mr. Burns:** Other councils also are upset, not only the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr. CAMM:** The claim of the Leader of the Opposition that other councils are upset makes me think that I should read the telex which I received this morning from North Queensland as follows:—

"The Queensland Government must resolutely reject pressure from the Brisbane brigade to back down on the Electricity Bill.

"Brisbane's Lord Mayor, Alderman Sleeman, is leading a last-ditch bid to block the legislation by running a petition for a referendum.

"It will not have escaped the notice of provincial and rural Queensland dwellers that the proposed referendum is for Brisbane residents only.

"In other words, the wishes of people who do not live in the metropolitan cluster are being ignored.

"Alderman Sleeman—and with him a considerable number of politicians, principally A.L.P. men—are crying tears of concern for Brisbane residents and other South-eastern Queensland residents who will have to pay more for their electricity under the new system of power distribution involving seven electricity boards.

"Their tears will not touch the hearts of North Queenslanders, who have long suffered, among many other penalties, the handicap of higher power tariffs for living in and developing the State's most richly endowed region.

"North Queensland and other non-metropolitan dwellers stand to gain from the Electricity Bill, in the form of an eventual reduction of the prices they pay for electricity.

"This is no more than their just due.

"Why should provincial and rural people, who produce the bulk of the State's wealth, and upon whom the metropolitan welfare is dependent, have to suffer the iniquitous impost of having to pay up to 55 per cent more for their power than do Brisbane consumers?

"The high price of power is one of the chief deterrents to the peopling and development of non-metropolitan areas. Industry naturally hesitates to branch out into the country when power costs are so heavy.

"One of the ultimate objectives of the Electricity Bill is uniform tariffs throughout the State. Admittedly, the Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr. Camm, has said that this will not happen overnight. But Mr. Camm has declared clearly that it is an eventual objective.

"North Queensland long ago pointed the way when the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, after a long relentless fight by rural members of the Board, abolished the rural surcharge that had given Townsville consumers a price advantage over country users.

"The same principle must be applied throughout the State.

"The Sleeman petition for a referendum is a cynical exercise in Brisbane self-interest with a corresponding callous indifference to the needs and feelings of the rest of the State—a type of polls patriotism as practised in ancient Greece.

"The State Government should give it the short shrift it deserves."

That is the telex I received this morning—

**Mr. Burns:** From whom?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn all honourable members on my left, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, that I will not tolerate persistent interjections. I ask them to allow the Minister to be heard in silence.

**Mr. CAMM:** I want to repeat something that I said during my second-reading speech on the Electricity Bill. On television, the Lord Mayor keeps hammering that the Government is going to take over electricity or the Government is going to do something else. All that the Bill does is enable a board to be set up, comprising five representatives of the local authorities in South-east Queensland, to govern the distribution

of electricity in this region of South Queensland. That is what the Bill does. The Government is not taking the industry over. Brisbane City Council representatives, together with representatives from the other local authorities, will be on the board. What is the Brisbane City Council frightened of? Is it frightened that the other local authority representatives will find out what it has been doing with the money it has received from the electricity users of Brisbane?

**Mr. BURNS:** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.39 a.m.): So that we can find out who sent it, I move—

"That the telex read by the Minister be tabled."

**Mr. CAMM:** It is the editorial in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin".

**Mr. BURNS:** A great telex! I have another question, Mr. Speaker. Would you stop the honourable member for Townsville South interjecting all the time?

**Mr. Aikens:** Where does Jones stand?

**Mr. Jones** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable members for Townsville South and Cairns under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr. BURNS:** What about pulling him into line?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr. BURNS:** I think that somewhere along the line there ought to be a bit of fair play so far as the honourable member for Townsville South is concerned.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I take that remark as a reflection on the Chair. The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw it.

**Mr. BURNS:** I withdraw it, Mr. Speaker.

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS PROCEDURE

**Mr. BURNS:** I ask the Minister for Police: Is it normal Government practice in filling senior administrative positions within the Queensland Police Force for the commissioner to tender recommendations? Was the commissioner consulted in the present case? Did he make recommendations? Did his recommendations coincide with the appointments announced yesterday by Cabinet or was he overruled?

**Mr. NEWBERRY:** The Government has the final say.

#### BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST RATES

**Mr. BURNS:** In directing a question to the Minister for Works and Housing, I refer to his statement in this House on 16 September 1976 during the passage of the Building Societies Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) that he expected efficient and well-managed societies to lower their interest rates below

the current level at that time of 11½ per cent, that he would be keeping a close watch over the interest rates charged by societies and, furthermore, that he would not hesitate to reimpose controls where unreasonable non-competitive rates were being charged. I now ask the Minister: How does he reconcile that statement made in Parliament on 16 September 1976 with the action taken by the Queensland Permanent Building Society to raise its interest rates to borrowers to 12½ per cent from 1 December?

**Mr. LEE:** The question certainly shows the lack of understanding of the Leader of the Opposition of the finances of building societies and the reasons why they may have to raise their interest rates. In the first place, when I made the statement referred to the bond rate was 9½ per cent. It increased by ½ per cent, and it has further increased since. Surely the honourable member knows that the bond rate has an effect on the amount of money available from the public purse.

There has also been since the time of my statement a rise in the interest rate on Treasury notes and surely this, too, has an effect on interest rates generally.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to want building societies to receive no funds, which means that he wants to see the building industry in this nation crash. It seems that he will do everything in his power to affect adversely the very people for whom he pretends to want to see homes provided, namely, the workers of Queensland.

#### PROPOSED CUT-BACK IN JAPANESE BEEF IMPORTS

**Mr. MULLER:** I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Has he read a report in today's "Courier-Mail" that the Japanese Government will announce today its intention to reduce Australia's meat quota for the first six months of 1977 from the anticipated 45 000 tonnes to 20 000 tonnes? If so, will he outline to the House what effect this alarming reduction in the quota will have on the already seriously depressed state of the beef industry and the confidence of the producers in their future?

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I did read the announcement in the Press this morning, and it certainly shocked me to think that the Japanese Government is contemplating a cut-back in the quota for the first six months of 1977. But it did not come as a surprise, because my contact in Japan, as recently as last Saturday, told me of a delay in the supply of 2 000 tonnes out of the total of 9 500 tonnes to be delivered in the last half of this year. That meat was to be supplied by 15 June, and the Japanese requested that delivery be delayed for a fortnight, although they were still going to take delivery.

There are three reasons for this. The first is the increase in the production of beef in Japan and the downturn in consumption.

The second is the big surplus of pigmeats held in cold storage in Japan. After all, there are no restrictions on the import of pigmeats into Japan, and at the moment there is a surplus of upwards of 130 000 tonnes of pigmeat being held in cold storage. The third reason—and on this point I appeal to the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members opposite for their help—is a real concern about delays in the delivery of meat caused by industrial strife on the wharves here. Meat that should have arrived in Japan in August and September was arriving there in October, and this has created a problem. I have spoken to two lot feeders who have been in Japan, Mr. Robin Hart and Mr. Don Bridgeford, who were looking at the situation, and the concern of the Japanese importers—the L.I.P.C. and the Government—is that boned-out chilled meat is taking 63 days to arrive at its destination.

When the honourable member for Warwick, the honourable member for Maryborough, myself and other members of the trade mission were in Japan last year the Japanese importers stated emphatically that boned-out chilled meat must arrive within 42 days of its being processed. The delays I have referred to have been caused by industrial strife. We also have problems with the oil industry that are presently being discussed, and we have heard of problems with the handling of wool. Militant trade-unionists are in the minority, and I think that many decent trade-unionists realise that the people involved in the production of goods for export are Australians and decent people like themselves. So I hope that this matter can be overcome on more of a personal basis. I think we can all understand the feelings of the people in the beef industry, after what they have been through, about the suggestion that there is to be a cut-back of 25 000 tonnes of the 45 000 tonnes agreed upon.

I commend the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. Sinclair) for the action they have taken. I understand that the Prime Minister immediately called the Japanese Ambassador to discuss the matter and that he has been in touch urgently with the Prime Minister of Japan. The NARA agreement, which was signed last year by the Prime Ministers of Japan and Australia, calls for co-operation and good will in relation to trade. In view of the state of the beef industry in Australia, a cut-back of 25 000 tonnes in the first six months of 1977 does not show either co-operation or good will, in my opinion. I hope that, for the sake of the beef industry and the people in it, the Prime Minister's efforts will result in the reversing of the decision of the Japanese.

At 12 noon,

*In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.*

## SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—  
ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1976-77

THE PREMIER

CHIEF OFFICE

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$2,425,262 be granted for ‘The Premier—Chief Office’.”

This is an increase of \$289,471 over last year's actual expenditure and results from a salaries increase of \$101,003 and a contingencies increase of \$188,468. The increase in salaries is in accordance with current upward trends and is mainly due to Public Service Award and basic wage increases. The actual number of officers in Chief Office has been increased by four from 63 to 67.

The increase in the amount required for Contingencies arises mainly as a result of expenditure under “Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses” and “Government Motor Garage”.

In regard to Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses, members will appreciate that the Premier's Department is the Executive department of the State and from time to time expenditures of an unusual and unforeseen nature are made.

During the previous year it was necessary to establish a section to deal exclusively with Federal affairs and in 1976-77 it will be necessary to provide further amounts under Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses to enable this section to fulfil its proper function. I am sure all members will appreciate the necessity for the Government to be fully informed in all matters involving Commonwealth/State relations and to do so it is necessary to ensure that the best advice is obtained and that all action necessary is taken to ensure that the interests of Queensland are protected.

The increase in the Vote for the Government Motor Garage is attributable to the considerable increases employees have received in wages and allowances. I wish to point out that since its establishment at Zillmere, the quality and efficiency of the service provided by the Government Motor Garage has been much improved and has led to increased use of its facilities by all departments.

As I did on the previous occasion when I presented the Estimates of my department, I wish to pay tribute to the work of my officers, particularly the senior officers of the departments and subdepartments under my control.

The ambit of the Premier's portfolio is an extensive one and, as his department is the Executive department of the State, it is essential that its personnel have a marked

degree of ability and experience in administration and also the ability to contribute to and co-ordinate matters which affect all facets of the State's activities.

At this point it is appropriate that I comment briefly on the Estimates provisions for departments other than Chief Office.

The Agent-General's Office in London has continued to play its valuable role as a channel of information to and from the State and also in providing a service to visiting Queenslanders both on official and private occasions.

As members will be aware, the Co-ordinator-General's Department assumes major responsibilities in relation to the Loan Works Programme and the implementation of Government policy and ensures that Government departments co-operate in a logical and orderly fashion in large Government projects.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to the services of Sir Charles Barton, the Co-ordinator-General, who is shortly to retire and whose successor has recently been announced. Sir Charles has played an invaluable role in co-ordinating many of the State's major development projects and his contribution to the development of the State in this field cannot be under-estimated.

I personally have a very high regard for Sir Charles Barton and the work he has done, just as I have a very high regard for his successor, the new Co-ordinator-General, whose appointment was announced recently. In addition, he has given the Government wise counsel on a diverse range of other matters, including environmental control, regional co-ordination, planning and development and general administration. We do thank Sir Charles for his outstanding work—a contribution which has been recognised by Her Majesty the Queen.

Not the least of the activities which the Co-ordinator-General's Department has been involved in is with the Metropolitan Transit Project Board, which has now become the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and in this role will have the important task of planning the future transport needs of the populous South-eastern region of the State. In the forthcoming year this authority will provide funds for railway works, interchange construction and bus support activities.

The Premier's portfolio also encompasses the work of the Parliamentary Counsel, Mr. Leo Murray, and his officers. They have the extremely responsible task of drafting legislation in as precise a form as the subject will allow and which also will implement the policies espoused by the Government. Their expert services are greatly appreciated.

The Public Service Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. R. H. Fields, continues to discharge effectively the functions imposed on it as the central administrative authority responsible to the Premier for the efficient control of the Public Service. The public

Service Board is charged with the implementation of the Government's decision to restrain staff growth throughout Public Service departments and is carrying out this task in a manner which will ensure maximum economy while still providing an efficient service to the public. The board is also proceeding with the computerisation of staff records and an amount of \$143,000 has been provided for this particular purpose.

This resumé of my department's activities is of necessity brief but before concluding I must mention the activities of other establishments which, although small, play an important role in the department's functions. These offices are: the Parliamentary Reporting Staff, with whose efficiency we are all very familiar; the State Public Relations Bureau, which continues to do sterling work in promoting the image of Queensland; and the State Stores, which performs a very necessary function in acting as the State's major purchasing agent. At this juncture I would like to pay tribute to the services of Mr. Tom Purtell, the former manager of the State Stores, who retired in July this year. Mr. Purtell gave very valuable service to the State in this responsible position. I extend to him sincere appreciation of the services he rendered.

Finally, in the Miscellaneous Services Vote, provision is made for many special grants to worthy organisations which the Government sees fit to provide from time to time. No doubt we would like to provide more to the many fine community organisations mentioned there and indeed we do try to make available something extra in most years. In addition to these grants, an amount has been provided for the expenses associated with the Constitutional Convention and various other activities.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (12.9 p.m.): Today is the first occasion since 29 November 1973 that this Parliament has enjoyed the rare privilege of debating the Budget Estimates of the Premier's Department. For three long years, at Budget time, the extravagant financial adventures of the Premier have been protected from scrutiny, under the sanctuary of parliamentary silence.

**Mr. Katter** interjected.

**Mr. BURNS:** Since 1967-68, the last 12 months—

**Mr. Katter** interjected.

**A Government Member:** He can't hear you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member keep quiet so that he may hear the Leader of the Opposition a little better.

**Mr. BURNS:** Since 1967-68, the last 12 months of the Nicklin-Pizzey era, spending in the Premier's Department has risen by almost 500 per cent from \$2,080,000 to an estimated \$10,230,000 this financial year.

In the State Public Relations Bureau, over which the Premier presides as political editor-in-chief, actual expenditure between 1967-68 and 1975-76 lifted by nearly 700 per cent from \$63,511 to \$424,228. Estimated spending in this departmental section for the current financial year drops back, I admit, to \$255,388, which still represents an increase of more than 400 per cent, and I will elaborate the reasons later in this speech.

Government inflation has flared more vividly, I submit, in the Estimates of this Premier than in any other region of State administration. At the same time he cynically proclaims a Public Service employment freeze and cuts in public spending as an essential means towards economic recovery. No doubt the first target of his newly created Priorities Review Committee should be himself.

It is not, however, so much the percentage rise in spending that excites most concern but the original ways he has discovered to channel State funds into National Party political pursuits. I mentioned the financial Vote for the State Public Relations Bureau. Last financial year the Estimates for this branch included a subtitle "Publicity. State Affairs", better known as the "Joh Show". Allocation for the "Joh Show" was \$180,000 to cover an entire year but, inside nine months before it was scrapped, actual expenditure had soared above \$207,000. I take those figures from the Auditor-General's report.

The State Auditor-General, on page 4 of his annual report, reveals that \$36,419 of this amount was squandered on advertisements, allegedly signed by the then four non-Labor Premiers, at the height of the Federal election campaign. The Victorian Liberal Premier (Mr. Hamer) for one, in reply to the Opposition Leader in that State (Mr. Holding) discounted all knowledge of the advertisement that bore his signature. Not only was public money diverted in the midst of a national election into anti-Labor political promotion; it was, if we accept the parliamentary statement of Mr. Hamer, used to ruthlessly, and I say dishonestly, deceive the Queensland people. The "Joh Show". I might add, was, according to the recently retired Deputy Premier and Treasurer never considered, let alone approved, by Cabinet.

Let me now turn to the Government aircraft. I do not deny that the Premier makes good use of it in getting round the State, but I say that it is misused when it is openly used for electioneering purposes, especially interstate. The State Auditor-General, again on page 4 of his report, discloses that operational and maintenance costs of this aircraft for a total 434 flying hours (fewer than nine hours a week) was \$101,622.

On one occasion a few years ago the Premier, in response to my deputy leader, lapsed and released vague details of individual flights undertaken by this aircraft. He speedily revised this accident in open government after an alert journalist in 1974 analysed

that the overwhelming majority of flights were between Kingaroy and Brisbane. While considering the same subject, let me note that page 14 of the budgeted Estimates of Expenditure contains a subheading "Payment towards cost of replacement of Government aircraft" under which \$488,368 was spent last financial year. In other words Queenslanders in the 12 months to 30 June this year not only contributed almost \$2,000 a week to keep the Government plane flying but contributed another \$9,000 per week towards its trade-in.

I refer now to the infamous Swiss loans affair. The Premier's Estimates include the Vote for the Agent-General in London. This Parliament was recalled at considerable expense for a few hours on 9 December last year—four days before the Federal election—so that the Premier could voice vile, unfounded allegations and innuendo against former Labor Ministers. Members were returned from all corners of Queensland so that the Premier could hide behind parliamentary privilege in promoting smears that have since been disowned by the new Liberal Attorney-General of Australia. The Auditor-General estimates wastage on this unethical exercise at around \$11,000 with an undisclosed amount for international telephone and telex charges. To carry out this type of exercise the Premier appointed as his financial adviser an undesirable foreigner, I submit, in Wiley Fancher, who was recently fined \$160 on the prosecution of the Government's Industrial Development Department for his failure to pay award wages and is being petitioned for bankruptcy for his inability to meet his Queensland debts. Fancher could not prise the lid off a 20c money-box, let alone penetrate the closely guarded secrets of Swiss bank vaults, yet he was given the official blessing of this State as the Premier's representative in the investigation of loans.

On the recommendation of this same Fancher, the Premier appointed yet another American, Richard Todd, in a similar financial capacity even though he had never met him. I am simply amazed that in his haste to discredit the Whitlam Government the Premier used public funds in this way. I wonder why he did not extradite Alexander Barton from Paraguay to assist him. The cast with which the Premier surrounded himself in this expensive but fruitless adventure makes Frank Hardy's "Power Without Glory" look like a bedtime story.

I now want to speak about expenses that should be the concern of Government members. In referring to Government extravagance, I instance overseas travel. A number of questions have been asked in the House about overseas travel by Ministers. On 7 September, on being asked a question on this subject by the honourable member for Wolston, the Premier replied—

"I do not propose to take up the time of this House in providing detailed itineraries, just as I do not propose to spend

time giving details of the places and countries visited by the honourable member when he travelled overseas recently at public expense."

I asked a similar question on 10 November, in which I listed seven points which I took directly from the "Hansard" report of a question asked by the Opposition Leader of the Premier in South Australia. The first of the seven questions was—

"What were the reasons for his travel overseas this year?"

In reply to that question asked of Mr. Dunstan in South Australia, he gave a reply in which there were six full paragraphs and three subparagraphs. The Queensland Premier did not answer the question. Expenditure of public money is involved and the real question here is accountability for the spending of money raised from the people by means of taxation. I do not object to Ministers making overseas trips but I do object to their not reporting to Parliament on their journeys.

**Mr. Moore:** Who paid for your trip to China?

**Mr. BURNS:** I paid my own way. I always do. Unlike the honourable member for Windsor, I do not bludge on the system.

On pages 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Annual Report of the Public Service Board are listed the names of officers who made overseas trips, their administrative positions, the centres visited and the purpose of each visit. If such information can be made available in respect of all public servants who travel overseas, why cannot similar details be made known of trips undertaken by Ministers? Why are they treated differently from public servants who go overseas? What is there to hide? I imagine that most Ministers did their job while they were overseas. Why, then, should they not detail why they went and what they did? There is something wrong with the present system.

I wrote to the Auditor-General in March 1976 and again in November 1976 asking if he would investigate some of the matters that I think are important. He replied that the question of an ordinary member of Parliament seeking such information was a matter that had concerned most Auditor-Generals but the Audit Act, which is under the administration of the Premier, restricted him in the reports that he can make to Parliament. I suggest that he should not be restricted in this way. I think that the Auditor-General should be able to submit to Parliament everything that he thinks should be submitted to it and that there should be nothing in the Audit Act to restrict him in this way. The Auditor-General said in his letter to me of 22 March 1976—

"The audit of the books and accounts of the Premier's Department is not a continuous audit as there is not the volume of transactions warranting this course. My Inspector assigned to the audit has undertaken part of his examination and is now engaged in audit work outside of Brisbane."

The point I make is that if this is not a busy department, it ought to be easy for the Premier to furnish us with the details that we seek by way of questions asked in the Parliament. The answer usually received is to the effect, "I do not intend to take up the time of my department in obtaining the answer to this question." The Auditor-General has made it quite clear that the work of the department is not so great that it needs a continuous audit.

The Premier referred to the Department of the Co-ordinator-General. Whilst I do not know a lot about Sir Charles Barton, I know that this department has an excellent reputation throughout Australia. That obviously has resulted from the work of departmental heads and their officers. I congratulate Mr. Schubert on his appointment as the next Co-ordinator-General. It is a very important job and one of the top positions in the Public Service. It is important not only to the State Government but also to the many local authorities which have to work through him for subsidies and other matters. On the subject of subsidies and assistance—I see in his report this year that the Co-ordinator-General refers to the National Sewerage (Backlog) Program, and he makes it very clear that the Fraser Federal Government and the people from this Government who ran around the countryside last year telling us to vote for Fraser were pulling the wool over the eyes of the people of Queensland. He said—

"For 1976-77, requests for funds totalling \$24.6 million were forwarded to the Commonwealth Government. However, advice has been received that an amount of \$1.0 million only has been approved as against a total allocation of \$50 million to the whole of Australia. This is a significant reduction in the absolute amount and the proportion of the Commonwealth total that the State has received in recent years; it would appear to be sadly disproportionate to the State's requirements."

This is a report from one of the Premier's own top officers, and I think we ought to take more notice of it. Government members ought to remind their Federal colleagues of the statements in their own Co-ordinator-General's annual report.

The other section of the report which I think is very important deals basically with Fraser Island. On page 17 of the report is the heading, "Wide Bay-Burnett Economic Structure Investigation". The final paragraph under that heading states—

"The study is expected to be completed by the end of August, 1976. As one of a series of similar studies which have been undertaken for other parts of the State, it will provide information relevant to future development."

That report has not yet seen the light of day. I understand that it has been sent to the Premier's office, and has stayed there. Right now, while consideration is given to employment on Fraser Island and in the Wide Bay area, I believe the report ought

to be made public and supplied to the Maryborough City Council, business houses and other people in the area. Let us have a look at it. If it contains recommendations which could bring some benefit to the workers of the area, let us go ahead and do something about it.

I have referred to the Co-ordinator-General and his report—that department comes within the Estimates under consideration because, as I said before, the new Co-ordinator-General has a major task in front of him. He will be responsible for making decisions or recommendations on assistance to local authorities through subsidies from the Government. I understand that those recommendations are rarely rejected. I understand also that Queensland is the only State in which a Co-ordinator-General's Department makes recommendations about State capital works programmes; that in other States this responsibility falls to the Treasury.

One of the worries I have is that somewhere along the line it was suggested that the Government—I think this was outlined in the last Liberal Party policy statement—would appoint within the local authorities grants commission a permanent committee to study the amount of money that was going to be made available not only from the Federal Government but from the \$5,000,000 that was made available at one stage and the \$3,500,000 at another stage, by the State Government for assistance to local authorities. I wonder what provision will be made now either to reduce the role of the Co-ordinator-General or to co-opt him into the scheme. I am not too sure exactly how the Government—I am referring to what was said in the Liberal Party section of the policy speech on 14 November—envisaged the role of the Co-ordinator-General in that particular area.

I wish to speak also about the regional co-ordination councils. I wonder why, when the initial grant of \$5,000,000 was made in 1975, distribution of the money was not made by regional co-ordination committees as part of a State's Grants Commission. On the same subject—I ask the Premier to advise whether the Co-ordinator-General's State public works programme is compiled on a regional basis. I ask these questions because I think it is accepted that the regional co-ordination councils are now a permanent part of our State local government structure.

This is not to say that there has not been criticism of regional councils. I think everyone who has had any involvement with local government in country areas would agree that there has been quite a lot of criticism of regional co-ordination councils. Generally the sort of criticism one runs into when one talks to local people is that these councils are too tame; that they produce all studies and no action; that they are only advisory and have no power over State and Federal Governments; and that local authorities always seem to have the worry about State

and Federal Governments having too much power over them. It was felt that perhaps the regional councils would give them some form of control. There is complete opposition to a public servant's chairing a meeting, and many believe that the regional co-ordinator should not get a vote at meetings of these councils.

While there has been criticism of these councils, not everyone has been critical. I believe these councils are starting to make some headway, for they have given many local government representatives a wider perspective and they are now looking at the region rather than just their own little local authority area. In my opinion, the scheme possesses a great deal of potential. Its administration under the Co-ordinator-General's Department has proceeded fairly smoothly and the regional co-ordinators have been well supported by the permanent head.

As my speaking time is running out, I can mention only briefly the Environmental Control Council. I wonder why I no longer receive its quarterly newsletter. It concerns me that up till the middle of last year I received that newsletter, which I thought was first class, but, although I have searched through my files, I have not been able to find one copy of that very valuable publication since then. If it has been scrapped, I am very sorry about that. Perhaps it is only that I have been removed from the mailing list. If so, I hope that my name will be put back on it.

I understand that this morning the Premier tabled an Order in Council on the Moreton Island inquiry. I have not yet had an opportunity of looking at it, but I presume that it appoints someone to replace Syd Schubert, who has resigned from the inquiry. It is to be hoped that he has been replaced by Mr. Peter Ellis of the Environmental Control Council, because I believe that he, with his experience in the Co-ordinator-General's Department, would be an ideal appointee to the inquiry.

While I am speaking about the co-ordination of environmental matters, I point out to the Committee that at least 74 Acts that relate to some aspects of conservation or environmental control are in force in Queensland. There is a list of these Acts, and probably it would be best for me to seek leave to table it; but let me simply mention the 11 departments that administer them. They are: Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement; Primary Industries; Mines and Energy; Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service; Harbours and Marine; Local Government; Water Resources; Attorney-General; Health; Transport; Police; and the Queensland Fisheries Service, which is not really a department. About 12 ministries are involved in environmental control. As the Co-ordinator-General's Department has a Director of Environmental Control isn't it time the Government got around to consolidating most of the environmental matters in this State into one area so that

people know where to find them? I find it very difficult to explain to people that under the Clean Waters Act or the Harbours Act, or some other Act, a certain discharge might be legal or illegal, or that a permit might have been obtained under those Acts. There ought to be one authority or one person they could go to to find out exactly which rules or laws apply to a particular matter.

One of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation is the State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974. It is commonly referred to as the Co-ordinator-General's Act, because no-one is going to read out the long title every time he wishes to refer to the Act; but it is administered by the Premier's Department. The Act establishes an Environmental Control Council the function of which is to continuously review and co-ordinate the state of the environment. It worries me that I cannot clearly see examples of the continuous review of the state of the environment.

I do not know Mr. Ellis—I suppose I have met him at a couple of functions—but I know that he lives fairly close to my electorate. Every now and then, when I receive a lot of complaints in my area about the smells from the pollution and the stink in the creeks, I say to the persons concerned, "Well, there is one public servant who has his after-hours phone number in the book. Why don't you ring up the Environmental Control Director?" So Mr. Ellis ought to know from now on who causes trouble for him some nights when he is being driven crazy with complaints. I suggest that somewhere along the line, after he has received a few of these complaints, he will agree with me that it is time we had in this State a 24-hour reporting service for pollution control, so that people who find themselves affected adversely by the foul and rotten odours of industries that are breaking the law—there is no doubt about that, because laws have been introduced to control them—will have someone to ring up. Having to ring at 9 a.m. after everything has been blown away by the morning breezes is unreal.

The Environmental Control Director should have some overriding control, some right to say to the Water Quality Council or the Air Pollution Council, or to some of the other authorities that administer the Acts, "It is time we took steps to protect the environment." If the function of the Environmental Control Council is to continuously co-ordinate and review the state of the environment, I should like to see a copy of the review of the state of the environment in the area between Morning-side or Balmoral Heights, where Mr. Ellis lives, and the mouth of the Brisbane River. I would be very pleased if that could be tabled during this debate.

(Time expired.)



**Mr. PORTER** (Toowong) (12.30 p.m.): In the Leader of the Opposition we have one of the great nit-pickers of all time. In this period when politics has never before been so polarised—never in Australian history have we been through such a series of great political events as have occurred in the last three years—what we get from him is a sort of scavenging expedition on a whole series of minor matters, a sort of trash-can operation. All these issues which have been trumpeted just now by the Leader of the Opposition were known of before recent general elections and by-elections; all of them have been adjudged and assessed by the electorate, and its judgment is a matter of history and cold statistics.

In the area of determination by the electorate, the points on which the Leader of the Opposition is trying so desperately to make capital have been thrown out by the electorate. People say, "These are not the important issues on which we should make up our minds to do certain things in certain ways." I said that the honourable gentleman "trumpeted" these issues. Perhaps that is a generous overstatement. He has a quite uncanny flair for saying only what is trivial and minor. If he had to play the last trump, he would make it come out something like a dirge played on a tin whistle.

There have been enormous issues over recent years; we have been through a very traumatic four years. I would imagine it to be a period which every historian in Australia from this point on will regard as the great watershed in Australian political, economic and social development. After the years we have just been through, politics in Australia will never be the same again. We have moved from a period when there was a quite deliberate and a very frenzied attempt to sweep the very notion of federalism into the gutters of history into a period where there is an intention—I say "intention" advisedly because I am not quite satisfied that the intent has been translated into fact—to regenerate a federal system. All the Leader of the Opposition can do is to keep to peanut-size, minimal, small matters, and apparently this makes him quite happy in the belief that he is discharging his obligations.

One thing is very certain: the events of recent times give us an opportunity which has probably never been known to us before in the same way to examine the role of a State Premier in terms of both the local and national scene. I do not think that ever before has a Premier loomed larger on the national scene than does our present Queensland Premier. I am not going to say that everybody likes him or that everybody agrees with what he does. He has many critics both at home and abroad. However, that does not deny the fact that never before, in both local and national terms, has a State leader loomed larger than does this one.

The plain fact is that in the last Federal election—the last major test we had—the Labor vote was only a shade over 36 per

cent; in other words, almost two-thirds of the people of Queensland supported the general propositions that the Premier embodied as the leader of our side of politics here. In the Lockyer by-election, which was the very latest opportunity for people to voice their attitudes and to demonstrate what they felt about the issues of the times—and traditionally by-elections provide the opportunity for people to voice any dissent and dissatisfaction, because they know they are not going to markedly affect the Government—when the preferences of the minor parties were distributed and the three major parties were left, the Labor vote was down to less than one-quarter.

This is almost unparalleled in political history, so I would imagine that nobody would deny that the Premier looms very large in the affairs of this State and this country. This explains the almost malevolent and vitriolic attacks that are made on him. Were he unimportant, nobody would bother. But his capacity to influence events attracts very violent criticism. Every action invites an equal reaction. We have seen it happen before. In my experience of politics I cannot recall another time when a State Premier loomed so large on the national scene.

In the past I have clashed with this Premier and, who knows, in the future I may well clash with him again, but this does not detract from the tribute I pay him that he, by his actions over recent years, was the rock on which the Whitlam grandiose dream of an Australian republic with all power in Canberra foundered.

I can well recall Alan Reid, who is accepted as the doyen of political commentators and journalists in this country, saying on a television programme about a year prior to the last Federal election and only a short time after the 1974 one that every time Mr. Whitlam (who is, shall I say, intoxicated with his own verbosity and intellectuality) tangled with the Queensland Premier, he was done like a dinner. Maybe there is a message in this for other Prime Ministers and party chieftains at the present time.

The whole of the Australian electorate, and in particular the Queensland electorate, owes the Premier a great debt of gratitude for the role that he played. I am very ready to pay him my tribute. At a very early stage, long before anybody else in authority was prepared to nail his colours to the mast, he assumed the role of protecting the States against the onward rush towards centralism. I think I was the first person on my side of politics in this State to come out in support of him, at a time when members of my party who are now very high in Federal parliamentary affairs were suggesting, "You mustn't do this. Labor has won the election and you have to go along with them. You have to cultivate the smile on the face of the crocodile." The Premier, however, was one of the few who realised early, as I did, that we have to

beware of the smile on the face of the crocodile, because all it ever aims to do is gobble us up.

I give a warning to my own party. In some quarters of it there seems to be the feeling that the whole concept of Liberal regeneration is tied up with being different from the Premier; that if he takes a certain attitude, the Liberal attitude must be different. I say to my party that there is no future in that at all. We Liberals must be clearly seen to be standing for the thing that the people want us to stand for. That is where our future lies. We had, if I might put it this way, a long winter of Liberal discontent when I chafed under the yoke of so many people believing that we on my side were aligning ourselves with Labor policies and that we regarded the Labor leaders as our true friends. I certainly chafed under it, so I was very glad to be able to associate myself with leadership that stood for the true values that both my party and the National Party stand for and that two-thirds of the people in this State stand for.

