

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 1977

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

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF MEMBERS FOR
NEW PARLIAMENTARY HANDBOOK**

Mr. SPEAKER: I remind honourable members of the need to have their photographs taken for publication in the new parliamentary handbook. The photographer will be on duty on the veranda outside the old Legislative Council Chamber today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

I seek the co-operation of all honourable members in this matter. If an honourable member fails to have his photograph taken for insertion in the new handbook, the space left for it will be vacant. Consequently, he will probably be known in his own electorate as a vacant allotment. It is entirely up to honourable members.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under the Forestry Act 1959–1976.

Orders in Council under—

Harbours Act 1955–1976.

Forestry Act 1959–1976.

Regulations under—

Queensland Marine Act 1958–1975.

Sawmills Licensing Act 1936–1976.

By-laws under the Harbours Act 1955–1976.

**SUMMONING OF Mr. JUSTICE
DOUGLAS TO THE BAR OF THE
HOUSE**

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South): Mr. Speaker, I give notice that tomorrow I will move—

“That Mr. Justice Douglas be brought to the Bar of Parliament so that members can question him on and determine the propriety of his remarks from the bench concerning a Townsville magistrate.”

Not fewer than three members having risen in their places in support of the motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: As the honourable member has the necessary support, the notice of motion will be placed on the Business Paper.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. DARRA EXPLORATION LIMESTONE-MINING AND CLINKER WORKS, GLADSTONE

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

(1) Further to my questions that could not be answered on 18 November 1976, as tenders have now been called for work in relation to proposed limestone-mining and a clinker works, has Darra Exploration now met all the requirements of the local authorities in the area?

(2) Has a franchise agreement been agreed to by the State Government and the company or will one be agreed to?

(3) Will the agreement take from the local authority its powers under the Local Government Act or by-laws in respect of this project?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The establishment of a clinker cement manufacturing plant in the Gladstone area utilising limestone and clay resources mined near Mt. Larcom will be of considerable benefit to Queensland.

As a number of administering authorities are involved in the proposal, as the proposal will involve major capital investment, and in view of the fact that the early commissioning of the plant will be of mutual benefit to the State and the company, Cabinet has appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of negotiating a franchise agreement between the State and the company. The statutory powers of the relevant local authorities are recognised.

2. BRIDGE AND ROAD-WORKS OVER CALLIOPE RIVER

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

(1) As the Co-ordinator-General reported in July 1976 that talks had been held with Darra Exploration in relation to bridge and road-works over the Calliope River, has the local authority of the area been taken into talks with the department and the company concerned?

(2) When will tenders be called for these important bridge and road-works?

(3) What is the estimated cost of the bridge and the road-works and what proportion is to be paid by the company?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I draw the honourable member's attention to my answer to his previous question. The committee to which I referred therein is presently examining these matters—the cost of the development, Government commitment, the timing of tenders for the proposed bridge and road-works, etc. The relevant local authorities will be involved in the discussions relating to these matters.

3. ROAD TRANSPORT OF STOCK FOR SLAUGHTER

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

(1) Are stock being sent for slaughter required to be tail-tagged when there is not less than one semi-trailer load from one property and they are kept separately?

(2) Are the numbers of head of slaughter cattle constituting a semi-trailer load specifically laid down and may a semi-trailer load be comprised of mixed sexes?

Answers:—

(1) Slaughter cattle in drafts of one full "K" wagon or semi-trailer or equivalent are exempt from tail-tagging except meatworks-owned cattle purchased in the paddock which are subject to spelling en route. Such cattle are required to be tagged if less than a trainload in one ownership because of the problem of boxing of separate mobs at most spelling centres.

(2) No specific numbers are laid down as to how many head constitute a "K" wagon or semi-trailer load. However, until recently 20 head was the minimum adopted. Of course, only about 16 or 17 of the big bullocks produced by the honourable member would fit into a "K" wagon. The number is elastic and there is a common-sense approach adopted to it. There is no specific number.

A "K" wagon or semi-trailer load may not be comprised of mixed sexes because sexes are segregated at meatworks and killed separately, thus increasing the chances that the cattle will lose their identity.

This is a matter that may be argued, but I may say in further explanation that if steers and heifers are sent in one truck, and if they are on weight and grade, they have to be identified in some way at the works. They are identified in lot numbers without tags and, with the bleeding of cows for the detection of disease, there are difficulties. It may appear to be a little foolish, but in reality it is not. The officers of the Division of Animal Industry of my department are in constant dialogue with the meatworks concerned and I hope that some of the things that may appear a little frustrating will be alleviated in the course of time.

4. BEACH EROSION AT KINKA BEACH AREA

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

As I have a number of times over the last three years drawn various Ministers' attention to the erosion problem in the Kinka Beach area and as the Livingstone Shire Council is required to find the

finance under a proposal put up three years ago by the Beach Protection Authority to channel the creek straight out from Causeway, will he endeavour to assist the Livingstone Shire Council on a financial basis to carry out this work recommended by the Beach Protection Authority to arrest this serious situation?

Answer:—

The financing of beach protection works is the responsibility of the local authority, subject to a State subsidy.

5. STEP-UP IN POLICE ACTIVITY,
CLAYFIELD ELECTORATE

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

(1) Is he aware of the serious crimes being committed in the Clayfield electorate?

(2) Will he give further consideration to increasing the staff at the present police station on Wagner Road in order to provide more localised preventative police activity in this densely populated area?

(3) What is the present position with regard to the provision of a new police station on the Sandgate Road site purchased some time ago for this purpose?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The established police strength of Clayfield is one sergeant 1/c and five constables. To further assist in the policing of the division, two trainee constables and one cadet (graduate) are detailed for duty there at present. In addition, attention is given to the area by mobile patrol units, members of the C.I. Branch and the Traffic Branch. It is not proposed to increase the strength at this stage, but the position will be closely watched.

(3) In view of representations by the honourable member for Clayfield together with those of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer and the honourable member for Merthyr, the question of a new police station at Clayfield is receiving current consideration, together with other requests received for police building requirements throughout the State.

6. ALLOCATION OF GRANTS TO LOCAL
AUTHORITIES

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

As several million dollars was set aside in the last Budget to assist local government in the administration of their shires, has this money been allocated and, if not, when can shires expect to receive the allocation?

Answer:—

The untied State grant money to which the honourable member refers was allocated to local authorities last Thursday. The total amount involved was \$5,034,000. Relevant letters of advice to the various councils and to the members of this House have been despatched.

7. DAIRY PASTURE SUBSIDY SCHEME

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

(1) Is he aware that the recent decision to abolish the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme has inflicted severe hardship on dairymen engaged only in the production of manufacturing milk and butter?

(2) As these dairymen are not engaged in the production of market milk, will he consider the reintroduction of the subsidy scheme for dairymen engaged in these less lucrative activities?

Answers:—

(1) The Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme was introduced in September 1966 to assist farmers in the establishment of improved pastures to provide their dairy herds with a better plane of nutrition. The Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme was never intended to be a subsidy to the income of dairy farmers, although that is how it would work out. Originally introduced for five years, the scheme has been operating for over 10, during which time over \$4,434,000 has been provided to meet 21,501 claims. A total of 145,751 hectares had been planted under the scheme. I consider that the scheme has served its useful purpose as there have been relatively few applications by farmers for assistance during the last 12 months. I would remind honourable members that the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme has not been used very extensively in the drier dairying areas of the State.

(2) It is not proposed to reintroduce the scheme to assist the very limited number of manufacturing milk producers or the farmers who are supplying cream. It is considered that the funds that the Government has provided under the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme can be used more profitably to assist the dairying industry in other forms.

8. TRIMMING OF CARCASSES AT
MEATWORKS

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

(1) As graziers selling livestock on a weight and grade basis are complaining bitterly about the amount of trimming of carcasses in one of Queensland's largest meatworks, is there a limit to the amount of fat trimming allowed under the Act?

(2) What happens to meat and fat trimmed from carcasses prior to weighing?

(3) If the trimmings are used for small-goods or other saleable goods, could the meatworks be forced to pay the stock-owners for the trimmings?

Answers:—

(1) No. The only trimming required by inspectors is to remove contamination and bruising. Any other trimming is at the discretion of the meatworks operatives. The proposed Australian Meat Board carcass-classification system provides for a standard definition of a carcass and this will be required to be made mandatory when it is introduced.

(2) Meat and fat trimmed to meet inspection requirements is condemned and is used for meat-meal production. Any other good quality trimmings could be used for edible purposes such as meat for manufacturing or fat for edible oil.

(3) No. Presumably this would be taken into account at time of sale.

9. AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION PROPAGANDA

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

(1) Is he aware of a major nation-wide exercise in political confrontation being planned for 6 April by the Australian Teachers' Federation, aided and abetted in this State by the Left Wing of the Queensland Teachers' Union executive, such exercise to comprise (a) deputations of teachers to all Commonwealth members of Parliament and senators, (b) school staff meetings, (c) joint parent/teacher rallies, (d) the collection of a pro forma from every school for the compilation of a statement of school needs and (e) the co-ordinated Australia-wide coverage through a Channel 7 hook-up?

(2) Is he aware that the publicly professed object of this elaborate exercise will be to attack Commonwealth and State Government plans for future funding of education, a suitably vague and popular cause for mobilising members of the profession and attracting community support?

(3) Will he publicly expose the true purpose of this blatantly manipulative scheme and warn the rank and file of Queensland teachers of the threat thus posed to the future integrity of the Queensland Teachers' Union by those Left-wing strategists seeking a shift to the one giant centralised federal body more amenable to their notorious machinations?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that the Queensland Teachers' Union is planning, in conjunction with the Australian Teachers' Federation, meetings and deputations seeking increased funding for education.

(2) I have not seen a statement of the objectives of the proposed exercise.

(3) I am confident teachers are sufficiently intelligent to recognise any political exercises mounted by their union executive and to object in the strongest terms to any misuse of the funds to which they contribute by paying such high union fees.

10. PRISONS DEPARTMENT APPEAL CURRAN V. LEWIS AND COLLINS

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

(1) Was an appeal involving the Prisons Department recently heard in Brisbane in the case Curran v Lewis and Collins?

(2) In view of the startling evidence given before that court, will he make the depositions available to any member who cares to read them and so acquaint himself with some of the basic reasons for the ever-increasing industrial unrest at Brisbane Prison?

(3) Has the prison officer who I suggested in a previous question was a practising homosexual been transferred from Brisbane Prison and, if so, what position does he now hold?

Answers:—

(1) Appeals recently heard in Brisbane included the cases of Curran v Lewis and Curran v Collins. The officers are employed in the Prisons Department.

(2) The question of the availability of depositions taken in appeals would be one for the tribunal concerned. However, I have been informed that the appeals had no bearing on any industrial unrest which might exist at the Brisbane Prison.

(3) In the absence of any identification, I am unable to supply further information.

11. TRENDS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement made in Hobart early this year by Mr. H. K. Coughlin, who was a member of the Karmel committee, that there was a need all over Australia for a rationalisation of education, that money spent on post-secondary education could have been wasted, that the present imbalance has resulted from each sector developing with little regard to what is happening elsewhere and that an outsider must find elements of craziness in the situation when the money for education is claimed to be inadequate and at the same time educational institutions are busy proliferating courses that sometimes duplicate satisfactory ones already in operation elsewhere?

(2) If he has knowledge of these serious statements, will he inform the House that the fears strongly held by many in Queensland that there has been grievous proliferation of courses at the post-secondary education levels and that it will not be long before our colleges of advanced education assume the aspects of our universities, where the real needs and aims of genuine education are subjugated to the mania of employing more and more academics, for any reason and at any cost, just to find lucrative employment for them and, at the same time, manufacture well-paid jobs for the unqualified and unlettered spouses of the academics, are well founded and will be grappled with?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The careful planning of post-secondary facilities in Queensland has prevented the duplication of courses that has occurred in some other States. Proposals for new courses are carefully vetted by the appropriate body. I have also set up a Joint Advisory Committee on Post Secondary Education, which comprises the senior officials of each sector and which will help to avoid any unnecessary proliferation of courses in Queensland.

12. INCIDENTS AT TOWNSVILLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE ART SCHOOL

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

(1) Were students of the art course at the Townsville Technical College who asserted that there were serious breaches of their high code of morality both in the classroom and in activities associated with the course interviewed by officers of his department in company with the principal of the college and the two lecturers against whom the serious allegations were made and did the lecturers have an inordinate opportunity to interrogate the students and denigrate them in front of the officers sent by his department?

(2) Has he since been advised by a reputable minister of religion that a strong and factual case seems to have been established that immorality and at times gross immorality has pervaded the classroom and its environs?

(3) Is he aware that one student, who joined in the protest against what she considered to be an affront against her sense of decency and Christian principles and considered that her Christian faith had been mocked at, failed in the semester after the allegations although she had previously been very successful and, incredibly, was failed in a subject she did not attempt?

(4) In order to counter the widely held opinion among Townsville people concerned that the investigation ordered following the serious allegations of gross immorality at the Technical College Art School was simply an appeal from Caesar unto Caesar, will he lay the full report of the investigation on the table of the House or make it freely available to members?

Answers:—

(1) The investigation referred to by the honourable member was carried out by three senior officers of my department using the procedures normal in such circumstances. The proceedings were carried out with courtesy and decorum and no interrogation or denigration occurred.

(2) I have had some correspondence along the lines suggested, to which I have replied. The writer had apparently accepted, at face value, information which his informant later admitted was merely rumour.

(3) The student referred to by the honourable member was the signatory to the written complaint forwarded to me by the local member. At the investigation she admitted, in her mother's presence, that she did not have direct and personal experience of the alleged affront to her sense of decency or the alleged mocking of her Christian faith. She also admitted that other allegations had been based on rumour and hearsay. The honourable member is mistaken in stating that she had been very successful in her first semester because four of her six passes had been conceded. She received low results in the second semester and thus on average marks failed the year. All the results have been checked and were based on accepted evaluation procedures, which were known to all students. Two subjects were assessed on assignments and practical work throughout the course. I suspect the honourable member is mistakenly referring to one of these subjects, for which this student did not submit all the required work.

(4) The report was received by me on 17 December last and has been available since that time for perusal by the local member. When he does read the report he will find that the affair was not "white-washed" as has been publicly stated. Although some serious complaints of immorality were unproven, other complaints were substantiated and two lecturers have received severe reprimands from the Director-General of Education.

I am pleased to report that 37 students have enrolled in art courses for 1977, indicating substantial confidence in the Townsville Technical College.

13. PUBLIC SERVICE INTAKE OF
SCHOOL-LEAVERS

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

(1) What is the reason for the drop in the intake into the Public Service of school-leavers as clerks, stenographers and clerk-typists for the months of January from 311 in 1975 to 265 in 1976 and to 159 in 1977, a reduction of 40 per cent from 1976?

(2) How does his Government expect school-leavers, particularly girls, to obtain employment when his Government is drastically reducing its intake?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The honourable member would be aware that school-leavers are engaged largely to fill vacancies created by resignations from the Public Service. The number of resignations of clerks, stenographers and clerk-typists has fallen since 1976 by 35 per cent. This is close to the percentage fall in engagements.

I can assure the honourable member that the policy of the Government is to give preference to school-leavers in filling vacancies.

14. INCREASED ROAD TRAFFIC FROM NEW
PORT OF BRISBANE

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

Further to his answer to my question on 9 March concerning traffic density from the new Port of Brisbane at Fisherman Islands that it is expected that any increase in traffic resulting from the construction of the new port for Brisbane at Fisherman Islands will be concentrated along Lytton Road and consequently it is anticipated that the suburbs of Bulimba and Norman Park will not be affected by the increase in traffic, to where will the traffic proceed, if not through the suburbs of Bulimba and Norman Park, after it has travelled along Lytton Road?

Answer:—

The member for Bulimba has failed to perceive the distinction which I attempted to draw between the predicted increase in traffic volume on a particular road and a general increase in traffic throughout a suburb. It is conceded that Lytton Road and Wynnum Road skirt the edge of Norman Park, but my advice is that Lytton Road, Wynnum Road and Junction Road do not pass through the suburb of Bulimba.

I would reiterate that no general increase in traffic volumes is expected through the complete network of roads in the suburbs of Bulimba and Norman Park, and in retrospect I would make a similar comment with regard to the suburb of Hawthorne.

15. WITHHOLDING STOCK OR LABOUR
FROM SALE

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

Concerning the reported call by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Anthony, to cattle producers to hold back stock sales, is there any difference between a person withholding his production from sale and another person withholding his labour and, if so, what is the difference?

Answer:—

The honourable member draws a strange analogy in that he is a member of a political party that was responsible for the introduction of legislation governing orderly marketing in primary production and yet he is quite willing to berate cattle producers for trying to introduce some orderly marketing into one of the few sectors of primary production that has not established it.

Technically, of course, there are two essential differences between withholding production from sale and withholding labour. Firstly, no breach of contract occurs in the case of cattle producers whereas there is a breach in the case of labour and, secondly, whilst there is no minimum price fixed by law for cattle, there is a minimum price, namely the award rate, for labour. I trust that the honourable member's mind is now enlightened.

16. ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN AT
PRE-SCHOOLS

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

(1) With reference to his answer to a question on 11 March 1976 wherein he promised to eliminate the "football scrum" method of enrolling children at pre-schools after a shambles occurred at the Ferny Hills Pre-school, is he aware that since that date the Strathpine Pre-school enrolment day was a similar disgrace?

(2) Has his attention been drawn to the method of enrolment proposed to be used by the principal of Bray Park State School, which would eliminate the problems occurring previously?

(3) Will he take steps to have this fairer and more dignified method of enrolment adopted generally in new pre-schools?

Answers:—

(1) In replying to the honourable member for Pine Rivers, I think it is important for me to add some perspective to what he has referred to as the "shambles" at Ferny Hills in 1976. In late 1975 I was aware that there was a great need for more pre-school facilities in the area. Both I and

officers of my department entered into discussions with local people aimed at finding a short-term solution to the problem. It was a matter of personal regret that these discussions had not been finalised by the time the waiting list opened in March 1976. I also regret that one of the main groups with whom discussions were being held actively sought to make the occasion of the opening of the waiting list an opportunity for publicity, because moves were already under way which resulted, a few weeks later, in over 100 additional pre-school places being created through a number of interim arrangements. The group in question was aware of these moves and had been given my personal guarantee that these would be finalised as quickly as possible. Further, I would point out that there has been no repetition of these events in 1977 in the Ferny Hills Area.

I now wish to turn to the matter of the opening of enrolments at the Strathpine State Pre-school Centre. Enrolments for this three-unit centre were conducted on 19 November 1976. Enrolments for both 1977 and 1978 were taken simultaneously. The pre-school teacher-in-charge and the principal of the primary school carefully planned the whole operation. Undercover seating was arranged and instructions provided so that people sat in order of arrival. Later, tags indicating both place on the waiting list and the year for which enrolment was sought were distributed so that those who were not able to stay could leave and return at a more convenient time. The result of this planning and organisation was that procedures were completed for 250 children in less than two hours and all eligible children were enrolled for entry in either 1977 or 1978 at that time.

There were no complaints from parents, and reports to hand indicate that the whole matter was conducted smoothly and with no confusion. Indeed, parents have expressed their admiration of the excellent work of both the pre-school teacher-in-charge and the principal of the Strathpine Primary School in this regard.

(2) I am informed that the principal of the Bray Park State School has verbally communicated his proposal to one of my officers but there has been no official request seeking approval to vary procedures from those laid down in the State Pre-school Teachers Handbook. My understanding is that basically the proposal is to establish the intake into the pre-school by a public drawing of names.

(3) I am not prepared to concede that a lottery represents a dignified approach for determining admission to pre-schools. With the increasing numbers of pre-schools coming into operation, problems of the kind referred to at Ferny Hills are decreasing. Further, I would add that I have had passed on to me expressions of grave

concern and apprehension held by parents about the proposed public drawing of names for places at the Bray Park State Pre-school Centre.

17. DISPLAY OF NOXIOUS WEEDS

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

In view of the serious consequences from the spread of parthenium weed and other noxious weeds and as many landholders and other interested people would be unable to identify these weeds, will he have this weed, together with other appropriate noxious weeds, displayed at the forthcoming country shows?

Answer:—

Arrangements were made for a scientist from the Sir Alan Fletcher Research Station to attend the Tara Show in Balonne electorate on 11 and 12 March 1977 for the purpose of acquainting people of the seriousness of the spread of parthenium weed. Unfortunately the show was postponed because of wet weather.

The display was arranged at short notice through the co-operation of the Co-ordinating Board and the Sir Alan Fletcher Research Station, and would have comprised a healthy young plant in full flower, smaller plants in a scant bed of soil showing the weed's tenacity, and a plant dying off and in full seed. This particular specimen would be protected by plastic bags and placed in a cage to prevent handling.

It is planned to display parthenium weed and other appropriate noxious plants at forthcoming country shows at St. George, Dalby, Roma, Chinchilla, Miles, Taroom, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi and other selected shows.

The displays are part of a "vigilance campaign" aimed at quick identification and control of new infestations. It is essential that people in areas into which the plant could be introduced recognise parthenium weed.

18. PART-TIME SOCIAL WORKER FOR BALONNE HOSPITALS BOARD

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

Will he give consideration to the appointment of a part-time social worker to be attached to the Balonne Hospitals Board?

Answer:—

The Balonne Hospitals Board has previously sought approval to employ a part-time social worker at the St. George Hospital. The board's request was investigated but the work-load at that time did not justify its approval.

The needs of the St. George area will be kept in mind when the extension of community health services centres are being examined.

If the honourable member would like to discuss the matter with me at some time, I would be only too pleased to have his views.

19. WYNNUM COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES CENTRE

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

(1) Is he aware that those involved with the Wynnum Community Health Services Centre, which is offering an excellent and well-used service to the community, are working under difficulties because of the lack of suitable furniture?

(2) What action has been taken to rectify this problem pursuant to my earlier submission on this matter?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that the staff of the Wynnum Community Health Services Centre have been carrying out their duties in less than ideal circumstances. Following the honourable member's representations to me, plans have been prepared for the installation of partitions within the centre to provide suitable work areas for staff and for the various activities carried on within the centre. I am advised that the Department of Works expects to start on this remodelling within the next four weeks and that it will be completed this financial year. It is anticipated that the provision of this improved accommodation and associated furnishing will provide the staff of the centre with satisfactory working conditions.

20. ROUTE OF EXPORT ROAD FOR NEW PORT OF BRISBANE

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

(1) Is he aware that there is still some confusion and concern by residents in the Wynnum area as to the route of the proposed export road to service the Port of Brisbane?

(2) To what degree are the consultants of the Brisbane City Council involved in the planning of the route and in the priorities determining the expenditure of road grants on this export road?

(3) In order to alleviate the concern of residents, will he detail the actual route that the export road will follow?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Might I say first in answer to the member for Wynnum that he has based his question on what would appear to be

the reasonable premise that the Brisbane City Council is the sole authority planning the routes to the new port, and consequently is the authority briefing consultants. This is not the case.