Recently I had the opportunity of attending on behalf of this Parliament the Constitutional Convention in Canberra. I was delighted at having the opportunity of being present on what should have been a significant and historic occasion. But I do not think it was significant and I doubt very much whether it was historic. As a matter of fact, at times I thought it had some elements of hysterics in it. There I said, and here I say again, that I have no intention of facilitating the passage of anything that directly or indirectly, that overtly or covertly works for the dilution of the federal principle. I don't give a toss which party is in power in which sphere, I have no intention of ever supporting any proposition which, no matter what may be its intention, tends to further exaggerate the imbalance in the theoretical Federal and State equal partnership.

I say to all Liberals and, for that matter, to all members of the National Party that we have to be very careful—very careful indeed—of appearing to deny with our hands what we profess with our lips. Voters are not stupid; they will soon see the real intention behind fair words. I have been in politics for well over 35 years and all my experience convinces me that whatever may be the political managerial problems facing Australia, they do not require wholesale changes in the Constitution to overcome them. Most changes mean introducing factors the result of which nobody can possibly foresee.

All that is promulgated so vigorously by the A.L.P. and the Left Wing about the Constitution being a horse-and-buggy document which is not applicable to modern times is nonsense. Indeed it is worse than nonsense because it is a smoke-screen behind which those who advocate change try to keep from view their true purpose in wanting change. The true purpose is to deny the federal

system (although some may voice support for it); to deny the equality of the partnership compact in our Federal Constitution; to continue tilting the factors of the Constitution so that power continues to flow to Canberra or, if it does not flow there, so that the big States of New South Wales and Victoria keep the edge that they have over the smaller States.

I, for one, was most distressed at the recent Constitutional Convention to note the number of occasions on which our Federal colleagues voted for Labor propositions and the consistency of the occasions on which our Victorian colleagues did so. I may be a purist of the old school, but we either believe in a thing and work for it or we do not believe in it. We should at least say where we stand and act accordingly.

When talking about the role of the Premier and that of the States in our federal system, I see no reason at all why the Constitution cannot be made to work effectively in the best interests of all the people of Australia. It does not need changes; all it needs is good will to make it work as it was intended that it should work. As a matter of fact, anybody who keeps proposing changes should be looked at and one should wonder what his real motive is. The people of Australia, through their massive reaction to referendum proposals down through the years, have certainly demonstrated that they are satisfied with the Constitution or, if they are not satisfied, that they are extremely apprehensive of the true motives of those who constantly seek change. It will be noted that it is always the Labor Party and the Left Wing that seek changes which, as I say, tilt the balance of power away from the federal compact.

We are often told that, because of the virtues of uniformity, we must change the federal system. I see no justification at all for the extraordinary, perverse passion that some people have for uniformity. What is so marvellous about the concept of having everything done in the same way, at the same time, throughout the length and breadth of the country? There may be a few areas where conformity is needed but I suggest that they are very few indeed.

Because the Premier has made it plain that this State stands for enduring values and does not go along with the proposition of change for the sake of change, we owe him our gratitude. I find it quite nonsensical to suggest that because we should have a national identity we must therefore achieve uniformity. That is ridiculous. Australia grew enormously over the last 50 to 70 years. We went through two world wars and we were able to act cohesively. To suggest that we could not act nationally because in some way we were not bound up together, with all power residing in Canberra, is ridiculous in the extreme.

I go so far as to say that far from there being any magic in uniformity, for its own sake, it would more likely be disastrously

counter-productive. I see tremendous virtue in individuality. What we should be doing in this State—and I think we do it to some degree—is encouraging regional, district and State variations over a whole range of matters that deeply concern every citizen. This enriches the national stature; most certainly it does not diminish it. People who want uniformity or conformity and want it by giving power to the Commonwealth Government to deny what is generated at the State level have a very sterile concept of what true national identity is.

As I said before, we must be careful of people who deny with their hands what they profess with their lips. This is one of the reasons why I totally support the Premier in his reaction to the Fraser Island decision. I am one of those who have long been deeply concerned at the ethics of sand-mining, so in that sense I am probably a little relieved to know that sand-mining will at least be diminished on Fraser Island or anywhere else. Having said that, let me say that the way in which the Federal Government did this fills me with fear, distrust and even loathing, because what the Federal Government has done is to use a constitutional power which has nothing to do with conservation in order to achieve a determination in a field which should be totally that of the State.

This is what Whitlam used to do ad infinitum. We condemned it then and I condemn it now because it is no more than a variation of the classic theme that the ends warrant the means. This has been the excuse for every petty tyranny that has existed from the time that man climbed out of the caves. If we accept that any means can be used because, in the view of the person employing the means, the ends are all important, we can get away with anything. It is totally and utterly wrong for this Federal Government or any Federal Government to use the power of the Australian Constitution to achieve an end which has no relation to the reality of the actual power.

If we allow the Commonwealth Government to get away with this with impunity, what will happen next? What power will it use next to deny a proper area of State sovereignty? Is it likely to make external affairs treaties with Japan under which only coal mined in New South Wales can be exported to Japan? It can do it if we accept this power. The notion that the Federal Government is sincere in wanting to see a regenerated federal system and its actions at the same time in doing those things just do not match. No wonder we are disturbed, confused, bewildered, dismayed and apprehensive. I think we are being absolutely proper in making it plain to our Federal colleagues at this point of time that we are deeply disturbed, and indeed we would be denying our responsibility to our electors if we did not, because now is the time to

nip this sort of operation in the bud. Let it go too far and it will be very difficult to stop.

Today the role of the States under the Federal system and the part that a Premier has to play are fraught with enormous responsibilities. I do not think that a Premier's role ever carried greater responsibility, not only in this State but also in all other States, than it carries at the present time. What happens in this country over the next few years will determine the shape of Australia for, I believe, a century to come.

It is in this area that I want to say a couple of things about the role that this State played in achieving a double dissolution in the Federal scene last year. It will be recalled that we replaced a deceased Labor senator with a Labor man; not a man who was acceptable to the Labor Party, because it did not want a Labor man (it wanted its nominee), but a Labor man.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. FRAWLEY** (Murrumba) (12.49 p.m.): I sincerely congratulate the Premier on the leadership he has given this State over the past few years.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** He has blood all over his hands.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** In reply, he is a great adversary of Communists and Left-wingers, who are the associates of the honourable member for Archerfield.

The best thing that ever happened was the acceptance of Whitrod's resignation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I indicate at the outset of this debate that references to police administration are not consistent with the Estimates under discussion.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I accept your ruling, Mr. Hewitt. I was provoked by the Opposition parrot.

The Leader of the Opposition again seized this opportunity to demonstrate his ability to read word for word a prepared brief that no doubt was given to him from the Trades Hall. He has constantly criticised the use of the Government aircraft and again today he failed miserably to convince anybody that this aircraft is not necessary. A State as large as Queensland can be covered adequately by the head of the Government only if he uses a private aircraft, because commercial flights do not always fit in with the busy itineraries of the Premier. Everybody knows that the Premier gives the people of Queensland the best representation ever given by a Queensland Premier. In the main, this is because he has the use of an aircraft.

This aircraft is not used exclusively by the Premier; it is used also by other Ministers. I can remember it being used on more than one occasion by Sir Gordon Chalk when he was Deputy Premier and it has also been used by other Ministers and other

people. I have never been in it myself because the location and size of my electorate do not warrant its use. But I can see its value not only to the Premier but to other members of this Parliament. When there have been disasters in Queensland, the Premier has been one of the first on the spot to assess for himself the extent of Government assistance needed. He is able to do this, too, only because he has the aircraft at his disposal. The Premier's actions contrast strongly with those of Mr. Whitlam when he came to Brisbane at the time of the floods in 1974. He would not even get out of the aircraft at Eagle Farm because he was frightened of getting his feet wet. That is why he was called the dry-foot leader.

The Leader of the Opposition criticised the cost of the State Public Relations Bureau, yet he himself has a staff of five paid by the Government. I do not disagree with that; I agree that the Leader of the Opposition should be given a private secretary, typists, and a driver. I have never been against that. But I should like to remind the Committee that until this Government came to office in 1957 the Leader of the Opposition, who was then a member of the Country Party, had exactly nothing. He drove his own car and he was given no assistance at all by some of the rotten Labor administrations in this State in those days. When Mr. Nicklin, later to become Sir Francis Nicklin, became Premier, the Leader of the Opposition was given a car and a driver. I am not against that.

**Mr. Lowes:** He wouldn't acknowledge it.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** That is right. He takes everything given to him but does not acknowledge it.

**Mr. Jensen:** Jack Duggan didn't get a car.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Rubbish! He got a car when Sir Frank Nicklin was Premier. That was one of the first things he did on gaining office. The honourable member for Bundaberg should wake up to himself or I shall not help him retain his seat at the next election. I have never disagreed with the provision of facilities of this type for the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition also should have a car. I would not oppose such a provision.

**Mr. Moore:** What about back-benchers?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** All the back-benchers on the Labor side could fit into one taxi, so there is no need to worry about cars for them.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Give him a sensible answer.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Perhaps they could have an old car and a trailer in which to carry some of their rubbish. The honourable member for Archerfield would be well versed in that.

Before leaving the subject of facilities for the Leader of the Opposition, I might make some further reference to the time before the present Government came to office. I was not here as a member then, but I worked in the House as a maintenance electrician. I can remember 12 Country Party members being stuck into one big room down below. A.L.P. members cannot complain now about the facilities that they enjoy at Parliament House. It is only because of the actions of the Premier and the Government that they enjoy some of the facilities that were denied to members of the coalition parties under Labor Governments. The honourable member for Townsville South could not even get a bed in The Lodge when the Labor Party was in power; he had to live at Marr's Guest House in Tank Street.

The Premier's actions were vindicated by the people's vote of confidence in the State Government at the 1974 election when the Labor Party was decimated. It now has a bare cricket team, and if anyone was hurt could not field a 12th man. I am quite convinced that the results of the next State election will again vindicate all the actions that have been taken by the Premier.

The A.L.P. has been afraid of the Premier for years, which is why it seizes every opportunity to criticise him and attempt to belittle him. In fact, the whole tenor of the A.L.P.'s opposition in this session of Parliament has been to criticise the Premier at every opportunity because A.L.P. members are deadly frightened of him and because they know he is an opponent of Left Wingers and Communists, who, as we all know, are associated with the A.L.P. In fact, the A.L.P. has been infiltrated by the Socialist Workers' League, which will take it over at any time.

The Premier should also be congratulated on the leadership that he showed this State when Gough Whitlam tried to work a dirty deal in the Senate by promoting Vince Gair to the position of Ambassador to Ireland in order to create a vacancy and an opportunity to work some swifly to get control of the Senate. The Premier was just too smart for him over that. In fact, every time I think of the A.L.P. referring to the Premier as the "Flying Peanut", I say, "Yes, but he made a monkey out of Gough, don't forget that." He made a very smart move when he appointed a true Labor man, Albert Field, as a senator, and I congratulate him for that.

I heartily supported him on that occasion, and I would do so again. I did so at the Constitutional Convention held recently in Hobart, when the former Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, severely castigated Queensland for its actions in appointing Albert Field as a senator. We also saw one of Don Dunstan's cohorts—I believe he was the South Australian Attorney-General—severely criticise the Premier and the Queensland Government for their actions in

appointing Albert Field as the replacement senator when Bert Milliner passed away. I think we should treat like with like—

**Mr. Jensen:** The Clerk of the Senate criticised him, too, for what he did. Did you read that?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I did read that, but I am not in the least interested in what the Clerk of the Senate said; I am interested in what this Parliament did. We did the right thing, and we will do it again. When we appointed Albert Field to fill the Senate vacancy, we did to Whitlam exactly what he tried to do to us. I believe in doing to others what they would do to us, but, for God's sake, let us try to do it to them first so that they will not get the opportunity to do it to us.

Recently at a Labor college seminar the Queensland University Lecturer in Government, Mr. K. E. Wiltshire, said that a public accounts committee should be appointed and that it should be chaired by an Opposition member. What a load of rubbish! Fancy having an Opposition member chairing any committee in this place. I well remember that when we had members of the Opposition on the Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence in Queensland, they could not even make an honest decision. Before they even sat on the committee, they were instructed to vote against anything, so how the devil could we have a public accounts committee chaired by a member of the Opposition? I am not against a member of the Opposition being a member of a committee, but I am certainly against any of them being appointed chairman.

Mr. Wiltshire also criticised the facilities of the parliamentary library by saying that back-bench members of Parliament should have research facilities, and that they could not be expected to debate a Budget properly unless they had research assistance.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I am sorry, but I must remind the honourable member that parliamentary facilities and members' emoluments are not covered by the Estimates under consideration.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** With all due respect, Mr. Hewitt, I did think that the parliamentary library came into this.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I acknowledge the honourable member's error, but it is an error.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I beg your pardon—

**Mr. Jensen** interjected.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I have always said that Mr. Hewitt is a very fair chairman. On every occasion he reminds me that I have transgressed, I thank him, and I promise I will not do it again.

In the Premier's Estimates we find provision for many miscellaneous services such as a grant of \$20,000 to the Standards Association of Australia. This is a very necessary

association in our society because it draws up standards for electrical installations, building codes and so on.

The total cost of the Constitutional Committee for the year is shown as \$8,000. I think this was money well spent, because I firmly believe we must attend the Constitutional Convention whenever we can, except, of course, on occasions such as the one in 1974 when the meeting, as we all know, was rigged by Gough Whitlam. I think we should attend all meetings of the Constitutional Convention, regardless of where they are held in Australia, so that we can put forward Queensland's point of view.

I agree with what the honourable member for Toowong has said on this subject. I would like to congratulate him on the brilliant address he gave at the Convention in Hobart. As one of the people who attended the Convention, I would like to say that Queenslanders acquitted themselves very well indeed. We were defeated on more than one occasion, but at least we had the courage to stand on our feet and debate all questions that had to be debated. We did not have one of our members rise and call "divide" and then, when the time came to be counted, creep away like a big carpet snake, as did the South Australian Attorney-General. When we were debating some issue he called out "divide" to try to put us on the mat, and then when the time came to be counted, he slunk away.

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

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** A very important Act administered by the Premier's Department is the Queensland Coast Islands Act, which was assented to on 24 June 1879. It is the Act that gave the Torres Strait islands to Queensland, and it provided that certain islands in Torres Strait lying between the Continent of Australia and New Guinea should become part of the Colony of Queensland. Ever since then, the Torres Strait Islanders have been under the protection of Queensland.

There has been more than one attempt to give away, or virtually give away, the Torres Strait islands to New Guinea. The Whitlam Government attempted to alter the border between Queensland and New Guinea; now we are having a similar problem with the Liberal-National Country Party Government in Canberra, which for some reason—perhaps to appease Papua New Guinea—is endeavouring to change the border. In my opinion, the Premier is to be congratulated on the stand he has taken on the Torres Strait islands border issue.

The Premier is the leader of a Government that is and always has been dedicated to preserving the right of individual Queenslanders to make their own decisions about their future. The Premier, in this place, has led the fight for States' rights, and it is a fight that concerns all Queenslanders who

prize their individual freedom. Even as far back as 1896, when the Australian Federation Enabling Bill was introduced in State Parliament, Queenslanders were very conscious of States' rights. Even then, some members were very concerned about the rights of Queenslanders, and it is quite safe to say that this State has had its rights preserved over the years that the Premier has been in office.

If the Premier did not lead the fight for States' rights, we would soon find ourselves under a socialist dictatorship where everything would be under the control of the Federal Government and States such as Queensland would have no say in their future. Indications of that have been given in this Chamber by some honourable members opposite. I recall a motion being put up at the Labour-in-Politics Convention in Cairns to have a referendum held in Queensland with a view to doing away with the State and placing Queensland under Federal control. That was on the agenda for that meeting, and I have a copy of the agenda.

**Mr. Houston:** Why don't you produce it?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I did produce it once before. If I am not careful, the Chairman will pull me up for transgressing.

Another very important Act administered by the Premier's Department is the City of Brisbane (North Pine River Dam) Act, and I have spoken in this Chamber on many occasions about the rotten, unethical treatment of the people of my electorate living in Dayboro, Samsonvale and Petrie by the Brisbane City Council in acquiring land for the North Pine River Dam.

**Mr. Houston:** What did your Government do about it?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Unfortunately, the Government handed over the building of the North Pine River Dam to the Brisbane City Council. The Government has made very few mistakes, but it did make that one. It has shown that it realises the dangers of such a mistake by keeping the construction of the Wivenhoe Dam under Government control.

To return to the North Pine River Dam—the catchment of the dam lies virtually wholly in the electorate of Murrumba and, as I said, the people in that area have certainly had a rotten deal from the Brisbane City Council over the years. Some people have virtually been forced off their land. The Premier has tried to do something about it—I have led more than one deputation to him about it—but unfortunately the Government's hands were tied because it had handed over the control of the dam to the Brisbane City Council.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I am advised that the North Pine River Dam project is not under the control of the Co-ordinator-General. Therefore, I must disallow discussion on it.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I am sorry, Mr. Hewitt, but it says here that the City of Brisbane (North Pine River Dam) Act is administered by the Premier's Department.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Committee is debating the Premier's Estimates and any Estimates under his portfolio, including those for the Co-ordinator-General's Department. The Co-ordinator-General does not administer the North Pine River Dam.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Hewitt. Once again you have put me on the right track. You are a credit to the Chair.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I appreciate the ready co-operation of the honourable member for Murrumba with my rulings.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Hewitt.

The Opposition takes every opportunity to denigrate the Premier and other Cabinet Ministers. We are indeed fortunate that we have a Premier who has been prepared to stand up against all the criticism and abuse that he has received from Opposition members in this Chamber. One would think that, being true Queenslanders, or professing to be true Queenslanders, they would support the Premier occasionally. Unfortunately, the Premier has been left to fight, with the assistance of Government members—and that is a blot on the record of the A.L.P. in this State—on all the issues of States' rights and the Torres Strait islands. At the Constitutional Convention in Hobart, A.L.P. delegates constantly voted against everything put up by the Government of Queensland. At no time did we get any support from the A.L.P. delegates.

**Mr. Jensen:** The Premier will get our support against Fraser.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** We may need some support, especially on the Fraser Island issue. I hope to speak about that at great length, but not in the debate on these Estimates. It does not come under these Estimates.

**Mr. Moore:** Of course it does. The Premier is titular head of the State.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I have been corrected on more than one occasion in this debate, and I have to bow to your wishes, Mr. Hewitt. However, I do not intend to discuss Fraser Island today.

I can find no fault with the spending of any of the money allocated in these Estimates. I can find no fault with the spending of money by the State Public Relations Bureau or in the cost of running the Government aircraft, which is a very necessary facility for the Premier. I would support the running of a Government aircraft even if the Premier happened to be a Labor man. God forbid! I do not think that will ever

happen again. I think the day of the true Labor man has gone, and I do not think that the people of Queensland will ever support any of the types we now see in the Opposition.

**Mr. PREST** (Port Curtis) (2.22 p.m.): I would like to speak about the Co-ordinator-General's Department and the Gladstone Area Water Board. Some years ago that board was set up to provide water for the citizens of Gladstone at a price comparable with that which was then being paid and to ensure that Gladstone and district had sufficient water to meet the needs of the ratepayers and industry in the event of an expansion of industry and population.

Recently a committee of businessmen wrote to the Co-ordinator-General's Department expressing their concern about the future price of water. Unfortunately the reply they received was not acceptable to them. They still have a problem that they want solved as to the future price of water in Gladstone.

In the past the ratepayers of Gladstone and district received very cheap water. I cannot comment on the price charged to industry. This year the price charged by the Gladstone City Council for water has increased from \$45 to \$85 a year. The Gladstone Area Water Board has brought down a price of 5.5c a kl; for next year it will be 7c a kl, and in 1978-79 it will be 8c a kl. A question arose as to the future of the ratepayers in the district beyond that year. Agreement has been reached between the council and the water board that it should pass over its assets and liabilities, and as from 1979 the price of water will be arbitrated, but it will not go beyond the highest rate charged for water in any shire or council area with a population in excess of 10,000. Gladstone has gone from a cheap water rate in 1975-76 to what will be the highest rate in Queensland in 1979-80.

The board will spend \$8,700,000 in this coming year on the Gladstone and district water supply; but this is only a flea-bite compared with what is to be spent. Although the first stage will not go as far as was originally envisaged, it will still cost \$27,000,000. The total cost will be in the vicinity of \$45,000,000.

I am concerned at the fact that the Gladstone Area Water Board is engaging in deficit budgeting. Last year it showed a loss of \$252,500 and this year it has budgeted for a deficit of \$500,000. Unless the area experiences a population boom and a large increase in industrial activity creating a greater demand for water, the board will have to carry a heavy financial burden.

The committee of businessmen is asking: what happens if the Auditor-General decides that the deficit carried by the Gladstone Area Water Board is too high and should be wiped out? The committee is concerned at the prospect of the board's charging high

prices for water after 1979-80. The people of my area want the position resolved, just as I do.

Water is, of course, a very important commodity. A plentiful supply is necessary in the area to enable industry to be established there. However, as the benefits from increased population and industrial activity will flow ultimately to the Government, it should play an important part in meeting the cost of construction of the Awoonga Dam.

To turn to another matter—I am disappointed at the way regional councils operate. I have in mind particularly the Fitzroy Regional Council. The idea was hailed as one that would work wonders, and in fact it did. Regional councils did for small areas things that could never have been done by the shire councils alone. I am sure that, while the regional councils were funded by the Federal Government, everyone praised their establishment.

Recently I attended meetings at Bauhinia and Duaranga. Duaranga, in close proximity to the Blackwater mines, experiences very little trouble; Bauhinia, in the Springsure area, on the other hand, faces serious problems. The roads in the area are in a deplorable state.

We enjoyed the function that was arranged on the evening of my visit. However, next morning we got down to the nitty-gritty. It was obvious from the outset that at that meeting, attended by councillors who had travelled hundreds of miles, motions that would have the effect of slapping jam on the face of the Government would not be accepted. We were told that such motions would not be accepted "because the boss would not want them." I do not know who "the boss" is, nor am I interested. I believed that regional councils were set up to work in the interests of the shires in their region and they were in fact doing so. If they become political—and "the boss does not like it"—we are wasting our time and it will be an utter waste of money.

I was told the other day that the meeting held in Rockhampton a couple of weeks ago was more abortive than the one held at Bauhinia. I understand that the members who attended that meeting are not members of the Australian Labor Party. They are the chairmen of the various shire councils, who, in the main, are members of the National and Liberal parties. But they, too, were disgusted with the treatment they received at these meetings. I should like the Co-ordinator-General's Department to look closely at these regional councils and put them back on the right footing. They were formed to help the areas. While they were doing that, they did a very good job.

I join with other honourable members in thanking members of the department for the work that they have done. In the short time that I have been in Parliament I have not had very much to do with them, but

my predecessor always said that departmental heads do a wonderful job and I would never doubt his word.

I join with the Premier in wishing Sir Charles Barton a very long, happy retirement. A man who has been so conspicuous for his hard work deserves a very good retirement.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD** (Toowoomba North) (2.32 p.m.): In rising to speak to these Estimates, I congratulate the Premier on the marvellous work he has done in preserving for Queensland those things which rightfully belong to the State. Nothing deserves to be more closely guarded against than the erosion of State rights and duties.

As long ago as 1868, when the coast islands and waters Act was mooted, a letter patent was issued by Queen Victoria over the whole of the east coast of Australia (then known in Britain as New South Wales) whereby the Governor of New South Wales was empowered to issue licences and impose conditions and regulations permitting the islands to be mined.

Initially, in New South Wales, the islands could be mined only for guano. It is interesting to note that by the time Queensland received its letters patent in 1872, the Governor, in being granted powers similar to those issued to New South Wales, had the right to issue leases and other dispositions for a term of years over any of the islands up to 60 miles off the coast. He had the right to issue licences authorising any person or persons designated therein to take minerals, guano or any fertilising substance, or other produce, for example, timber, from the said islands.

As those rights were granted to the State of Queensland in 1872 (and were later enacted by this State), they have vested in the Premier of this State over a period of 103 to 104 years power to regulate mining and timber-getting. It is very interesting that the Commonwealth Government should now be attempting, through powers vested in it, to restrict Queensland's sovereign rights to mine or extract timber from our offshore islands. The State clearly had a pre-existing right to carry out the activities of mining and extracting timber from the islands long before the Commonwealth was mooted. In fact, it had this right when the founding fathers of the Commonwealth were hopping around in their little baby baskets.

**Mr. Moore:** They should have gone down with the bath water.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** Maybe they should have been set adrift down the River Nile.

The modern-day centralists in Canberra are seeking to control all these things from Canberra. They are trying very hard to limit the powers of the States in this field.

It is curious to note also that in 1878 certain islands were to be annexed to Queensland. They included, of course, the

Torres Strait islands as far north as Saibai and Dauan, which was then known as Tuan. It is very important that people realise that the Torres Strait islands dispute does not revolve round the migratory lives of the people of the islands or their traditional homelands, but round minerals. That was clearly spelt out in 1872 when Queensland—and Queensland alone—had sovereignty over the mineral rights in those waters.

We need an increased amount of money expended by the Premier's Department each and every year to see that these rights are not eroded by the Commonwealth Government or any other power or faction within the country or by any overseas Government. Recently it was decided that mining on Fraser Island should be brought to an abrupt end by the Commonwealth use of the power it has in export matters.

In those early days Queensland clearly had the right to export products from the islands, be they guano or timber. Later on, from 1872, it had the right to export any minerals extracted from an island. It is very difficult for the Commonwealth to fully justify on constitutional grounds its right to ban the export of these minerals. These rights have always belonged to the State and, if this right can be removed or interfered with in any way, one wonders just where Commonwealth/State relationships will lead to.

I think it is true to say that the mining rights on Fraser Island were granted by this Government and that the mining company has invested a great deal of money in developing its rights. When Mr. Connor was a Minister of the Federal Labor Government, it was mooted that these rights of export could be lost. Mr. Connor opposed that suggestion, but he did not remain as Commonwealth Minister for Mines and Energy for very long.

The offshore islands dispute, particularly concerning the Torres Strait islands, has come about in a most peculiar fashion. People have been treated in one fashion, the land above high-water mark in another fashion, and the lands beneath the sea in yet another fashion. Perhaps the Commonwealth Government is trying to offer overseas aid to Papua New Guinea in giving it some rights to the undersea lands which it claims that the State Government does not have. This is, of course, not for the sake of a few trochus shells or coral polyps; it is for the oil that might or might not be beneath the waters of the Torres Strait.

I would like the Queensland Government, in budgeting for next year, to set aside specific amounts of money to enable it to carry on the battle over mining rights and offshore island rights so that the people of Queensland, be they on Fraser Island, on the mainland or on the Torres Strait islands, can be protected in the way they have become accustomed to over the past 100 years.



Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (2.40 p.m.): Mr. Hewitt—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Now we will hear some sense.

Mr. MOORE: There is no doubt about that.

In rising to speak to the Estimates of the Premier's Department, I point out that Estimates are never set out in chapter and verse so that a person can find the detailed spending of every department. That applies not only to the Premier's Estimates but to all Estimates. Whilst the Auditor-General audits the accounts of all departments, the Premier's included, it is very difficult for anyone to see in detail how every last dollar was allocated and spent. When I worked for the Railway Department, I worked on jobs that were financed from loan funds and on other jobs that were financed from revenue. There were many jobs paid for from revenue that should have been carried out with loan funds, and vice versa. That applies in all departments over the length and breadth of Queensland.

When we debate Estimates, we really debate the total amount of money spent. That is about all we can really do because details of allocation and expenditure are not available. Generally speaking, annual reports are not in the hands of members in sufficient time to permit close study and, in any case, all the information required cannot be gleaned from reading annual reports. Further probing is needed to ascertain how every dollar was spent.

I can recall working in the Railway Department at the time of quadruplication of the line from Roma Street to Corinda. I remember doing a job at Caboolture and booking it to, "Loan Account, quadruplication, Roma Street to Corinda." The job was in fact done at Caboolture. I know of other jobs being booked to Loans Suspense Account when they were in fact done in Cairns. One would never find such expenditures listed in the Estimates. My few remarks today will therefore be directed to the Premier's Department and Estimates.

The Premier's responsibilities are very great. I do not propose to go through them all. I see that you, Mr. Hewitt, are looking a little askance as if to say, "I wonder what this fellow is going to speak about? I wonder whether I should pull him into gear?" Although every item of expenditure does not appear under a subtitle in the Estimates, there has to be an allocation for the administration of every Act within a Minister's portfolio. Although all details do not appear in the documents in front of us, there has to be a Vote for carrying out each of the Premier's responsibilities. If there were no Vote, it would have to be a matter of getting manna from heaven or finding some other way of paying the accounts. I make those few remarks to forestall your calling me to order, Mr. Hewitt.

Mr. Frawley: Does that mean that I can now have another go?

Mr. MOORE: It does not. It means that the honourable member is too dumb as a debater to know Standing Orders.

I commend the Premier, as nominal head of this State, on being a shining light for the rest of the Premiers in Australia. Before federation he would have been called the Prime Minister, because that was then the title of the head of State. Another thing in his favour is that he is game to stand up and be the odd man out, and to take all the ridicule and questioning that comes his way.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: He gets plenty of that.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, he does; but the man who has never broken an axe handle has never chopped wood. There is nothing wrong with what the Premier does. I have the greatest admiration for him. That does not mean that I agree with everything he does. In the joint-parties room we have had a bit of an altercation on one or two occasions but that does not take away my admiration for him as a good Queenslander and a man who has Queensland at heart.

In about 1899 or 1900, there was a special meeting of Parliament to debate the Federation Enabling Act. This was just prior to federation. The Premiers of those days—or the Prime Ministers; they could be called by either name—felt that their rights were being whittled away. This is what I am talking about when I refer to the Premier's feeling for States' rights, that they should not be whittled away, and yet they are being whittled away day by day. In the debates prior to federation, generally speaking, the delegates were quite parochial. They just spoke about unfair trade practices and competition between States. They also talked about revenue that would be lost if the States could not impose customs duties on the various goods that crossed the borders. But then it was realised that if States did not receive any customs duties, at least they were not paying any. In other words, those who would normally be paying customs duties would not have to pay them, and even though the State would not obtain any revenue, traders would not lose and thus would have much more money to put into their businesses and so on.

The States had always been worried about revenue, and they felt that because the sugar industry had always been a very good industry in this State, a bounty of a farthing per lb. on the domestic price of sugar would overcome the disadvantages of federation. It was also said that there would be no increases in taxation. Many of those who were against federation were somewhat parochial in the debates and favoured property franchise but not the adult franchise which we have today.

But what I ask the Premier to do in the future is to really look after the State. When we had State taxation, we had some control of our own affairs; but when in time of war the States decided to have uniform taxation, they found how easy it was to give something away, but that it is jolly difficult to recover it. It should be remembered that the State now receives by way of Commonwealth reimbursement only 33 or 34 per cent of the taxes collected from this State, whereas the Commonwealth retains two-thirds, and that this percentage represents only about 33 per cent of what we were receiving at the time of federation.

It is true that one of the reasons for federation was to create one cohesive nation and that it was felt that, while people might call themselves Queenslanders, in the overall context they would consider themselves to be Australians. It was felt necessary for a single body to control defence, trade, the telegraph and the carriage of mail, while the States retained all other rights. There was talk that the Commonwealth should take over the railways, but the Premiers of the time said, "No; there is no point in that. If we can't run them at a profit, how is any other body going to run them at a profit?" I would like to think that, even though South Australia and Tasmania have decided to hand over their railways to the Commonwealth, at future Premier's Conferences we will take a stand about this sort of thing and that, even if we have sewage running down the middle of our streets and we cannot control it or our railways are running into the ground, we just do not hand over responsibility to another body simply because we cannot handle the problem at the time. The day we start to hand over any responsibility is the day we give away our own powers. I do not really need to remind the Premier of that. He does not dodge a fight, and he knows better than to give anything away. He knows better than to give away bad smells and retain the perfumes. He accepts responsibility for the bad as well as the good, and I am very pleased that he does that.

At the recent Constitutional Convention in Hobart, this State stood out alone, and I commend the Premier for his attitude and his leadership on that occasion. However, I think it is necessary for him to consider the problem of having the Constitution amended to draw a line between the Commonwealth and the States and remove the section of the Constitution which now provides that, where the Commonwealth has counterpart legislation, that legislation shall take precedence and override State legislation. The situation must be considered very carefully because almost every Bill passed by the Federal House whittles away some of the power of the States. Probably the States lost about 10 per cent of their power at federation, leaving them with about 90 per cent. Now they have only about 33 per cent of the power they had originally. Things

are pretty bad, and I hope that the Premiers will get together and ensure that States retain their identity.