The routes to the new port have been included in the subjects for discussion at several meetings of the Technical Planning Committee—a committee set up by the Main Roads Department comprising representatives of other Government departments, the Brisbane City Council, etc. On the basis of agreements reached at these meetings, the plans for the port development will incorporate features designed to minimise the possibility of heavy transports from the port proceeding through Wynnum, thus it can be said that the concern of the Wynnum residents was appreciated and positive action taken to alleviate the problems.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. HINZE: The honourable member for Wynnum, being a very capable member, made recommendations to me.

Answer (contd.)—

For the information of the member for Wynnum—the Commonwealth Minister has declared Lytton Road from Junction Road to Pritchard Street to be an export road. I have also made representations asking the Commonwealth Minister to declare the access road from Pritchard Street to the new port as an export road and this is currently under consideration by the Commonwealth. Should he agree to do so, then both sections of road will be eligible for funding from appropriations made under the National Roads Act.

21. ROAD-MARKING AT "STOP" SIGNS

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

(1) Is he aware that the Brisbane City Council has introduced a system of road-marking at intersections where "stop" signs exist by extending the white stop line in line with the kerbing and channelling, resulting in a vehicle crossing the accepted pedestrian traffic walk area before having to stop, and that in many cases where this new marking has been carried out pedestrian road-markings have been eliminated?

(2) Does this represent a further hazard to the pedestrian?

(3) What advice has he received from the Queensland Road Safety Council in connection with this apparent dangerous planning?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I suggest that the honourable member direct his question to the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, as provisions for pavement markings by way of transverse

lines are set out in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices issued by the Commissioner of Main Roads.

22. PAPER-PULP FACTORY FOR MACKAY

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

(1) Have there been any recent discussions with W. R. Grace & Co. regarding the proposal to establish a paper-pulp factory at Mackay to produce pulp from bagasse and, if so, with what result?

(2) During the last three years has his department had discussions with any other companies interested in establishing a bagasse paper-pulp project and, if so, with what results?

(3) Does the possible establishment of a wood-chip industry in Queensland have any bearing on the possible marketing areas for the bagasse paper-pulp project?

Answers:—

(1) The current situation is still as outlined in the reply which I furnished to the honourable member on 23 September last in answer to a similar question.

(2) No. I believe it would be pointless to discuss the matter with other companies while W. R. Grace & Co. are still assessing the prospects for a Mackay-based project. As I have previously indicated, the viability of the Mackay project depends in large measure on the ability of the entrepreneurs to establish long-term markets for the output of the proposed pulp mill. As is generally known, the world pulp market has been depressed for some time.

(3) No.

23. BEEF CARCASS CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

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

(1) Did the recent Australian Agricultural Council meeting recommend the commencement of a beef-carcass classification scheme based on the use of an electronic probe with three impulses developed by C.S.I.R.O. or is there to be a trial period to measure the success or otherwise of the scheme?

(2) If there is to be a trial period, how long will it be, which killing works in Queensland will conduct the trials and will it be on both export and local-consumption carcasses?

(3) Is he aware that a similar classification scheme has been operating successfully in Sweden for 10 years, using a similar type of electronic probe with two impulses at about half the cost of the C.S.I.R.O. machine and capable of being installed and operational at all killing works in a matter of six months?

(4) As organisations such as the Cattle-men's Union of Australia strongly support the Swedish system and as a carcass-classification scheme is a necessary prerequisite to a beef stabilisation scheme, did he press for its implementation at the Australian Agricultural Council meeting and, if not, for what reasons?

Answers:—

(1) The Australian Agricultural Council agreed at its meeting at Bundaberg in August 1976 to equip several meat-works throughout Australia in order to test the commercial feasibility of the Australian Meat Board's classification scheme.

(2) The council has requested that a final report on these trials be available for consideration at its meeting in July/August 1978. The beef and pig chains at the Cannon Hill abattoir are in the process of being equipped. Both export and domestic carcasses will be classified.

(3) I am not aware of a Swedish classification scheme. I am aware of the SFK fat probe developed and used in Denmark for fat measurement. This is an alternative device to the C.S.I.R.O. probe but I understand that the Meat Board staff have had difficulty in assessing its potential because of a reluctance by the Australian agents to make the instrument or their own results available. It is important to realise that the Danish instrument is not in itself an alternative classification system. If it were immediately available it would not hasten the introduction of classification. My information is that the Danish probe is more costly than the C.S.I.R.O. probe.

(4) For the reasons outlined in the answer to the previous question, I did not press for the introduction of the Danish probe.

ORDER IN CHAMBER DURING QUESTION TIME

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Government Members interjected.

Mr. BURNS: Government members may laugh, but those people are having their power turned off by the Government. If Government members like that they may laugh, and I hope it is recorded in "Hansard" that they laughed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. If any honourable member interjects persistently I shall deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. BURNS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STABILITY OF STATE COALITION GOVERNMENT; ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

Mr. BURNS: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer I refer him to the speech delivered this morning on his behalf by the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs to the Queensland Women's Historical Association, in which the Minister said—

“This has been a balanced coalition in which power has been shared and no one party is able to dominate the other.”

and continued—

“There has not been one occasion in the last 20 years on which one party has used its numbers to dictate to the other.”

I now ask him: how does he relate those statements to yesterday's decision by Cabinet in which the National Party forced approval of amending legislation to permit a redistribution under circumstances which the State Liberal Party President described on Sunday as “sinister” and a “misuse of the law”? How does he relate the remarks that I have read to yesterday's events in which the non-elected State President of the National Party was able to inform “The Telegraph” of Cabinet's decision even before Cabinet met?

Mr. KNOX: In answer—first of all, there was no decision made yesterday by the Government to have a redistribution; so the piece of information given by the Leader of the Opposition in that respect is wrong. Like all the other bits of information that he has leaked to him, this one, too, is a bit coloured and wrong.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition called on public servants to give him confidential documents from their files. He was inciting public servants to commit crimes. He does not mind what he says or does. If some poor public servant were to get caught and lose his job, the honourable member would just walk away from it. That is the sort of attitude he adopts and it is the type of thing that started the Watergate operation. If that is the style of the honourable member's approach, God help this State if he should ever get into office. It would be a great tragedy.

LEAKAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BY PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mr. BURNS: I direct a further question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: With reference to his answer to my preceding question, does he now denounce the Prime Minister (Mr. Fraser) for his statement on 5 July 1975 when interviewed on television, in which he said—

“There could be circumstances I believe in which a Treasury official could regard his over-riding duty to Australia as being greater than his duty to a government, and ultimately our duty lies to Australia.”

He was asking them to leak information to him. Does the Minister now deny the Prime Minister's statement?

Mr. KNOX: When the Prime Minister spoke on that occasion he was not referring to leaks, the stealing of documents or the release of unauthorised or secret information. He was referring to the fact that Treasury officials have a responsibility to the various Estimates Committees, which are committees of Parliament set up by the Parliament and which meet in Parliament House, where the Treasury officials are cross-examined about the various matters on which they advise Ministers. It was quite proper for the Prime Minister to make such a statement on that occasion.

Mr. BURNS: I appreciate the reply that it was proper for the Prime Minister to ask people to leak information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

ADDITIONAL FLOOD EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AT INGHAM

Mr. ROW: I ask the Minister for Police: Following my discussions with him last week about the Ingham floods and the equipment for the State Emergency Service at Ingham, what action has he taken in response to my request for additional flood emergency equipment at Ingham?

Mr. NEWBERY: Following discussions with the honourable member last week during the Ingham floods, I had an official of the State Emergency Service go to Ingham to investigate further equipment requirements. Following his visit to Ingham, it has been decided to forward to that area a boat, motor and other equipment that was needed. The boat was to leave Brisbane by road at midday today, to enable it to get there in the quickest possible time. The equipment, including the boat and motor, is worth \$3,500.

STATEMENT BY DR. KALOKERINOS ON IMMUNISATION AGAINST RUBELLA

Dr. LOCKWOOD: I ask the Minister for Health: Was his attention drawn to the A.B.C. programme “AM” on 10 March 1977 in which Dr. Kalokerinos made certain statements regarding rubella vaccines? Is there any truth in his allegations and does the department still recommend rubella vaccination for females in the 12 to 14 years age group?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am aware of the statements made on “AM” by Dr. Kalokerinos. They were also mentioned to me by the honourable member for South Brisbane, who has a specific interest in children who have

deafness problems associated with rubella. Dr. Kalokerinos is, of course, well known for his extravagant statements in certain medical situations. He is, for instance, well known for his statement that vitamin C is an essential component of all diets for children of Aboriginal descent. This claim was fully investigated by the National Health and Medical Research Council and found to be inaccurate and irresponsible.

In the present situation he has again acted irresponsibly by saying that vaccination against rubella is of no use as an immunisation programme for girls. I want to place on record that the Queensland Government fully supports the programme of immunisation with vaccine against rubella. We have recommended that it be made available to girls between the ages of 12 and 14 years as a preventive measure against rubella during pregnancy, as this is one of the major causes of deafness, mental retardation, blindness and heart and other congenital defects.

I also wish to place on record the work done by the Australian Deafness Council. That organisation has undertaken a programme and I know that the honourable member for Toowoomba North and the honourable member for South Brisbane, who is, I think, the State president of that council, have been particularly associated with that programme. I feel very strongly that we should be extremely critical of irresponsible remarks by a man who has a history of making extravagant and irresponsible statements.

NUDE BATHING AT GRANITE BEACH

Mr. POWELL: I ask the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service: Has his attention been drawn to the controversy raging in the Noosa Shire with regard to nude bathing on Granite Beach, as it has been claimed that Granite Beach comes within the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service? Will he inform the House what the legal position is as far as the Government is concerned?

Mr. TOMKINS: I thank the honourable member for Isis for his question. I realised that it would be raised by somebody here today. As the honourable member indicated in his question, it has been suggested that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has control of beaches, but this is not so, and to set the record straight I shall now indicate the position regarding nude bathing at Granite Beach.

The control of beaches covers a vast area of law and regulation and is not wholly equated to control of people bathing in the nude thereon, or to the dress of bathers.

However, in this particular context, the by-laws of the Shire of Noosa published in the Government Gazette of 18 June 1941 show that the shire has clear authority to control nude bathing.

Clause 4 of Chapter 13 of the by-laws states—

“No person shall offend against decency by exposure of his or her person in or upon any road or land or place under the control of the Council, or within view of such road, land or place.

“It shall be lawful for any officer of the Council or member of the Police Force to arrest any person offending against any of the provisions of this clause.”

Clause 12 of Chapter 18 states—

“All bathers shall, except in the dressing sheds, wear suitable and appropriate bathing dresses . . .”

I also draw attention to section 4(1)(vii)(d) of the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act 1931–1971, which provides—

“Any person who wilfully exposes his person in view of any person in any public place shall be deemed to be a vagrant and shall be liable to a penalty of \$100 or to imprisonment for six months.”

“Public place” includes every road and also every place of public resort open to or used by the public as of right.

At Granite Beach the public has the right of entry onto the national park. A track has been provided for use by the public near the seaward boundary of the park, and nude bathers would be observable by members of the public walking along the track. My inquiries reveal that members of the public also have access to and walk along the beach front, and that members of the public in boats navigate and fish in waters adjoining the foreshore.

EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHER ALLEGED TO BE HOMOSEXUAL

Mr. YEWDAL: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: Is he aware of the recommendation by a leading Young Liberal official, Scott Prasser, that the Government employ a teacher who is alleged by his department to be a homosexual? Will the Minister accept that recommendation and, if not, what advice has he to offer to Young Liberals in connection with this matter?

Mr. BIRD: I am not aware of the recommendation referred to by the honourable member. However, might I say that I, as Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, and my department reserve the right either to employ or to refuse to employ any person.

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

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENT BY MR. W. HAMILTON ON
ALLEGED GOVERNMENT PLAN TO SPLIT
UNIVERSITY UNION

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.5 p.m.), by leave: In today's issue of "The Courier-Mail" there is an article headed "Government Plan to Split University Union". I shall not bore the House by reading all the article. I will deal only with that particular section which is very germane to this House. I have always fought very hard to preserve the privileges and, I might say, the dignity of this House.

The article reads inter alia—

"The Australian Union of Students State organiser (Mr. P. Annear) said yesterday . . .

"He said that this was despite a statement by the Education Department deputy director-general (Mr. W. Hamilton) that no legislation was being prepared or even considered for the current session of Parliament."

I should like to know by what right a relatively minor public servant such as Mr. Hamilton can arrogate to himself the function of telling people what legislation is being prepared and what legislation is being considered. Is this Parliament to give away to its relatively minor public servants the right to advise the people of Queensland what legislation the House is to consider? I should like you, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of the preservation of the superiority of this House to inquire from Mr. Hamilton what right he had to make such a statement.

QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS
TRUST BILL

INITIATION

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities): 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 establishment and incorporation of a body to be known as the Queensland Performing Arts Trust, to make provision with respect to the administration of that body and for purposes incidental thereto."

Motion agreed to.

IRRIGATION ACT AND ANOTHER ACT
AMENDMENT BILLINITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION
OF DEBATE

(Mr. Kaus, Mansfield, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 10 March (see p. 2399) on Mr. Hewitt's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Irrigation Act 1922–1973 and the River Improvement Trust Act 1940–1971 each in certain particulars."

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (12.8 p.m.): When we are considering amendments to the Irrigation Act and the River Improvement Trust Act it is pertinent to review the real problems presently confronting the people of Far North Queensland, some of whom are undergoing extreme hardships mainly because of the uncontrolled run-off of flood waters from streams and rivers in their areas. Their plight emphasises the need to plan for better river improvement, the storage of water for irrigation and its harnessing for such things as the generation of hydroelectric power.

With the intensive agricultural pursuits undertaken on the river flats of Far North Queensland, especially in the cane-growing areas, the run-off of silt caused by erosion and damming has built up the rivers to such an extent that higher and higher flood levels are being recorded. This consideration must be examined by the river improvement trusts.

Farmers who have been subjected to the recent flooding and flooding in earlier years have said that some of their land has been rendered useless by debris and sand deposited on their farms by the rivers when in flood. At a time when this is a matter of very great concern, the Government should be looking at far greater investment—and investment I consider it to be—in the drainage of farmland in particular areas. Funds should be allocated for river improvement and irrigation schemes in Far North Queensland that have already been proposed and drawn up.

During the course of the debate the honourable member for Mackay referred to the survey that he and I conducted in Far North Queensland in the basin of the Barron River as well as in the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers. We there saw the devastation wrought by the recent floods, and particularly the erosion that occurred along the river-banks. The farmers all commented that the rivers rose to greater heights, they believed, because of the silting up of river beds. With the huge run off through cultivated lands, that reasoning is understandable. We must take a very close look at the effect of that silting, and that brings me to the allocation of funds for drainage in those areas. We should attempt to halt the process of erosion, and we must recognise the agricultural benefits flowing from any expenditure for that purpose.

The same comments apply to all those areas in Far North Queensland where a river's run-off is short, where the coastal plain is narrow and where the rainfall is heavy. The areas quickly become inundated. After a tidal build-up, once the tide runs out there is a very quick run-off. Flood rains falling on an area that is already heavily saturated lead to erosion in steep areas. The problem is no less in the Johnstone, Tully and Herbert Rivers than in those rivers I have already mentioned.

The other point I want to make relates to the personal hardships suffered by the people affected by a flood. It is all very well to declare a flooded area as a disaster area.

However, if there is no subsequent follow-up assistance, we are faced with personal disasters on a grand scale. Whether it is farmers who are flooded out or whether it is pensioners, the emergency grants are very meagre. No grant is given for damaged carpets, television sets or luxury items. There is no grant for stereo equipment or even normal household appliances that are damaged. People are given grants merely for the loss of food or bedding. That is as far as the allocation goes.

If an area is declared a disaster area as a result of flooding, I believe that we must consider giving further assistance to the people affected. At the moment a means test is applied—assets of \$1,250 and cash of \$750. That limit denies even pensioners the right to participate in emergency funds. I think almost every pensioner these days has \$750 in the bank to guarantee his own independence. Pensioners find this independence in providing for their own burial, which costs about \$600 in North Queensland. Most people save up to \$750 for it and this disqualifies them from receiving flood relief.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the subject-matter of the legislation.

Mr. JONES: I appreciate your assistance, Mr. Kaus. I digressed only because I felt that what I had to say was important to Far North Queensland. That is one of my main reasons for speaking. I wish to make known to members and the people of Queensland the difficulties suffered by people in the North.

I conclude by returning to my original point. When considering this type of amendment, we should be looking to the problems that confront the people of Far North Queensland and the difficulties that are peculiar to that area. We should also be considering the better use of water for irrigation, the provision of water storages and the harnessing of waters that now run off unused in wet seasons. They could be used for the production of a diminishing energy commodity, which is hydroelectricity in Far North Queensland.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Chatsworth) (12.17 p.m.): The River Improvement Trust Act was brought down in 1940 and its primary intentions were to provide for the control of erosion in relation to part of the Burdekin River, to make financial provision to repair damage occasioned by cyclone and flood to the banks of that river and to constitute a trust charged with guarding against the recurrence of any such damage. Importantly, the Act also provided for the constitution of a trust in relation to any other river.

When we study the Act in detail we find that if two local authorities so determine, they can set up a river trust. It is in this context that I want to argue for the establishment of a Brisbane River Trust. I believe firmly that this great body of water should

have a trust interested in its beautification and purification, its use for transport, the provision of jetties along its banks and all the other things that such a fine body of water should have. The Brisbane River drains a natural basin 200 km long and 100 km wide and the catchment area above the city of Brisbane is 13,500 sq km.

I use the words advisedly when I say that it is one of the finest bodies of water in Australia. Adelaide and Perth can to some extent claim that they have reasonable rivers. Victorians choose not to talk about the Yarra. Most of the time, as we all know, it flows upside down. In clear contradistinction, the Brisbane River has on many occasions quite rightly been compared to the River Seine. Whenever people talk about the Seine they tell us of the exciting things that the French have done with that river. They have developed beautification on both banks. They have provided for outdoor living and entertainment. There are bridges that not only span the river but are themselves objects of great interest. In contrast, the Brisbane River meanders through this fine city of ours and nobody seems particularly interested in its beautification or other things that could be done with it.

In the first place, a Brisbane River Trust could be interested in beautification of the river-banks. To some extent this is at long last happening. Some of the most unsightly buildings are slowly disappearing. I support the cultural centre that to the great credit of the Government will be built on the south bank of the Brisbane River so that each bank will be complementary to the other.

A trust such as I envisage would, in the interests of beautification, be interested in enforcing the provisions of the Clean Waters Act. One could refer to half a dozen Acts of Parliament that already regulate certain aspects of the Brisbane River. But if it was good enough on many past occasions to argue for the establishment of trusts for other rivers, we should with greater validity be talking about a trust for the greatest river in the State, the one that covers the greatest land area and the one that is potentially the most beautiful of all.

I have spoken briefly about beautification. My colleague from Merthyr, who has taken a very close interest in this matter, will, I am sure, develop an argument with regard to transportation, but suffice it to say that all the efforts to date to establish an efficient transport system on the Brisbane River have been perfunctory. We found out all the reasons why they won't work! I believe firmly that a close study of this matter will show that an efficient transport system could work on the Brisbane River.

It is to the credit of the Minister for Transport that he has set up a committee to look at this very question, and I am sure that this committee will sustain the points of view that my friend from Merthyr and I hold very, very strongly indeed. It seems

pointless to suggest that if a good, efficient commuter service were established, people from the lower and upper reaches of the river would not choose to use such a service each day rather than breathe the filthy fumes from Brisbane City Council buses. There are strong reasons why a Brisbane River Trust should be established for beautification and transport purposes.

Importantly, too, the river itself feeds into that wonderful body of water, Moreton Bay, and boating people tell us that the facilities provided are inadequate. We do not have enough launching ramps, we do not have enough jetties, and a Brisbane River Trust could certainly look very closely at this aspect of the problem as well. There are a dozen different problems that could be looked at sympathetically with regard to the Brisbane River. At the moment they are looked at in isolation by people who police different Acts. A Brisbane River Trust would bring all of those problems under one microscope. Its members would look at them sympathetically and, importantly, they would challenge the people of Brisbane themselves to recognise what a beautiful waterway this is and appeal to their imagination and co-operation.

I believe very firmly, Mr. Kaus, that it would be a most useful authority. It can be instituted, however, only at the behest of local authority itself, and here, if the Brisbane City Council has the wit and the wisdom to do it, it can take the initiative. It would have to invite the co-operation of a contiguous shire, and that co-operation should not be difficult to obtain. If this does not happen, then I feel that the Minister or this Government should give local government some gentle prompting. The Brisbane River is one of the finest waterways in the world; it is about time we elevated it to its proper status.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (12.23 p.m.): I am pleased to have the opportunity of joining in support of this legislation, but more specifically in joining with my two metropolitan colleagues, the honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr. W. D. Hewitt) and the honourable member for Kurilpa (Mr. Doumany), in proposing that this legislation be used for the establishment of a river trust for Greater Brisbane, that is, a responsible body set aside from politics which will have the total responsibility for developing the Brisbane River as a facility that will be a great asset to this city. It has the potential. Even now it has the reputation of being an outstanding feature of this city.

I am pleased that the second part of this legislation, which relates to the River Improvement Trust Act, contains amendments whereby an application will be able to be made by a single local authority for the constitution of river improvement areas. The existing legislation allows two contiguous

shires to join together under one trust for the development and treatment of a waterway, but the amendments proposed by the Minister in this instance now make it clear that a single local authority may make application for this in its own right. It may establish its own trust, and I join with my Brisbane colleagues in calling on the Brisbane City Council to make use of this River Improvement Trust Act to set up a trust to manage that great expanse of water, the Brisbane River.

There is one aspect of the development of which I have been an advocate for some time, and I wish to place most emphasis on it in my remarks today. I refer to river transport. It is well known that local authorities now have the responsibility of controlling ferry services on waterways throughout the State, and it would require an amendment of legislation to take that responsibility away from them. However, under the River Improvement Trust Act it is within the power of the Brisbane City Council to take action to provide river transport in Brisbane.

Because the Brisbane City Council has been found wanting for so long in this field, it has been necessary for the State Government, through the Minister for Transport, the Brisbane Metropolitan Transit Board, and now the Metropolitan Transit Authority, to take action to encourage greater use of the Brisbane River by the provision of passenger ferry services. Ferry services of this type have been put to the test practically and realistically over the years on the Golden Mile ferry service run by Mr. Charlie Newitt. It currently runs ferries between Mowbray Park, Sydney Street, New Farm, and the city, where it has a pontoon at the bottom end of Creek Street. All these facilities have been provided at the expense of Mr. Newitt and his company and he is forced to maintain them.