The Metric Conversion Act is also administered by the Premier. This State stood out and went it alone in opposing daylight saving because it did not suit Queensland, and I backed the Premier whole-heartedly on that decision. With hindsight, I think Queensland should have adopted a similar attitude to metric conversion, although the Commonwealth probably would have passed some overriding law on it. The metric system has some advantages, of course. In accountancy, for example, instead of using 12d. to the shilling and 20s. to the £ in calculations, it is now only a matter of moving a decimal point. It might make for easy conversion by computers and other mechanical devices that operate in tens, but I do not think it increases a person's brainpower. I do not mind it so much in the currency, and perhaps it may be of advantage in the long term. However, when every last thing is subject to conversion, I prefer a dual system. Whereas tyre pressures were in lb. per square inch, they are now in kilopascals, and most people do not know what that means. People were taught to think in a certain way, and aged people, in particular, in Queensland are not going to take the trouble to learn how to convert quickly to the metric system. From now till they meet their Maker, they will continue to think in feet, inches, pounds, and so forth. I should have liked this State to retain a dual system and say, "We don't mind metrication but we want it introduced over a long term. We do not want it forced upon the people when they do not really understand it and they will continue thinking along the old lines."

Another matter that comes within the Premier's portfolio is the election of senators to fill casual vacancies. Queensland has a reputation for going it alone and doing things that other States consider irregular. We did that with the appointment of Senator Field, which was not made along party lines.

Mr. Lowes interjected.

Mr. MOORE: It was only because the Opposition was not prepared to give us a panel of names.

I recently read the debate on the Federation Enabling Act. The suggestion was made that the senators should not be elected by popular vote but by those who have property. However, it was said—

"There is one safeguard that we will have. We will have Queensland senators down in that House. There will be six from each colony, and the State's rights will be preserved. Irrespective of what the Parliament moves, if necessary the Senate will be able to counter it."

I should like to think that the Premier would invite Queensland senators to this Parliament at a time when the Senate is not sitting.

They could sit in the distinguished visitors' gallery and hear the debate and note the thoughts, fears, frustrations and aims of members of this Parliament. They could then go back to Canberra and vote as Queensland statesmen. The Senate was never designed to be a party House. It is only by evolution that it has become that. That should not have been allowed to happen.

We want Queensland senators in Canberra to represent us on the Torres Strait border issue. We want them to lobby other senators so that the State's wishes are acceded to.

We do not want to have a report preventing the export of rutile simply because it comes from Fraser Island. An investigation was carried out as to whether Fraser Island should be mined, not whether the island should be mined for rutile in conjunction with a sensible attitude towards conservation. The investigation should have been on the basis of sand-mining so that a minimum area of land was made bare in order that Queensland and Australia could obtain revenue, with an improved balance of payments, and to keep good Queenslanders in work, but with proper rehabilitation by the planting of the right sort of trees such as blackbutt, which will grow well in that type of country, so that in 30 or 40 years it would not be apparent that the land had been sand-mined.

That is the sort of thing our senators ought to be doing. They should not be down there merely as Liberal Party senators, National Party senators or Labor Party senators. They are down there as representatives of the State as a whole. They should be expressing the views of the State House; but they are not doing that. The Whitlams and others say, "Oh, here we have a convention." It is a convention that should never have come about. The Senate was never designed to be what it is. It was never designed to be a party House; it was designed to be representative of and for the benefit of Queensland, so that the State would retain its entity and the Commonwealth Government would be one authority to bind the States together for the common weal in matters of defence and communications and various other things that need to be standardised.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. TENNI** (Barron River) (3 p.m.): It is with the greatest of pleasure that I speak to the Premier's Estimates. At the outset I congratulate him on the increase of \$289,000, or only 9 per cent increase, in the sum required this year by the Chief Office over its expenditure last year. In view of the rate of inflation that was inflicted on us last year by the Labor socialist regime in Canberra, the increase is very minor indeed.

**Mr. Marginson:** Is it true that you are his bodyguard?

**Mr. TENNI:** The honourable member for Wolston made an interjection.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I suggest that it be treated in the way it deserves.

**Mr. TENNI:** Thank you very much, Mr. Hewitt.

I listened with interest to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the official aeroplane. It is hard to imagine how he could make such stupid statements as he did. Perhaps he is not aware that the aircraft has a seating capacity of eight passengers and on many occasions carries a full load of Cabinet Ministers or departmental heads to the far-flung areas of the State.

The return air fare from Brisbane to Cairns is approximately \$200. For eight persons the total cost is in the vicinity of \$1,600. I am quite sure that the Government aircraft can transport eight persons from Brisbane to Cairns and return for a lot less than \$1,600. Unfortunately, however, this message is not got across to the people. They tend to think that the Government aircraft is a plane with two engines and only one person on board. How stupid!

It is about time that members of the Opposition woke up to themselves and realised that, as the result of the policies of the socialist regime that was in office in Canberra for three years, air services to the Outback were cut to a minimum. To certain parts of the State, the only means of access is by light aircraft. Our Premier represents not just the people who live in those areas serviced by commercial aircraft but all the people of the State. He is entitled to visit them and to see at first hand the problems confronting them whenever he wishes.

It is about time that the Leader of the Opposition thought about the stupid statements that he and his colleagues give to the Press. The Government aircraft is an essential item, just as the car and chauffeur provided by the Government for the Leader of the Opposition are essential to him. Just as his car is a means of transport for him, so, too, is the official aeroplane a means of transport for the Premier and the Ministers.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the official aeroplane was used fairly extensively on trips between Brisbane and Kingaroy. How does the Leader of the Opposition travel from Parliament House to his home? Does he hire a taxi? Or does he use the car that is provided for him by the Government? We all know that he uses the car provided for him. It is hypocritical of him to kick the Premier in the backside for using the official aeroplane when he uses his official car. As Leader of the Opposition, he is entitled to use the car provided for him by the Government. Likewise, the Premier and other members of Cabinet are entitled to use the aircraft.

**Mr. Gibbs:** The people of Queensland are entitled to service from the Premier whenever they like it.

**Mr. TENNI:** Of course they are. As I said before, there is no better way of travelling round the State. A car could be used, of course, but as the Premier is such a busy man he does not have time to drive to the distant areas of Queensland. He must be able to travel from point A to point B in the shortest possible time.

Queensland is fortunate in having as the Premier's wife a woman who is both charming and capable. She works tirelessly for the State—at no cost to the taxpayers. The Premier is indeed a very lucky man to have as his wife a woman who is keen to go out among women, and other people as well, and see for herself the problems that confront them. All of us know how hard she works, how often she is away from home, and how quite often it is inconvenient for her to do this. Like her husband, she believes that it is essential to be aware of the problems confronting the people of this State. I congratulate her on her splendid efforts and the assistance she renders to our Premier.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition make a further silly statement, namely, that Wiley Fancher could not lift the lid off a 20c money-box. Isn't it about time the Leader of the Opposition realised that people in the cattle country are in trouble and that Wiley Fancher is one of them? Isn't it about time that we got the message to him that the cattle people have problems? There are only a few cattle stations that could lift the lid off a 20c money-box! The Leader of the Opposition should not be a centralist. Let him get out and become aware of the problems confronting people in the country, including those on stations.

**Mr. Glasson:** He could not care less.

**Mr. TENNI:** That is dead right. He was born a centralist and he is a centralist at heart. He is a member of a centralist party.

The Premier controls the Co-ordinator-General's Department. All honourable members who have dealt with that department know that it is an excellent department, with great capabilities and know-how. The work done by it is vital to the State. I congratulate the department on the work it carries out and I congratulate Sir Charles Barton on the splendid work that he did over the years. I wish him a long and interesting retirement. I also congratulate Mr. Schubert on his promotion. I sincerely hope that he follows in Sir Charles Barton's footsteps so that we may look forward to the department entering bigger and brighter fields.

The Public Service Board is another very big department looked after by the Premier.

I am sure that all honourable members with any brains will agree that the Premier fights for the people of Queensland at each

Premiers' Conference. He does not care which party is in power in Canberra. Whether it is a socialist regime led by Gough Whitlam or the Liberal-National Country Party Government led by Mr. Fraser, he fights for the people of Queensland and to hell with those he upsets. He looks after the people of this State and he is doing a marvellous job for them.

In my two years in this Assembly I have found that all officers in the Premier's Department—not only the Premier, but his private secretary, press secretary and all the capable people under him—have been very helpful. It is wonderful to be able to pick up the phone 1,200 miles from Brisbane, contact a particular person in the Premier's Department and get an on-the-spot decision. The people of the Outback want satisfaction on the spot. Knowing that they are broke, cattle people do not want others like the Leader of the Opposition telling them that they cannot lift the lid off a 20c money-box. They want straight, common-sense answers, and that is what we get from the capable men and women who work in the Premier's Department.

One of the Premier's attributes that stand him in good stead is his guts. I say "guts", because that word expresses just what he has. He is not frightened to say what he thinks is right for the majority. That is what we should all do. When he knows that something is right, he will fight, if necessary, to protect a particular person or a particular thing. But when it is wrong, he says so and that is how we should act. Having that attitude, we can lie straight in bed at night. I do not know how members of the Opposition at times lie in bed.

The Premier's handling of the Torres Strait islands issue and the Aurukun turn-out are fine examples of his ability. We heard how the fellows on the Labor benches felt on these two subjects, but the Premier knew what he was doing, just as he did when Gough Whitlam was in power. Gough took him on and he took Gough on and who won? Not Gough Whitlam; not once did he win.

A while ago the honourable member for Windsor said, "You don't get rid of the bad smell." Sometimes I wonder about that when I look to my right and remember certain statements made by certain Opposition members, particularly the honourable member for Archerfield.

**Mr. Gibbs:** They're really not on your right; they're on the left, aren't they?

**Mr. TENNI:** He is so Left that he has caught up with himself going the other way.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And even his expenses do not come under these Estimates.

**Mr. TENNI:** I am sorry, Mr. Hewitt.

When the Premier makes a statement it is most important that the Press report him correctly instead of listening to people like the honourable member for Archerfield, who distorts the Premier's statements. In doing that, the Press are completely unethical and are certainly not doing the right thing by the Premier or by the people of the State, whom he represents.

If this time next year we can have very straightforward Estimates put before us showing a minimum increase as we see in these Estimates today—it is about 9 per cent and, considering inflation, that is a marvellous achievement—this State and this country will benefit greatly.

**Mr. WARNER** (Toowoomba South) (3.12 p.m.): In rising to speak to these Estimates, I make no apology for what I am going to say in front of the Premier, because I say it with all my heart. The Premier has administered this State and its affairs with unequalled ability. Over recent years no man has loomed as large as this Premier in both State and Federal politics.

**Mr. Moore:** Head of a good team, you should say.

**Mr. WARNER:** Certainly the head of a good team.

No Premier has fought so consistently for Queensland and for Australia, as the head of a good team. No Premier is more talked about, misunderstood or revered than he is. This whole nation owes him a great debt of gratitude, as I do personally. We can breathe again because of his stand against the previous Labor Federal Government and decisions to turn us in one way or another into a republic. Those who take his words lightly today—and I refer to those who do so in the present Federal Government—should take notice of what he says, as it was he who gave the Federal Government its charter or opportunity to govern Australia.

I am truly amazed at the decision of the Federal Government to ban sand-mining on Fraser Island, the interference that has led to such a lot of misunderstanding at Aurukun—and nobody can say that we have not had a lot of misunderstanding—and, of more importance, the Torres Strait border issue, which is to come up and will keep coming up as long as we keep fighting. They are all matters that could have been avoided. Each of those issues is a Queensland issue and should have been left to this State. The Queensland Government should have been allowed to govern in its own right and to settle each of those issues as it saw fit.

The Premier fought these matters when the Labor administration was trying to impose its centralist policies on us. He stood out against those in his own party who, in 1972 when Labor was elected to office, wanted, by hook or by crook, to have peace

at any price. This is the same Premier who today is opposing those who seem to be showing similar tendencies.

If Queensland is to expand, and if mining companies are to prosper in this State, we cannot have decisions such as the one made recently concerning Fraser Island which, apart from the unemployment that it will cause, has, to my mind, set back many years the whole mining industry, overseas investors and the investment of risk capital. No company will risk its capital in exploration if it has no reasonable guarantee that it will obtain a return. I do not believe that any person would ever do that in any free society.

The vast potential of Queensland, with its enormous deposits of coal, iron and virtually every other mineral, is estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars. That sum represents hundreds of millions of tonnes to be mined in Queensland. Experts agree that these resources will last for hundreds of years, even with a consumption much greater than the present figure. Such statistics must surely turn our thoughts to the way in which this energy can be used to best advantage. Planning by private enterprise, as espoused by the Premier, must be encouraged now. Plans for the use of these mineral deposits must be considered immediately and private companies must be given all support to start viable enterprises.

I should like to give one example in my area, namely, the Millmerran Coal Company. This company has already spent more than \$500,000 in exploring Darling Downs coal deposits and investigating the conversion of coal to products such as petrol and diesel fuel, lubricating oil, waxes, resins, chemical feedstocks and a high-heating gas which would be a substitute, in the South-east Queensland market, for the now dwindling supplies of natural gas. It is interesting to note that this coal yields a higher proportion of liquid and gaseous products than any other Australian coal.

Opportunities for the sale of Millmerran steaming coal to Japan are enormous, but, if the Federal Government's policy is to restrict any Queensland expansion, that Government will also be responsible for the lack of security and loss of livelihood for coal miners and their families. There is such a situation now on Fraser Island.

If coal-mining proprietors—and any other mining proprietors, for that matter—are given long-term assurances which encourage them to invest a great deal of capital in such projects, Queensland will have cheaper coal and cheaper electricity and, in all, a booming mining industry, which is what is desperately needed.

There is one other matter that I believe should be referred to. As Queensland progresses to an all-embracing system in the provision of essential services, it appears to be imperative that the city of Toowoomba be linked with the West Moreton Water

Authority, with the city being the western boundary of the Moreton Region. I base this contention on the fact that the major part of Toowoomba's water supply comes from the Esk Shire, which is in the Moreton Region. The regional water authority, which was recently established by the Government to overcome water problems in the Moreton growth area, would be an ideal vehicle for the lessening of the additional costs which seem to be besetting the Toowoomba City Council in the construction of the Cressbrook Dam. It is the last dam site available to augment Toowoomba's water supply, and so in the future it will have to enter the area covered by the Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation to obtain further water supplies. So I believe it is essential that Toowoomba be included in the area covered by this investigation.

A recent geological survey at the dam site disclosed a number of problem areas caused by poor quality rock. The test drills that were completed earlier were conducted in areas where the rock conditions were considerably better than average, but later extensive drilling, which costs a great deal of money, showed serious defects in the rock structure. Apparently these defects extend over the entire area, and although many sites were considered to be suitable this is not the case here, because of the porous nature of the rock. Therefore, as I said before, I believe it would be advantageous to both Toowoomba and the Moreton Region if Toowoomba were included in the growth strategy investigation.

Many areas included in the Moreton Region adjoin shires and towns whose industries and growth potential are related directly to Toowoomba, which is currently Queensland's fourth largest city with a growth rate far exceeding other areas, with the possible exception of the Gold Coast. Toowoomba has very much to offer which would justify its inclusion in the area under investigation and, as I said before, it should be included. No city could offer more than Toowoomba in justification of its inclusion in a regional growth area. To my mind its inclusion in the Moreton Region would greatly enhance the chances of the Moreton Region obtaining greater financial assistance from the Federal Government when it allocates funds to growth centres.

The reduction in the Estimates this year is to be commended. I commend Sir Charles Barton on the work he has done in the Co-ordinator-General's Department over the years and I wish him the very best in his retirement. I would also like to commend his departmental officers on the way they approach members. I commend the Premier, too, on the presentation of these Estimates.

**Mr. DOUMANY** (Kurilpa) (3.24 p.m.): I rise to commend the Premier on the presentation of his Estimates and to make a number of comments to the Committee. During the past year we have seen some

very eventful days with which our Premier has been closely involved. I believe that probably no more important area exists than that of our Federal constitutional position, and I want to comment on some of the criticisms that have been directed towards us by honourable members who are very biased and who would like to see the complete demise of State Government in this nation. They would also like to see the demise of the Senate, which is the States' House, and on the subject of the Senate, which I think is most appropriate in relation to State Government, it is a pity that the accountability of senators to their home States has gradually but surely deteriorated. It is a pity that senators no longer identify with their home-State Parliament as closely as the Federal system of Government dictates. It is also a pity that senators have no direct accountability to the Parliament in their home State. I see it as a weakness in the federal system that senators do not have a close relationship with State Parliaments, that they do not have the obligation to report back in a formal and organised fashion to the Government in their home State. When it suits them, of course, they become very involved in State issues; but from time to time senators completely lose sight of their responsibility to their home State and to the Government in that State. If we want to strengthen the federal system and see it survive as a viable force—and we all want to see that—there must be a closer and much more formal liaison between senators and the Government in the State from which they are elected.

**Mr. Yewdale:** Is the Premier's Department responsible for the Estimates you are talking about?

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I think that what I am saying is very relevant to the Estimates, because the Premier, as a member of Cabinet, is responsible for various functions and for administering various Acts of Parliament, and this particular issue falls squarely in his court. Much of the money that is expended in the Premier's Department is directed towards fulfilling these functions and meeting the requirements of the particular Acts.

**Mr. Frawley:** You have taught them something that they didn't know.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I think the honourable member for Murrumba is right. From time to time we should have lessons in constitutional Government for the A.L.P.

One feature that makes Queensland almost unique is the absence of an Upper House of Parliament. My private opinion is that it is a pity we do not have an Upper House of Parliament here.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You would not inflict that on the people of this State again? It is an anachronism, and you know it.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I remind the honourable member for Archerfield that it was a Labor Government many years ago that imposed the abolition of the Legislative Council on the people of Queensland against their will. The people were asked what they thought and they said clearly that they wanted to retain the Legislative Council.

I believe that an Upper House is part and parcel of good constitutional, democratic government and only serves to strengthen the Government of the day. It gives a greater capacity for review of legislation and of issues that may occasionally be difficult for us in this place to cope with and contend with because of the time factor. There is no question that members of the Legislative Assembly, if they are doing their job faithfully in their constituency, do not always have a great deal of time to study intricate legislation and give the detailed attention to issues that an Upper House can give. I am not talking about an unworkable type of Upper House that puts its foot in every door and prevents it from being closed; I am talking about a logical Upper House—and there are some States in Australia at the moment in which an Upper House is working well and very democratically. It is a great slur on the A.L.P. that some 50 years ago it was responsible for eliminating the Upper House in this State. That was a prime example of what the A.L.P. would like to do in Canberra if it could get its hands on the helm again. It would abolish that Upper House, too. It would also like to abolish the State Parliaments because they are a fetter on an A.L.P. Prime Minister; they are a hobble.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. Frawley:** He's nothing but a rubbishman.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I think we all remember the image of the honourable member for Archerfield bending over and emptying out those great sacks of garbage somewhere along those roads—

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Blunder Road.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** On the Blunder Road. He has admitted it.

These issues of the Commonwealth Constitution, the Legislative Council that no longer exists, the responsibilities of the Senate back to the home States, and so on, are very important issues. Over the last year the Premier has given us a strong defence against many attempts to encroach on these areas.

I will move to another area of the Premier's Estimates, namely, the control of the environment, which is a very topical matter. It is a great pity that the high priests of environmental control and preservation have brought about an extreme decision in

the last few days on Fraser Island. It was clearly demonstrated on Stradbroke Island by Associated Minerals that effective rehabilitation of native vegetation can be achieved with adequate expenditure and adequate technology.

**Mr. Casey:** You don't have to tell us that. You should be telling your mate Fraser in Canberra.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** I am placing my views on record. I trust that the honourable member for Mackay does not take objection to that.

As an agricultural scientist and one who is not unfamiliar with agricultural technology, I am absolutely convinced that it is feasible to restore native vegetation in most situations after sand-mining. I will concede that where there are high dunes and when climatic conditions and the force of wind and sea makes a severe impact, there are particular circumstances where it is better not to mine; but I believe those precautions were being taken on Fraser Island. I also believe that the percentage of beach that was to be mined was minimal. Surely it would have been possible to compromise. Surely it would have been possible to call on this Government to strengthen its control over the rehabilitation programmes undertaken by the mining companies. I have no doubt that the Premier would have agreed to make those requirements more stringent if we could have preserved the economic viability of the mining operation on Fraser Island, and thereby the economic viability of the Maryborough township and its people. Instead of that we now have an absolute withdrawal from economic mining, and the next thing to happen will be that these extremists will clamour to stop all sand-mining everywhere.

I call them extremists because they are just as extreme as those who would rape the environment and those who would mine willy-nilly without any responsibility. It is irrational. If a person goes into the home of the average conservation crank he will find product after product in his home and in his car which has used rutile, zircon and all the other elements obtained by sand-mining. He is quite happy to use those amenities and to enjoy the fruits of modern technology. At the same time he hypocritically urges Governments to take unreal measures to stop all economic mining activity.

Furthermore, while he expresses grave concern about pollution, he urges the Government to establish a tourist industry on Fraser Island. What greater threat does the environment on Fraser Island face than that posed by large-scale tourist and commercial development? In spite of heavy penalties imposed for littering, people discard rubbish almost anywhere at all. Irresponsible persons in four-wheel-drive vehicles race up and down the beaches. Don't they constitute a danger to the environment?

The mining companies are as responsible as anyone else, and I am quite certain that, with strict Government control and supervision, technical programmes for the rehabilitation of mined areas could ensure that mining can be undertaken on Fraser Island without any long-term harmful effect on the very small area of the island that would be mined.

Again I stress that the matter arising for consideration from the decision to prevent sand-mining on Fraser Island lies in how far its implications will flow into other areas of the environment that cause concern. It is indeed worrying that extreme environmentalists want to abolish almost every form of effluent and emission. What will the community end up with? Certainly not the 20th Century comforts that these same people are happy to enjoy!

Some persons who have an obsession about pollution happily smoke in cars, buses and trains to the chagrin of fellow passengers. They apply a double standard. Any man who belongs to their movement should wash himself every half hour, be free from all bad habits and act like a saint before he calls on the rest of the community to conform to unrealistic standards.

Finally, I speak on metric conversion, which also comes under the Premier's portfolio. It is most unfortunate that those who were committed to metric conversion did not take stock of the cost involved. For the life of me I cannot see any difference between reading a temperature in Fahrenheit and one in Celsius—or centigrade, as it is better and more accurately described—nor can I see any difference between measuring length in inches and in centimetres. Why should tyre pressures now be changed to pascals?

**Dr. Lockwood:** Kilopascals.

**Mr. DOUMANY:** Kilopascals. No-one understands what the term means. I am alarmed by the number of advertisements that, say, in describing a piece of equipment refer to centimetres and somewhere else mention, for example, half an inch. Everyone knows what half an inch is. Metric conversion is nothing but a gross waste of money. Certain heavy equipment industries, which have not yet converted, are quaking in their boots at the capital investment called for. This is one of the worst confidence tricks ever perpetrated on all of us. It was an unnecessary exercise. Metrics were in vogue where they were needed. They were used in laboratory work and many precision areas, but we did not need to pretend that we were part of an exclusive club. The United States has not converted. In converting, all we have done is confuse the people.

**Mr. Casey:** Who do you think pulled it?

**Mr. DOUMANY:** It is one of the tricks pulled to make jobs for the people who are clever enough to think of it.

In the fertiliser industry a hundredweight pack was converted into a 50 kg. pack. Everybody still thinks that the pack contains a hundredweight. The conversion has been a nuisance to everyone—to commerce and the people. In real estate advertisements we see blocks advertised as containing 850 sq m. What is wrong with 32 perches? What is wrong with an acre? I'll bet every man who goes into his paddocks still thinks in acres. I'll bet that when the honourable member for Archerfield is in his car he still thinks of 35 miles per hour and not 60 km/h. At the risk of being called old-fashioned I say that I believe this conversion has been a costly, stupid exercise.

The Premier has actively defended the interests of Queensland but, in the coming year, this will be a job for all of us. We must fight for those interests anew because there is much to be done.

**Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (3.42 p.m.):** I have much pleasure in supporting the Estimates presented by the Premier. Firstly, I praise the Premier on the way he has carried out his duties as Premier of Queensland over such a long time. I congratulate him on the stance he has adopted on State rights, irrespective of the party in power in Canberra. In recent days, the Fraser Island decision has created problems that have set back the entire State. We should never forget that the problem started in the Whitlam era and that the environmental inquiry was established by Moss Cass. But we are stuck with the result of it. That is unfortunate, but we must keep in mind where it started and try to ensure that similar problems do not occur in the future.

The Premier told us that more money is being diverted to State/Federal relations to keep everybody advised on what is happening at State and Federal levels. We must press for State rights as long as Queensland is Queensland, and, so far as I am concerned, it will be Queensland for ever and a day. We will certainly fight for our State and, judging by our Premier's past performance, no-one will do a better job to ensure that Queensland and the other States are run as all Australians want them to be.

Although people know that our Premier is the Premier of Queensland, the average person does not realise that his portfolio is very wide. The Co-ordinator-General's Department is one of the main departments under his control. He also administers the City of Brisbane (North Pine River Dam) Act, the City of Brisbane (Water Supply) Act and many other Acts.

At this stage I should like to refer to the quality of the staff throughout the Premier's Department. I have said that the Premier controls the Co-ordinator-General's Department. For many years Sir Charles Barton has been head of it. He came there from the Main Roads Department. Following his retirement his place will be taken by the



Deputy Co-ordinator-General, Mr. Syd Schubert. I congratulate him on his elevation to this big job, which carries great responsibility. On his performance to date, he has shown that he is qualified to carry out the very important job of co-ordinating all the departments in Queensland. He is well worthy of this appointment.

The Co-ordinator-General's Department is at present undertaking the following studies: Far North Queensland Economic Structure Study; Coastal Management Investigation, Innisfail to Mossman; Burdekin Basin Reappraisal; Townsville Development Programme Study; Update Study of the 1970 Mackay Regional Study; Hay Point Environmental Study; Bowen Basin Industrial Development Study; Wide Bay-Burnett Economic Structure Investigation; Coastal Management Investigation, Queensland-New South Wales Border to Northern Boundary of Noosa Shire; Moreton Island Study (which is very important at the present time); Waste Disposal Study, Brisbane and Near Brisbane Area; Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigations and the Moreton Region Employment Base Study (which is very important in the south-east corner of Queensland because of its growth and resources).

These studies are very important to assist the shires and cities in their planning. The Co-ordinator-General's Department, in association with the Local Government Department and many other departments, lays the foundation for local government to follow through and plan for the future in such matters as the availability of water. In this area, that will be covered by the Moreton Region Water Board.

At this stage I shall deal with the Waste Disposal Study, which was commenced in February 1976. It covers the Brisbane area as well as adjacent urban areas such as Ipswich city, Gold Coast city, Redcliffe city, Albert Shire, Beaudesert Shire, Caboolture Shire, Moreton Shire, Pine Rivers Shire and Redland Shire. The study is important to the solution of this great problem, which first confronted me when I decided in 1973 to stand for election to the Gold Coast City Council. One of my platforms was the institution of a waste-disposal study in the Gold Coast city and Albert Shire areas. However, the Co-ordinator-General's Department decided to take this matter up. Because of various problems such as funding, the study took a while to get off the ground. Nevertheless it was started and it is being conducted on a much grander scale and in a much better way than it would have been if we had simply looked at the Gold Coast city and Albert Shire areas.

Because of growth in the south-east corner of Queensland, the waste-disposal problem has become a major one. Looking ahead a few years we will be in considerable trouble if we do not get the scheme under way. I do not know when the final results will emerge from the solid waste disposal study.

The objectives of the investigation are shown in the annual report of the Co-ordinator-General as—

“(a) to collate all available data on waste collection and disposal in the study area, and to carry out surveys as necessary to provide supplementary data;

“(b) to analyse this data as relevant to the assessment of existing waste collection and disposal methods and to the estimation of future waste generation and composition; and to prepare forecasts taking account of future urban growth and spread, transport aspects, and other relevant social, economic and environmental factors;

“(c) to examine and describe alternative methods of waste collection and disposal;

“(d) to recommend, on the basis of the above information and analysis, a preferred course of action for collection and disposal of waste, particularly to deal with problems likely to confront local authorities by 1980.”

I assure the Committee that the problem will be serious prior to 1980.

The study also covers solid and liquid waste management, which will be a long-term problem. These policies will be developed, together with solid and liquid waste disposal plans right up to 1986 and proposals for advance actions which may be required to provide for the period to the year 2000. It is expected that the final report will be completed during 1977. It is very good that the report will be completed by that time.

With three aldermen and two officers of the Gold Coast City Council, I went to New Zealand to investigate waste disposal problems there and to see how they were being dealt with in that country. We were treated very well and we learnt a lot whilst there. We had a look at some of their fragmentation plants and transfer stations, and these appear to be a possible answer to the problem. Fragmentation or grinding plants reduce solid waste to about 50 to 60 per cent of its original volume and remove much of the smell that worries many people. This fragmented material does not have to be covered every day, as does the waste material deposited in our tips. It can be used for building up sporting grounds much more cheaply than is possible with our present methods. This method of fragmentation reduces the whole problem of disposal. It is good to see that a waste disposal study is under way and all credit for that goes to the Co-ordinator-General's Department.

The capital works programme in Queensland has for many years been focused on the preparation of an annual programme of works financed from various sources. Two new approaches have been initiated. A five-year rolling programme has been initiated for semi-governmental bodies and local government and these individual programmes

which provide target levels for the authorities, are used in the formulation of future programmes. The principle of the five-year programme has been extended to the governmental sector, and there have been many discussions with departments with the object of securing information of forward financial requirements on a uniform basis and in a manner which would indicate the annual activity in real terms. A system has also been developed for computer programming of the Co-ordinator-General's programme.

The work itself spells out co-ordination and I believe this department is doing a tremendous job for the Public Service and for local authorities. Other States do not have such a department serving the community in forward planning and co-ordination. The department has done a tremendous job in our corner of the State with the Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation. The report of the Co-ordinator-General states—

"The Investigations were divided for working purposes into 10 tasks, each culminating in the preparation of a report. The first seven tasks were undertaken concurrently and provided the data base for strategy planning."

The report states further—

"It is considered that the investigation should act as the basis for an ongoing programme of action designed to promote the balanced development of the Moreton Region."

We have now had the publication of the first part of this investigation, which will no doubt become the Bible to which local authorities and the Government will refer when looking at their resources. The study included an investigation of water supplies, and we know that the growth of all regions is governed by the availability of water. Water is one of the things we take for granted. It is something we never think very much about until there is not enough to go around. The Moreton Water Board will be set up to build the Wivenhoe Dam, which will be of great importance to the Moreton Region. It is significant that, when it is completed, over 50,000 acres of land will be covered by water and approximately 75,000 acres will be required for the catchment area. Honourable members can imagine what the dam will mean to the water supply of Brisbane and surrounding areas. It will also become a tourist Mecca, which will provide enjoyment for thousands.

In time other areas will be included in the growth area, although not perhaps for quite a few years. The Gold Coast and the Albert Shire are included in the growth area and they will be included in the area covered by this Moreton Water Board, although this will not happen overnight. The Wivenhoe Dam is a tremendous programme, and I believe that three-quarters of the land required has been purchased, not by the

Brisbane City Council but by this Government. We have the Lord Mayor of Brisbane complaining about the Electricity Bill and saying what it will do to Brisbane, but he is not complaining about the fact that the Government has stepped in and taken over his commitment to build the Wivenhoe Dam. He does not complain that the Government has taken over his commitment to supply the people of Brisbane with adequate water, or that it has already purchased three-quarters of the land required for the Wivenhoe Dam.

Mr. Warner: Freeways, too.

Mr. GIBBS: That is another point. The Brisbane City Council often receives great credit for the freeways that have been built in and around Brisbane, which provide free-flowing traffic outlets for the people of Brisbane. The council does not deserve the credit that it is given. The former Lord Mayor, Clem Jones, played a great part in the planning of some of these freeways, but the Brisbane City Council had very little to do with the financial side. This Government paid for them, certainly with Commonwealth aid. But it is money we are entitled to receive back out of our personal taxation and the petrol tax. Where would the Brisbane City Council be without this Government? The Government's attitude towards the council has been one of great co-operation, the very opposite to what the present Lord Mayor is trying to make people believe.

The Co-ordinator General's Department deals with the development of the State as a whole and concentrates on public expenditure. The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development deals more with private sector planning. We also have departments dealing with mining and with local government matters. We have a number of departments concerned with the development of the State and perhaps we have to look more at the development of the State as a whole. Through the Co-ordinator General's Department we should be looking more closely at ways of deciding who has the responsibility for northern and western development and, in fact, the development of the whole State to make sure that our resources are handled correctly in the long term. There should not be a mass of red tape. The "Resources Atlas" that has been produced by the Government shows the great background of work of Government departments.

As I said, the Co-ordinator-General's Department is of great importance to the people of Queensland because of the guidance it gives to local authorities and to the Government itself. The Metropolitan Transit Authority is a statutory body for which the Co-ordinator-General's Department is handling work that is important to the whole of the Moreton Region, and it is to be hoped that it gets under way very quickly. It is interesting to note that the Metropolitan

Transit Authority is not setting up a tremendously large department but intends to operate on much the same lines as a small business.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. KATTER** (Flinders) (4.2 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to take part in the debate on these Estimates and to put forward my thoughts on the performance of the Premier of this State. My initial association with the Premier was during my election campaign in the electorate of Flinders.

**Mr. Lester:** It was a very successful campaign.

**Mr. KATTER:** Probably more because of the opposition than my own efforts. The beef industry was collapsing and producers were receiving 9c a lb. instead of the 45c a lb. they had received the year before. Although the Government was hoping to win a number of mining areas such as the one represented by my worthy colleague from Belyando, the Premier took a great risk in speaking about the beef-coal connection, as it has now come to be called. It was indeed an act of great courage on his part and, on behalf of my constituents, I should like to say that they deeply and sincerely appreciate it. It is something that they will not forget as long as the Premier is a member of this Assembly.

Let me turn now to the second arena into which the Premier stepped and attracted attention. I refer to the conflict between the Queensland Government and the Federal Labor Government, and I bring to the notice of the Committee only two issues. The first is Medibank.

**Mr. Prest:** What about Fraser Island?

**Mr. KATTER:** I did not think that the honourable member for Port Curtis was capable of making a comment. However, the situation at Fraser Island is the result of an inquiry instituted by the Federal Labor Government, and if the blame for that situation can be laid at anyone's feet, it can be laid squarely at the feet—

**Mr. Burns:** Oh, rubbish!

**Mr. KATTER:** The Fraser Island inquiry was instituted by the Federal Labor Government because it wanted to have a green light to stop mining on Fraser Island.

**Mr. BURNS:** I rise to a point of order. The decision on the Fraser Island inquiry was made by Mr. Fraser, the Liberal Prime Minister on whose behalf the Premier campaigned.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr. KATTER:** The committee on whose findings the decision was based was set up by the former Federal Labor Government. It has cost Queensland at least 300 jobs and probably as many as 1,000.

Let me return to the Medibank issue. I was very pleased about it. I said, "We have had free health care here for ever. At least now the Federal Government is going to be picking up the tab instead of the State Government."

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member will return to the Estimates.

**Mr. KATTER:** What I am pointing out is the performance of the Premier on the issue. That bears very strongly on the Estimates. Whereas it was costing us \$200,000,000 a year, I expected Queensland to get a cheque from the Federal Government for \$200,000,000 each year, but we got a cheque for \$80,000,000. In other words, Queensland was short-changed by the Federal Government for \$120,000,000 annually. That was the first thing that upset us. It is a figure that should upset any sane-thinking man. The Premier had the temerity to take on big, powerful Canberra, the source of all our money!

Again, on the issue of mineral royalties—the Federal Government introduced a tax on coking coal which cost Queensland some \$55,000,00.

**Mr. Marginson:** What has that got to do with the Premier's Estimates?

**Mr. KATTER:** There has been criticism from the Leader of the Opposition about the way the Premier has spent his money in the last 12 months. That is what it has got to do with his Estimates. The expenditure of money in an attempt to secure evidence to destroy the last Federal Government, which the Premier most successfully did, was money very well spent. Whatever money was spent was spent for Queensland's benefit and in a very worth-while cause. We now have the elimination of royalties on coking coal. Hopefully, as the years pass by, we may see a little more justice with Medibank. One thing is for sure: the Federal Government will not quickly overrun Queensland while Bjelke-Petersen is Premier of this State.

Let me move on to other areas of positive action taken by the Premier and his department. I refer to two initiatives, neither of which came to fruition, because of the opposition by vested interests. The first was the Brisbane mall project. Anyone with any sort of feeling for old people surely must be in favour of that initiative taken by the Premier. Surely anyone who sits down and thinks about it must realise that of course the street must be closed off, and of course we must have electric trams running the length of the street. We must look after the old people who simply cannot walk 100 or 200 yards from shop to shop in the inner city area. That type of problem solves itself immediately with that sort of complex. It is a reflection on the Brisbane City Council that we have lagged behind the rest of Australia by not accepting the initiative taken by the Premier in this respect.

The same applies to night shopping. I know many people disagree on this issue but that is not the point. The point is that the initiative was taken by the Premier. I speak here for the average working person in the State, who has to start work at 9 a.m. and finish at 5 p.m. Those who have opposed night shopping think in terms of everyone except the vast bulk of the Queensland population, who work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every working day of the week and have no way of doing their shopping. At my own personal level I recall what happened when I was working at Mount Isa Mines. We had to do a 600 yd. sprint over to the town side to buy a pair of working clothes during the lunch-hour because that was the only time we got to do it. That is the situation that applies to the average working man in this State. But when the initiative was taken by the Premier, powerful vested interests strongly opposed his manoeuvre. At this stage we are still in a state of flux on the issue.

I now turn to a subject vital to my area, namely, the beef industry. Once again the Premier took quick and decisive action. When the crisis had reached the stage where it was obvious that aided only by natural market forces the industry would not come out of it and that because the industry was not working on a free market system something artificial had to be done, the Premier proceeded to establish the State Beef Cattle Committee. Although, because of some personnel on the committee, it tended to bog down, this was no reflection on the speedy steps taken by the Premier to help overcome the crisis. In fact, that committee came forward with firm proposals that have now been agreed to by the other States.

During a visit with other parliamentarians to Hobart, I was being given a bit of a rough time at the bar by some from other States, but it was with a great deal of satisfaction that I heard them say, "Whatever else you might say about Queensland, just remember that's where it happens first." I'm sure I have no need to remind honourable members of the abolition of death duties. Queensland took this initiative first, and it is now being followed progressively by the other States. Similarly, Queensland was the first State to stand up and say that it would not live with the Whitlam Government in Canberra. Queensland said, "Both of us cannot remain." Both of us did not remain. Fortunately, the people passed their judgment, and the Queensland Government remained.

As to the beef scheme, the industry lives in hope—though this may be frustrated by certain Labor Governments in Australia. I shall not, however, go into that in this hall of power.

**Mr. Lee:** Why not?

**Mr. KATTER:** Because I still have the hope that good government will listen to the sentiments expressed by the people of

Australia. My information is, however, that that will not occur. The initiative taken by the Minister for Works and Housing, who interjected, has been nothing short of magnificent. He has transferred much of the work done for the Housing Commission by the Works Department to—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn):** Order! The honourable member has spoken very little on the Estimates. I have given him a lot of latitude. He must now return to the Estimates.

**Mr. KATTER:** I was referring to the initiative taken by the Premier in setting up the State Beef Cattle Committee and to the success achieved by that committee.

I move now to a matter that has over the past two days caught the attention of the people of Queensland. I refer to the strong and decisive stand taken against the "educrats". Certain people contend that persons with credentials and qualifications in education should take over the control of the Police Force. I have nothing whatever against giving to a person with high education qualifications control of the Police Force. What I do object to, however, is closing the door in the face of people who have merit but who do not have university or tertiary education qualifications. The Premier said that inspectors of police would not be required to have qualifications from the Queensland Police Academy. In saying that, he left the door open to men with ability instead of closing it in a fit of blind prejudice against them. He took a courageous stand—the first taken by anyone—against the "educrats" in our society.

The Premier's activities over the past year or two are a story of courage of a man who, most of the time, has been outnumbered—of a man who has had to fight against vested interests, against conventional wisdom and against the mass media. Fortunately, in their enlightenment they seem to be more partial to the Premier nowadays. This story is one of which the Premier can be justifiably proud, and Queensland can be justifiably proud in having as its Premier this man who holds that high post.

**Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (4.14 p.m.):** On behalf of the people of my electorate, I express their thanks to the Premier and his officers for the assistance given to them. I also thank the Premier and his wife for the many visits that they have made to my area. If any Opposition members feel that they are going to upset me by saying that the Premier is not a good fellow, they are sadly mistaken. I am reminded strongly of the last occasion when we went to Blackwater and 500 men, women and children were at the airport to meet him. That is an indication of the high esteem in which he is held in country areas.

One of the Premier's most important proposals is the East-West railway project. I fully support his efforts to bring this project

to reality with the help of another gentleman named Lang Hancock from Western Australia. The idea of having a steel mill in the West using coal from the Central Highlands coal-fields and a steel mill in the East using Western Australian iron ore is commendable. If we wish to develop Australia, surely this is one way of doing it. Undoubtedly industries would be attracted to the areas. I see no reason why we could not attract car-manufacturing industries, heavy steel industries and many other industries associated with them.

Unfortunately I see a problem in the not-distant future of trying to provide job opportunities for young people now living in mining towns like Blackwater and Moranbah. If we were to agree to the Premier's idea of developing twin steel mills, we would be on the right track. The twin steel mills project would provide the chance of a lifetime to develop our wonderful State. I have no hesitation in saying that this concept could be likened to the Ruhr Valley in Germany and many other such important areas throughout the world.

It has been said on many occasions that the costs of the project would be particularly high—that many millions of dollars would be required to build the railway line and provide the necessary rolling-stock. But surely there are ways in which the money could be raised such as by providing tax-relief and compensation for companies involved in building the project and establishing industries at either end of the huge railway line. This would be an outstanding way of developing the northern part of Australia.

Surely to goodness this is a logical, sound, common-sense defence project. We are totally defenceless in the northern part of Australia. If any of our enemies wished to, they could get into Australia before we knew anything about it. They could even get as far as Brisbane before we knew very much about it. We must try to develop our North. The Federal Government must give tax relief to make these things possible. They may seem to be wild dreams but many of the great projects under way throughout the world started as so-called wild dreams. Those dreams became a reality only after continual harassment. The dreamers had the guts to stick out and to stand up for what they wanted and they eventually won. Now the world acclaims them for their wonderful foresight.

It has been said that it is cheaper to ship coal to Western Australia and iron-ore from Western Australia. Railway transport is coming into its own. It was very heartening to read only the other day that B.H.P. is changing a good deal of its operations from sea to rail transport because of industrial trouble on the wharves, associated disruptions and resultant high costs. It might not be too far around the corner when the railways will be able to compete adequately with the so-called cheaper shipping transport costs. Let us hope so.

This is one way to overcome in the not too distant future the problems of school-leavers in the mining towns of Blackwater and Moranbah. As the Premier has said from time to time, there is no magic formula for the employment of school-leavers. We have to make things happen. Goodness me, many companies in Australia have the motto, "Make it happen". Let us not sit back and whine and expect the Government to do everything. The ultimate cost of that to us will be increased taxation, less profitability and less production. Let us get on with the job of trying to make Australia a really great country through hard work and through living up to the ideals of our forefathers when they were fighting for Australia during World War I, World War II and other wars. As fighters, they had a magnificent record and some of us are letting them down by not working hard enough to uphold the ideals that they fought and died for.

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** Members of the Opposition tried to turn Remembrance Day into the Sir John Kerr Remembrance Day.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! I call the Committee to order.

**Mr. LESTER:** I thank the Premier for his interjection. In the not too distant future we will be having a Remembrance Day for the people who used sit in the Opposition benches. They will not be there after the next election.

I back up some of the ideals that the Premier has tried to put up for the people of Queensland. Again I support his efforts to get some petrol-equalisation justice back into our country areas. It is all very well to say that the Labor Party took it away. It is up to our Federal people to give it back as soon as possible. If we do not encourage people to go out and live in the country areas, we will have nothing in the city areas. We must have people in country areas and we must encourage them to stay there. In spite of all that the State Government is doing, things are still rather difficult for them.

Telephone costs continue to rise and the cost of postage has been rising in the order of hundreds of per cent over the past few years. Fortunately it has not gone up during the term of the present Federal Government.

It was particularly appalling to me the day before I left my office in Emerald, to have the chairman of the Jericho Shire Council ring me and tell me that the Federal Government is considering doing away with a couple of the mail runs from Alpha and a couple of the smaller country telephone exchanges in that area. I realise that this is a Federal matter, but the people in that area are distressed and very concerned at their possible loss of identity in Australia.

I am also concerned about the scurrilous way in which the Labor Party promotes the ideology of one vote, one value. My electorate is so large that I find it difficult to cover it as I would like to. At week-ends I often have to travel hundreds of miles in order to attend four or five functions. Because of the very size of my electorate, it is difficult to do justice to the people whom I represent. Yet the Labor Party persists in its scurrilous efforts to promote the almost sacrilegious policy of one vote, one value, which would take away from the people of the country their voice in Parliament and their right to know what is going on.

**Mr. Burns:** What has this to do with these Estimates?

**Mr. LESTER:** I am going to be easy on Labor members today—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! I am going to be easy on the honourable member, too. I should like him to return to a discussion of the Estimates before the Committee.

**Mr. LESTER:** I will return to the Estimates, Mr. Miller. But before doing so, might I point out that this shows how scared the Leader of the Opposition is of me. I was going along quite well until he drew your attention, Mr. Miller, to the fact that I was straying a little from the Estimates. He could not bear to let me tell him a few home truths about country areas. He just couldn't take it. So what did he do? Like a little boy in school, he decided to tittle-tattle, saying in effect, "Sir, he's speaking away from the subject."

**An Opposition Member:** Now he's crying.

**Mr. LESTER:** I can take all the scurrilous interjections Opposition members care to give me. I'm tough; I'm from the country and I can take whatever they like to give. They do not worry me a bit. The more they scurrilously attack me, the stronger I become. The Leader of the Opposition knows what a fool he made of himself the last time he came to my area, when he said that virtually nothing had been spent on the Capricorn Highway since 1957. I produced figures to show that over \$14,000,000 had been spent on it, whereas in a corresponding period under Labor Governments the amount spent on it was only \$105,000. So don't come to my area saying what you know and what you don't because you just make a big fool of yourself. Actually I don't mind if the Leader of the Opposition does come to my area, because he gets me a lot of votes. Often he does not know what he is talking about.

**Mr. Tenni:** Did you know that the Leader of the Opposition found out only this morning that the poor boys in the cattle country are in trouble?

**Mr. LESTER:** Opposition members amuse me, Mr. Miller, in the way they go on. They talk about what we should do for country people, yet they have not the guts to back us on the Electricity Bill. Let us not talk about this matter any further. Their voice is just not worth listening to.

**Mr. Burns:** You hate the city.

**Mr. LESTER:** I do not hate the city.

**Mr. Burns:** You hate Brisbane.

**Mr. LESTER:** Now we have it all. What Opposition members say about the city will now be in "Hansard". Whilst Opposition members carry on like this, they gain more votes for me. Keep it up! What they think of city people is now in "Hansard" and I will be able to campaign on it at the next election. And I certainly will campaign on it. Let them not start interjecting on me. I have been through many a dry gully and I will take them on any time they like.

**Mr. Burns:** Which side are you looking at now?

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the honourable member that he is not obliged to heed interjections and I ask him to return to the Estimates before the Committee.

**Mr. LESTER:** Thank you, Mr. Miller.

In conclusion—I feel that the people of Queensland are entitled to Government by responsible, sensible people such as those now occupying the Government benches. I further say that trendy Government—Government by people with magnificent academic qualifications—sounds wonderful in theory but in reality it does not work when it comes to plain common sense and forthright judgments. What is needed in Parliament are representatives of the people from all walks of life. We need graziers, bakers, lawyers, electricians—all sorts of people. Parliament is a conglomeration of people from all avenues of life who come together, in both Government and Opposition, to make for healthy Government. In conclusion, I thank the Premier for coming to my area and doing what he could to help me. We in the area appreciated it greatly, and the people of Belyando have asked me to tell the Premier just that.

**Mr. AHERN** (Landsborough) (4.30 p.m.): My purpose in rising to speak in the debate on the Premier's Estimates is to express some concern on behalf of local authorities north of Brisbane regarding the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation, which has now presented its report to the Government. The report has been released to the public. The local authorities in my area are, I think, rightly concerned at the very existence of the report and their equity in relation to general Government policies in the future in the light of that report. I have not had a chance to check the detail, but it appears that

some of the statistical data used in some of the planning assumptions made early in the study were shown by the recent census to be up to 40 per cent in error in relation to my area. Local authorities are concerned that the Government is now going to accept the report as such and base its future planning decisions completely on that report.

**Mr. Moore:** Are we going to do that?

**Mr. AHERN:** I am not suggesting that that has been done at the moment, but what I am suggesting today is that we want to look at what has been proposed in relation to the strategy for the region and relate it to what has happened since the planning investigation started. The recent census provided us with some valuable statistics which we can relate to the initial assumptions and, as I was saying when I replied to that interjection, the local authorities in my area say that in some respects those initial assumptions were 40 per cent in error. The local authorities are genuinely concerned that the Government is going to act on the basis of the strategy investigation's recommendations and ignore what is actually happening in terms of growth, particularly in the coastal areas north of Brisbane. I think they are rightfully concerned. You would no doubt know this, Mr. Miller, but for the information of honourable members, the preferred growth study which was described in the resume of the report presented to the public was that—

“ . . . the urban structure of the region is seen in terms of a regional centre (Brisbane); two major metropolitan sub-regional centres (at Ipswich and in the north Albert/north Beaudesert area); a major sub-regional centre at the Gold Coast; and smaller retail/service centres on the Sunshine Coast, in the Pine Rivers/Redcliffe area, in Redland, and in the vicinity of Chermiside, Indooroopilly and Upper Mount Gravatt in the City of Brisbane.”

That is the general strategy for the region which is suggested as the most preferred strategy. One of the options which was considered was described in the report as a coastal strategy, and it was rejected as the most preferred strategy on the basis of some constraints in relation to transport and plantation areas, which are extensive, and the existence of other urban development in the region, which could probably more economically proceed. But what we are concerned about is that whilst the Government might be acting in relation to this preferred strategy, planning ahead and saying, “We think the growth should occur more and more in Ipswich and in the north Beaudesert area”, what is actually happening is that people are shifting up to the coastal areas. I went to all the briefing sessions that were offered to members, and I think they were valuable, but the facts are, and we can see it in my area, that a very considerable migration is occurring within

the region to the coastal areas. This has actually happened. There has been tremendous growth in the coastal areas.

I always think a good indicator of growth is the enrolment figure of school-children in those areas. In the last few months or so, an additional 100 children have presented themselves for education at the Caloundra State School. That is what is actually occurring, preferred strategies or no preferred strategies. People want to live in these coastal areas, and they are going to do it whether the Government likes it or not.

Local authorities, Government departments and members of Parliament have to cope with what this actually means in terms of provision of services. It means many things, not only schools or hospitals; but it means schools most of all. The Education Department is one department that I have had a devil of a job convincing that the growth which is occurring is of a permanent nature. I was told by a senior official of the Education Department less than four years ago that the enrolment at the Caloundra State School was 650 pupils, that in his view it was at its peak and that we were looking forward to a trough. Today, about four years later, 1,030 children are enrolled there. That shows what is happening. What the authorities there are worrying about, and what I am worrying about, is that the planners are going to look at this strategy and say, “It isn't going to happen there.” It is happening there, and it is important that we not only recognise it but also plan ahead for it.

It concerns not only education; it concerns Main Roads programmes and, most importantly, loan programmes. Local authorities are concerned about a report emanating from the Co-ordinator-General's Department under which some general restriction may be applied to them as to the amount of loans they are able to raise. It is terribly important that they not be restricted in any way when they are trying to cope with the tremendous investment in real estate and in the building industry that is now taking place in the area. The Maroochy water supply has had to be completed duplicated recently—storage, treatment and reticulation. Sewerage works are also going ahead. I doubt whether they are keeping pace with the growth, but some very real advances have been made in recent times.

Nervousness is expressed by the local authorities north of Brisbane that if the spirit of this strategy is implemented by the Government, particularly through the Co-ordinator-General's Department, it will hit them in their loan programmes and so on. Secondly, they are concerned that moneys that would be coming to them through the Grants Commission, the Local Authorities Grants Commission and by way of grants to local authorities will be steered more into the preferred growth areas as described in the strategy.

Councils in my area have had a dreadfully rough deal with local authority grants. Just recently in this Chamber the Maroochy Shire Council was named by the Minister for Local Government as having the highest urban rate in the dollar in the State, but it is still not receiving adequate consideration. We are concerned that if the growth strategy is adhered to by the Government, the Co-ordinator-General's Department will in some way, through the grants system, endeavour to steer development away from the area. The growth is still occurring there.

As to industrial development—the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development has some industrial estates in the area. The Minister has told me that he has been tremendously impressed and that the Maroochy Industrial Estate has been a success beyond his dreams. It is there; it has been successful because people were living there who wanted to invest. There is a natural magnetism towards the coastal areas. People like to live there and wish to invest there. They want to live beside their investment, and they want to know from the Government that local authorities are going to be able to cope with the development. We need more recognition from this Department.

Recently a local authority representative said to me, "The very existence of this report in its present form is the greatest threat we have at the present time." I understand the way the committee went about its very difficult task. Whatever it recommended, it would be in trouble. But having studied the papers presented to me, I felt that it was important that I express concern to the Government on behalf of the local authorities north of Brisbane, which feel that because of this report their future equity in the total Government exercise, whether it be loans, sewerage, water or anything else, is weakened. Because people are just not going to be regimented, the local authorities are going to have to cope with the growth that is going to occur, and they are not going to have the means to cope with it.

Individual situations are going to promote development even more as time goes on. I have mentioned before in this place the very real fact of a pulp-mill industry in my area that is going to generate a lot of secondary industry and secondary employment around it. That is a matter of Government contract now. The retirement industry there is booming all the time. There is every reason to think that the coastal strategy that was embraced and considered in this report is going to happen anyway. I want the Government to recognise that and to say, "We will watch year by year the type of growth that is occurring. We will not see you deprived simply because the report has said that we should be putting more into Ipswich or somewhere like that."

**Mr. Marginson:** Why shouldn't they?

**Mr. AHERN:** Because the growth is going to occur in these areas anyway. We are not looking for any more than we need to cope

with the growth. It has occurred there. In the past there has been considerable concern among local authorities that Government departments fairly generally have not been prepared to believe the type of growth these areas have had and the need for loan programmes, etc., to enable them to cope with this tremendous growth. I express that concern on behalf of local authorities in my area. They have had some meetings, and they say that they are concerned. I agree with them. I ask for consideration by the Premier because of the very real problems these local authorities are going to have if that report is proceeded with in its present form.

**Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (4.43 p.m.):** I enter this debate on the Estimates of the Premier's Department for a number of very good reasons. The first is that there seemed at one stage to be a lack of interest on the part of members to speak in this debate, possibly because to many members this debate has become purely a political hassle. I want to move away from that today and bring forward some discussable points about the affairs of the Premier's Department. Apart from the Premier's over-all responsibility to the Government of Queensland, he has a number of subdepartments under his control that play a very important role in our everyday affairs and everyday lives and, as far as Queensland affairs are concerned, throughout the rest of the world.

First of all, I refer to the fact that we do have an overseas representative under the auspices of the Premier, namely, the Agent-General in London. In recent years I have become increasingly concerned that the Office of the Agent-General in London is coming to a stage of redundancy. Our trade with London is nowhere near as great as it was in the past. When we go back in history we see why that office was first instituted. The office was constituted when we were a colony. Back in those times we had a section liaising in London.

Time passed, and we came to the 1920s and 1930s with their financial problems. In that decade the Office of the Agent-General in London played a very important role in obtaining from overseas financial institutions the money that was necessary to see the State of Queensland through that era. Next came the war years—a time when once again the office was concerned with liaison between Queensland and Great Britain.

After the war the Agent-General's Office was transformed into a trading post. At first the emphasis was on trade with Great Britain and Europe, but since the 1960s the emphasis has shifted from the European sphere to Asia and particularly to Japan. Trade with Great Britain has virtually gone by the board, so I suggest that serious consideration be given to transferring the Office of the Agent-General from London to Brussels, which is the centre of the European Economic Community.



In concentrating on trade with Asia and Japan, it would be unwise for Queensland to turn its back completely on Europe. The E.E.C. represents a major trading bloc in the world today. In the interests of Queensland industries, outlets through the European Economic Community to markets in Europe should be maintained. This can best be achieved by the relocation of the office in Brussels.

I have referred to the development of Queensland's trade with Asia and Japan. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the importance of the sugar agreement that Queensland has with Japan. Sugar is the State's major agricultural industry. Very recently the Minister for Primary Industries announced his intention to visit Japan again to discuss our sugar problems. Japan claims that it is now faced with certain trading difficulties arising from the high prices negotiated in our sugar agreement, and the industry is faced with a very worrying time. Despite the fact that the industry has been involved in continual negotiations with Japan over the past five or six months, it is necessary for the Minister to visit that country again in an endeavour to iron out these problems. It is equally necessary to establish in Japan at high level an office representing this State.

As to the beef industry—only this morning concern was expressed at the step taken by Japan to cut down on its imports of beef from Australia. As is known, Queensland is Australia's major beef-exporting State. The beef industry is Queensland's major pastoral export industry. Both it and the sugar industry are seriously affected by the everyday affairs of Japan and the Japanese economy.

Similarly, our mining industry is tied almost totally to Japanese trade and industry. If it were not for the fact that in Queensland big coal mines have been opened up to export directly to Japan and for the fact that much of the mining industry in the State is tied up with Japanese companies, the economy of this State would be in a very sorry plight. No-one could deny that Queensland's export economy is helping to keep the entire Australian economy going—sick as it is—and that without Queensland's export trade with Japan the nation would be in a very sorry state.

It behoves us as Queenslanders, in the interests of Queensland industry and our people generally, to ensure that we have top-level representation in Japan at all times. It is also in our interests as Australians to ensure that we have representatives in Japan liaising in all ways with various Japanese industries and at all other levels. On various occasions similar suggestions have been made from both sides of the Chamber. This morning the Leader of the Opposition referred to the big increase in expenditure by the Premier's Department. I believe that much of the

money would have been better spent if it had been channelled to establish an Agent-General's Office in Japan.

The regional councils are controlled, generally, by the Co-ordinator-General's Department, which in turn is controlled by the Premier. Before dealing with the regional councils, I wish to express my personal congratulations to Sir Charles Barton on the work he has done. I had a far closer association with him before he entered the Queensland Public Service than any other honourable member. He was a consulting engineer in Mackay and I had a close association with him through both the Army and Rotary International. I have thus known him longer and better than any other honourable member. He has been a great citizen of Queensland. I congratulate him on his efforts over a long period of years. I congratulate Syd Schubert, his successor, on his appointment. He has a high record to emulate. He does not have Charlie's slow drawl, but he has a happy smiling face. I am sure that he will do his best in his new position. He has a very important task to fulfil and, in doing so, I am sure that he will receive the full support and co-operation of all honourable members.

The concept of the regional councils is excellent and, thanks to decentralisation, they were established very easily. Legislative provision for the councils was provided in Queensland 12 months before the Commonwealth and other States thought of the concept. The way in which the councils were established was excellent, but they are not working for the full benefit of the regions. In many instances councils have been used by Ministers in charge of various departments as a good excuse to defer decisions on projects that should be going ahead. I know that it is a very touchy situation for the Premier and his department to step in and say, "From our point of view, this has to go ahead."

The Premier and the Minister for Police are fully aware of the circumstances surrounding the proposed new rail access corridor to Mackay Harbour. The proposal became bogged down with the Railway Department, the Main Roads Department, the Department of Local Government and various councils. Discussions were held with the Co-ordinator-General's Department and finally he looked at it closely and recommended to Cabinet that something be done to get the project under way. The condition of the old railway bridge was such that it could have collapsed at any time during floods. Planning considerations for the whole of the Mackay district, and in particular the developing urban area of Mackay through which the new rail access corridor would have to be built to the Mackay Harbour, were being held up. The matter was resolved finally, but it had been deferred and deferred and considerable hassling had gone on month after month.

The people who were being caught up knew full well that something was to happen in the area and that there would be a new rail access corridor. They knew that their land probably would be resumed. Some knew their businesses would be disrupted. They could not up anchor and start afresh or anew somewhere else. They could not develop their businesses. This completely bogged things down. Unfortunately this is only one example of what has been happening in a number of areas.

Early in the piece I suggested to the Premier that members of Parliament were being left out in the cold. The regional councils are only consultative councils and I suggested to the Premier how imperative it was that the local member be kept informed on what was going on in his own area. As a result of my approaches, the Premier decided that all honourable members would have made available to them the minutes of regional council meetings. For that I thank the Premier. In this way members know what is happening. However, I point out that when the minutes do arrive they are some six months old. The meetings are held quarterly and what transpired at them is stale news when the member receives it because the minutes could refer to a meeting held six months previously.

A perusal of the minutes indicated that the matters considered at the meetings are, in the main, drafts of reports and considerations that relate to future proposals, some with far-reaching consequences. In many cases, these are disseminated as draft reports to the various members of the local authority who are component parts of the local regional council. They have an opportunity to peruse them and discuss them fully and openly at council meetings. Quite often those people approach the local member to discuss these matters, but he is out in the cold because he has not enjoyed the privilege of looking at or examining the draft reports. It is not until they become public knowledge that the member of Parliament knows anything about them, yet every member of a local authority has full knowledge of them. This is an anomaly that the Premier has to look at closely again.

I accept that some of the reports are very confidential. But if the Government is prepared to allow members of local authorities to look at them (after indicating that they are confidential reports and that those members must respect their confidentiality), surely every responsible member of Parliament would act in the same way if he were told they were confidential reports and not for public release. Surely that is the basis of the oath of office taken by a member of Parliament. This matter must be looked at very closely.

Unfortunately, in a lot of their work, the regional councils have become merely clearing houses for information. They obtain information from a local authority and send

it to the Co-ordinator-General's Department for dissemination through some other department which is not playing ball with the local authority or is not giving out the information that it should. Where there is a disputation between two local authorities on a matter such as water supply, the regional council is able to obtain the information and pass it on to the local authorities. This is where they get their information. In some respects even the local authority representatives are making the regional councils just clearing houses.

They are also making them places where they lodge complaints about some other departments. In fact, that is all that they can do. In Main Roads planning, for example, how often have we seen differences of opinion between two adjoining local authorities on road priorities and on which local authority should have priority in the spending of Main Roads Department revenue.

The regional council has in effect no say in any such situation. I feel that if regional councils are to operate successfully, they should be given a few more teeth. Quite often matters involve not only two local authorities but even up to 10, 15 or 20 local authorities, who tend now more and more to look at their over-all regions. Consequently it may be possible to say through the regional council, "It is far more important to give priority to this road or this bridge in the interests of the whole region, despite differences of opinion between two local authorities."

I have given one example concerning roads. The Premier and other Ministers and members would be well aware that the same situation is arising in respect of water supply schemes and sewerage work, particularly where urban areas adjoin other local authority areas. This is a matter that deserves very close attention. The over-all answer is to have a revision of local authority boundaries, but that is a subject with which I do not intend to deal fully now. I do feel, however, that my point must be accepted that if regional councils are to operate successfully, circumstances must be accepted as they really are. Where there are problems between local authorities, the ones to suffer as a result of the dispute are the people living in the area.

I know in my own area the problems presented by sewerage work and the proposed extension of sewerage facilities. This work is held up because of a hassle between the Pioneer Shire Council and the Mackay City Council over the sharing of the cost of additional sewerage treatment works. Meanwhile people in the Slade Point area have to put up with earth closets. They are being held up in obtaining sewerage. The sewerage backlog in Queensland was mentioned this morning by the Leader of the Opposition.

If regional councils are to operate properly, I think they must have a little more power and a little more control over regions in resolving problems and getting local

authorities, where two or more are involved, to get off their tails and get planning work done and projects under way.

During the 1974 election campaign the Premier made it quite clear that he would set up a Department of Northern Development. I am very disappointed that that has not been done. I think there is still a strong need in Queensland for such a department.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AKERS (Pine Rivers) (5.3 p.m.): The main subject that I wish to discuss is the matter raised by the honourable member for Landsborough, namely, the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation. I have with me the relevant documents. They are quite massive. The investigation was broken down into many subjects or tasks, as they were called, and a report has been prepared on each one. These were the tasks—

Task 1—Inception Report and Programme

Task 2—Urban Land Use and Commitment

Task 3—Inner Urban Redevelopment Potential

Task 4—Infrastructure Systems and Plans

Task 5—Non-urban Land Use and Physical Constraints (a massive document)

Task 6—Planning and Administrative Processes

Task 7—Urban Land Demand (a noticeably small report)

Task 8—Regional Issues (an even smaller report)

Task 9 was a concept generation and evaluation.