For many years he was compelled to pay general rates on the land on which his waiting shed stood. It was leased through the Lands Commission, and it is only recently that the State Government has given him some relief from paying one of those fees. When the pontoons were swept away in the disastrous flood a couple of years ago, he had to relocate them himself.

Mr. Newitt has frequently come up against bureaucracy in attempting to develop and extend this wonderful service. He has two modern launches, each capable of carrying 100 passengers, and on them it is possible to travel from New Farm or Mowbray Park to the centre of the city in about 10 minutes. In peak hours it takes at least 30 minutes to travel by Brisbane City Council public transport from the New Farm area to the centre of the city—30 minutes against 10 minutes—so it is obvious that ferry services should be extended and enlarged.

I was very pleased to read an announcement by the Minister for Transport last week-end that the first part of a report commissioned by the Metropolitan Transit

Authority had been made available to him by the University of Queensland, which was given the contract to carry out the study. The university was given the job in 1975—quite a long time ago—and it has been a source of disappointment to me that it has taken so long to put the report together and indicate what is the current use of the Brisbane River by ferry services.

As I understand it, there is comment in the report on other facilities that could be established along the banks of the river in association with ferry services—new terminal sheds, ramps with more modern facilities, paved car parks and bays for parking. This would encourage people to bring their cars to these areas and commute to the city on modern ferry services. Of course, the Golden Mile ferry service has already provided these facilities itself, and I think it is disappointing that it has taken the investigating team at the university so long to discover this. The report is available now and I hope that it will be acted upon very quickly.

If the local authority shirks its responsibility in any real way to implement services of the type to which I have referred, then, of course, it will fall to the State Government to take action. Under the Metropolitan Transit Authority Act, the Government has power to do just that. But it might be better to establish a River Improvement Trust for the Brisbane River to facilitate the establishment of such services, so that there would be a well-co-ordinated transport service from the suburbs into the centre of the city. Along with this would go beautification and the other matters referred to by my colleague the honourable member for Chatsworth.

I take a great deal of pleasure in adding my support for the setting up under this legislation of a Brisbane River Trust.

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (12.30 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Bill, and at the outset I support the comments made by my colleagues the honourable members for Chatsworth and Merthyr about the urgent need for a Brisbane River Trust. As my colleagues pointed out, the Brisbane River has enormous potential for exploitation and better use as a public facility.

I would like to make a few comments about its aesthetic qualities as we see them at the present time under the Brisbane City Council administration. Unquestionably the neglect of the banks of the Brisbane River is obvious in almost every riverside suburb in this city. The Yeronga reach, which is in my electorate, is a sheer disgrace. Dumping of litter in the area adjacent to the river is becoming an almost daily occurrence. With its blasé attitude the Brisbane City Council allows weeds and grass to grow to such a height that a person walking in some parts of the area is obscured. He could almost tie the growth over his head. I am afraid that that sort of attitude on the part of the local authority that is responsible

for a very large segment of the area through which the Brisbane River flows can be changed only by the creation of a river trust with independent representation and which is given responsibility for the river and its immediate environs and the use of its waters. I am pessimistic about what can be done until a river trust is created.

I wish to make a few comments about the very important subject of cyclone and flood control repercussions which was alluded to by the Minister in his introductory speech. The Brisbane River has a record of flooding, with its effects on individuals, businesses, roadways and other facilities used by the community which are probably unparalleled in this State, considering the population affected. I hope that the proposed provisions in the Bill dealing with the funding of repairs and recovery from floods and cyclones are taken advantage of in this city and in its flood plain by the creation of a Brisbane River Trust.

I endorse the comments made by the two previous speakers and add my support to the Bill.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.34 p.m.): I should like to make a few brief points on the comments of the three previous speakers. I believe that what they are trying to achieve is very worthy. In particular I would like to say a few words about such things as bicycle tracks. In Melbourne bicycle tracks are provided right along the Yarra River. I believe that they have been of great social significance in Melbourne. Although the debate on this Bill might not be the most opportune time to be raising such subjects, nevertheless they are topical.

On the occasion of the naming of the new fountain I was talking with the three members who spoke previously and we were interested to see what can be done with the banks of a river under a beautification programme. The river-bank at South Brisbane near the new fountain is now quite attractive, as is the north bank of the river in the vicinity of the Captain Cook Bridge where a beautification programme has been undertaken. I repeat that I support the three previous speakers in what they are trying to achieve.

At times river trusts can become bogged down in bureaucracy and can also find themselves faced with fairly difficult problems in public relations. On some occasions, in genuinely endeavouring to do the right thing to alleviate, say, flood problems they take action that causes further problems to landowners.

In some of the rivers and streams of the State, particularly those in the West, which are fairly slow-moving, tremendous problems have been caused by the backing up of water and the diversion of water by logs and trees that have fallen into them. Great care should be taken in carrying out any works along rivers and streams. It is very easy for man to adopt an attitude contrary to nature and

decide that the best thing to do with a certain stream is to cut off a corner to straighten its course. Nature, however, does not work that way. Man tends to adopt a mechanical approach to the handling of water—sometimes with disastrous consequences.

As an illustration—a tremendous erosion problem has been caused in the area of Ashall Creek by what appeared at first to be an excellent drainage scheme. A very shallow, lightly battered and fairly straight drain was dug. A lightly battered drain is one which has gently sloping sides. The idea seemed to be a brilliant one. Today, however, that shallow drain is now a chasm 20 ft. deep and it is just not doing the job it was envisaged it would do. Continual battering and back-filling has to be carried out to stabilise and settle the bed. Rock weirs have been erected in an attempt to get siltation on the silt cone above the battering. The whole area has to be consolidated again. I believe action should be taken to spread the water right across the plain as was done in the first place by nature.

Things are not always as simple as they appear to an engineer to be. Before we contemplate any further similar schemes we should ask ourselves whether by carrying them out we are likely to create similar problems. On the surface a problem may appear to be relatively simple. However, it is not always as simple as it seems. Nature works in various ways. I would urge caution in the clearing of streams by the removal of trees and debris. Obviously no-one would argue against clearing debris that is causing streams to back up but in the past there has been a tendency to remove trees indiscriminately. I hope that from our mistakes we have learnt that we should not carry out too much mechanical earth work in trying to divert water to where it really should not be running.

Mrs. KIPPIN (Mourilyan) (12.41 p.m.): I have spoken here on this subject on other occasions, but in view of the recent North Queensland floods I must reiterate some of the matters that I have raised in the past two years. The sugar industry suffers quite severely from lack of drainage. Indeed, it is the main factor restricting increased productivity throughout the industry in Far North Queensland. Our most urgent need is an overall drainage scheme which, in the light of the floods in the last few months, must extend from Tully to the Mossman area.

The Minister is well aware of the activities of the North Queensland Sugar Industry Productivity Group. Indeed, he has allocated money for an initial survey of the drainage needs in North Queensland. The allocation is already bearing fruit and the committee has presented an interim report. In the past few months many of our rivers have been unable to cope with flood waters. Admittedly we have had exceptional floods but the drainage work carried out in the last couple of

years seems to be placing extra stress on river capacities. This leads to an interesting point. Farmers will no doubt continue to improve their drainage and, with that in mind, the Government will have to look broadly at river capacities and take a wider interest in what farmers are doing. This will naturally cost a lot of money but the Federal Government also has an interest in this field because of the damage caused to agricultural lands and the severe loss of the national asset in the last few months.

I know that the northern people intend to approach the Federal Minister for Primary Industry on this subject when he comes to the North next week. They intend to explain their point of view to him and to try to gain his sympathy so that more funds might be allocated for this work. This is a vast project. When it eventually gets under way, the cost of the overall drainage of North Queensland will run into millions of dollars.

The officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission at Mareeba do a very good job, and it is most unsatisfactory that officers are not stationed along the coast. When we need them, they have to travel from Mareeba. While they try to make regular trips to the coast, it is not always convenient for them to come when we need them. Recently we have had three floods and after each flood the officers visited Innisfail. I am sure that what they have done will help us in the future.

In the past few years I have stressed the need for irrigation and water supply officers to be stationed somewhere along the coast and I am pleased that the Minister has now agreed to consider Innisfail as the possible venue for an office. The town is very centrally situated, but the officers will have to be men with a special interest in drainage. I can assure the Minister that they will be fully employed, as no doubt Mr. Pearce, Assistant Commissioner, Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, would verify. Over the past two years he has made a couple of visits to my electorate and his time has always been more than fully occupied.

I have stressed before that our present legislation does not cater for all of the problems that arise in the field of drainage. I hope that these men will look very closely at the problem and that, after a period in the district, they will be able to assess in a practical way the improvements that are required. In numerous cases people carrying out their own drainage have blocked water-courses and caused flooding further upstream. Under the present legislation there does not seem to be any remedy available.

In closing, I stress the urgent need for these men to be stationed on the coast. I hope that the Minister will give favourable consideration to selecting Innisfail as a suitable location for the establishment of such an office.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (12.46 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister's introduction of this measure. We all know what

an interest he takes in the irrigated areas of our State. When one thinks of river improvement trusts, one naturally thinks about floods and their effects. However, before speaking about that aspect, I wish to thank the Minister very much for the trip that he made to my electorate during the flooding about 12 months ago. His action was not generally known in the area—but that is the sort of Minister he is. When he finds there is a problem, he quietly goes about trying to fix it.

I know that the Minister is aware of a problem in my electorate at the moment. I have had several discussions with him on this matter and I am quite confident that he is examining my submission in detail and that, when a deputation meets the Premier later this month, the groundwork done by the Minister and me will be of some advantage to the people whom I represent.

Floods present hazards in certain parts of our State, and it is a great pity that we cannot find ways and means of overcoming some of them. Apart from the possible formation of trusts in my area, one solution may be the construction of a dam on Mole River. This has been a dream of many people for a long time. A dam has been built on Pike Creek. That was to be a New South Wales/Queensland/Commonwealth venture, but it ended up being funded by the two States. The construction of that dam was a great help to the people of my electorate during the floods of 12 months ago.

I turn now to the need for trusts and the benefits that can be achieved through them. River improvement trusts in Queensland do a good job. More people should try to emulate the work done by the more successful trusts in Queensland. I heard the member for Chatsworth talk about the wonderful Brisbane River and what could be achieved if a trust were set up to manage it. Many other rivers in Queensland could similarly benefit from the creation of river improvement trusts. I am pleased that the Minister is asking at least some trusts to establish emergency funds so that money will be available immediately after a cyclone or other natural disaster.

I support the Bill and commend the Minister on bringing it down.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Water Resources) (12.51 p.m.), in reply: The honourable member for Mackay agreed with the need to ensure the validity of fees and charges made by the Government. This is the purpose of the first amendment. I would, however, remind honourable members that this particular fee is not in dispute. As I stated previously, the basis of the charge was accepted by the mill owners prior to approval of the schemes. The charge presently applies only to sections of the Bundaberg Irrigation Area and assessments made have been promptly paid by the mill owners concerned.

All honourable members are aware of the effects that inflation has had, and is continuing to have, on our capital works programme, including the Bundaberg and Eton Irrigation Projects. It is unfortunate that following expenditure of the previous grants, the Commonwealth Government, in pursuit of its responsible approach to restoring the economy, is unable to provide further funds in the current year. However, this Government has taken action to maintain progress on these projects. Planning is regularly examined to maintain the maximum progress with the funds available, as well as to maintain the existing level of employment on continuing projects.