In addition to those great documents, there is another which is supposedly the report itself.

I call for all of that work to be revised, because it has a totally inaccurate basis. The study says that during the January 1974 floods my house was under water. Not one house in the Pine Rivers Shire was flooded. That is one of the obvious basic faults of the report. Many other things are wrong with it, but I will go through those later on.

I will now deal with the recommendations of this report so that honourable members can see how potentially far-reaching and important the study is. The basic recommendations of the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation could be summarised as follows: firstly, major urban growth will be concentrated in three corridors emanating from Brisbane (to the north, to the west and to the south-east) and in two coastal areas (the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast). I must say that this is a summary of the preferred strategy. The second is that development in the western corridor should be encouraged at the expense of development in the northern corridor. That is the recommendation which I wish to discuss further. The honourable member for Landsborough certainly explained many of

its implications. The third recommendation is that major employment and servicing centres known as sub-regional centres should be developed in the western and south-western corridors and at the Gold Coast.

I think it is significant that, when one looks at those recommendations and at the membership of the steering committee, the members included the chairman of the Albert Shire, Councillor Drynan of the Beaudesert Shire, Alderman G. Jones from the Brisbane City Council and representatives from the Boonah Shire, the Ipswich City Council, the Laidley Shire Council, the Moreton Shire Council and the Redland Shire Council. The only representatives from the northern part of the Moreton Region were Councillor Beausang from the Landsborough Shire, who was appointed to the committee very late in the study and long after it was established, and Alderman Hodges from Redcliffe, who as honourable members know, is now a Federal member of Parliament and was obviously not present for very long. Those two people were the only members from the north of Brisbane and I do not understand how that report could have been produced in the way that it has without adequate representation from the north of Brisbane. This is shown by its basic faults.

Anybody who knows the area north of Brisbane at all knows that Strathpine was not covered by flood waters and is not flood prone. That is a basic fault that should have been found before the report was printed—and honourable members can imagine the cost of printing this document I have in my hand. The purpose of the study as it is published appears to have been twofold. The first is to serve as a framework in which decision-makers in local government, State Government, Federal Government, semi-governmental authorities and the private sector can develop the future programmes of their particular organisations, and the second is to recommend a certain level of Government intervention to promote the attainment of a preferred pattern of development. Those are its purposes, and they show the effect it can have. Anybody making a decision today about development anywhere in the Moreton Region will, if he has any sense, look at this report. Unless he goes back and checks all the basic facts (which nobody can be expected to do) he will believe it; he will believe, because Strathpine will be covered by flood waters, it should not be developed; and he will believe a lot of the other basic assumptions which are incorrect.

Since the release of this document, the officers of the Co-ordinator-General's Department appear to have been emphasising the first of those two roles I have mentioned, that is, the framework within which decision-makers can act. Again I point out that the report is pushing people, governments and private enterprise in the wrong direction. As I said, some of the information—and I

have given the example of flooding at Strathpine—on which the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigation is based is inaccurate, and inaccurate to a degree which appears to have been significant in the shape of the final strategy. Those basic inaccuracies have forced the designers, the people who have come up with the final strategy, to head in a certain direction. It has been done on a completely inaccurate basis.

The misinterpretations embodied in the evaluation of physical constraints on urban development in the northern corridor are of great concern. The flooding that I mentioned is extremely important, and I cannot stress too frequently how inaccurate that information is. It worries me, because if it contains that basic inaccuracy, how many other items covered in these massive documents could be called into question?

The 1976 census showed that approximately 86 per cent of the growth of the Moreton Region in the inter-census period has been along the northern and south-eastern corridors, not along the western and south-western corridors that are proposed by this strategy. So people want to live in the north and the south-east; yet it is proposed that the Government should say, "No, you can't live there. You have to live in the west and the south-west." If the Government takes action—I am not sure yet what action it intends to take—it is obvious that it should try to encourage the implementation of the strategy in the form in which it is presented. One method of doing that is to pour money into the areas it suggests ought to be developed. Therefore, if the Government takes that action, Government money will be going to one area and people will be going to another area, because people want to live in the north and the south. They have shown that, for 86 per cent—much more than half—of the growth has been in those areas.

Another factor that I fear is totally wrong is that the preferred strategy does not recognise the existing areas of secondary industry and the potential for major additional industrial development in the northern corridor. There is almost 2,000 acres of zoned industrial land in the Strathpine-Lawnton-Petrie area and about 1,000 acres of State industrial land at Narangba. That is virtually ignored by the study. Very little emphasis is placed on those areas, and the industrial development on the western corridor is taken as being of major importance.

Even accepting those mistakes and accepting that the potential industrial development of the north has been ignored, another factor that has been ignored makes that irrelevant. At least 83 per cent of employment growth in future will occur in the tertiary sector of the economy. Again, the basis of the study is that there is going to be industrial growth to the west and to the south-west, so people should go there. If that is wrong to begin with, the fact that people should go there because of industrial growth is not correct.

It is incorrect because people will not be going to jobs of that sort. By far the majority of jobs will become available in the tertiary sector. So that is another basic mistake in what is proposed for the growth of this region.

As an architect, I understand fully that planning is essential, and during my term on the Pine River Shire Council I have stressed the need for planning. But planning must be thoroughly and soundly based, and people must be able to trust it. People coming to live in an area must know that they can trust the strategy in order to know how they can react to it.

Although the preferred strategy has been proposed, three strategies have been considered. There is a trend strategy, which is an extension of the present trend; there is a proposal that would force people to live in coastal areas; and then there is the preferred strategy. No reason has been given for this preferred strategy. The other strategies have been assessed and faults have been found in them, but there is no assessment of the preferred strategy; no faults have been looked for in it, and there appears therefore to be a tacit assumption that no faults are in it. That indicates to me that the people who produced that study have not followed the basic requirement of planning, which is to question one's own decision as thoroughly as possible to see what is wrong with it. Had that been done they would have found the faults I have just pointed out. I am sure they would have found many more, because I spent only a short time on it.

There is no practical, logical, logistic assessment of that final strategy. Any strategy without a thorough assessment is completely devoid of any use at all. I believe the study should be recommitted. It does not follow that the whole lot has to be done again. Much of that work can be shown to be accurate. It should be checked. The submissions made by various local authorities and people interested should be assessed and not just noted as another report, which is the way it is most likely to happen. We would then have another document like this that would have to be read. Anyone reading one would then have to read the second one produced later on to see the faults in the first. Nobody has the time to do that.

The study must be redone. The assessment must be made of it so that the people who have to use it can trust it. I have a written-out recommendation that I would like to read. It is most important that a review be made of the study, with much greater emphasis being placed on the implementation than was contained in the original document. Because of the extensive work which has already gone into compiling the base data for the project, and because the Co-ordinator-General's Department will be considerably more familiar with the important factors involved than it was at the outset, such a review process will be nowhere near as expensive or time-consuming as the produc-

tion of the original document. The review should be conducted post haste. It is important that the review take place while statistical data is up to date and relevant. It is also most important that if the strategy is to be used as an educative document, and thence as the basis of substantial decisions, the information and conclusions it contains be the most accurate and valid available. Any significant delays will detract from the interest which has been generated in the concept of regional planning in the Moreton Region and, I would submit, completely destroy the use of the study. As a further recommendation I suggest that similar reviews should be undertaken every five years. Much more could be said about it. I ask the Premier to instigate a review along the lines I have raised, and on the basis of a submission that is being prepared at present by the Pine Rivers Shire Council on behalf of the local authorities in the northern section of the Moreton Region. That document will be a very thorough assessment, and I believe it should be the basis of a very thorough review.

I am very sorry that we have not introduced daylight saving in Queensland this year. We experimented with it a few years ago. I believe that it was well accepted then, and I ask the Premier to have a further assessment of it again next year.

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** Don't forget that we had a committee set up and report to the Government on this.

**Mr. AKERS:** That was four or five years ago, and I am sure that since then, having seen the effect of daylight saving in other States, people have changed their views.

**Mr. Bjelke-Petersen:** Don't go outside Brisbane or you will not get a very nice reception.

**Mr. AKERS:** My electorate lies on the outskirts of Brisbane, and I do go outside Brisbane quite a bit. In fact 65 per cent of my electorate is outside Brisbane.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to the regional co-ordination councils. I believe they are working quite successfully. I realise that some of the work done by them has not been totally successful. Nevertheless we have gone a lot further than before. Local authorities are being given the chance to get together regularly to discuss things. Discussions are held already, of course, through the Local Government Association, but it is done on an annual basis. The establishment of the regional co-ordination councils allows such discussions to be held quite regularly and, furthermore, allows the local authorities to have at their disposal the knowledge and experience of expert staff.

I should like to discuss certain other matters relative to these Estimates, but as my time has nearly expired, I shall content myself with the remarks I have already made.

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (5.22 p.m.): I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on my Estimates. I express special thanks to my coalition colleagues for their kind remarks and support for the Government. The great strength of this Government lies in the loyal support that it receives from all members of the coalition. Members of the Opposition are, of course, aware of this.

As was to be expected, the Leader of the Opposition trotted out his hardy annuals. He criticised the costs incurred by the Premier's Department and particularly by the Public Relations Bureau. It was established, of course, by the Labor Government and it is only natural that since that time the wages and salaries paid by the bureau would increase, just as the salary of the Leader of the Opposition has increased.

As I anticipated, the Leader of the Opposition was critical of the use of the official aeroplane. The time has arrived when he and his colleagues should be dragged—no doubt by the heels—into the 20th Century. I am staggered by the way they live in the past. They do not seem to realise that the distance from Brisbane to some parts of this State is greater than that from London to Moscow or from London to Rome. How on earth my fellow Ministers and I could get to those parts of the State without the use of the Government aircraft, I do not know. The Leader of the Opposition, as usual, seems to be concerned at the fact that we fly in an aeroplane.

**Mr. Burns:** Why don't you supply me with one, too, and drag me into the 20th Century?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition is being hypocritical. If he were to start flying around in an aeroplane he would be turning a political somersault. He is always critical of the use by the Government of an official aeroplane. Anyway, he is given adequate allowances and so on.

The cost of the Swiss loans affair would be infinitesimal compared with the \$4,000 million that it would have cost this State if the Federal colleagues of the Leader of the Opposition had succeeded in obtaining their loans or Iraqi funds for the Labor Party's election expenses. I noticed that he did not say anything about that side of the story which caused considerable concern to many people.

With ministerial expenses, exactly the same procedure has been followed over the years in the tabling of information.

As to local government grants, we know that an interim committee was established quickly to make recommendations on the distribution of funds to local government and to expedite the channelling of these funds to local authorities. The proposal is that a local government grants commission be established. The legislation is being prepared and will be presented to the Chamber when it is finalised.

In other States various approaches have been adopted to administer the environment. In New South Wales and Victoria the approaches have led to conflict between the operating departments and the Department of the Environment. In Queensland we have adopted a policy of providing for existing departments to include environmental considerations in the decisions they make. The Co-ordinator-General's Department supplies technical assistance to the departments and acts in a co-ordinative role when projects involve more than one department. That approach has been very successful.

The matter of the environmental newsletter was raised. The Environmental Control Council agreed to discontinue the newsletter and replace it with a series of occasional bulletins as the need arises—and that is what is being done.

I have approved the release of the report on the Wide Bay-Burnett Economic Structure Investigation. An important conclusion emerging from the report is that the region's industrial structure has not been favourable to growth at a rate comparable with that of the State or nation as a whole. Consideration is being given to that matter in assessing the Fraser Island environment report.

I thank the honourable member for Toowong for his remarks and his analysis of the responsibilities of the Premier in the light of the present political climate in Australia.

**Mr. Houston:** Why don't you make him a Cabinet Minister?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** He is certainly one of the members who is very able and deserves to be a Cabinet Minister. He would make a very excellent Minister, one whom I should be very pleased to have in my team.

**Mr. Houston:** He is an old, senior member.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should be the last honourable member to talk about who should be what; he has been shuffled around quite a lot in his time.

I appreciate the views expressed by the honourable member for Toowong about the dubious and doubtful benefit of the Australian Constitutional Convention. I hold similar views.

The honourable member for Murrumba drew our attention to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition would not have anything like the convenience, support, and help in every way but for the actions of the Government. When I think how Sir Francis Nicklin was treated as the Leader of the then Opposition, I can only say that the present Leader of the Opposition should give sincere thanks to the Government for what it has done for him and his colleagues.

**Mr. Burns:** You're living in the past; you're yesterday's man there.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** If anybody is yesterday's man, it is the Leader of the Opposition. He demonstrates that by his continuing criticism of the Government aircraft.

**Mr. Frawley:** He wants to worry about tomorrow.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** That's the point; he should concentrate on the future.

The Gladstone Area Water Board was set up at the request of the Gladstone City Council. It is a body corporate composed of four local authority members and three Government members. Thanks to the former Federal Labor Government, the industrial growth in the area has not been quite what we hoped or predicted. In the circumstances, the State Government is providing financial assistance for the scheme. I am sure that the honourable member representing the district is very grateful to the Government. As he knows, the determination on the price of water is primarily a matter for the board itself.

I appreciate the exposition given by the honourable member for Toowoomba North on the constitutional aspects of the State's mining and timber industries and the power and responsibilities of the State. As I explained at the outset, and as suggested by the honourable member, we have established and are maintaining a Federal affairs section in the department to advise and watch over developments in the Commonwealth-State relations irrespective of the political colour of the Government in Canberra. I can assure him that we will continue to play the role that we ought to play in this regard.

The honourable member for Windsor asked that I continue to look after the State's rights and responsibilities. I assure him that with his support and that of my other colleagues Queensland's rights and responsibilities will always be well to the fore and that we will always be on the alert to protect them.

I thank the honourable member for Barron River for his remarks about my wife's activities and work around the State. My wife does quite a lot of voluntary work. She moves among the women from one end of Queensland to the other. She is continually on the move meeting people, speaking to them and listening to their problems. I, too, recognise her work and appreciate it.

**Mr. Lester:** So do the people of Belyando. They thank her very much for coming up there recently.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I thank the honourable member for that remark. I know that his people are appreciative of my wife's visits from time to time.

I thank the honourable member for Toowoomba South for his remarks. I certainly will take note of them. I will continue to work to the best of my ability and I know that other honourable members will do

their best to ensure that Australia has a clear and comprehensive understanding of our problems. I agree with his views that we should use all of our natural resources and so develop some of our wonderful areas, such as the Toowoomba district. I took up with the Minister concerned the use of steam engines because I could see the benefit that could flow to tourism. That is one small way in which we might develop and display our resources to others.

The honourable member for Kurilpa spoke about sand-mining. As he said, our approach to environmental matters is to provide for balanced development. I thank him for his comments in this regard and I agree with what he said. The Government has sought to have a balanced economy, a balanced approach and the protection of the environment.

I thank the honourable member for Albert for his views, particularly those of appreciation of the work done by members of my department and what they do to help. What he said is only too true.

I support the honourable members for Flinders and Belyando—two of our men of the Inland—for the way in which they have worked.

I thank all Government members for their support and work. I thank also the members of my staff and the officers of the various sections under my control. I mention particularly Sir Charles Barton and the role he has played in the affairs of this State, Mr. Syd Schubert and Mr. Spann, who have worked so hard and played key roles. They are always co-operative with all honourable members, irrespective of party affiliations. These men, together with ourselves, work in the interests of Queensland.

In reply to the honourable member for Landsborough I make the comment that the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigations represent the first attempt to assess the total Moreton Region, which comprises 17 local authorities. The latest census figures will be examined in relation to the assumption used in the report, which is advisory only and is for the guidance of local authorities and their use as they see fit. The allocation of funds is not related to the report.

The honourable member for Mackay spoke of the Agent-General's Office as becoming redundant. I think if he saw what goes on there, as I have from time to time, he would recognise that it still has a very important role to play.

**Mr. Casey:** It was only its location I was referring to.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I appreciate the honourable member's comment. However, I believe that Sir Wallace Rae has done an excellent job in London. He is outstanding in his present position. Many people who go to London use Queensland House as

virtually their base and go there regularly to seek advice. The office of the Agent-General has a valuable function in this way.

Some members raised questions on regional matters. These are under consideration and will be considered further in the coming year.

#### VOTES PASSED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDER

By agreement, under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 19 October, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to—

The Premier—	\$
Chief Office .. .. .	2,425,262
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds .. .. .	59,785,412
Executive and Legislative	2,718,511
The Treasurer .. .. .	173,314,321
Education and Cultural Activities .. .. .	396,665,171
Health .. .. .	226,296,839
Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs .. .. .	15,337,897
Justice and Attorney-General .. .. .	25,723,698
Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service .. .. .	19,563,215
Local Government and Main Roads .. .. .	3,739,229
Mines and Energy .. .. .	9,117,891
Primary Industries .. .. .	29,568,074
Tourism and Marine Services .. .. .	14,961,957
Transport .. .. .	5,650,805
Works and Housing .. .. .	50,155,314
The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations .. .. .	175,915
The Auditor-General .. .. .	2,108,650
Railways .. .. .	327,136,000
Trust and Special Funds Estimates, Balance of Estimates .. .. .	1,689,659,516
Loan Fund Account Estimates, Balance of Estimates .. .. .	212,116,826
Supplementary Estimates (Consolidated Revenue), 1975-1976 .. .. .	79,747,450.02
Supplementary Estimates (Trust and Special Funds), 1975-1976 .. .. .	42,554,069.02
Supplementary Estimates (Loan Fund Account), 1975-1976 .. .. .	20,920,905.40
Vote on Account, 1977-1978 .. .. .	576,000,000
Resolutions reported, and ordered to be received tomorrow.	

## ELECTRICITY BILL

## MOTION FOR RECOMMITTAL

The Order of the Day being called for the third reading of the Bill—

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.47 p.m.): I move—

“That the Order of the Day be discharged and the Bill be recommitted in three months’ time.”

In looking through “Hansard” for occasions on which a debate was initiated on the third reading of a Bill, I had to go back as far as 1958, when Mr. Mann called “Not formal” to the third reading of a Bill. In that debate, both Mr. Mann and Mr. Tom Hiley, who was Treasurer and Minister for Housing at the time, made the point that it was a somewhat rare procedure for the House to engage in a debate on the third reading of a Bill. Mr. Hiley went on to say—

“It will be recognised that the time for the House to exercise this rare right to debate a third reading of a Bill, is when some new matter or phase emerges which was not available for consideration in earlier stages of debate.”

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that new matters have arisen in relation to the Electricity Bill that constitute circumstances which would allow the House to recommit the Bill in three months’ time.

The new items that have arisen relate to section 53 of the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1965. Subsection (1) reads—

“Poll of electors on certain questions.  
(i) The Local Authority may at any time and shall when so directed by the Minister take a poll of the electors of the Area or of such division or divisions thereof or part of a division or divisions as the Local Authority or the Minister, as the case may be, considers to be interested, upon any of the following questions, namely:—

(a) The site of the office of the Local Authority;

(b) The abolition of all the divisions of the Area;

(c) The alteration of the boundaries of any division or divisions of the Area, whether by increasing or decreasing the number of divisions or otherwise;

(d) Any other question relating to local government upon which the opinion of the electors is required by the Minister, or upon which ten per centum of the electors of the Area or of such division or divisions thereof or part of a division or divisions have petitioned for an expression of opinion.”

I suggest that paragraph (d) is the important one.

Mr. Speaker, 65,000 electors of Brisbane—in other words, 65,000 Queenslanders—have signed such a petition. It reads—

“LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1936–1976  
(Section 53) PETITION

“The petition for an expression of opinion upon the question relating to local government, viz:—

‘whether Brisbane City Council should retain those powers it has had and possessed since its initial constitution in 1925 in relation to light and power and continue to operate its electricity undertaking’.

To: Town Clerk, Brisbane City Council, City Hall, King George Square, Brisbane.

“The petition of those persons whose full names, addresses, occupations and personal signatures appear on one of the several numbered pages hereof showeth as follows:—

1. Brisbane City Council has pursuant to section 36 (1) of the City of Brisbane Act 1924–1974 since its initial constitution had and possessed powers in relation to light and power.

2. Brisbane City Council at present operates an electricity undertaking pursuant to the Electric Light and Power Act 1896–1972.

3. The Electricity Bill, which has been introduced into the Parliament of the State of Queensland by its initiation in Committee on 15th September, 1976, proposes, inter alia, that Brisbane City Council be deprived of its powers in relation to light and power and be divested of its electricity undertaking.

“The petitioners therefore humbly pray that a poll of electors of the City of Brisbane be taken by Brisbane City Council upon the question heretofore set forth.”

Having received a petition from 65,000 electors of Brisbane, the city council met at 10 o’clock this morning and carried the following resolution—

“1. That the petition presented by the Town Clerk lodged pursuant to S. 53 of the Local Government Act 1936-1976 be received.

“2. That the Council take a poll of the electors of the Area upon the question relating to local government viz: whether Brisbane City Council should retain those powers it has had and possessed since its initial constitution in 1925 in relation to light and power and continue to operate its electricity undertaking, upon which not less than ten per centum of the electors of the Area have petitioned for an expression of opinion.

“3. That the Council requests that the Governor in Council make such modifications of the provisions referred to in S. 53 (6) of the Local Government Act as are necessary for the taking of the poll



of the electors of the Area upon that question and that the Town Clerk convey that request, through the Director of Local Government, to the Governor in Council."

As you would recall from what you read out this morning, Mr. Speaker, the fourth part of the resolution dealt with notifying the aldermen about the next meeting of the council to deal with this matter.

With that number of electors having signed a petition in five days since last Friday when the Bill was passed by the Assembly at 4.6 a.m., it is obvious that large numbers of people have expressed their concern about this matter. They have asked for their democratic right. As I understand it, that democratic right is the right to have a vote on the issue. I am asking the Government to give them that opportunity. Other areas of the State can be talked about, but it is up to those other areas to do something about the matter. Let me remind honourable members from country areas that the Cities and Towns Local Government Association of Queensland has endorsed the Lord Mayor's letter on this subject. I have a telegram here from the Roma council. We have received representations from aldermen all round the State. Maybe some other people would like to hold a poll in their area. We ought to debate the matter in three months' time. That would give people in Townsville, Brisbane and elsewhere an opportunity to vote if they so desire. We should give them the right that is written into the Act. The Act states very clearly that if 10 per cent of the people in an area seek a poll, then the local authority should give them a poll. It would be very convenient for the Government to say "No" on this occasion, but later if the Brisbane City Council received a petition from 10 per cent of the electors and then said to them, "We won't give you a vote", honourable members opposite would all object and say, "Look at the undemocratic actions of the Brisbane City Council."

Let me remind honourable members that the decision taken by the Brisbane City Council was not a political decision. All of the Liberal aldermen and all of the Labor aldermen, in other words aldermen representing every elector in the city of Brisbane, voted unanimously to endorse the petition and to seek a poll. So it is not a matter of the Labor Party versus the rest; it is not a matter of the Labor council versus the rest; it is not a matter of the citizens of Brisbane versus the rest. This is a decision of all the elected representatives of all parties, representing all the electors in the city of Brisbane. They are asking, "Can we conduct a poll under section 53 of the Local Government Act?", in accordance with the Act that was passed by this Parliament.

**Mr. Lindsay:** What about Cairns?

**Mr. BURNS:** I suggest that Cairns and all the other areas ought to be very careful about the proposal. If the honourable member had been here on Friday at 4.6 a.m., he

would know that there is a clause in the Bill which, maybe, will allow the Governor in Council to deny Cairns, Townsville or any of these other areas in the State that have an electricity distribution authority the right to retain it. Their rights are not guarded by this Bill.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that you will pull me into line if I attempt to debate the Bill. I cannot debate the Bill at this stage. All I can do is debate the deferral or recommittal of the Bill, and that is what I am suggesting. There has been a change in circumstances between last Friday morning and today. Since then this large number of electors have asked, in accordance with their democratic rights, that they be allowed to vote on this matter. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister concerned, that we ought to endorse their democratic right to hold a poll on the issue. The Order of the Day should be discharged and the Bill recommitted in three months' time after such a poll is held.

**Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.55 p.m.):** I have great pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. A good deal of nonsense has been spoken by Government members about what the Brisbane City Council and the people of Brisbane want to do and also about what I want to do. All we are asking is that the citizens of Brisbane be given the right to conduct a poll to determine whether or not they want their own electricity authority.

The Bill provides that there shall be seven electricity boards. We ask that there be eight, of which one should be located in Brisbane.

**Mr. Aikens:** Lovely Brisbane! Protect all the people of Brisbane.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The loud mouth from Townsville South was not game to make a speech when the Bill was before Parliament. If he keeps quiet I shall tell him something about it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Bulimba is either blind or silly. If he reads "Hansard", he will find that I did make a speech on the Bill.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** How the honourable member can describe the words that he uttered as a speech, I do not know. They left a lot to be desired. However, I do not want to get side-tracked on this very important issue.

**Mr. Lindsay:** You fellows are a facade from start to finish.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** If the honourable member for Everton listens for a while, he will learn something.

The people of Brisbane have the right to decide whether or not they want the present position to continue. Some time ago it

was suggested that the Cairns board and the Townsville board be amalgamated and the people of North Queensland objected violently to such a proposal. The greatest advocate for the people was the honourable member for Cairns. He came into this Chamber and argued against the recommendation for the setting up of four boards. The Government went along with the Opposition on the proposal. There is nothing wrong at all with what the people of Brisbane are doing. They are merely saying to the Government, "Just leave us alone as you left Cairns and Townsville alone to manage their own affairs."

As to the equalisation provisions—the holding of such a poll will have no effect on them whatever. Even if the Brisbane City Council is given the right to continue as a distributing authority, the equalisation provisions of the Bill will apply and the council will have to buy its power from the generating authority at a price that would be the same as that charged under the present provisions of the Bill.

The granting of authority to the Brisbane City Council to act as an electricity board in its own right will retain an organisation that has proved over the years to be quite efficient. Aldermen of the Brisbane City Council will still be responsible to the people of Brisbane for the operations of the electricity undertaking. This is a sound democratic principle.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, the people of Roma, through their council, have said that they want to retain their electricity authority. There is no reason why there could not be several distributing and selling authorities.

We have heard a great deal of nonsense about restricting the number of boards to seven. Originally, as I say, the Government proposed to set up only four boards and then increased the number to seven. I contend that it should establish eight boards.

The major point is that 60,323 people of Brisbane have asked for a poll. At this stage they have not said whether or not they want to retain the present set-up in Brisbane.

**Mr. Jones** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I will not warn the honourable member for Cairns again.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The people of Brisbane should be given the right to conduct such a poll if they so desire. It is obvious that, as a result of the agitation of the honourable member for Cairns, the members of the National Party and the Liberal Party took up the matter in their caucus rooms and succeeded in convincing the Government that it should change its mind. At no time has the Minister said why he discarded the establishment of four boards in favour of the creation of seven. Nor has he said why he wants to take the electricity authority

in the metropolitan area out of the hands of the Brisbane City Council. I do not, however, want to go into the broader issues.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will come back to the motion.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** This morning the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads had the cheek to make a ministerial statement in which he threatened the people of Brisbane that if they keep on agitating for a poll the Government would be likely to divest the Brisbane City Council of its powers. What kind of treatment is that from a Minister for Local Government who is supposed to be protecting local government and people under the control of local government? When a local government asked the Government to do something on its behalf, he said that! It is a complete sham. I support the people of Brisbane and all people who want equalisation. But I support the right of the people of Brisbane to determine their own destiny.

[*Sitting suspended from 6.1 to 7.15 p.m.*]

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (7.15 p.m.): I have waited for over 30 years in this House for today. I have waited for a definite, irrefutable chance to expose members of the A.L.P. as the slobbering, sickening, political hypocrites that they are. Finally they have delivered themselves into my hands.

**Mr. Houston:** The Liberal Party is in the council.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The Liberal Party or any other party has not got people in it like Sheila Keffe and Jim Keffe, who, in my opinion, should be indicted as accessories before the fact in the murder of a little girl in Townsville.

**Mr. Houston:** You've got nothing else to talk about.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The honourable member should know from his long experience in this House that if he tries to knock a chip off me I will cut lumps of skin off him.

Unfortunately this Government inherited from the A.L.P. two separate local authority Acts. One is the Local Government Act, which covers every local authority in Queensland other than the A.L.P.'s beloved Brisbane. The other act is the City of Brisbane Act, which covers only the A.L.P.'s beloved city of Brisbane.

I am amazed that the Government has not taken much stronger action to break down that discrimination than it has in this Electricity Bill. I think the Leader of the Opposition, supported by his new deputy, exemplified what I mean to the fullest extent. His new deputy is much preferable, of course, to the honourable member for Rockhampton. These people have played what we call in Rugby League circles Brisbane v. The Rest. At the end of the Rugby League football season, how often has the farcical match of

Brisbane v. The Rest been held? Today we witnessed an example, politically speaking, of the A.L.P. fighting for Brisbane against the rest of the State. The people of Brisbane do not mind living on the rest of the State, or the rest of the State providing all the things that they need to keep them going. Without the rest of the State, Brisbane would be a collection of mud and bark humpies along the banks of the Brisbane River. The people of Brisbane do not mind sponging, fattening and battenning on the rest of the State; but when it comes to distributing the facilities of the State, they believe that Brisbane should get the best portions of the duck and the people in the rest of the State should get the parson's nose.

I remember when the A.L.P. put up quite a lot of arguments to convince the people that it had the interests of all the people of the State at heart. I remember that just prior to the last election, a big argument was used by the honourable member for Archerfield and others to stab Jack Houston in the back and put Percy Tucker into the job of Leader of the Opposition. They said that it would be wonderful to have a northerner as Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament because his election as Leader of the A.L.P. would, they thought, inveigle some northern and country people into voting for the A.L.P. The northern and country people are not fools and at the last State election they showed what they thought of that shabby manoeuvre.

I shall now get right down to facts and not deviate from them. This Bill passed its first reading on 14 September, which is about eight or nine weeks ago. Anybody can work that out for himself. Quite a few speeches were made at the introductory stage. I made a speech that lasted the full time permitted under Standing Orders. My speech can be found on page 443. But, of course, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition neither heard my speech nor read it in "Hansard". I do not know why. I would not like to suggest that, like many members of his party, he is walking around most of the time like a stunned ox. The fact remains that he did not hear that speech and he did not read it in "Hansard". Yet today so eager was he to boost Brisbane against Northern Queensland that he said I did not speak on the Bill. I suppose we can excuse him for that because he is a Brisbaneite body and soul.

I am going to ask all members of the A.L.P. and all of their political stooges who are up in the public gallery at the moment—I shall also suggest afterwards, Mr. Speaker, that you ask the cleaners to lavishly distribute phenol or some other disinfectant around the gallery—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** They are all up there—the Brisbane City Council aldermen (even some of the Liberals or so-called Liberals)—and

they are all bound together with that indissoluble bond of giving everything to Brisbane at the expense of the remainder of the State.

If we are going to talk about mean, cheap, narrow, shoddy, party-political politics, I suppose they can be excused, too, because their interests are not the interests of the State of Queensland; their interests are only the interests of this great, overgrown, rat-ridden city of Brisbane.

This Bill was printed and was laid on the table of the House and open for anyone to read or comment on—it became public property—on 14 September last. What took the A.L.P. in the Brisbane City Council or in this House or at the Trades Hall, where their bosses reside, so long to galvanise into action against the provisions of this Bill? I think that we are entitled to that explanation from them; but, of course, naturally, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, possessing some minimal intellect, were very wise not to touch on that important matter and they will not touch on it whenever this Bill is debated.

As I said, two separate Acts of Parliament deal with local authorities in this State. They are the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act. I can remember when the Minister in charge of those Acts exercised his option against the express will of the people in the form of a petition from Townsville. We submitted a very big petition against the, shall I say, introduction of fluoride into the Townsville water supply. It was an unanswerable and irrefutable case but the Minister wiped it for reasons that I do not suppose we can mention in this debate.

This will give the House some example of the slobbering hypocrisy of the A.L.P. and the members of the Labor Party representing country electorates. They are the honourable members for Cairns, Rockhampton, Rockhampton North, Bundaberg and Port Curtis, who are grovelling, genuflecting and lick-spitting to the A.L.P. section that represents Brisbane and Brisbane alone. How will they explain those things to their electors?

When I started off in Parliament I went from one end of this State to the other and I told the people at public meetings and over the radio—there was no television then—just what went on in Parliament, who lined up with whom and who supported what. I am contemplating doing the same thing again. I am contemplating going from Cape York to Coolangatta and out to the Northern Territory border to tell the people of Queensland who live in the areas that matter most, who are the salt of the earth and who live outside Brisbane, just what attitude the A.L.P. cravenly adopted on this particular Bill.

I was chairman of the Townsville City Council Water and Electricity Board in 1945. It was, I suppose, one of the finest little profitable boards in the history of this State and in 1946 the Labor Government—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am coming back to the Bill, Mr. Speaker. I am going to draw an analogy. Opposition members would not know what an analogy is; they think that it is an illegitimate octopus or something.

In 1945 the Labor Government of the day passed the Regional Electric Authorities Act, which is almost the same as the Act to which Labor members are now objecting. After the passage of that Bill, the Labor Government took over every local authority electricity department in the State. What I said then as chairman of the electricity department of the Townsville City Council is on record; I said, "This is the blackest day in the history of Townsville." But we were doing exactly what the Brisbane City Council is now doing with their electricity undertaking. They are using for other purposes money that really belongs to the electricity consumers. They are taking money from the electricity account and spending it on all sorts of things. Goodness knows where they will stop this spending.

Some chap named Frank Sleeman, whoever he is, spent nearly \$4,000 on sending to every member of this Parliament this telegram of 140 words that I now have in my hand. The honourable members for Townsville, Townsville West and I received the telegrams on Saturday night. They were read to us over the telephone and delivered in the mail on Monday. Honourable members know what is in the telegram. Do they want me to read it?

**Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It is a lot of insufferable bilge and I feel sure honourable members do not want me to read it.

I shall tell the House what the people of North Queensland think of it. "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" is a paper that is pretty independent and this is how it reported in today's issue my reaction and that of the honourable members for Townsville and Townsville West to this insulting, intolerable, impertinent telegram that we received from this person Sleeman. The headline is, "Power Telegram Slammed" and the article beneath it reads—

"Townsville State Parliamentarians yesterday hit out at a telegram sent to Parliamentary representatives throughout Queensland by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Sleeman—"

(Is that who Sleeman is? Why didn't somebody tell me?)

". . . seeking their support for a referendum on the proposed State Government takeover of the Brisbane City Council's electricity distribution.

"They claimed that the 140-word telegram, sent to the State Government's 82 Parliamentary representatives, was a waste of time and public money."

And so it was. The article then went on to report me, quite truthfully and transparently honest as I always am, in these words—

"Mr. Aikens said the telegram had been sent to each of the 82 members of the Queensland Parliament."

I gave my copy of the telegram to "The Townsville Daily Bulletin".

**Mr. Hinze:** Do you know that the council aldermen are jointly and severally responsible for the cost of the telegram? You do know that, don't you?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Who is going to pay the cost of the telegram?

**Mr. Hinze:** Sleeman.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Sleeman will pay for it out of his own pocket? That'll be the day! That'll be the day when any member of the A.L.P. pays for anything out of his own pocket. I have been in politics for a long time and I have yet to see such a momentous occasion.

The principle of this Bill is the very principle of the Regional Electric Authorities Act put through Parliament by the A.L.P. in 1945.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will return to a discussion of the motion. The Bill has already passed the second reading. I ask him now to address himself to the motion for recommittal.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am telling the House why this flim-flam motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and supinely seconded by the Deputy Leader should be thrown out by the House. In fact, I do not think it is worthy of debate.

**Mr. Houston:** Well, sit down.

**Mr. AIKENS:** They do not like it, Mr. Speaker. They are like Murphy's dog; they can give it but they cannot take it. I should like the vociferous member for Bulimba, who is fighting his way back into favour with the Q.C.E., to tell the House why it took nine weeks for the A.L.P. in this Chamber and in the Brisbane City Council to make even the first move to oppose the Bill or to suggest a referendum. So there is the position, ladies and—

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** What is wrong? Do honourable members opposite not think that the honourable members for Salisbury and Mourilyan are ladies?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am sorry that you will not let me pursue that argument, Mr. Speaker, but as I see it, this Bill, and I am subject to your correction, is purely an enlargement of the Regional Electric Authorities Act.

This Bill proposes to take away from the Brisbane City Council as such the generation and distribution of electricity and hand it over to a board. This is what the Regional Electric Authorities Act did with regard to all local authorities in Queensland who ran their own electricity authority. I want to say that in a way I am very, very pleased that time has always vindicated me. No matter what I have said, and although people have disagreed with me at the time, as time goes on it has vindicated what I have said, and I knew that the day was coming and all I had to do was to remain in this Parliament to see it. I have remained in this Parliament and will remain in this Parliament, I suppose, to see it again. I have seen the members of the A.L.P. in this House on their knees—almost on their stomachs—crawling and cringing to the vested interests of Brisbane represented in the gallery of this Chamber not only by A.L.P. aldermen but by Liberal Party aldermen. I regret very much that it is not possible to take a televised picture of this Chamber so the people will know just how low, how contemptible and how despicable the A.L.P. has sunk.

**Mr. LINDSAY** (Everton) (7.34 p.m.): In rising to speak against the motion for the recommittal of the Bill moved by the Leader of the Opposition, I would first like to correct his innuendo that I was not in fact in the House last Friday morning at 4.7 a.m. In fact I was, and sat through the whole long proceedings. I must say in passing that I commend the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy for the case that they presented on that occasion. So I would ask him now was he saying that I was not here as a political smear, or was he just so tired, as I believe he was—as we all were—that he did not realise I was here? I see the Leader of the Opposition nodding his agreement that I was here.

We have before us in this Electricity Bill a very serious issue, the concept of rationalising the distribution of electricity throughout Queensland.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The Bill has already been read a second time. The honourable member can deal only with the motion for recommittal.

**Mr. LINDSAY:** With respect, Mr. Speaker, what I am leading up to is that we in this House are expected to make a decision on issues. What the Leader of the Opposition has done is to place a red herring across the path and suggest that what is in fact required is a referendum. Historically the Australian people have shown a dislike for referendums. As elected representatives of our electorates, we are expected to make decisions on issues. Some issues are difficult; some are easy. In my speech at the introductory stage and also at the first joint party meeting, I indicated that I was against the measure. Subsequently, at a joint party meeting, I again argued the case. But what

we have seen done by the A.L.P. here is a tactic to avoid letting the public at large know exactly how members of the Opposition feel on the issue. It is a delaying tactic, a tactic that they have used because they are afraid to make a decision.

I will call the toss. If there is a referendum in Brisbane, what about all the other authorities? What about the other 22? Are they not entitled to a referendum? If the result is 11 all, who then is going to make the decision? I say it is the Parliament of Queensland that must make the decision, and that decision should be made in the House tonight. So let us have a vote on it. I give notice here and now that when the motion for the third reading is put, I shall call for a division. We will then see which way the A.L.P. votes.

**Hon. R. E. CAMM** (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (7.36 p.m.): As everyone knows, it is quite unusual for there to be a debate on the third reading of any Bill. Our parliamentary procedures are such that the broad principles of the Bill are outlined at the introductory stage, it is discussed in detail at the second-reading stage, and the clauses are then analysed separately. So every member of Parliament has ample opportunity to debate any clause or any particular aspect of the Bill if he so desires. However, earlier today the motion for the third reading of this Bill was questioned by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly, as he claims, to give the people of Brisbane another opportunity to consider their opinion of the Bill.

Over the last few days, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a campaign mounted by the Brisbane City Council in opposition to the Bill. I indicated at both the introductory and second-reading stages that the Bill was discussed fully with the State Electricity Commission by my predecessor and me, with many local authorities, with many electricity distributing boards, and also with representatives of the Brisbane City Council, and I did see Alderman Thomson and the Lord Mayor on one occasion. But after the Bill had been presented to the House and printed five weeks ago, why did the Brisbane City Council wait till a few days before the second reading was to begin to mount this campaign?

I have never seen a campaign in which the subject matter was so misrepresented to the people by any local authority as this one was misrepresented to the people of Brisbane. I heard the Lord Mayor say on television, "They are taking away \$100,000,000 of revenue." He did not say that the council was also being relieved of expenditure of \$100,000,000. The Brisbane City Council is not supposed to make a profit out of the electrical undertaking. It is a distributing authority for electricity that is generated by a generating authority. It is supposed to distribute that electricity at a price that will meet its costs. But the

Brisbane City Council has seen fit over the years to fleece the electricity users of Brisbane in order to support some of its unprofitable undertakings.

It did not say that in its representations to the people. It did not say that from now on, if this undertaking is passed over to a board comprising members of local authorities within the South-east Queensland region, including representation from the Brisbane City Council, all that the people of Brisbane will be required to pay is the actual cost of the generation of electricity plus the cost of distribution, and no profits will be distributed in any shape or form to any other local authority undertaking.

It is quite illuminating to read the history of electricity generation in this part of the State. Way back before 1925 many small local authorities controlled electricity distribution. In 1925, following the introduction of the City of Brisbane Act, the council assumed the responsibility for distribution and some generation. The council built the New Farm Power Station and later started to build the Tennyson Power Station. The City Electric Light Company, which was later taken over by the S.E.A., built Bulimba A and Bulimba B. The S.E.A. took over the New Farm and Tennyson Power Stations and assumed responsibility for repayment of debts. From my recollection the council was pleased to be rid of the generation responsibility.

That was in about 1963. There was no reduction by the Government in the loan allocation to the Brisbane City Council, even though it was relieved of responsibility for the generation of electricity. As a matter of fact, the then Treasurer gave it an additional loan of £1,000,000 for sewerage work. When we look at the record of the Brisbane City Council, and the assistance it has received from this Government since we assumed office, the Brisbane City Council can be regarded as the most fortunate local authority in the State. Look at the last 11 years. I can speak with authority about the last 11 years because I had the privilege of administering the Main Roads portfolio in the time. Look at the roads that have been built in this area; look at the bridges that have been built; look at the Shafston Avenue-Main Street intersection; look at Kemp Place, the Captain Cook Bridge, the Riverside Expressway and the South-east Freeway.

Not one penny of local government money went into those undertakings. Every penny came from this State Government. That was expenditure in the city of Brisbane. Yet this council has the effrontery to say that because the Government is endeavouring to reorganise electricity generation and distribution in this State, it is going to fleece the council of \$100,000,000. How could anything be more misrepresented?

**Mr. Burns:** Don't you think the people of Brisbane are Queenslanders, too?

**Mr. CAMM:** The way the Brisbane City Council is acting, it is about time the aldermen realised that they are people of Queensland and not just isolated in the city of Brisbane. That is what the Leader of the Opposition wants to realise. That is what I told Alderman Thomson when he started to talk about what we were doing. I said, "It is about time you Labor aldermen in the Brisbane City Council realised that you are Queenslanders, not just people living in Brisbane in isolation. Why not share the good things with Queenslanders because you are prepared to take all the good things that the rest of Queensland gives you? Why not share with the rest of Queensland the advantages that you enjoy because of the concentration of population?" That is all that we ask the people of Brisbane to do—to share with Queenslanders the advantages that they have because of the concentration of population.

The rest of Queensland is prepared to share with the people of Brisbane the advantages that will accrue to them because of the development of the outlying areas of the State. The Cairns people were prepared to share the cheap electricity from hydro stations with Northern Queensland and Western Queensland. Yet we find that aldermen on the Brisbane City Council are not prepared to share with the rest of Queensland the advantages that they have because they happen to have a concentration of population here.

I was interested to read in the newspaper this morning that I was invited to address a meeting with representatives of the council. Let me make it quite plain that the Brisbane City Council must have known yesterday that this meeting was on. When the telegram I have in my hand was delivered to my office, I was at a Cabinet meeting. It was delivered far too late for me to even consider attending. The date on the top of the telegram would appear to indicate that it was lodged at 6.35 p.m. on 14 November. That would be on Sunday evening. I do not know whether telegrams can be lodged at that time on a Sunday. Nevertheless that is the time and date on the top.

**Mr. Marginson:** What does it say?

**Mr. CAMM:** Listen to this: it starts off by saying, "I respectfully invite you". What does he mean by "respectively"? If he had said, "I respectfully invite you", that would have been correct.

**An Opposition Member:** That's a typist's error.

**Mr. CAMM:** It might have been. This seems to indicate that he was going back and had invited me last week or the week before, or that he is drawing a distinction between me and someone else.

However, the Lord Mayor did invite me to attend the meeting, but the telegram was delivered after I had been to Cabinet at midday on Monday. To the Lord Mayor I would say this: I challenge him to debate

this Bill with me on any TV station in Queensland. I challenge him to debate it with me not on a TV station whose programmes are confined to Brisbane but on one whose programmes are transmitted throughout the length and breadth of the State. I will debate the Bill with him on any radio station or television station that has Queensland-wide coverage. Let us see how good he is then. It is useless sending me a telegram when it is far too late for me to accept the invitation.

**Mr. Houston** interjected.

**Mr. CAMM:** The new Deputy Leader of the Opposition must know by now that I have never dodged an issue.

**Mr. Houston** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. CAMM:** I have never dodged an issue that comes within my responsibilities. I certainly would have attended the meeting if I had had the time and I would have been quite happy to address the people assembled there. But, of course, the telegram was not sent to me on Friday or Saturday.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I rise to a point of order. As the Minister has issued that challenge, I take it that the Government will support our motion to enable the Minister and the Lord Mayor to debate this issue on either Channel 9 or the A.B.C.

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

**Mr. CAMM:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has the twisted outlook of Labor aldermen in the Brisbane City Council.

I am confining myself to action taken by the Brisbane City Council over the past few days to stymie this Bill and to the misrepresentations that it has engaged in. The honourable member for Townsville South referred to the telegram that was sent to every member of Parliament.

**Mr. Houston:** That's not right.

**Mr. CAMM:** I understand that a telegram was received by every member of Parliament.

**Mr. Houston:** Wrong.

**Mr. CAMM:** Do Opposition members mean to tell me that they did not receive the telegram?

**An Opposition Member:** Never got one.

**Mr. CAMM:** Of course not. They knew that they would act like sheep-dogs and follow whatever they were told to do by their dictator in the Trades Hall.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order, or I will deal with members under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr. Houston** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I now warn the honourable member for Bulimba under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr. CAMM:** The cost of these telegrams would amount to something in excess of \$1,500. I would like the ratepayers of Brisbane to ask who paid for the telegrams and who paid for the advertisements in the paper. Right from the start the council engaged in an exercise in futility. On many occasions the council had an opportunity to discuss this matter with me.

**Mr. Burns:** On the radio the other morning did you say that even if 300,000 people signed the petition you still would not take any notice of it?

**Mr. CAMM:** No. I have not discussed this Bill on radio with any reporter. I have been meticulous in telling every reporter, radio announcer and television announcer that only when the Bill is passed and becomes law will I discuss it with anyone who wants to discuss it.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr. CAMM:** Opposition members might laugh like jackasses, but the forum for discussion and debate on any Bill, until it becomes law, is Parliament. That is where I will discuss it. Opposition members make guesses about the contents of the Bill, run to their stooges in the Press and say, "This is what we are going to do." But they did not know anything about the Bill until it was presented. I follow the proper procedure and wait until a Bill is presented and passed before I discuss it outside. In this Chamber I will debate any Bill as fully as we did last Thursday and Friday morning. Only when it becomes law will I debate it with anyone outside.

In incurring this expenditure, the council is only carrying on what the Labor administration in the Brisbane City Council has been doing for quite some time. It is time that the people of Brisbane realised how electricity users in this city have been subsidising other council departments, including transport. Even though they might not be able to take advantage of other council departments, including transport, the electricity users have been subsidising them.

It is on record that up till June 1975 Brisbane City Council electricity users had subsidised other Brisbane City Council departments to the extent of \$10,435,944. The amount contributed in 1974-75 was \$2,481,332. Is it right that the electricity users should be saddled with additional expenditure to prop up the Transport Department or some other area of council responsibility? That is quite a nice dividend for the aldermen who have been handling other departments that are not quite so profitable.

In 1972-73, the total accumulated loss in the council's powerhouses undertaking was \$1,808,575. It is important to note that the electricity supplied to the tramways at that time was provided at a special rate and that the charge made by the electricity distribution undertaking was always sufficient to ensure a surplus, that is, the electricity users and not the tram users or the rate-payers subsidised the transport undertaking in those days.

I shall go a little further.

**Mr. Burns:** Answer one question. If the Brisbane City Council has been ripping off people with its electricity charges, is it true that electricity charges should go down?

**Mr. CAMM:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. Burns:** Why not?

**Mr. CAMM:** Because the city council has let the electricity undertaking become so run down in the last two years, it will take all this profit to restore electricity distribution in the city of Brisbane to the standard that we desire.

In 1975-76, a further contribution of over \$800,000 was made to the City Fund. The accounts for 1975-76 have not been published and the Auditor-General's report on finances of the Brisbane City Council will be tabled shortly.

The council's dealings in other respects are open to question. I wonder if the council is afraid that when representatives of other local authorities are placed on this board, they will see what the Brisbane City Council has been doing over the years with electricity money and will wonder whether they can subsidise road construction in, say, the Pine Rivers Shire, or undertake water-works in another shire belonging to a distribution board. When a board is appointed in charge of electricity distribution in this part of Queensland, the people in this part of the State will pay charges for electricity that they are legally compelled to pay—and no more.

**Mr. Burns:** Has the Auditor-General ever reported that these people have been ripped off—Brisbane City Council consumers?

**Mr. CAMM:** The Leader of the Opposition asked if the Auditor-General's report has indicated that this has been going on. I did not intend to read this quotation, but in the light of his question I shall now quote from the 1973-74 Auditor-General's report on some of the council's undertakings. He said—

“During 1973/74 two properties of the Transport Undertaking, the Ipswich Road Bus Depot and its Coronation Drive property, were purchased by the Finance Department (General Division) at book

values of \$519,000 and \$1,790,600 respectively. These values include appreciations of \$190,630 and \$911,031, respectively, made on revaluations in 1968-69 and 1971-72.

“The properties were offered publicly for sale. Although no sales have been negotiated the book value is considered to be well below the current market value. Because of the transfer, any profit on sale will not be recorded as such in the books of the Transport Undertaking.”

Although this is transport, this could be what has been happening with electricity. The report continues—

“The Council is required to maintain its cash accounts under several financial divisions and the Council prepares a statement of assets and liabilities for the General Division and separate profit and loss accounts and balance sheets for each of its undertakings.

“If assets and liabilities are transferred from one division to another without adequate financial consideration, the financial position of each division as disclosed by the final accounts is distorted and misleading and seem to me to defeat the purpose of the separate divisional accounting.

“I consider that the transfer of land as outlined above was made without adequate financial consideration and, accordingly, I am unable to say that the Summary of Assets and Liabilities, the Statement of Assets and Liabilities of the General Division and the Balance Sheet of the Transport Undertaking present a fair view of the financial position of the Council insofar as the finances of the various divisions are concerned.”

We all read in this morning's “Courier-Mail” that the Ipswich Road property is to be sold to the S.G.I.O. for \$1,000,000. I wonder whether the profit of \$481,000 will be used to pay off existing transport department loan indebtedness or whether it will go into the coffers of the council as a contribution to the City Fund.

This is a snide way of dealing with the assets of the council by transferring an asset from one department, which is so far in debt that it does not matter, to another and then selling it so that the resultant profit will not be used to reduce the indebtedness of the first. This is the sort of thing that the Brisbane City Council is doing. As responsible citizens of Queensland, aren't we doing the right thing in appointing a board to look after the distribution of electricity and to assess the charges to be made for electricity for the people of Brisbane and the people of South-east Queensland?

The Government has no intention of acceding to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and seconded by his deputy.



Question—That the Order of the Day be discharged and the Bill be recommitted in three months' time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 11

Burns  
Casey  
Houston  
Jensen  
Jones  
Lamont  
Marginson

Prest  
Wright

*Tellers:*  
Hooper, K. J.  
Yewdale

NOES, 46

Ahern  
Aikens  
Akers  
Bird  
Bjelke-Petersen  
Bourke  
Brown  
Byrne  
Camm  
Crawford  
Doumany  
Edwards  
Elliott  
Frawley  
Glasson  
Goleby  
Greenwood  
Gunn  
Hales  
Herbert  
Hewitt, W. D.  
Hinze  
Hodges  
Hooper, K. W.  
Katter

Kaus  
Knox  
Lane  
Lee  
Lester  
Lowes  
Miller  
Moore  
Newbery  
Porter  
Simpson  
Small  
Sullivan  
Tenni  
Tomkins  
Turner  
Warner  
Wharton  
Young

*Tellers:*  
Lindsay  
McKechnie

Resolved in the negative.

### THIRD READING

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

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

Question put; and the House divided—

Resolved in the affirmative under Standing Order No. 148.

## GRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (8.12 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced relating to the promotion of research in the Queensland grain industries; to provide for the constitution of a Grain Research Foundation; and for related purposes."

Now that honourable members have come to order, I hope that the atmosphere will not be so electrified and the motion will be considered in a manner befitting the grain industry.

The purpose of the Bill is to assist the Queensland Graingrowers' Association in their highly commendable efforts to support research work within their industry. For

some time Queensland graingrowers have contributed to a levy on the proceeds of sale of their wheat crops to finance research projects relevant to the graingrowing industries. To this end, they have substantially assisted in the establishment and operation of the Queensland Wheat Research Institute located at Toowoomba.

It is now necessary to increase the research capabilities of the institute. This will require the expenditure of considerable capital funds from time to time. The State Council of the Queensland Graingrowers' Association decided earlier this year to form a Grain Research Foundation.

Honourable members on both sides of the Chamber will agree that the Queensland Graingrowers' Association, under the leadership of Sir Leslie Price and those who preceded him, has been a very responsible industry organisation. So when, after discussions with my departmental officers and representatives of the Graingrowers' Association, a request was made to me for the formation of a Grain Research Foundation, I thought that the request was sound and well founded.

The first task planned for the foundation was to finance the construction of a plant breeders' barn at the Wheat Research Institute, and it was intended that the financing of other research projects would follow. A trust deed was drawn up establishing a Grain Research Foundation, and four trustees were appointed, one of these being my department's Director of Plant Industry, Mr. Brian Oxenham. The whole purpose of the foundation is to raise money for worth-while research.

It was recognised that, as well as the collection and disbursement of levy funds voluntarily contributed by growers, the foundation would find it necessary from time to time to borrow funds. It soon became obvious that the foundation could more conveniently borrow money if it were a body corporate and if it were also declared to be a local body within the meaning of the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act. This would make the foundation eligible to apply for a Government guarantee on borrowings, which, if successful, could result in loans being offered at more attractive interest rates.

This is what this quite simple and straightforward Bill is all about. The provisions of the Bill substantially follow the terms of the original trust deed, which will cease to have effect when this Bill is approved.

The foundation will consist, as under the present trust deed, of four members: the Director of Plant Industry as an ex officio member and three other members to be recommended by the Queensland Graingrowers' Association and appointed for three years by the Governor in Council.

The Queensland Graingrowers' Association is a responsible and high respected organisation. Its members are to be encouraged in

their efforts to protect and develop the Queensland grain industries. In the discussion with my parliamentary primary industries committee the Bill received unanimous support, as it did in the joint parties meeting when I took the Bill there for approval. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (8.18 p.m.): At the outset I assure the Minister that the Opposition certainly supports the principle involved in the legislation. We all realise the importance of the grain industry to this State. It is the basis of the prosperity or decline of many centres in the State. Whether the grain industry has buoyant sales is reflected in the welfare of many thousands of families throughout the State. Being a primary product, grain is subject to climatic conditions during the growing period, and those engaged in the industry have to run the gauntlet of climatic conditions and the problems associated with pests, irrespective of the grain being grown. If they have a successful crop, they then encounter the problem of markets. I am very pleased that in recent times apparently the various grain boards have been successful in commanding overseas markets. I trust that those markets can be assured. That is one of the reasons why the Labor Party has always urged for the establishment of trade offices in many parts of the world. It is one thing to grow a successful crop; but, unless it can be sold at a successful price, all is lost to the grower. It would be very frustrating to see a crop not mature, but it would be even worse to have a mature crop that could not be sold at an economic price.

With these things in mind, the Opposition is determined to assist wherever it can. Research is most important. As the Minister and all honourable members know, it is essential that a grain grower cultivate the variety that is best suited to the prevailing climatic conditions and soil and is also the least susceptible to damage by pests.

I do not think that the foundation will do a more efficient job than that done by the present organisation. It is certainly doing a good job. However, the establishment of the foundation will speed up the process because it will be allowed to borrow money and put it to work much more quickly than if it came through the ordinary levy.

One problem that will confront the foundation is that if there happens to be a slump in sales the levy will be down and the foundation could be caught with certain repayments that could impose a financial strain on it.

Without labouring the point, I assure the Minister that the Opposition supports the motion and that if the Bill provides what I understand it will provide, there will be no problem in having it passed.

**Mr. CASEY** (Mackay) (8.21 p.m.): I wholeheartedly support the measure as outlined by the Minister. Without knowing the contents of the Bill, I should like to make a couple of points.

I was very pleased to hear that the Bill will facilitate the extension of research into the grain industries of Queensland. Agriculturally, a number of areas of the State have tremendous potential for the extension of research into grain-growing.

Certain aspects of the industry need to be looked at very closely, and I mention them because I think that they could be brought to the notice of the Grain Research Foundation. I have in mind particularly the problems associated with the transportation of grains in Queensland.

In the Budget, in spite of the general increase provided for in rail freights, concessions were granted to assist the grain industry. This was done virtually on an ad hoc basis and other industries were disturbed for the simple reason that it appeared that the concessions were granted to the grain industry purely as the result of political pressure. A proper examination of transportation problems would lend weight to any submissions put forward by the grain industry if at any time it is proposed to increase rail freights for the carriage of grain.

The Central Highlands, an area with vast potential for grain-growing, could do with an extension of rail facilities for the transportation of grain. In recent years large quantities of grain have been brought out from the area between Springsure and Clermont to Gladstone, where it is handled by the Central Queensland Grain Marketing Board. Although moves have been made by certain people in the Mackay district to have the railway line extended further into the hinterland to open up some of the best grain-growing areas in Queensland, no such rail link has been provided and the area is faced with high transportation costs. Railway lines have been laid through the heart of the grain-growing areas into the mining areas to carry coal and other mineral products, and I would like to see a research farm or experimental station set up in the northern area of the Central Highlands to undertake research into the potential of the area. At the same time it could investigate ways and means of levelling transportation costs and of transporting grain more economically to the ports. After all, Queensland relies heavily on export markets for its grain.

The Minister will probably recall that some years ago a move was made to open up a major sorghum industry at Lakeland Downs. Eventually the industry perished through lack of research and experimentation in the area, and through lower prices at a time of high transportation costs. At the same time, the entrepreneur faced problems in exporting the grain through his special port. However, this venture proved that there was suitable country in the Lakeland Downs area for growing grain under certain conditions.

It is essential to establish a few more research farms. If that can be done through the Grain Research Foundation, this will be an excellent measure. I should like to see

one established in the northern area, away from the main wet belt, to investigate sorghum-growing because this grain can be grown there. I would like something similar undertaken north-east of Clermont in the Logan Downs/Avon Downs area. I have a good knowledge of this area. It contains some of the best undeveloped agricultural land in Queensland.

Despite price fluctuations and other problems in the grain industry, we must continue to expand the industry in Queensland, not only in this decade but in decades ahead. I am sure that the measure that we are soon to discuss will highlight the value of sugar experiment stations to the State of Queensland since they were first established in about 1900 by an Act passed by this Parliament.

I hope that this measure, properly handled by a determined Government, will lead to excellent research work into the grain industry in Queensland so that it may be further developed as a major agricultural industry.

Although the Minister did not say this in his introductory remarks, I hope that the Grain Research Foundation will cover the rice industry in Queensland. In North Queensland this industry has real potential. Research is currently under way into the potential of the Burdekin area. In the earliest of times rice was considered to be a suitable crop for extending agricultural pursuits in the Burdekin area. As this area is very close to the Far East countries, rice-growing should provide much scope for expanding grain production in Queensland.

About two years ago, Mr. Miller, when we were members of the parliamentary delegation to Asia, you may recall that I suggested that while in Thailand we should try to visit a rice experimental station. We did that and it was one of the best days of our tour of the whole South-East Asian area. It was very interesting to see what was being done in the way of experimental work. It was also very nice to know that the Australian Government had assisted that project through officers of the Snowy Mountains Authority and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. In those organisations we now have a nucleus of trained, experienced personnel who have returned to Australia and who could render great assistance to the Queensland Government if this Bill should be extended to cover the rice industry. I ask the Minister to look closely at this facet of grain research.

**Mr. DOUMANY** (Kurilpa) (8.30 p.m.): I should like to speak very briefly in support of this Bill. I commend the Minister on its introduction. Unquestionably the grain industry has been a most important primary industry in Queensland. During some of the slumps in our livestock industries over the past 10 years it has in fact been the grain industry that has carried many landholders through very difficult times. We all know that the prospects for grain—both summer

and winter—still look attractive on the world market. There is no reason to believe that this probably most portable and durable of food commodities will lose this sort of market appeal in the foreseeable future.

One important result of this Bill will be increased productivity. Unquestionably productivity, with its effect on unit cost of production, is probably the most important factor in the economics of the grain business.

It is to be hoped that the Grain Research Foundation that the Minister is proposing to foster will carry on the work of the existing research people and institutions. Also it is to be hoped that we get increases in productivity, which are the only sure way of meeting the challenge of inflation and cost escalation. There is no other way; nor is there any way of remaining competitive on world markets other than by looking constantly for better varieties and methods of culture, which will lead to the best possible yields in our environment and conditions.

One aspect that I stress for Queensland and particularly its dry-land grain production is that the last thing we want is any deliberate suppression of production. It is only about five or six years ago that quotas applied to wheat. They were an absolute disaster. They were useless and in fact were never realistic. I hope that our grain industry stresses the question of output in the dry-land environment, with all its vagaries and conditions, as one of prime importance. It is in the best interests of Queensland, which in fact grows some of the best quality grain, to maximise its production and to take a very positive view of output policies. The last thing we want to see is any deliberate method or effort to restrict production. It is not in the interests of our grain industry to do that.

I think the Bill recognises that fact. If we are aiming at productivity and efficiency of production through research, we recognise that this State has a very strong position nationally in serving world markets and it should maximise that opportunity as far as possible.

**Mr. ELLIOTT** (Cunningham) (8.34 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill most strongly. I have worked in close contact with Jim Syme of the Queensland Wheat Research Institute, which runs trials in my area. I worked with it for a number of years before becoming a member of Parliament. I want to go on record tonight as congratulating Jim Syme on the work he has done, especially in the production of some of our newer varieties of wheat. I refer particularly to the Oxley variety, which has revolutionised the wheat industry in some sense of the word with its yield.

There have been a few critics of the performance of this new variety under recent stress conditions. I am speaking now of the period about late August when there was

a stress period for wheat crops, particularly in the Downs area. There was much discussion on whether this variety would hold up in dry weather. I should like to go on record as saying that I believe the increases in yield brought about by the introduction of this variety far outweigh any small problems that could be associated with it.

I think we should be very mindful of the work done by the Wheat Research Institute in fertiliser trials and other trials that are conducted in conjunction with varietal trials. We must also look very closely at the areas for which these varieties are recommended. We should not consider the performance of varieties in trials in only the more favourable areas where there is good deep soil and good subsoil moisture with an obvious potential for really good yields in anything like a reasonable season. Nor can we afford to be parochial and consider only Queensland. We should consider Northern New South Wales and possibly down towards Central New South Wales. I do not think that our wheat research is significant much further south than that area, because for the most part we are looking hopefully for exportable wheats, primarily prime hard wheats.

To improve yields, further consideration should be given to the frost tolerance of wheat varieties. This is a very serious problem facing the wheat industry and it must be recognised as such. It is very hard to be specific and say, "We have lost X, Y or Z percentage of this crop because of frost damage." It was argued by some experts this year that the Oxley variety was frost-damaged and by other experts that it was dry-weather damaged. Adequate research must be carried out into this problem. In the days when most of the new varieties were being produced by the University of Sydney at Anchorfield, a crop I saw, which was expected to produce an Australian record yield, produced only 50 or 60 bushels to the acre. That was a very good yield in commercial terms but it was by no means an Australian record.

In the final analysis, after a close examination of the nodes in the straw of the wheat, it was decided that the reduced yield was the result of frost damage. That was a wheat that was conservatively estimated by many people with a good idea of yield potential as being capable of producing 100-plus bushels an acre. The loss in the case of that crop was of the order of 40 bushels an acre. One does not need to be an expert to appreciate the amount of money involved in that loss. I should like to stress tonight the need to be very mindful of frost damage.