In the Bundaberg area, almost \$6,000,000 will be expended in the current year. This compares with \$4,900,000 in 1975-76, and is in fact the highest level of expenditure achieved on the project in any year. The sum of \$2,500,000 has been allocated for Monduran Dam and Gin Gin channel, previously financed from Commonwealth grants, and \$3,400,000 on the area works to be financed wholly by the State. By 30 June 1977 some 13 miles of Gin Gin channel and 25 miles of distribution channels will be completed.

The honourable member for Mackay also commented on progress on the Kinchant Dam. By 30 June 1977 \$5,800,000 will have been expended on the dam. In the current year, \$1,650,000 will be expended, including \$800,000 provided by the State. Total expenditure on the Eton scheme for 1976-77 will be over \$2,000,000, virtually the same level of expenditure as in the previous year. Contrary to the honourable member's views, progress is being maintained. Subject to funds being available, the initial bankment of Kinchant Dam to storage level E.L. 53 will be completed by December 1977. Members may be assured that we are continuing to press for further financial assistance from the Commonwealth for these and other urgent works.

The member for Mackay referred to the recent flooding in North Queensland. Of the 19 river improvement trusts, 10 relate to streams from Mackay north. These include the Herbert, Johnstone and Mulgrave Rivers.

The matter of drainage problems in North Queensland raised by the honourable member is not a matter for consideration under the River Improvement Trust Act. It is, however, receiving close attention by the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply. With a view to obtaining a better overall picture of the problems involved, the Government has agreed to studies with a view to defining the extent of drainage problems in the sugar areas from Mossman to Ingham and flood mitigation and river improvement problems in that area which require to be corrected if drainage works are to be effective.

The report on drainage works has been received and the report on flood-mitigation problems should be completed in the next

few weeks. These reports will be discussed with interested parties. Arising from these reports, an overall submission will be formalised for consideration by the Government.

The honourable member for Isis has, with facts and figures, clearly shown the period of instability that contributed to the inflationary problems affecting the irrigation projects. His representations in respect of the Bundaberg scheme are well known and appreciated. In view of the limited funds available for water conservation and irrigation works, I am sure he will acknowledge that with an allocation of \$6,000,000 the Bundaberg project has been fairly treated. I and all members of Cabinet share the desire to see both the Bundaberg and Eton projects brought to completion as early as possible. For that to be done, an injection of Commonwealth funds will be needed in the years ahead.

The honourable member for Warwick referred to the Leslie Dam Stage II project. He may be assured we will commence this work as soon as funds permit. The costing and proposed planning for this work has been subject to periodic review.

Concerning the respective functions of the river improvement trusts and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission also raised by the honourable member for Warwick, the River Improvement Trust Act wisely recognises the fact that river improvement works are best handled on a local basis. The trusts are constituted following an application by a local authority to me as the Minister administering this Act. The local authority elects the members except the chairman, who is appointed by the Governor in Council. Generally an officer from the commission acts as chairman until such time as the trust is well established, and where appropriate, local chairmen are appointed. It is realised that, as far as possible, it is wise to have controls of this nature vested in local people who have personal knowledge and experience of the locality. The local authority representation on the trust ensures that its extent, location and running costs are kept within the overall control of the shire, who are in a position to assess the local requirements and the capacity to meet charges.

A river improvement trust is an autonomous body which, under the provisions of the River Improvement Trust Act, employs its own officers both technical and administrative to assist and advise the trust. In the large majority of trusts, technical advice and assistance are provided by trust engineers or by consulting engineers. The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission does not provide direct engineering services to trusts. The commission does not have the organisation or a source of funds to do this.

The Irrigation and Water Supply Commission does check and approve engineering plans submitted by trusts but this is for the purpose of making recommendations to the Co-ordinator-General and the Treasury

for subsidies and grants towards the trust's works. However, the commission has always endeavoured to provide technical advice and assistance to trusts on engineering and administrative matters and pass on to them new techniques and methods as they become aware of them. It could be said that the commission has never failed to supply any available information of this nature if requested by a trust. For many years now this Government has recognised the importance of river improvement works and has provided a one-third subsidy towards the cost of such works.

This afternoon the honourable member for Cairns spoke about drainage problems in the Cairns area. Let me say in reply to the honourable members for Cairns and Mackay that progress has been made in investigations into drainage problems in the area from Mossman to Ingham. The possible methods of financing any proposed works will be among the matters to be covered in the submission to the Government.

The honourable members for Kurilpa, Chatsworth and Merthyr spoke of the need for a river improvement trust for the Brisbane River. Let me say that in 1972 I wrote to the former Lord Mayor, Alderman Clem Jones, suggesting that a river improvement trust be constituted in the Greater Brisbane Area and outlining how the council could apply to me as the Minister administering the Act for the constitution of such a trust. Unfortunately, to date I have not had a reply from the city council.

The honourable member for Carnarvon made certain suggestions which he felt were of a practical nature, and he can be assured that these suggestions will be given every consideration when we are looking at any further works to be carried out in the area. I thank him for his comments.

To the honourable member for Mourilyan let me say that this Government has sought Commonwealth assistance for flood mitigation works by three river improvement trusts in North Queensland. Commonwealth assistance to the Proserpine River Improvement Trust was granted on the basis of 40 per cent from the Commonwealth, 40 per cent from the State and 20 per cent from the trust. We as a State Government are conscious of the need for river improvement trusts and would naturally like to see more trusts set up.

All I can say to those who have spoken is that I appreciate their comments. I feel that the Bill has been fairly well received.

Motion (Mr. Hewitt) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

[*Sitting suspended from 1.2 to 2.15 p.m.*]

COAL AND OIL SHALE MINE WORKERS
(PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (2.16 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Pensions) Act 1941-1975 in certain particulars.”

This Act makes provision for the payment of retirement benefits to coal-mine workers retiring from their employment by reason of age or incapacity and for payments to dependants of coal-mine workers where death occurs before they attain retirement age.

No doubt all honourable members fully appreciate the destructive impact inflation has had on all pension and superannuation schemes and the continuing problem involved in providing satisfactory retirement benefits in relation to the ever-increasing living-cost level from the reserves of a fund built up over years from contributions related to a much lower living cost and wage structure.

When this particular fund commenced in 1942, the mine worker's contribution rate was very nominal. The maximum amount that any mine worker could have paid in contributions to date is approximately \$1,400. Under the circumstances, I think the new benefit payments provided in the Bill will be considered by honourable members to be very satisfactory.

While the fund has continued to make good progress, principally owing to the expansion in the industry in recent years and the ensuing growth in the number of contributors to the fund, a necessity has clearly emerged for the provision of some method of raising finance for the fund to meet more regular adjustments in the level of retirement benefits commensurate with the increasing level of wages and living costs.

For some time now the mining unions and the coal owners have been having discussions with a view to finding an acceptable method of providing the finance for improved benefits and some method by which the benefits can be updated at regular intervals in the future. To resolve this problem the coal owners and the mining unions have agreed to the principle of indexing the contribution rates to wage levels. The parties have agreed that the award wage rate for a coal-cutting machineman, as specified in the Coal Mining Industry (Miners) Award, Queensland (Southern Division), is the most appropriate base for this purpose.

They have also agreed that the contribution rates payable by mine workers and owners should be fixed at 2½ per cent and 7½ per cent respectively of this award rate, and that the contribution rates should be adjusted from the beginning of the first

pay period in July each year on these percentages of the award rate applicable at 1 July of the particular year in question. The Bill makes provision for the payment of contributions accordingly. In addition, the present Government contributions of \$150,000 per annum will continue.

Basically, the purpose of the scheme is to provide mine workers with the means to enable them to retire at age 60, five years before they can qualify by age for a Commonwealth age pension. Consequently, there are two sets of pension rates specified in the Act, one set applicable for the first five years from the date of retirement, and the other set applicable thereafter, when in all cases the pensioner and, in the case of a married pensioner, his wife also, would be eligible for a social security pension at the maximum rate, provided, of course, that their means permitted payment at the maximum rate.

Honourable members may recall that in 1970, on the joint recommendation of the mining unions and the Queensland coal owners, the Act was amended to provide for the payment of retirement benefits on a lump-sum basis instead of on a pension basis for all qualified mine workers retiring thereafter. Because of the introduction of this principle of lump-sum payments, no weekly pensions have been granted to mine workers since that time, and now all pensioners have moved onto the set of pension rates applicable after the expiry of the first five-year period, except for a few female pensioners who are paid at special rates as provided in the Act because they have not yet reached the qualifying age for a social security pension. The pension rates applicable after the initial five-year period are the margins by which the rates payable during the first five-year period exceed the Commonwealth age pension rates.

The mining unions have sought an increase of \$5 per week for all single, married and widow pensioners. The Government considers this increase to be reasonable in view of the upward movements in the rate of age pension and the living-cost structure, and accordingly provision is made for this increase in the Bill. The proposed increase will thus improve the weekly pension rates by \$5 to \$13 in the case of a single pensioner, \$15 in the case of a married pensioner and \$10.25 in the case of a widow, which in conjunction with the age pension will give them a combined pension income of \$56.50, \$87.50 and \$53.75 respectively, assuming of course, they are eligible by means for the maximum rate of age pension.

Unlike the pension rates payable during the first five-year period the lump-sum-benefit rate has had no automatic escalation, and consequently in any general review of benefit rates this rate warrants a greater proportionate increase than the pension rates. This rate has risen in two stages since 1970 from \$25 to \$35 for each month of the mine worker's employment as a mine worker. In

the opinion of the State Actuary, on the basis of the proposed contribution rates, this rate can now be increased to \$80 for each month of employment. Provision has been made in the Bill for an increase in this rate accordingly. Thus a mine worker who retired in 1970 with 40 years' employment in the industry would have received \$12,000. At the proposed rate a mine worker with the same service retiring now would receive \$38,400.

Provision is also made in this Bill for the lump-sum-benefit rate to be automatically adjusted from 1 July 1977 and each year thereafter to the rate determined by the actuary as actuarially feasible in relation to the new contribution rates payable as calculated on the basis explained earlier.

The Act presently provides for the payment of a minimum lump-sum benefit to a mine worker retiring on account of incapacity and to a qualified widow of a deceased mine worker. The minimum payment is based on a service period of 15 years, which at the current rate of \$35 per month is \$6,300. Provision is made in this Bill for a minimum payment in such cases on the same basis, which at the proposed rate of \$80 per month amounts to \$14,400. This minimum payment will also be automatically adjusted in future in line with changes in the lump-sum-benefit rate.

The unions have sought some retrospective application of the new pension and lump-sum-benefit rates. The owners have supported this proposal, and it has been agreed that the lump-sum-benefit rate should be increased as from 23 November 1976 and the pension rates from the commencement of that pension pay period, 18 November 1976. Provision is made accordingly in this Bill.

Under the present provisions of the Act, refunds of contributions paid by mine workers who cease employment in the industry without the required service qualifications for a benefit payment are subject to minimum service conditions. In view of the higher contribution rate payable by mine workers under the proposed provisions, the parties have also agreed that future contributions paid by mine workers on the proposed new basis should not be subject to such minimum service conditions. Provision for this is also made in this Bill.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. MARGINSON (Wolston) (2.25 p.m.): I know that since last July the Combined Mining Unions, the employers and the Minister and his department have been negotiating and conferring on improvements to the scheme. Apart from the increase in benefits as announced this afternoon by the Minister, I am very pleased to see the introduction of indexation and what could be described more or less as automatic payments as from 1 July each year.

I believe that the mine workers have played their part in obtaining this increased benefit. As the Minister has said, the increase in the number of industry contributors to the fund has enabled him to bring forward these increased benefits. On top of that, the mine workers have agreed that their proportion of the amounts paid into this fund compared with that paid by the employers should be altered. At present the employers' proportion is something like $4\frac{1}{2}$ units, a ratio of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 or 9 to 2. Under this new scheme the employers' payments in proportion to the employees' payments will be in the ratio of 3 to 1.