We also must look for varieties with weathering ability. It is soul-destroying to look round the Downs at this very moment and see the effect of the weather on the fine crops that have been grown this year. I know from my own part that we have taken off only three tonnes in the whole time we have been trying to harvest. The paddocks are under water. When I left the Monday

before last, the quality of the wheat was still excellent. We had some approved for seed wheat, and now, because of the weather, this quality has deteriorated. We will be very lucky if we get Australian Standard White for it and it could well get down to G.P. standard—General Purpose—or, in other words, pig feed. The difference in return from that wheat because of its deterioration from being prime hard or seed wheat right across the spectrum back to G.P. is a staggering amount of money over any sort of area. So we should look very carefully at varieties which have the ability to shed water; which possibly turn over more and are not so open at the top and therefore are not so susceptible to weathering.

I believe it is very important that we stress the need to support anything the Government can do for wheat research institutes such as the Queensland Wheat Research Institute. It is very easy for people who are not associated with the industry to see this as a Bill which is not really very significant. But in terms of the Queensland economy it really means a very great amount of money. If we are able to increase the production and yield potential of wheat, this will mean real money in the pockets of the farmers, which in turn will boost the economy of this State. Honourable members should not underestimate the importance of this Bill and what the Government is trying to do.

I congratulate the grain growers—both the association and individual farmers—on the part that they have been prepared to play over many years in this industry by in some cases voluntarily allowing quite considerable areas of their farms to be used gratis for these trials. They have also contributed a voluntary levy for the furtherance of such research. Admittedly, in the long-term, they will be the beneficiaries of this research, but unfortunately some people were not big enough to see that benefit and did not contribute. I hope that honourable members realise just how important this type of participation is to the State as a whole. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (8.44 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his ready acceptance of what is contained in the Bill. I think he has indicated—perhaps because of his maturity and longevity in this area—his understanding of some of the problems of the grain industry. We have seen the Leader of the Opposition in recent times courting the support of people in primary industry after they had had a pretty rough time at the hands of people of his political colour in another place. This is probably the reason for the election this week of the honourable member for Bulimba as Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The present members opposite have acted very wisely, in particular the honourable member for Rockhampton North, because in view of what happened he is about the only one

who does not enjoy a secret ballot. In view of what rural industry means to the economy of Queensland, they probably decided that the honourable member for Bulimba would be a much better bloke to fill the position of Deputy Leader than the honourable member for Rockhampton.

**Mr. Houston:** There's no need to say that.

**Mr. Burns:** There's another version.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** No, but the rural industries in the hinterland mean a lot to the people of Rockhampton, and I think the honourable member for Rockhampton North acted very wisely. I am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will agree with me. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the graingrowers' organisations have acted very wisely.

Let me deal now with the comments of the honourable member for Cunningham, who is a young, practical, dedicated farmer. His comments were along the lines of those made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and indicated some of the turmoil experienced in farming. He is suffering personally, as are the people whom he represents, and a drive through the area indicates why. It is rather soul-destroying when seasonal conditions make it possible to grow a good crop—and God only knows, the world needs prime hard wheat—and then the crop deteriorates very quickly at harvest time. As the honourable member said—and I know this only too well—some people have been fortunate enough to complete their harvest; but excellent crops of grain are deteriorating at the moment, and there will be a terrific loss not only to individuals but also to the industry as a whole.

The honourable members for Mackay and Kurilpa have indicated that they see a lot of value in the proposals contained in the Bill. The honourable member for Mackay mentioned particularly the need for research in areas that have agricultural potential. What he said about Lakeland Downs was very true, and he also referred to an area east of Clermont.

The Queensland Wheat Research Institute is involved primarily in the development of new varieties of wheat to suit particular localities. However, I think that the Queensland Graingrowers' Association is looking further ahead than that, and the provisions of the proposed Bill will assist research in the fields in which the honourable members for Mackay and Kurilpa have shown an interest.

Other submissions made by honourable members who spoke in support of the Bill may need more detailed consideration, and I think I should leave further comment on them till the second reading.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

## SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (8.50 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900-1973 in certain particulars and for another purpose.”

When the original Sugar Experiment Stations Act was given Royal assent in December 1900, the sugar industry and the Government of the day took a major step forward towards the economic viability of the sugar industry and to the progressive development of urban centres along the coast of Queensland. Because of the way the sugar industry has stretched out almost from the southern border to Mossman, I am sure honourable members would agree how important its development was for the decentralisation of population along the coastline in the 1900s.

The Act created the principal research and extension organisation for the sugar industry, namely, the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. The B.S.E.S. now comprises six experiment stations within the major cane-growing districts of the State and 14 advisory centres from Mossman in the Far North to Rocky Point, near the Gold Coast.

When the B.S.E.S. was founded over 75 years ago, there was little expertise available to cane growers and mill managements to bring about gains in productivity. Today the major pests and diseases are either under control or eliminated. Superior cane varieties are being released year by year. Techniques for fertilising, irrigating and drainage of the crop have been developed and milling research has contributed to high recoveries of sugar.

The B.S.E.S. has been an important partner in the industry's progress, while on the international scene it has a reputation for objectivity and the quality of its research. In this broad context the Queensland industry must always remain vigilant in its control of pests and diseases.

The continuing escalation of Fiji disease in southern mill areas has prompted a number of minor proposed amendments to the Act. These are necessary to support, in practice, the control measures arising from the research of the B.S.E.S.

The opportunity has also been taken to spell out in more detail some of the wide powers which were written into the Act many decades ago. For instance the powers of delegation of authority from the Minister to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board and to the director have been specifically clarified.

One amendment is an audit requirement covering the expenditure of funds and the investment of reserves. There are others in a similar vein.

Abandoned cane on land subdivided for real estate purposes is a disease threat to neighbouring crops, particularly in southern mill areas where Fiji disease is a major economic hazard to production. Abandoned cane should be ploughed under as soon as possible after the land has been de-assigned.

Whilst the power for the destruction of abandoned cane is already written into the Act, one of the amendments is designed to simplify procedures. At present the Act requires a bureau officer to report abandoned cane to the Minister. In practice the report is furnished to the director and never to the Minister, through the existing powers of the Minister's delegation.

Another proposed amendment specifies the procedures whereby the Sugar Experiment Stations Board, of which the Minister is the chairman, may instruct the director to take the necessary steps to destroy abandoned cane.

In the best interests of disease control it has been a long-standing practice for cane growers to plant only disease-free cane. Cane pests and disease control boards in areas where Fiji disease is a problem are seeking the right to inspect sources of planting material to ensure that Fiji disease is not propagated inadvertently.

An amendment sets out the procedures to be adopted when a cane pest and disease control board decides that approval of sources of planting material is a necessary option to be exercised. Cane-growing and mill owners' representatives on cane pest and disease control boards are elected or appointed every three years and have the power to determine annually the assessment for pest and disease control. Because of inflationary effects, it is proposed that the maximum assessment which may be levied without reference to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board should be increased from 5c to 10c per tonne of cane.

The anomalous position has arisen in the industry where active cane growers, in setting up unit trusts, are debarred from cane pest and disease control boards. It is proposed that a body corporate may nominate a person actively engaged in cane-growing to represent the corporation and therefore be eligible for election. This is in line with appointees to the board who represent milling corporations.

Other amendments empower cane pest and disease control boards and the Sugar Experiment Stations Board to invest their reserves, in bank deposits or other securities approved by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Treasurer. It is also proposed that cane pest and disease control boards may borrow funds and that the Sugar Experiment Stations Board may act as guarantor.

Recently the Queensland Cane Growers' Council requested that penalties for breaches of the Act be increased to more realistic figures. Many of these have remained unchanged since 1938. The opportunity has

therefore been taken to review the penalties and update them to be consistent with penalties shown in other Acts and in line with present-day values.

There are a few amendments of an administrative nature. One adds to the statistical requirements of mill owners and others correct minor anomalies and grammatical errors. Others convert monetary measures into decimal currency.

There is nothing controversial about the proposed amendments. They are designed merely to support the administrative, research and extension efforts of the Bureau of Sugar Experimental Stations and cane pest and disease control boards.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (8.59 p.m.): The Opposition has no objection to the introduction of this measure, and naturally we will study the clauses when the Bill is printed. I think everyone would agree that the sugar industry is the most efficient of our primary industries. Provided no mistakes are made in the granting of new assignments and provided expansion is controlled to cover only the available markets, no problems should arise in the future.

I think it is true to say that the problems that confronted the industry in years gone by arose from bad decisions arrived at by people who did not have close contact with the industry. However, the industry weathered the storm and got itself back onto an even keel. It is up to the Government to ensure by means of modern and up-to-date legislation that industries that are buoyant remain so.

I think everyone would agree also that the methods adopted for the sale of sugar on world markets have proved to be very successful. Other primary industries would be wise to follow the lead given by the sugar industry.

There are those who claim that the sugar industry is a socialist industry. Certainly it follows many of the socialistic principles in which some people believe. The farms are owned privately, but there is no competition between growers on the price of the product. Thanks to the experimental stations and assistance in the way of Government expenditure, the progress and prosperity of the industry have been helped greatly. Even people in the industry would agree that, on their own, in competition against each other, fighting for markets and without Government assistance in the way of experiment and research, they would certainly not be as successful as they are today. When the sugar is marketed the growers are paid by the mills, not on the basis of one crop compared with another or grower against grower but on the c.c.s. value of the crop.

Growers are certainly well organised, but the industry is virtually a closed shop. I do not quarrel with that. This is the way to run an efficient primary industry if it is

possible to do so. I am sure the Minister will agree that some industries cannot be run that way.

**Mr. Jensen:** Government northern members do not seem to be interested.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** It is a shocking state of affairs that when we are discussing the sugar industry—one of the most important primary industries—members representing the sugar areas are not here to back the Minister up.

**Mr. TENNI:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member said that no member was in the Chamber representing sugar-cane areas. I represent the Mulgrave and Mossman Shires, which contain some of the biggest cane-growing areas.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller):** Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member did not say that no honourable member representing sugar areas was here.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I am sorry. I should not have spoken so loudly as to awaken the honourable member. I apologise to him. I saw the top of his head but I did not want to wake him up.

As the Minister knows, the industry is highly organised and regulated. I am sure that the honourable member for Barron River will eventually find out, as a member of this Assembly, that he cannot simply decide to grow sugar-cane. Growers have to get an assignment and then grow their crops under very strict area conditions. Their production is regulated according to the mill area in which they are situated. No-one argues about that. It is good to have such controls.

Governments have a responsibility to assist this industry. When an industry such as the sugar industry is regulated, we must take the next step and give the growers every opportunity to become acquainted with the latest advances in cane types and developments in pest and disease control.

The research stations and advisory centres that have been established help the industry. As the Minister said, major pests and diseases are either under control or eliminated. This is attributable only to the co-operation of this and many other Governments since the year 1900. I am sure that wise Governments will follow the same procedure. Unfortunately Fiji disease is still prevalent but I am assured by my colleague from Bundaberg and others that it is not as bad as in years gone by. This is to the credit of the research stations and the co-operation of growers. I note that the Minister wants to give more power to controlling authorities to ensure that no-one tries to be smart and plant cane in which this disease is inherent. In any organised, regulated industry we must make sure that no smart alects try to take

advantage of their colleagues. This indicates the success of co-ordinated industry of this type. It is bad enough if the disease is in a particular crop; it is far worse if it is transmitted throughout a new area or the whole of the State.

It is true that research costs money. I think the Minister's idea here is the same as it was with the previous Bill. He intends to assist in the speeding up of investigation by allowing the organised bodies to borrow money. I think this is wise. The only note of warning I sound is that we make sure that they do not overstep themselves. Problems will come to the sugar industry, not because of anything that the growers may or may not do in the way of letting it slip but, as the Minister knows, through the loss of world markets. This industry depends on exports, and it does not matter how much we can come to an agreement with other countries, there are always the problems of broken agreements and of internal politics playing a part as we find today with the beef industry.

When we see the Bill we will have a look at the penalties and whether they meet the situation.

Next I want to deal with abandoned cane. This arises when an area is being subdivided for other purposes and loses its assignment. I know from my limited experience and certainly from talking to many experienced people that abandoned cane can be quite a problem to them. It is very wise of the Minister to take the necessary steps.

I suggest that the local authorities must watch very closely that prime cane land, because it happens to be near a centre of settlement, is not subdivided for someone to make an easy dollar as it were. Such an area should not be made available for home-building. The local authorities have a very important responsibility to make sure that prime land is kept for that prime purpose. There are other lands, perhaps a little farther away from the centre of population, that would be more suitable for development as residential sites.

I have seen areas around Brisbane that were once great producers of small crops. Because they happened to be near the centre of the city they were converted into residential lots and farmers are now trying to make a living on areas that are less favourable for the growing of small crops. There must be a certain amount of control, perhaps within the town plan. I do not want to deny anyone the right to sell his property if he so desires. There has to be over-all control to make sure that we do not lose some of our best lands for this purpose.

In general terms the Opposition supports the introduction of the Bill and looks forward to reading it in detail.

**Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (9.8 p.m.):** Initially, I pay tribute to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations in Queensland. It is perhaps

one of the most worthy experimental and research groups to be found anywhere in the world. Its true value is proved by the number of occasions on which the Queensland Government has received requests from other nations, particularly the developing countries in the Asian area, for advice, support and assistance from staff officers of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations in Queensland.

At times such as those we are experiencing now in the sugar industry with dropping world prices, we really appreciate the true value and worth of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. Its work is most important within the industry. It plays a very important role in ensuring that in Australia we maintain high sugar productivity.

One of the reasons why this industry has been able to survive as one that is at the top throughout the world in both good and bad times has been our ability to provide the necessary technology to develop our industry to overcome its problems particularly in the fields of disease control, cane pest control and the like.

Perhaps one of the most enjoyable experiences for a member of Parliament is to attend the field days of his local sugar experiment station. I compliment the bureau on the field days that it has conducted over the years. I also make the suggestion to the Minister that he endeavour to persuade metropolitan members to attend some of these days. They provide an excellent opportunity to obtain a knowledge of the main agricultural industries of this State. I know it is a little difficult to get into the heads of some Brisbane members, particularly Liberal members, the value of agricultural industries and the work done by research organisations.

One of the big problems facing sugar experiment stations is coping with fluctuating weather conditions and changes generally in the industry. One of the great strengths of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations over the years since 1900, when it was first established, has been the way it has adapted to changing circumstances.

In recent years mechanical harvesting has produced a completely new ball game in which there have been very many problems for both growers and millers. Wet areas that previously were not considered difficult have now become a problem because they cannot be harvested with mechanical equipment. In other cases dry areas, in which cane has been growing on sloping ground, are no longer of value because cane harvesters cannot operate on such terrain. Growers are now endeavouring to have their assignments transferred to flatter land so that they can carry out mechanical harvesting. In all of these problems the bureau has been to the fore providing support and assistance to the industry by means of farm surveys, soil conservation work and advice on drainage schemes.

The problems with harvesting are still continuing. There are problems arising from the type of machinery used and the spread of disease by machines. There is a need to teach machine operators and farmers the correct methods of handling this equipment and moving it from farm to farm so that disease does not spread from area to area. There are also problems with compaction of soil caused in some areas by the weight of the larger harvesters that are being developed within the industry as lower production costs are sought.

All these things are providing problems for the bureau and it is excellent to see the way in which the director and his staff have come to the fore to deal with them on behalf of the Queensland sugar industry. An examination of the annual report of the bureau reveals the amount of work that they do in every cane-growing area of Queensland to overcome these problems.

One thing that I noted in the bureau's annual report concerns me greatly because I feel that somewhere along the line the Minister is being given incorrect advice on some aspects of the sugar industry. On 2 September of this year, which was only a couple of months ago, I asked a question in this House concerning approaches made by the Government of Papua New Guinea to the Queensland sugar industry for assistance in establishing a sugar industry in that country. The Minister's answer was that no such approach had been made by the Government of Papua New Guinea but there had been informal contacts among officers of the Papua New Guinea Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, his department and Australian sugar industry personnel over a number of years. Yet the report of the Bureau of Experiment Stations quite clearly reveals that the chief mill technologist, Mr. P. G. Atherton, and the agronomist, Mr. A. P. Hurney, visited Papua New Guinea to advise on the setting up and maintaining of a small domestic sugar industry in that country. I am not being critical of the Minister on this, I am merely saying that I feel that somewhere along the line he is not being given correct information to answer some of the questions I have put to him on the sugar industry. Again the other day I drew to his attention—

**Mr. Jensen:** He's giving you the big A; that's all.

**Mr. CASEY:** I would not make that accusation of the Minister myself, but perhaps somewhere along the line one of his advisers is trying to give this impression. I know the Minister is now quite concerned about a matter I raised with him only last week in a question regarding statements quoted by a certain person as supposedly emanating from the Sugar Board as to the acquisition of next year's crop. In his answer the Minister indicated that he had



absolutely no knowledge of this, yet the person concerned was interviewed on a State-wide radio broadcast in which he gave out information that had been transmitted to him by the Sugar Board. This was something which was not being kept confidential within the sugar industry as it was supposed to be, according to the answer the Minister gave me in this Chamber, so I am very concerned about it.

All sections of the industry have always co-operated well with the Queensland Government and I think it is only fair and proper of me, if I believe that a responsible Minister of the Crown who is looking after the affairs of the sugar industry is not being given correct information, to tell him about it, especially as he is so concerned about the affairs of the industry. Only the other day he announced that he is about to lead a delegation to Japan to again have discussions on the contractual problems of this industry. This obviously shows his concern about the problems of the industry and I feel it is incumbent upon me to point out to him that somewhere along the line he is not being given the proper information. Whether it is somebody intent on doing mischief I do not know, but for what those points are worth, I submit them to the Minister not in criticism of him personally but as an established fact. I think they are matters about which we all ought to be concerned.

The Bill that the Minister is bringing forward indicates a new approach to some aspects of the legislation affecting the bureau and the solution of some of the problems facing the industry in Queensland.

One very real problem which I think the industry will be faced with in the future is that great pressure will be exerted by conservation groups. We have seen in recent days the pressure that can be brought to bear by conservation groups, particularly on Canberra Governments.

I have in mind the burning of cane. The burning of cane in certain areas causes considerable atmospheric pollution. Cane trash in the atmosphere causes considerable inconvenience in a lot of areas. Over the years a lot of research has been carried out to try to develop green stick cane harvesters. In other parts of the world green cane is harvested quite successfully under certain conditions, and I feel that the time is fast approaching in the Queensland sugar industry when we may be forced, in most mill areas, anyhow, into green cane harvesting. Again, this will cause a lot of problems within the industry because of changing harvesting methods, and I feel quite sure that the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations will be ready to accept the challenge and come to the fore.

One of the points made by the Minister was the worry and concern in the Bundaberg industry regarding Fiji disease. I feel sure that the honourable member for Bundaberg

will speak on this subject at a later stage, but the point I would like to make is that the industry as a whole must be concerned at the extent of the problem in Bundaberg when we see that something like 80 per cent of the assigned areas in the Bundaberg-Isis district have been affected in one way or another by Fiji disease in recent years. It has now spread to the Maryborough area, much to the alarm of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, and the remainder of the industry hopes sincerely that it does not spread any further. Fiji disease can have rather disastrous consequences for the industry and is very difficult to overcome. It has to be overcome initially in the laboratory and later in the field, if the industry is to be rescued.

**Mr. Jensen:** This year Bundaberg has the biggest cane crop ever.

**Mr. CASEY:** Yes, you have, but you still have your problems.

Vermin are still a serious problem in the industry. Rats, which are the oldest pest, still pose the biggest problem not only for the bureau but also for the various control boards. The problems vary from area to area. Unquestionably, feral pigs have increased in numbers in some areas because of the dingo-baiting campaign. Some small pockets of the industry have greater problems with wallabies than with other pests. That is certainly true of some parts of the Mackay area. Although conservationists tend to think that wallabies are pretty animals, in some respects they are a serious pest in the sugar industry and certainly are considered to be vermin.

I should like to make a couple of other points on matters on which the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations must take a much firmer stand. In the Mackay area in recent years, streams have been polluted by the effluent from certain mills. I will name the mills because they were named by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads in answer to a question asked by me recently in this Chamber. They are the North Eton Mill and the Marian Mill, both of which have been causing water pollution problems. There have been occasions on which overflow from water channels has flooded farm areas and caused rather disastrous losses on some farms.

When a farmer encounters a problem such as this, he naturally turns first to the people in the industry in whom he places his greatest trust—the field advisory officers of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. However, in this instance the officers were very reluctant to come out and say openly what had caused the problems on the particular farm. I remember well one case in which not only the farm itself was badly damaged but also the farmer. It was in the Victoria Plains area, along the channel through which the effluent was coming from the Marian

Mill. The mill was washed down with caustic and other substances after the crushing. The effluent met up with storm-water in the drain, overflowed onto the farm and caused very serious damage to the cane. The farmer, who went out and walked through the cane in his bare feet, suddenly found that his feet were infected. For six to eight weeks he could hardly walk, and that problem was created by a mill.

Although there is a reluctance in some areas of the sugar industry to be critical of other areas, the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations must retain its impartiality at all times. If a problem is caused by a mill, the bureau should be prepared to say openly that the problem has been caused in that way and why it has been caused. Only if that is done will the mills that are not pulling their weight in the treatment of effluent be pulled into line by other segments of the industry. That is what it really comes down to. The fault does not lie with the farmer, the bureau or anyone else. As the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads mentioned in his answer to me, only a couple of mills in the State are not playing their proper role in the treatment of effluent. If the industry receives the support of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, certain mill directors will be frightened into overcoming problems associated with the disposal of effluent that they should have overcome many years ago.

**Mr. SIMPSON** (Coorooora) (9.25 p.m.): I support the Minister's proposed amendments to the Sugar Experiment Stations Act in the hope that they will improve efficiency in the industry. We have a great industry that must maintain its efficiency or it will lose its competitiveness on the world market. The Government's aim should be to strengthen the industry's efficiency and it should not introduce controls that will increase the producer's costs. I commend the workers in the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. They work in a specialised agronomy field, which accounts for their efficiency in carrying out their tasks. They do not have to worry about alternative crops, apart from cover crops. This allows them to specialise in their field.

With the additional assignments in recent times, marginal areas and new land have brought new problems. In the Moreton mill area it has been necessary to move on to new ground, some of which is in a drainage-problem area. Consequently there has been a need for more contour work and more drainage schemes to overcome wet-year problems. This year was a disaster for us because of the exceptionally high rainfall in the first six months. We realised only about two-thirds of what we expected.

We must be continually looking for new varieties and more efficient methods, particularly with the rising costs of fertiliser and labour. We have been looking at new

planters for cane and we will now have to look at new varieties that will suit particular planters so that we can get good germination. Obviously corners must be cut if the labour content on the farm is to be cut down. This poses problems which must be evaluated through experimental work. There is also the problem of the spread of disease by mechanisation. When machinery is used over a larger area disease can be spread very rapidly. It is critical that we control disease. It can wipe a cane grower out if it gets going.

We need to look at all methods of containing costs. We must consider all the ways in which we may save costs in the future, whether they be through the use of more efficient machinery or new methods that will enable us to produce larger crops more cheaply.

One of the existing problems aggravated in an area where expansion onto new ground is taking place is urban development which may inhibit the flood flow in a particular river. That is a problem on the Maroochy River and it must be considered. It is a matter of constant concern to cane growers in that area.

The Minister referred to the de-assigning of land and the proposed amendments to speed up the eradication of self-sown disease-spreading plants. Land is de-assigned for a number of reasons. The land may be too steep or stony for mechanisation, or it may be taken over for urban development. In all cases there is a need for a quick method of eradicating the potentially disease-spreading plants.

I commend the Minister for any move that will increase the efficiency of the industry and allow the experiment stations to carry on their good work.

**Mr. TENNI** (Barron River) (9.30 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister and to congratulate him on the introduction of the Bill. At all times he looks after our primary industries, and this Bill is another indication of the way in which he looks after the people in my electorate—in this instance, the cane farmers. Contrary to the belief held by a lot of city people, they are not well off. Like everyone else, they have had to cop inflation and high costs and high wages. I thank the Minister for anything he can bring forward to assist the cane farmers in the Barron River electorate.

It is a pity that the honourable member for Bulimba has left the Chamber. He seemed to think that the Assembly lacks members whose electorates contain cane-growing areas. I should like him to know that in the Barron River electorate large quantities of cane are grown in the Mossman area, which, as the Minister said, is the northernmost point on the coast where cane is grown, and the Mulgrave Shire Council area, the northern portion of which is in my electorate.

I whole-heartedly support the provision referring to abandoned cane. Every time I drive from Mareeba to Cairns to catch a plane or to talk to constituents, I look at areas of abandoned cane at the bottom of the Kuranda Range. It has been left there for about three years. Each year it grows from the stool and rots in the paddock. I sincerely hope that it does not spread disease. I feel sure that it will eventually grow itself out, but at least the Bill provides for action to be taken promptly. Fiji disease is a very dangerous one that poses a tremendous threat to the industry. I am pleased to hear that the Bill will help keep cane in the northern areas free from disease.

The honourable member for Bulimba patented the cane farmers on the back and said that they do a good job. Why didn't he come out in support of them two weeks ago when they could not get electricity and when they could not repair broken parts on their tractors or harvesters? Why did he support the 59 men who went on strike at Collinsville and deliberately inconvenience the cane farmers of North Queensland? He did not support the cane farmers at a time when they were in a sorry plight.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill before the Committee.

**Mr. TENNI:** The honourable member for Mackay spoke about green-stalk harvesting. I agree that that will occur. As a matter of fact, as recently as last Friday my father-in-law received his green harvester. Such a machine imported from Germany costs \$96,000. I believe that the next model will cost as much as \$100,000. If conservationists and environmentalists succeed in forcing cane farmers to spend that type of money, serious problems will arise. Not every cane farmer can afford to pay that much money. The cane industry in North Queensland has been in existence for a damn lot longer than the environmentalists and conservationists and it has made a valuable contribution to the economy of Queensland. I sincerely hope that if the conservationists and environmentalists hop on the band wagon on this occasion and try to force the cane farmers to buy such expensive machines, we as a Government will stand up and tell them where to go.

A serious situation will develop if expenditure such as that can be forced on the cane industry by minority groups. I do not say that environmentalists do not have a job to do. But we must not let them pick on the cane industry at this time. This industry is facing serious problems with inflated costs, high fertiliser prices and wages and union conditions and demands. Let us kick the conservationists to hell out of the area.

I attended my first field day in an area south of Cairns. The Minister performed the official opening and the honourable members for Cairns, Mulgrave and Mourilyan

were in attendance. I agree with the honourable member who said that all honourable members should attend one field day in their political life. Field days are an experience—an eye-opener—and they are very enjoyable. People learn on the spot about the problems confronting the industry.

Drainage is a major problem in northern cane areas. Thanks to this Government and the Minister for Water Resources, a drainage scheme is about to be commenced in the Smithfield area of the electorate of Barron River. Undoubtedly it will help the cane farmers.

Wild pigs are another big problem which comes under the Minister's control.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! There is nothing about wild pigs in this Bill. It clarifies the powers of the board to borrow moneys and to invest surplus funds. It provides additional powers in respect of disease and pest control.

**Mr. TENNI:** I did not think you would let me get away with it, Mr. Miller, and I thank you for your guidance. In my view these pigs are a disease.

I am grateful for this opportunity to say a few words about this industry and I extend to the Minister and his capable staff my thanks for their interest in the cane farmers of Queensland, particularly those in the electorate of Barron River.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.37 p.m.), in reply: I again thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for accepting on behalf of the Opposition what is contained in the Bill. At this late hour I shall not deal at length with the honourable member's comments. He referred to the value of the sugar industry and the part played over the years by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations in helping the industry, as did the honourable members for Mackay, Barron River and Cooroola. When the Bill is printed, honourable members will be able to examine it in detail, particularly those who have the interests of the sugar industry at heart. I suppose all honourable members have the industry's interests at heart, but some are more interested than others because the people they represent are deeply involved in it.

I thank honourable members for their kind remarks and words of praise about the officers of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. Over the years, the director, and those who have preceded him, and the officers and field staff right down the line have been dedicated to their jobs. It has often been said by the officers that they are privileged in that their responsibility requires them to live and work in some of the more favoured parts of Queensland. When someone is about to be promoted to a job that requires him to return to Brisbane, it is often said that he is not keen to leave a beautiful spot like Bundaberg

or Mackay. It is good that the officers should be so dedicated. Many of these people went into their chosen professions as young people and came up through the ranks, and it is good to see the co-operation that exists between them and the industry.

Like other honourable members, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned how wonderfully organised the sugar industry is at all levels. I agree. When I became Minister for Primary Industries my background in primary industries was not concerned with sugar. Perhaps I was fortunate in having as colleagues men like my predecessor (Sir John Row), the Minister for Mines and Energy (Ron Camm) and others with whom I have been closely associated over the years that I have been a member of Parliament and more particularly since I became a Minister. I sought their advice and therefore perhaps I was a little better equipped to become the Minister controlling the sugar industry among other primary industries than I would have been had I come straight off the grain farm.

I should like to pay a special tribute to the people who have served on the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations Board since I became its chairman. Firstly I refer to the late Jack Webster, who was the millers' representative on the board when I took over. He was tragically killed shortly after moving to Brisbane. I refer also to Jack Elliott, who was the growers' representative. He came onto the board at the same time as I did. He has done an excellent job. He has chosen to retire because of his wife's ill health. Lastly I refer to the retired Director-General (Dr. Harvey), who spent a number of years on the board and made a great contribution to the industry prior to his retirement.

In my second-reading speech I shall refer to other measures that have been raised by honourable members. I thank them for their acceptance of what is contained in the Bill. We believe that it will be good for the sugar industry in the future.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

### LIQUOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION

**Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Acting Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: 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 Liquor Act 1912-1975 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

**Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Acting Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.46 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Liquor Act 1912-1975 in certain particulars.”

The 1977 Budget provides for variations in licence fees payable under the Liquor Act. It is necessary that the Liquor Act be amended so as to provide for these variations.

Briefly the Bill provides—

(a) an increase from 7 per cent to 8 per cent in the general licence fee;

(b) a decrease to 8 per cent for fees payable by holders of tavern licences;

(c) a decrease from 9 per cent to 8 per cent in the fee payable by spirit merchant's (retail) licensees;

(d) a decrease from 15 per cent to 12 per cent in the fee payable by licensed spirit merchants and registered brewers on the value of sales to unlicensed persons;

(e) no variation in the fee payable by the holders of vigneron licences, which will remain at 9 per cent on the value of sales made.

With the exception of licensed spirit merchants and registered brewers, the fees as varied are to apply for two-thirds of this financial year. In the case of spirit merchants and registered brewers, the fees for this financial year will be—6 per cent on the value of actual sales made during the period 1 July 1975 to 31 October 1975, plus 15 per cent on the value of actual sales made during the period 1 November 1975 to 30 June 1976. The percentage fee will be reduced to 12 per cent on sales for the current and subsequent years and will apply from 1 November 1977.

For the benefit of the liquor industry as a whole, it would be more beneficial to this industry for spirit merchants' sales to private persons to be assessed on a licence fee of 12 per cent and not lower than this figure.

There will be a reduction in fees payable by holders of spirit merchant's (retail) licences. (Holders are resident in remote parts of the State—Adavale, Cooladdi, etc., and the public in these areas should not be forced to pay a higher price for their liquor by the imposition of a higher licence fee than the general rate on other licences.)

Fees payable on tavern licences will be decreased from 9 per cent to 8 per cent. Tavern owners have spent a large amount of money in building new taverns, especially in the Brisbane area, often to the extent of over \$1,000,000, and it is considered that the rate of licence fee should be the same as that for a licensed victualler's licence, as is the case in New South Wales.

This Bill gives effect to the proposed variations to fees payable under the Liquor Act as provided for in the 1977 Budget.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. WRIGHT** (Rockhampton) (9.48 p.m.): Approximately a year ago—in fact, on 24 October 1975—similar legislation was introduced in this Chamber. Members will recall that at that time the context of the legislation was of increases. There was an increase from 6 per cent to 7 per cent in the general licence fee; an increase from not less than 6 per cent to not less than 9 per cent for tavern licences; an increase from 6 per cent to 9 per cent in respect of vignerons' licences and spirit merchants (retail) licences; and an increase from 6 per cent to 15 per cent in the fee payable by spirit merchants and registered brewers.

**Mr. Moore:** They were a little bit too high.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** That is the point I want to make. Members will recall the debate that took place. I have with me Volume 269 of "Hansard", in which it is recorded. Members on both sides of the Chamber expressed some concern at the increases, because in one case the increase was a staggering 150 per cent—from 6 per cent to 15 per cent in the case of spirit merchants and registered brewers. Members warned that this would create serious problems for spirit merchants, especially in country areas. I know that one such merchant in my own area has gone to the wall. I know, too, that continual representations have been made to the Minister to do something about it.

Now some changes are to be made, and they will no doubt be welcomed in many ways because in a sense they are considerable decreases. There is to be a decrease from 9 per cent to 8 per cent for spirit merchants (retail) licences. The Minister has made the point that this will help people in rural areas. The other decrease worthy of note is the reduction from 15 per cent to 12 per cent in the fee payable by licensed spirit merchants and registered brewers on the value of sales to unlicensed persons. Some explanation is required here, because back in about April this year the point was made in a report that the 15 per cent is paid on the selling price, whereas the 7 per cent which was paid at that time by hoteliers was paid on the landed cost of liquor on their premises. The point was raised with me approximately two months ago that it is still unfair for one to be paying the fee on the actual selling price. This makes it rather difficult for the persons involved in this industry.

The reductions will no doubt be welcomed. I accept the Acting Minister's point that a considerable amount has been invested in taverns, so again the decrease in

that area will be welcomed. I did intend to speak on some other aspects of the liquor industry, but I do not desire to do this now. I would ask the Acting Minister to explain whether the 12 per cent will still be applied on the selling price or on the landed price of liquor at these premises.

**Mr. TENNI** (Barron River) (9.51 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate because I am quite concerned for the people of Far North Queensland. I am somewhat shocked that we as a Government would have the audacity to impose a tax on freight handling and packaging, which is exactly what we are doing by charging 12 per cent on the retail price charged by 2-gallon wine and spirit merchants. We are also saying that a person who walks into a pub should pay 8 per cent tax, but if he walks into a 2-gallon wine and spirit merchants he should pay 12 per cent tax. To me that is complete and utter discrimination. The thing that worries me is that I know, and sensible members know, that these 2-gallon wine and spirit merchants will go broke.

**Mr. Wright:** They are going broke; what are you talking about?

**Mr. TENNI:** I believe that five have gone broke. I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton.

Many more will go broke because we are pricing them out of the market. I appreciate the fact that consideration was given to reducing this tax from 15 per cent to 12 per cent. That is at least a 3 per cent offering which will help them a little bit, but I can assure the Acting Minister that it is not enough.

Because of this action I can see in the very near future a cut-throat price war being waged between those merchants who are wholesale wine and spirit merchants as well as 2-gallon wine and spirit merchants and the publicans; and the publicans will find themselves in serious trouble. I hope this does not happen, but I fear that it has already started. I am told that it is happening in Ayr and that it will spread to other towns. I would like the Acting Minister to give further consideration to the people of North Queensland who live north of Rockhampton. I cannot see why we cannot draw a line across the State and charge so much to persons north of the line and so much to persons south of the line, or at least make this 12 per cent payable on the wholesale price. The hoteliers would still pay the 8 per cent tax on the wholesale price and I am sure in this way everyone would make a living.

I can appreciate the difficulties facing hoteliers. I know that they are having trouble surviving, but that trouble is being caused by their own mates who are cutting the price of grog, and for no other reason. It is alarming to think that we are allowing

this Bill to pass when we have had a man up in the North investigating this problem. He brought back reports, which have been shown to me personally by certain individuals, and they are strong evidence that 12 per cent on wholesale is as much as they can bear. In spite of that, the Government is still going ahead.

I say to the Minister through you, Mr. Miller, that I have never pleaded in my life before. However, for 13 months I have been trying to help these people and stop them from going broke, and I plead with him to again look at this before it goes through and assist them by charging 12 per cent on the wholesale price. As a Government, we should not set an example by taxing the people of Queensland on freight, cartons and packaging, which is what we will be doing if we agree to this.

I thank the Minister for the opportunity of making that point for the people of the area that I represent and about whom I am genuinely concerned.

**Mr. JENSEN** (Bundaberg) (9.56 p.m.): I rise to take part in this debate because I think it is quite unfair that the hoteliers licence fee should be increased. It is the only one that is to be increased, and it is the one that hits most of the workers.

I am not really much concerned about the honourable member for Barron River and his support of the 2-gallon merchants. The 2-gallon merchant in Bundaberg can buy beer in Brisbane. He has not to pay a licence fee on freight, and he can undersell the hotels in every respect. I do not believe that the hoteliers should be penalised; they are one of the biggest employers in the State. The 2-gallon merchant can employ only one or two people, but the hotelier has to provide rooms, servants or maids, and kitchen staff. Whenever the hotelier is hit, the general public is hit, and in this instance it is the worker who is being hit.

The honourable member for Rockhampton mentioned that last year the licence fee was increased from 6 per cent to 7 per cent, and that this year it is to be increased from 7 per cent to 8 per cent. It is the only licence fee that has been increased; the others have been reduced. It is the one that hits the general public. It is bad enough paying sales tax on freights, and that happens on virtually every item that one buys. Sales tax on freight hits virtually everyone throughout Queensland, and in this industry a licence fee is to be paid on freight. It is iniquitous, and I cannot understand the Government's allowing it to continue.

The Premier said that sales tax and similar taxes should be reduced, and that the Federal Government should do something about reducing them to assist industry. But in this case the Government of Queensland is allowing this tax to continue. I was given

to understand that the proposal would be amended and that the hoteliers would gain a little because they would not have to pay sales tax on the freight. It appears that that is not so and that the hotel industry is to be hit again this year, along with every worker in the State. The hotelier supplies most of the workers. In some cases the 2-gallon merchant supplies to workers who buy for home consumption, but usually the worker goes to the hotel and has his beer in the afternoon. He is the one who is paying this tax. The Government knows that that is where it is getting its big money, so it raises the hoteliers fees. As I said, it is the only fee that it has raised, and I do not think the A.L.P. should support it on any condition.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (9.59 p.m.): I support the statements made by the honourable member for Rockhampton and the honourable member for Bundaberg.

**Mr. Moore:** And the honourable member for Barron River?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Yes, I support the honourable member for Barron River, too. I have always argued that sales tax should not be charged on freight. That is why I interjected when the honourable member was speaking. I was not trying to be facetious. In my opinion, Governments should be fighting taxation of that type. It is all very well for the Premier to say, "I want a reduction in sales tax." Here the Government is virtually imposing a tax on sales. It can call it what it likes.

I wish to speak particularly about hotels and taverns. Taverns are a good idea. For those who want to have a drink, I think the set-up is quite good. But in many areas there are no taverns, only hotels.

**Mr. Moore:** The taverns supply a meal but the hotels don't necessarily supply one.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That's a lot of nonsense. That is one of the things about it. Years ago a hotel had to supply a certain amount of sleeping accommodation and a certain amount of food for travellers. That was one of the purposes of hotels. In many areas only a limited number of hotels are allowed to operate, so that they can enjoy a reasonable living. In its wisdom the Government introduced the tavern idea. I do not think any political party opposed it. When a different fee was set for the tavern, that was accepted because the hotelier had to provide other amenities. The tavern had only to provide entertainment to bring in customers. But now they are all going to pay the same.

Surely this is discriminatory against the person or the company that decides to build a hotel in preference to a tavern. I don't think it is right at all. If the Government

is going to do this, for goodness' sake let it remove the requirement that a hotel must provide certain accommodation and food. Let it have the option. If a hotel wants to provide accommodation and food, it should be free to do so. Money can be made in accommodation. That is proved by the fact that motels all over the State are making a substantial profit. I have no fight with that at all. They do not require a liquor licence to make a profit. Now that the pattern has been set, I believe that the two should be separated.

It is ironical that the Government is constantly saying, "We have to cut down on drinking. We are against alcohol.", yet every time it wants a bit of extra money or it wants to compensate for something else, it picks on liquor and hits those who like a drink. As the honourable member for Rockhampton said, the fees went up last year from 6 to 7 per cent. They had been increased prior to that. The Government condemns liquor on the one hand, but on the other hand it hopes to goodness that increased sales are made. The Government must be realistic.

I have no brief from the breweries or the hotel owners, but there has to be a certain amount of justice. The hotel in my area has to provide certain things. If he wants to, the Minister can say, "In practice they don't do these things now." But the reality is that the building is already there. It has bedrooms, a kitchen and other amenities. If they are not being used, they are certainly a capital investment that is not bringing in a return. If the Minister is going to adopt this principle in order to bring in finance, I suggest that he should go a step further and allow some relaxation of the present requirement on hotels so that their conditions are evened up with those of the taverns.

**Mr. GOLEBY** (Redlands) (10.5 p.m.): I am disappointed that it has been necessary to place a further impost on hotel owners by raising their fees by 1 per cent. I know that there is a problem in this industry with the 2-gallon licences. But that problem is chiefly associated with those operating in North Queensland. In South Queensland there is an entirely different situation. I must speak about my electorate and how it is affected, because that is the area I represent. I am a total abstainer, but I do believe that the industry must be fairly treated. I refer particularly to the Davies group, which has purchased a chain of hotels throughout South Queensland.

It is selling liquor at prices below those at which the ordinary hotelier can purchase it. This has caused considerable embarrassment to long-established firms.

In his introductory speech the Minister said that many of the taverns that were constructed in accordance with the requirements

of the Licensing Commission have had to incur expenditure in excess of \$1,000,000. I would remind him that many new hotels constructed in and around Brisbane, including those in my electorate, have incurred expenditure far in excess of that. They provide not only a bar service but also meals and accommodation as well as a general service to the public. It is regrettable that it has been found necessary to take this line, which affects those hoteliers who, as I say, are already fighting a battle against those merchants who operate in a chain and purchase liquor at prices lower than those at which many hotels can purchase it from the breweries.

**Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Acting Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.6 p.m.), in reply: I appreciate the interest of members in this measure. Over the past 12 months or so the honourable member for Barron River has put up a pretty solid fight on this issue, and whilst his efforts may not have been successful 12 months ago they, together with the efforts of the two members from Townsville and others, have resulted in a review of the fees that were levied then and a reduction in the fee. He is not satisfied that the reduction is enough in relation to the 2-gallon licences.

**Mr. Yewdale:** You can only help so much of his electorate.

**Mr. KNOX:** It is not just electorate; it is the people he represents and who put up a case to him. As a result of his representations and others, I met all the people involved and ascertained their problems. All I can say is that I think we have come up with the right answer. He may not think so.

The honourable members for Bundaberg and Bulimba contended that the fee was being increased only for hotels. That is not so. The same increase applies to all those that normally fall into the same category, such as restaurants, cabarets, function rooms, theatres, resorts, bistros and caterers. They all come under the same heading and have an increase in fees.

Whilst the licence fee may be applied to a special section of the liquor industry, it does not necessarily mean an increase in the price of liquor across the bar.

**Mr. Burns:** Are you sure?

**Mr. KNOX:** The prices now being charged by many hotels would indicate that hotels are engaging in a price war.

**Mr. Jensen:** Only in bottle sales.

**Mr. KNOX:** Bottle sales still attract the licence fee.

**Mr. Burns:** Tell me where you have seen a cut-price public bar.

**Mr. KNOX:** I have seen public bars that charge prices lower than those charged in other public bars.

**Mr. Burns:** Not too many.

**Mr. KNOX:** The reductions are not as dramatic as those offered in bottle shops, but they are all part of the turnover, which is subject to the licence fee. In most hotels, bottle sales constitute the major proportion of their sales and bear the major portion of the licence fee. So it is not axiomatic that the licence fee increase is being passed on today. In previous years it may have been passed on. Indeed over the past six months hotels have had a number of cost increases that were not passed on to the public by way of higher prices.

**Mr. Wright:** Why should the spirit merchant pay on his selling price?

**Mr. KNOX:** These merchants are in fact in a very advantageous position, because their fee to supply to the trade is \$400 a year. That is what they were designed to do. That is all they pay and that is their fee.

**Mr. Gunn:** They are supposed to be wholesalers.

**Mr. KNOX:** Exactly. And they had the option to do other things, which they have taken advantage of.

They have been brought back somewhat by the increase in fees on sales to the public. They were established to sell to the rest of the trade, for which they paid the very reasonable fee of \$400. The position that they hold has not changed.

I do not think that I should dwell too long in reply. As the honourable member for Rockhampton and other honourable members pointed out, there was considerable debate on this subject last year. This matter was part of the Budget and I trust that it will be supported by honourable members.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

### CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (10.13 p.m.), I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Clean Air Act 1973-1976 in certain particulars.”

This is a straightforward Bill which seeks to update and strengthen the Act, and to strengthen the role of the Air Pollution

Council. Its key provisions centre on reconstitution of the Air Pollution Council of Queensland, widening public representation on the Council, and taking advantage more effectively of the available environmental expertise of Government officers.

For the first time, there will be a representative of the public on the council, and he (or she) will be nominated by the Minister. Also for the first time, the Director of Air Pollution Control within the Local Government Department will become a member of the Council—and its chairman.

We have a highly qualified and respected authority on air pollution control in the Director of Air Pollution Control, who now is only an adviser to the council, with no voting rights and therefore no direct say in decisions of the council, some of which involve highly technical matters and recommendations.

As indicated, the Director of Air Pollution Control will become the chairman of the Air Pollution Control Council under the terms of this Bill, and I believe we are fortunate in having a man of the calibre of our director, Dr. Graham Cleary, available for this position. This should not be taken as any reflection on the ability and performance of chairmen of the Air Pollution Control Council to date. They have carried out their duties efficiently and effectively.

Previous chairmen of the council have been officers of the Department of Health with a medical background, and the present chairman is a highly qualified and experienced administrative officer of the Department of Local Government. However, it is considered that greater emphasis should now be placed on the technical aspects of the Clean Air Regulations, and it is in this light that the Bill proposes that the Director of Air Pollution be the council's chairman.

The Director of the Environmental Control Section of the Co-ordinator-General's Department also will become a member of the council under this Bill, and industry representation will remain at two members. Other members will include—

- \* representatives of the Departments of Commercial and Industrial Development, Health and Local Government;
- \* one representative of departments or authorities administered by the Transport Minister;
- \* one representative of the Local Government Association of Queensland;
- \* one representative of the electricity industry nominated by the Minister for Mines; and
- \* one representative of the University of Queensland, nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the university senate.

Further provisions of the Bill seek to strengthen the role of the Air Pollution Council in acting against offenders for alleged breaches of the Act.



This Bill will provide broader powers for the council to direct the occupier of premises to take action to prevent or minimise air pollution, and the range of materials subject to open-burning conditions (in respect of motor vehicles and parts of motor vehicles in particular) will be increased.

The amendments proposed will place the onus firmly on the occupier of premises to prove that all reasonable steps were taken to overcome problems caused by operations such as the burning of wastes and to extinguish such nuisance fires. These provisions are influenced, to some degree, by problems encountered in the exercise of controls over the burning of waste car material and other nuisance fires in the Brisbane metropolitan region and nearby areas.

There is a provision, for example, that in addition to specific measures which the council may already require the occupier of scheduled or unscheduled premises to take to control the emission of air impurities, the council may require other action considered necessary to prevent or minimise air pollution. One such requirement might be the provision of suitable fire hydrants at car wreckers' yards for use in the case of fire, for example.

Another section of the Bill tightening the Air Pollution Council's control over the burning of waste material provides that, where the burning of waste has been prohibited or restricted and burning still occurs, the occupier of the premises will be guilty of an offence unless he proves that the burning was caused by circumstances which were unforeseen and not reasonably avoidable, and that all reasonable care and steps were taken to extinguish the fire immediately on discovery.

There have been a number of serious breaches of the Clean Air Act in respect of the burning of car bodies at wreckers' yards in the Brisbane area in recent times. Under present law it has been impracticable to secure sufficient evidence on which to institute legal proceedings. The provisions of the Bill are designed to enable the proper enforcement of the law but at the same time to enable the owner of premises to rebut a charge if he can establish that the burning was not foreseeable or avoidable or that reasonable steps were taken to extinguish it.

A similar provision is included in the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act in respect of certain offences under that Act, and I am advised that it has proven very effective in making the Act more enforceable and in helping to generally improve the water pollution situation as a result.

I think I have covered briefly, but to effect, the more important provisions of this Bill, which as I said at the outset is a very straightforward piece of legislation.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (10.19 p.m.): On 16 March 1976, when introducing the last Clean Air Act Amendment Bill, the Minister said—

“This is part of a planned attempt, by me as Minister, and by the Government, to show clearly that we are mindful of the potential for more serious air pollution problems in the State and that we are serious in our endeavours to ensure that the situation doesn't get out of hand.”

The Opposition asked the Minister a question on 30 March, and when he was giving his answer I interjected, saying, “The same answer was given in 1971.” The Minister replied, “You'll get the same again next year, too.” I think that is a fair indication of the Government's activity in the control of air pollution. Another Bill has been brought down tonight. We are told that it is a straightforward Bill that seeks to update and strengthen the Act and to strengthen the role of the Air Pollution Council. The Minister said that further provisions of the Bill seek to strengthen the role of the Air Pollution Council in acting against offenders for alleged breaches of the Act.

**Mr. Hinze:** It seems to me I've heard that song before.

**Mr. BURNS:** With all due respect to the Minister, we have heard this song before from him. There has been only one prosecution for pollution of the atmosphere since the legislation was enacted in 1963. There was an investigation by a parliamentary committee in 1959. An Act was passed in 1963. There was some implementation of it in 1965. Industry was given until 1972 to implement the provisions of the Act. Polluters were given seven years to comply with it. In May 1972 we said to them, “You should now have complied with the Act.” But we still did nothing about it.

I assure the Committee that after all that time industries in this city are still polluting the atmosphere. It is no use saying that it is only airy-fairy conservationists who are concerned about this matter. The ones who are concerned are the ordinary, average housewives who get smog and soot on clothes hanging on their lines. People in industrial areas have to wipe soot and grease off their window-sills and watch the sides of their houses go black as a result of the pollution in this State—years after the legislation was enacted and amendments were passed, they laugh when they are told how the Act has been strengthened.

In the first place, why do we not have the 1975-76 report of the Air Pollution Council? To see how well we are going, I looked for figures to compare this year with another, but they are nowhere to be found. Let us then look at the figures in the 1970-71 report and compare them with those in the 1974-75 report. It will be seen that the city laboratory measurements of sulphur dioxide for nine

months of 1974-75 exceeded the 1970-71 measurements. In other words, three or four years later the measurements were higher. Not much has been achieved there.

The November 1974 measurement of 41 micrograms per cubic metre was almost two and a half times the November 1970 reading of 17. The readings for seven months at Hemmant in 1974-75 exceeded those of 1970-71. At Hamilton, the readings for six months in 1974-75 either equalled or exceeded the 1970-71 levels. In daily smoke concentrations, in six months of 1974-75 the city's readings either equalled or exceeded the 1970-71 readings. So let the Minister not try to tell us that something is being done about air pollution. We have done a lot of talking about it, we have come to a lot of resolutions and we have amended the Act on dozens of occasions; but the people who live at Hemmant, Tingalpa and Darra—and others throughout the city who have had to put up with the stink and fall-out from pollution—are starting to laugh at us when we talk about the Air Pollution Council and what we are doing.

The Minister knows this himself because he has visited the area with me on a number of occasions. We visited and inspected the Bulimba Creek area. But the people at Tingalpa, in which homes worth over \$30,000 are now being built, are still suffering from the same smells and pollution. They are still writing the same sort of letters after their houses have been scrubbed by professional cleaners, repainted and again gone black. We are told that it is not a matter of pollution; that there is something wrong with their homes or the paint used, or it is caused by the tropical climate. It is peculiar that these things happen only in certain districts and that people using the same paint in other areas do not have the problems that are experienced at Hemmant and Tingalpa.

What has been done to control pollution is just not good enough. I am not making an attack on industry, because we want industry there. We are interested in having industries in our area and we want them as good neighbours. But there are some industrialists who seem to think that Friday night is the best time for pouring pollution into the creek or having a breakdown in air pollution control equipment. I have asked on dozens of occasions for a 24 hours a day seven days a week reporting service. Not a lot of money would be needed to give the opportunity to people to complain to someone while pollution is taking place. A lot of services are provided in this way. If we look at the end of the Brisbane City Council section in the telephone directory we see that there is an emergency number we can ring for water, sewerage, electricity and other services; but people complain that if pollution occurs at 6, 7 or 8 o'clock at night, they cannot ring the air pollution control officers till 9 o'clock the next morning and, of course, by the next morning the wind has blown it away. When

the inspector goes down to the factory that has caused the pollution, there is no evidence of it and he has to go back and tell the truth—that when he got there, there was no evidence of pollution. But the night before, the people had to put up with the foul smells and were forced in the hot weather to stay inside their homes with the windows closed.

I would have thought that in amending the Act on this occasion the Minister would have made provision for a reporting service 24 hours a day seven days a week and a public advisory service on pollution, or perhaps done something about what is called the non-degradation of clean air areas.

There is nothing in the Act or being done to protect clean air areas. At least in my area we know we have pollution problems. The Minister knows it. I see Dr. Cleary is here. I know he is a first-class officer in the department. We ought to back him up with firm control measures against the people who are causing pollution in the area.

We have experts and we ought to do something to ensure that we lay down the same standards so that all industries face uniform control regulations under this Act, that industries in clean air areas are not treated the same as already polluted areas but on an industry basis, and there is no scheme to put different requirements on the clean areas than the already polluted areas. This would prevent adequate planning by industry and put companies which operate in clean air areas at an advantage compared with others which operate in polluted areas. If there is an industry in a polluted area, it is fairly obvious that inspectors and others will be down on its back all the time to make it clean up but if a company is the only industry polluting a clean air area it will get away with it because there will not be so many problems from smog and fall-out and people will not be complaining so much.

It should be that we have standardisation right across the city. One particular industry out in a clean air area could be badly disadvantaged, or indeed, as in one case, can in fact be advantaged over one in a dirtier area. The public is also put at a disadvantage in that this policy leads to all areas eventually reaching the same level of pollution.

I stress that there is a need for uniform industry-wide standards. I understand that permits are issued on a case-by-case basis. There are no over-all evaluations of pollutant emissions into the one area. There is no provision in the Act for extensive studies to take into account the total combined effect of all the permits put together. That is to say, permits are granted only on the merits of each particular case and do not take into account the total combined effects of all outflowing pollutants.

There is no requirement for future up-grading of permit requirements. The licences are granted under the Act and there is

nothing in the Act that provides for the further upgrading of the pollution control requirements of the permits once they are renewed. While nothing in the Clean Air Act prevents the upgrading of permit requirements, there is still nothing that requires the Air Pollution Council to upgrade them on renewal. Why shouldn't there be? If we have an industry that is creating pollution problems why shouldn't we say, "All right, we accept that you have a problem. Next year we will again give you a permit to discharge, but you will discharge less. The year after, you will discharge even less. We will take a gradual, progressive stand with you. We will accept that you have a problem and we are not going to send you broke or put your employees out of work; but over a period we expect some improvement."? As far as I can see that does not happen; it should be a requirement of the Act that it does happen. People should not be given the same permit each year to discharge the same amount of pollutant into the air destroying the housing values, home life and happy environment of the people they adversely affect. If we do not provide for a gradual reduction in the permitted levels of discharge into the air then advance planning is not possible, because it is not possible to say that in a number of years we will have removed most of the pollution problems in a certain area. But if the permits are graded in that way, we can be sure that we will see some improvement.

It is a pity that the Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government gave us the "wipe" this year on air quality monitoring. I understand that the Federal Government gives to the States grants for the purchase of equipment for air quality monitoring on a dollar for dollar basis. The other States received a total of \$200,000 for 1976-77; but, as I read the Federal Budget, Queensland received none of this money. In 1975-76 we received \$33,000; in 1976-77 we received nothing. This is another instance in which Queensland has missed out on grants, and it is obvious that it will be necessary to cut back on some of the monitoring programmes.

It seems to me that more monitoring programmes are needed. Because of the number of complaints that I receive in my area—continued complaints from the same areas about the same problems—it is obvious that if inspectors cannot do the job, more equipment must be stationed there to ensure that people are protected in some way.

Most of the Bill appears to be taken up with the appointment of a new board, and I welcome the decision to put the Director of Environmental Control (Mr. Peter Ellis) on the board and to make the Director of Air Pollution Control the chairman. I believe that the man in charge of the Air Pollution Council should be the chairman.

If he has the expertise needed for appointment as director, he should be the chairman of the new board.

As I said this morning when speaking to the Premier's Estimates, now that the air pollution officers and the water pollution officers do not put their private numbers in the telephone book, Mr. Ellis receives most of the complaints if I come up against major problems in my electorate. If he is to be the Director of Environmental Control, I will draw his attention to some of the problems in the environment when they occur. He does not live very far from my electorate—in fact, he lives in the electorate of the honourable member for Bulimba—and on many occasions when I have telephoned him to have a yarn to him about a problem that has arisen, he has said, "Yes, I can smell it myself."

Let us have a look at the new board. As far as I can see, the only change is that it is being increased from 10 to 12. Before dealing with each member of the board, I ought to say that I cannot understand why the Government continues to appoint only a representative of the University of Queensland. The Griffith University now has a first-class School of Environmental Studies, and I believe that this would be an opportunity to give it representation on the board rather than just the University of Queensland. I am not suggesting that the numbers should be doubled or anything like that. Perhaps the university representatives could take turn about. They could each have a year or a couple of years on the board. The school at the Griffith University is gaining an Australia-wide reputation in the field of environmental studies. If people are being trained there to take up environmental jobs in the community, there should be someone there who could be appointed to the board to represent that particular group.

The new board will include representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures and the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, and they will all represent industries that are usually involved in polluting. There will also be representatives of the Department of Health, the Department of Local Government, the Department of Transport and the Local Government Association. They will all be associated with governmental activities. There will be a representative of the electricity industry, nominated by the Minister for Mines and Energy, and, as I said earlier, a representative of the University of Queensland. Then there will be one lone representative of the public. The Minister said tonight, "We are giving the public some representation." There will be one representative in 12. I could find 12 people in Murarrie who would like to sit on the Air Pollution Control Board for 12 minutes, not 12 months. I could find 12 in Tingalpa, 12 in Hemmant and 12 in Darra.

**Mr. Hinze:** They would be biased.

**Mr. BURNS:** The Minister may be a little bit biased, too. I suggest that on a board which is supposed to control the polluters there ought to be more representation of the people whose environment is being polluted and whose homes are being affected. I will accept that one in 12 is a token. The Minister will say that it is probably a step in the right direction. I know all of the Minister's answers; he has given them to me before when similar Bills have been introduced. But it is time he gave the public a chance to have a say, and I think it is quite clear that one representative is not enough. Probably we ought to ask for representation from the Queensland Conservation Council, the Littoral Society or some of the people who are involved in the anti-pollution field. I suggest to the Minister that he might take a representative from the Lytton electorate who has to put up with some of the weaknesses of the Act and the mistakes that have been made.

**Mr. Marginson:** And one from the Wolston electorate.

**Mr. BURNS:** The honourable member suggests that there ought to be one from the Wolston electorate. Probably other honourable members would like to suggest one from their electorate.

Any change that will strengthen the Air Pollution Council is welcome. Any change that is going to give the public more representation on the board or any change that will give the director and his staff a greater say and enable the Director of Environmental Control to participate in the deliberations of the board is of some value, and I cannot just knock it for the sake of knocking it. But I believe there is a lot more to be done. I would like to think that we will not get the same answer as we did last time from the Minister 14 days after this Bill has been passed. Probably I will get worse figures next year, as I did last time.

**Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (10.35 p.m.):** In 1965 when I was working at the Ipswich Hospital, I received a notice from the Government that we had to do something about the pollution of the air by the fire in the boiler at the hospital at that time. All industry received a similar notice. Industry was given seven years to put its house in order. How farcical this talk of clean air in Queensland has become! In particular how farcical it is in South-east Queensland! Nothing whatever has been done. With its Clean Air Act, its Water Control Act, its Litter Act, and no doubt with its Noise Abatement Bill, this Government will have done nothing but window-dress.

**Mr. Ahern:** Have you seen the new cement factory?

**Mr. MARGINSON:** I am telling the Committee what I experienced in my electorate. We have industry in my electorate, but we do not want to drive industry out. I have said that every time the Act has been amended. But we are getting nowhere with our complaints. I complained to the air control people when the matter came under the Health portfolio. What did that director say? He said that the then Minister (Mr. Tooth) was not interested in the subject. That is what Mr. Gilpin thought of Mr. Tooth. The Minister tucked him away in a little corner and gave him one or two people for staff. For years that was all that was done about clean air in this State. That was this Government's attempt to give the people of Queensland decent air to breathe.

**Mr. Newbery:** You haven't travelled very far.

**Mr. MARGINSON:** The Minister hasn't travelled very far. He has only to go to Darra to see what is happening there. I have been continually complaining about it.

**Mr. Newbery:** They are spending millions up along the coast.

**Mr. MARGINSON:** I don't give a damn what is happening up in the Minister's area. I am concerned about what is happening in my electorate. Let me point out what is happening today. This concerns one of the chief supporters of the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, and I will name him. When I was attending a function in Ipswich, Hancock Brothers were polluting the air with clouds of black smoke. Nothing is being done about that. Nothing was done about it when they polluted the water. The Minister for Local Government and Main Roads should go up and see what is going on in Darra. I get the reply from the Minister, "We are going to fix them next year." I am told now that he is going to fix them at the end of this year. The Minister knows the complaints I am getting from Darra and Oxley. Clothes are being spoilt and homes are being spoilt. The monitoring is going up and down. We do not know whether anything is being done. Some members travel on the highway from Brisbane to Ipswich. Let them take note of the air at Oxley Creek. Let them take particular note of the quality of the air they breathe in that area on a winter's night. Let them take note at Wacol. The people in Wacol have complained about odours from Sandy Creek. I have complained about the odours from Sandy Creek and other creeks at night-time, but nothing has been done.

**Mr. Frawley:** What is wrong with a bit of a smell?

**Mr. MARGINSON:** I ask dirty Des to keep out of it.

The Act has been amended on three or four occasions since I came here in 1969. The Minister by way of window-dressing

tells us what he is going to do, but nothing is done in most industrial areas. He heard what the Leader of the Opposition said about his area. I ask the Minister to come and do something instead of just standing up in Parliament and making promises to the people of Queensland. He has done nothing about water quality. I hope he will amend that Act. I have something to say about that, too. I say that the Minister is also window-dressing with the proposed Noise Abatement Bill.

I will study the Bill to see just what is in it, but I do believe that nothing further will be done about clean air. I want the Minister's assurance that the latest correspondence I received from him to the effect that Darra would be cleaned up by 31 December still stands.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (10.40 p.m.), in reply: I suppose it is the Christmas spirit that is grabbing me, but in this present atmosphere I would like to be charitable. I appreciate the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Wolston represent the most polluted areas in Australia. This is not by chance, nor is it by design; it is just that they are very highly industrialised areas. Those two honourable members speak with a great deal of knowledge of their areas, because they continually receive complaints from their constituents about industrial problems, whether they concern air, water or noise.

I recognise the two main points made by the Leader of the Opposition, the first of which concerned the availability of someone who can be contacted by telephone. I am prepared to give serious consideration to that proposal and to talk to the director to determine whether or not it is practicable.

The honourable gentleman's other point concerned a Chair of Environmental Studies at the Griffith University. I recognise the merit in that suggestion and will take cognisance of it.

Reference was also made to the standing of the present Director of Air Pollution Control, Dr. Graham Cleary. He has just returned from a World Health Organisation seminar, at which he represented Australia. That is an indication of the high esteem in which he is held throughout the world. It was with some trepidation that he found himself under the control of the Department of Local Government. Obviously he did not

know what to expect. I hope to be able to prove to Parliament as well as to the people of Queensland that I treat the environmental problem seriously.

The honourable member for Wolston has claimed that nothing is being done about the great billows of smoke that pour out from the chimneys in the Darra area. That is not the case. I can bring forward evidence to show that industry is spending millions of dollars in Queensland on combating environmental problems. It is not my decision or that of the Government to continually drag someone into court. We want to work with industry, because we realise its importance to the State. We try to discuss with industry environmental problems, in relation to both air and water pollution, and we try to solve them.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the annual report of the Air Pollution Council. It has been prepared and it will be available shortly from the Government Printer. It will be tabled in Parliament immediately after it is received from the Government Printer, and it is hoped that this can be done prior to the second reading of the Bill.

I am sure that both Opposition speakers will agree, having had some experience in local government, that town-planning plays a major part in creating these problems. The Leader of the Opposition lives in an area where the problem has got completely out of hand. It is not my fault or that of the Government and preceding Governments, or people charged with taking care of the problem. We have to accept that we have noxious industries and very high-class development in the one area. The Leader of the Opposition would like to find a solution, and so would I. But what can we do when people wish to live within a certain mileage of the city? When land is available at a reasonable price they set up their homes there only to find, after a very short period, that they are in an area with a pollution problem.

I have nothing more to add this evening other than to acknowledge again the contribution made by both Opposition speakers.

Motion (Mr. Hinze) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.