I am particularly pleased to see that this scheme has been improved fairly well. As at today, before this legislation becomes law, the benefits paid to a retired coal miner are \$35 per calendar month for every year of service. This sum will be increased to \$80 per calendar month for every year of service. Having had discussions with the mine workers, I know that this is rather pleasing to them. We wholeheartedly support these additional amendments.

As I say, the coal miners have played some part in obtaining these benefits. In about 1942, in trying to get this scheme going, the Queensland Colliery Employees' Union, of which all mine workers at that time were members, agreed with the then Government that even those miners who made contributions to the fund but did not qualify would not be entitled to a refund of their contributions. That has been changed by the present Minister, and we now have the position that from April—I am not sure of the year—the contributions are refunded to them.

A lot of members have asked me how a mine worker qualifies. Some of course have not had sufficient service in the industry to qualify for the lump-sum payment or even for the weekly payment. As the Minister said, there are still the two schemes—the weekly payment and the lump-sum payment. The lump-sum payment is the one we work on today and the weekly payment is the one that is gradually going out of existence.

I think I should let members know how a mine worker qualifies for length of service in the coal mine. To qualify for 15 years of service, for example, he has to work for 15 years within a period of 20 years prior to his retirement. Until the position is studied this can be confusing. To qualify for 20 years of service, a miner must have worked five years within the industry in the 10 years immediately prior to retirement.

A miner with 25 years of service will be entitled to a lump-sum payment calculated at the rate of \$960 per annum multiplied by 25 if 10 years of his service is worked within the 20 years immediately preceding retirement. Provision is included for miners with 30 years and 35 years of service. In the case of the man with 30 years of service, five years must have been worked in the 15 years immediately prior to retirement. This means that a mine worker can leave the

industry but he must return to it and complete five years of service within 15 years of retirement.

All in all, we are happy with the provisions outlined by the Minister. We think they represent a good improvement. We are glad that weekly pensions are to be increased by \$5 a week. Generally speaking, the Minister has our full support on this legislation.

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (2.32 p.m.): Like the honourable member for Wolston, I represent an area of Ipswich and, in the circumstances, I believe that I should also support the Bill. As my family has been connected with the mining industry since 1912, I feel that I have some empathy with the mining community. However, it was only yesterday that, for the first time in my life, I ventured down a coal-mine to gain some understanding of the life of a coalminer in the pit. Miners' conditions today are much better than they were many years ago.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: They would want to be, wouldn't they?

Mr. HALES: No-one would disagree with it.

I well remember that some of my relatives worked underground on seams 3 ft. high. The shafts would have been like little rabbit burrows. Miners' conditions today are much better than they were many years ago. It might be pertinent to point out that my mother-in-law is entitled to a weekly payment from the miners' pension fund, and that I have a couple of brothers-in-law and many close friends in the mining industry.

There is much merit in the Bill. The full amount that a miner can draw from the pension scheme is now to be increased to about \$40,000. I note that the effect of the legislation is retrospective to November last, so that miners who retired towards the end of last year will be able to gain the increased benefits.

The indexation of the pension scheme according to the award rate of the coal-cutter machineman is an innovation of great merit. When we debated this legislation on the last occasion, I suggested to the Minister that we should try to include such a provision so that the legislation would not have to be brought before us repeatedly.

In the past many men who retired at 60 years of age after working in the industry for a long time probably did not get the maximum amount available. This could happen in the future. Many men who have to retire at 60 years of age find that they have to seek work elsewhere. Their financial position drives them back into the work-force.

While this Bill is a great step forward, perhaps the final and greatest step forward would be a return to a weekly pension scheme in place of the present system. I am led to believe that the weekly pension scheme is successful in New South Wales and

that it has not been changed to the lump-sum payment system. I stand to be corrected on that statement, but that was the information given to me yesterday by a mine worker.

Although Queensland coal miners are the highest paid in the world, I believe they are convinced that if they themselves pay a little more—and if the coal owners pay a little more—they could revert to the weekly pension instead of the lump-sum scheme. I do not believe that mine workers who have to retire at 60 should be forced to take some other employment. They should be able to enjoy the benefit of retiring at 60 years of age.

I am concerned about the many retired miners who have been forced back onto the employment market. I know many who, at the age of 60 years, have gone into the railways and other fields. Quite candidly, I do not believe that is right or proper. After working in the conditions prevailing underground, where they inhale a great deal of dust, they should justly be able to retire at 60 years without having to seek employment elsewhere. Somehow or other—by agreement among the unions, the owners and the Government—I believe that they should enjoy the benefit of a worth-while weekly pension scheme.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (2.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for their contributions and their ready acceptance of the proposed amendments. The honourable member for Wolston indicated that he was quite happy with the amendments, which of course are brought forward as a result of an agreement between the unions and the mine-owners, through the pensions tribunal and the registrar of that fund.

The honourable member for Ipswich West spoke about miners' conditions. They are very much improved compared with those of 10 or 20 years ago. However, conditions have improved over the years in all spheres of activity, whether men are self-employed or work in the many industries in this State. He mentioned a weekly payment scheme. That existed for many years. I know that the men who are presently concerned with the scheme suggested that a lump-sum payment be made. As he indicated, many retired miners have sought employment elsewhere. However, there are still men receiving the weekly pension, and that is why it has been increased. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

LIBRARIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (2.40 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Libraries Act 1943-1974 in certain particulars.”

This is a very short Bill the main purpose of which is to further improve procedures for disbursing library subsidies to local authorities. The existing provisions of the Libraries Act make it necessary for all subsidy payments to local authorities to be listed and sent to Executive Council for approval. This applies whether the amounts of money involved are large or small. Since the majority of claims are small, varying in size between approximately \$50 and \$2,000, a more direct system of payment would reduce the paperwork involved and speed up payments to local authorities. The suggestion that the procedures for payments of funds to local authorities should be improved is supported by the Auditor-General's Department.

The amendment also allows the Minister to alter the formula for disbursing library subsidies to local authorities without reference to Executive Council, but major changes to the formula for disbursing library subsidies to local authorities will continue to be referred to Cabinet.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (2.42 p.m.): The Opposition supports any move to cut out bureaucratic red tape. I agree that it is unnecessary for subsidies to have to be approved by the Governor in Council when only such small amounts are involved. I think the introduction of the Bill, however, gives Opposition members and others who may be interested in this matter an opportunity to make some general comments on libraries in Queensland.

It was brought to my notice last year that many libraries in this State were poor, although that cannot be accepted as the general position. In places such as Mt. Isa, Rockhampton and Brisbane library facilities are very good. But in many parts of the State they are inadequate. We need to take cognisance of this because people today have more time to spend in recreational pursuits and for many reading is truly a recreation.

Whilst we are considering streamlining the payment of money for library purposes to the various local authorities, it is time we considered increasing the funds made available to libraries because there is a huge demand for their facilities. No longer is it enough for libraries to have a few fiction books on their shelves. I know that in many

cities—certainly Rockhampton and Townsville—students make extensive use of library facilities. So great is the demand on the libraries of educational institutes that students must go to public libraries to satisfy their needs. I believe that Governments have a responsibility in this field.

The library in Rockhampton has seen fit to include a very important section for children. It is generally realised today that children will be deprived socially and culturally unless they read. Without reading, the art of communication will be lost. Libraries today are therefore very important. I think this is a point that the Minister accepts. With the present demand on Government finances, how the Minister will be able to increase funds for libraries I do not know. Perhaps a scheme should be implemented under which libraries, if they are able to open up new avenues, would be subsidised. I take this idea from the previous Federal Labor Government, which in effect said to schools, “You come up with an innovative programme and we may fund it.” Because the funds available are limited, this might be a good approach. Local authorities could be contacted to see what they are doing in this field. If they are able to come up with projects that are considered worth while, the Government could consider ways and means of assisting them.

We in this Chamber have to accept that libraries are important. It bugs me to go to some of the schools in this State and see the inadequacy of their library facilities. I went to a school recently at Aldridge in Maryborough where the library had not been completed. No doubt the honourable member for Maryborough and the honourable member for Isis, who lives nearby, know the problem there. Here was a brand new school, only three years old, that did not have a proper library. Libraries are basic to learning and basic to community needs and I ask of the Minister that consideration be given to increasing the funds available for them. I suggest, too, that consideration be given to the innovative schemes that I have mentioned.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (2.45 p.m.): I welcome the Bill now before the Committee. Like the honourable member for Rockhampton I welcome any cutting of red tape and I am sure other members do, too.

I agree that libraries are most important to any community. As the Education Department continues to provide primary and secondary schools in this State with libraries, the children when they leave school and enter the community will demand an adequate library service there, too. It is most important, I feel, that we look at this need now and legislate to allow it to happen in a sensible manner.

The city in which I live is one of the major provincial cities in Queensland but it does not have a free public library. Indeed, it is one of only three major provincial

cities in Queensland that do not have such a library. It has a fairly adequate library, run by a school of arts committee, to which people have to subscribe before they can borrow books, but the people of Bundaberg are concerned that there is no free public library, especially when they see the libraries provided by the Education Department for schools throughout the district. I take this opportunity to point out that anomaly. Perhaps in some way the Government could do more to encourage local authorities to provide libraries. I am not quite sure how the Government could do this, but the encouragement is needed. I understand that Mackay and Gympie are the other two major centres in Queensland that do not have a free public library.

With the increased amount of time available to people for recreation, it is important that we plan ways in which they can use that time. I do not believe in organising people but we should ensure that facilities are available should they need them, especially libraries, because children in primary and secondary schools today are being taught how to use them. If members think back to the time when they went to primary and secondary school, generally speaking the library time, if it was on the timetable at all, was merely 10 minutes or half an hour set aside for free reading. The Education Department's forethought in providing teacher-librarians for schools and encouraging teachers to teach young people how to use libraries means that when those children leave school and enter the community they will expect a library to be available for their use.

I know that some schools, particularly secondary schools, are opening their libraries at night-time so that they can be used by the community in general, and this attitude is to be applauded; but because of the tremendous costs involved some local authorities are still very reluctant to fund libraries. It would cost the Bundaberg City Council something like \$500,000 to provide a decent library in the city and council members are very loath to commit the ratepayers to expenditure of that order. So any Bill that will help to streamline the methods of funding local authorities to provide free libraries for the community and change the present subsidy system will be welcomed. I look forward with interest to reading the Bill and perhaps discussing it further during the second-reading debate.

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (2.50 p.m.), in reply: I appreciate that this is a very short Bill, and indeed, designed only to streamline procedures. However, I would like to thank both the honourable member for Isis and the honourable member for Rockhampton.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke of the need to constantly watch the needs of local authorities, and might I give

him the assurance that we are indeed ever watchful of the needs of local authorities and are at all times only too pleased to receive recommendations from them. Honourable members may know that approaches were made some time ago to my department to alter the system of giving grants to local authorities. We took note of that and, of course, moved accordingly.

I should like also to thank the honourable member for Isis for raising the matters that he brought to the attention of the Committee. He spoke of something that is indeed near and dear to my heart—the use of school libraries. It is well known that far better libraries are provided at schools today than were provided in the past, and I have always felt that it is wasting a good facility with an abundant supply of reading and other material not to make the fullest possible use of these libraries. Therefore, I am pleased to hear the honourable member encouraging and recommending the use of school libraries outside school hours, and I hope that each and every member of this Assembly will encourage their use in that way.

Libraries play a much more important part than ever before in the life of the people, and we can hope to see libraries grow and provide a better service only if we assist and encourage people to make use of them. As Minister, I certainly will do everything I can to encourage the growth of libraries throughout the State.

I again thank the honourable members for Rockhampton and Isis for their contributions to the debate.

Motion (Mr. Bird) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

UNIVERSITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (2.54 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Griffith University Act 1971–1973 and the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970–1974 each in certain particulars.”

The purpose of the Bill is to amend existing legislation which enables the universities to borrow funds for such projects as the provision of student accommodation.

Both the Griffith University Act 1971–1973 and the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970–1974 contain a provision enabling each university to obtain

"temporary" financial accommodation to enable it to exercise and perform its functions. As a result of a Universities Commission recommendation, the universities now find it necessary to borrow funds for student accommodation, and it is not considered that this loan-raising could be described as "temporary". Accordingly the universities have requested that the word "temporary" be removed from each Act. A similar amendment has already been made to the University of Queensland Act.

When examining the amendment, the Parliamentary Counsel suggested also a slight change in the wording as it referred to the ability of the university "to exercise and perform its functions". This, it was felt, would further improve the section.

The Auditor-General's Department and the Treasury are in agreement with the proposed amendments. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (2.56 p.m.): The Minister has explained the reason for the Bill. I say on behalf of the Opposition that we support the contention he has put forward. In view of the sheer demands on accommodation today by students it is important that the universities be able to borrow funds on a long-term basis. I was not aware that they had power to borrow only on a temporary basis. If that is so I personally would like to see that provision removed from the legislation.

We realise that throughout the State we have a serious accommodation problem. That applies particularly in every area where there is a college of advanced education or a university. It is one problem that this State no doubt has to face. It is not a problem that will solve itself, but special finance will be required from the Federal Government. If there is one real need of education at the tertiary level, this is it. Accommodation must be provided. At the present time the flow-on effect in the community is disastrous.

I take my own area of Rockhampton as an example. Students from the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education get together in fours or fives and rent a house at \$60 or \$70 a week. The worker on a low income or middle income cannot match that. It is only natural that flat owners and house owners will accept the highest bidder. So rents for ordinary houses and flats have gone sky high. I have been told on good authority that the same sort of thing has happened in Townsville and Toowoomba, and I am sure it is happening in Brisbane, too. Students who do not have accommodation made available for them by institutions or churches, as the case may be, are going into the ordinary community and competing with ordinary families for accommodation and making great hardships for those families. So it is important that funds be made available. If it is the university that is to carry out this work, I do not mind as long as

accommodation is made available. To my mind it is the highest priority for students today.

It is all very well to give a student \$70 a week if he is so many years old and has been at the university for so long, or \$40-odd a week if he comes under a tertiary education assistance scheme, but that money does not mean anything if a student is paying \$45 a week for rent, which is often the case. Students who are on \$35 or \$36 a week have to pay more than that for accommodation, and so they have to depend on their parents.

Accommodation is an issue for every person in the community. It has been raised by the honourable member for Archerfield, and I feel sure most honourable members would agree with him on it. Certainly it is a big issue for the students themselves. If the Minister can use his office to put pressure on the Federal Government to make more funds available for student accommodation, he will doubtless have the support of this Assembly.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (2.59 p.m.): If I am here when the motion is put I will oppose it. I am going home to my beloved northland at five minutes to 4, so let us get the vote on before then so that my vote will be recorded against the motion.

We listened to the heart-rending sobs of the honourable member for Rockhampton speaking on behalf of his beloved academics and university students. Well, I suppose he has the right to do that because, when all is said and done, he is university impregnated; I am not. I look at this from a purely factual viewpoint—from the point of view of an ordinary, average Queenslander.

Mr. Miller, if you look at last year's Federal Budget you will find that our universities absorbed \$603,000,000. In addition to that, \$97,000,000 was spent by way of allowances handed out to students who descend to attend the university.

The honourable member for Rockhampton mentioned his political blood-brother the honourable member for Archerfield. I wouldn't mind betting that he agrees with me that if we are to provide money for accommodation let us provide accommodation for the poor and needy—the widows, pensioners and others who desperately need accommodation. Let us face up to the fact that if we cleaned out from the universities and the colleges of advanced education the bludgers, the time-servers, the no-hopers, the hangers-on and the spongers, we would have more accommodation than we really need. This is something that the honourable member for Rockhampton does not touch upon. In fact, very few members of the A.L.P. ever touch upon it. When it is all said and done, of course, there is a very close liaison between the academics and students on the one hand and the A.L.P. on the other.

The Minister may not know, although I feel sure that it will not be long before he does, but it is an indisputable and irrefutable fact that not long after a person is given a job at a university or a college of advanced education as a lecturer—and that person may have the letters or degrees, as they are termed, to qualify that person for the job—a job is found for that person's spouse whether that person is male or female. If the person is a male it is not long before his wife, with no letters, no degrees, no educational qualifications—sometimes she is too useless to rake up the yard—is given a very fine sinecure of a job and is paid \$17,000 to \$18,000 a year. Likewise, if the lecturer is a female a job is found for her husband. You would know, Mr. Miller, that that is true. You would also know that in addition to the money spent on students' accommodation money is spent on providing accommodation for these useless academics.

The Bill deals with the James Cook University. In Townsville there was a case involving an academic and his wife. It was fully exposed by that champion of the ordinary people—myself. This academic and his wife were overseas on sabbatical leave—six months' sabbatical leave is given nowadays for every three years' service at the universities and colleges of advanced education—and while they were overseas it was decided to build a house for him free of cost because he happened to be in charge of the students' hostel. This magnificent house—one that the Minister or even the Leader of the Opposition would be proud to live in—was almost completed when the academic and his wife returned from their overseas tour. The wife, not the professor, took one look at it and said, "Oh, that house is no good to me. I don't want a house like that." Believe it or not, that house was pulled down and rebuilt at a cost then, when money was money, of £49,000—merely to suit the whims of the wife of that professor. That is the sort of thing that goes on.

If I might use the vulgar vernacular—something I eschew more often than not—I have had a gutful of pandering to the university students and academics; I have had a gutful of this crawling, genuflecting and grovelling to the academics and the students. Let us give them the deal to which they are entitled. If there is a student who wants to attend the university or a college of advanced education to take a course that will be of benefit to himself and to the community, by all means let us give him every facility to enable him to do so. A student is paid \$39 a week just for attending the university. In addition he is provided with luxurious accommodation, cheap meals and everything else. But what is done for the apprentices? Do we provide them with accommodation? Do we provide them with cheap meals, free bus services and so on? Let us try to get down to basic principles and treat everyone alike.

I shall oppose this Bill for the very simple reason that we are spending far too much money on universities—far too much on the no-hopers. Until we cut away the dead wood from the universities and the colleges of advanced education, we will always be in a financial pickle. We will have continual demands for more sabbatical leave, more accommodation, more expenses and more facilities. We should bear in mind that a university works for only 32 weeks a year. In the other 20 weeks no work at all is done. The three semesters take up only 32 weeks of the year and for the other 20 weeks it is whacko-the-diddle-o. I remind honourable members that the students earn whatever money they can over the 20-week period and I understand that under the benevolent, munificent Federal Government they are to be paid (according to Mr. Carrick) the students' allowance for the 20 weeks in which they are doing nothing or are out earning money elsewhere.

Let us look after the dinky-die students and academics at the university and clean out the riff-raff, the dead wood, the no-hopers, the bludgers, the spongers and the incompetents. If we were to do that, we would have more accommodation than we need.

I oppose this Bill with all the vehemence at my command. It perpetuates a system that was founded in snobbery and works in snobbery. We inherited two main putrid anachronisms from Great Britain. Firstly we inherited the judiciary, which is a putrid anachronism.

Mr. Wright: Here's something on the judges.

Mr. Aikens: We also inherited the university system, which is a putrid anachronism. It is even more putrid, I might inform the honourable member for Rockhampton, than the judges—and that's saying something!

Let us have an end to it; let us face up to it! Don't let us walk and talk around the House, as most honourable members do, and say that something is wrong with the university system—that it stinks, that it is on the nose or on the beak. Let us do something about it here; let us strike our first blow on this Bill and say to the universities, "You have not only had enough from this Government; you have had more than enough. So far as we are concerned you are finished."

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (3.9 p.m.): I support the Bill but, at the same time, I shall use this occasion to point out certain problems.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Miller, to draw your attention to the state of the Committee.

(Quorum formed.)

Mr. McKECHNIE: While supporting the Bill, I shall point out some education problems in Queensland and relate them to the contents of the Bill. It seems to me that much of what the honourable member for Townsville South said is true. Many people who are at the university should not be there. If these people were not at the university, there might not be so much need for this legislation. In my opinion probably 90 per cent of the people at the university should be there, because they are trying to do a good job.

Mr. Wright: What percentage did you say?

Mr. McKECHNIE: 90 per cent.

Mr. Wright: How did you arrive at that figure?

Mr. McKECHNIE: If the honourable member for Rockhampton were conversant with his electorate, he would know that people are very concerned about the dearth of tradesmen in this State. He would also know that people are sick of being taxed to the hilt. If more money is to be provided for technical education, the only way to get it is to take a little from university allocations. That is how I arrive at my figure of 90 per cent.

I compliment the Minister on what he is endeavouring to do to promote technical and further education in this State; but he is hampered by a lack of funds. If universities are to be given the permanent right to borrow money for hostels, the expenditure of increased sums of money in that field will result in less public money being available in other spheres to encourage technical and further education.

Because of a lack of demand for the skills that they acquired at the university, many university students will not be able to get good jobs when they graduate. On the other hand there is a crying need for greater assistance to employers so that they can give opportunities to apprentices and the chance to country children to receive training in trade courses within the area in which they live instead of their having to come to Brisbane and be educated at the university and then be unable to find a job after completing their course.

I reiterate that I support the Bill, but I bring these problems to the attention of the Committee so that at a later date we might have a closer look at all of the ramifications of university education in Queensland. As a Government, we might approach the Commonwealth Government to see if some of the money now being provided by it for universities can be transferred to technical and further education, thus allowing children in my electorate, and in other western areas in particular, to be able to look forward to training as apprentices in their own areas when they leave school.

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (3.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank those honourable members who have contributed to the debate this afternoon. This is a minor amendment to the university Acts so there is not a great deal that can be said about it.

The honourable member for Rockhampton said that accommodation at universities was previously provided by church groups and other organisations. It would appear that there has been a change to some degree. The universities now find that they have to provide this type of accommodation. It is for that reason—and because they have to find the rather considerable funds necessary—that they have asked for an amendment in this form.

The honourable member for Townsville South spoke about the number of people at the universities at present who have no real desire to go anywhere or do anything worth while. Perhaps that is correct. Nevertheless we must have doctors, dentists and other professional people in the future. As we know, many students do find great difficulty in securing accommodation so that they can attend the university.

Mr. Frawley: There is one way to do that—build some accommodation for the Commonwealth Games and then hand it over to the Griffith University.

Mr. BIRD: It would not be the first occasion on which something like that had happened.

We must ensure that accommodation is provided for students who seek it so they can carry out their future studies.

I should also like to thank the honourable member for Carnarvon, who spoke along similar lines and who also said that there are perhaps at the universities people who have no real desire to do anything worth while when they have completed their studies. He spoke briefly about the possible need to transfer finance from the universities to the field of technical and further education. I believe that to be a matter for discussion in other places at other times. I thank all those who spoke briefly this afternoon on this Bill.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Bird) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided.

Resolved in the affirmative under Standing Order No. 148.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 3.21 p.m.