

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 23 MARCH 1977

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Mr. ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

RAILWAY PROPOSAL

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) laid on the table working plan, section and book of reference of proposed railway connection from the Ferny Grove Branch to Mayne Depot, together with the report of the Commissioner for Railways thereon.

The Commissioner's report was ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

Forestry Act 1959–1976.

Forestry Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975–1976.

Fauna Conservation Act 1974.

**MEDICAL ACT AND OTHER ACTS
(ADMINISTRATION) ACT
AMENDMENT BILL****INITIATION**

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Medical Act and other Acts (Administration) Act 1966–1976 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

RURAL FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**INITIATION**

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Rural Fires Act 1946–1975 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

**IRRIGATION ACT AND ANOTHER
ACT AMENDMENT BILL****THIRD READING**

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

**ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AND
ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL****THIRD READING**

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

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

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

**ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
BILL****THIRD READING**

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

**QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS
TRUST BILL****THIRD READING**

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

**FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND
AUDIT BILL****THIRD READING**

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE**1. ACQUISITION OF WOONGOOLBA LANDS
BY ALBERT SHIRE COUNCIL**

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

(1) Following his answer to my recent question concerning the actions of the Albert Shire Council on the rating of sugar-cane lands at Woongoolba under the special Act passed last year that it requires legal interpretation so that an interpretation for the local ratepayers can be forthcoming, did a new budget have to be approved by the Albert Shire Council within 30 days from the start of the special Act, which was 16 December 1976?

(2) Do the minutes of council disclose that approval of the budget did not occur until well after that date?

(3) Did the council tell him that it had neglected to observe the requirements of the special Act and, if so, when, and what were the reasons given?

(4) If the council has advised him that it had neglected to observe the requirements of the special Act, what action has he taken to restore the situation?

(5) If the true position is as I have indicated in the preceding questions, what justification can he give for the apparent blatant disregard of special measures approved by the House to extricate the council from an administrative blunder in the first place?

Answers.—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3 to 5) I was not informed personally by the council of the failure to comply with the requirements of the Act but I am now aware that non-compliance did occur. Advice is being sought as to the most appropriate method of remedying the problems, if any, created by such non-compliance.

2. STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS IN QUEENSLAND HOSPITALS

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

(1) Did Cabinet issue an instruction that living-out staff in Queensland hospitals are not to be supplied with meals except in cases of emergency?

(2) Do some staff start work at 6.30 a.m. and as a result of the ruling will they not have a hot meal all day even though they carry out hard physical and mental work in areas where there is danger of infection?

(3) Does the night shift in many country hospitals consist of only one nurse and as a result of the instruction would such a nurse be unable to obtain meals without leaving patients unattended while she was away from the hospital?

(4) Does his department expect nurses working under physical and mental stress in infectious areas to work through winter nights without at least one hot meal?

(5) What amount of money does his department expect to save by this miserly, penny-pinching attitude?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) The honourable member is obviously referring to a departmental circular dated 20 January 1977 which was forwarded to all hospitals boards, advising boards of an approval of Cabinet that, in future, hospitals boards supply meals only to staff living in at State hospitals.

It is important that the honourable member be aware that, in advising boards to this effect, the department stated that the implementation of this policy decision should be arranged as a phased programme, meaning, of course, that no specific date was indicated for the introduction of the new arrangement.

The department recognised that situations would arise where boards might feel obliged to provide meals to living-out staff in cases of emergencies or in other special circumstances, and hospitals boards generally were authorised to exercise their discretion in the supply of meals to living-out staff, bearing in mind, however, at all times the new policy decision.

It is equally important that the honourable member and members of this House realise that the decision taken applies to all categories of hospital staff, and not only members of the nursing staff.

With respect to the particular aspects raised by the honourable member, let me say that the department has recognised that there are problem areas to be looked at, and, I would hope, resolved by hospitals boards in the exercise of their responsibility. It is with that end in view that the departmental circular indicated the board's right to exercise discretion in special circumstances.

3. INDUSTRIAL STAND-DOWNS, A.C.F. & SHIRLEYS FERTILIZERS LTD. AND K.R. DARLING DOWNS

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

(1) Did A.C.F. & Shirleys Fertilizers Ltd. at Pinkenba stand down A.W.U. members on 4 March over a dispute that the company had with the F.E.D.&F.A.?

(2) Even though the company must have been aware that it would be standing down the men for some time, did it give them notice at 7 a.m. on 4 March?

(3) Did day workers finish at 3.45 p.m. on 3 March and the last shift finish at 7 a.m. on 4 March, at the time the stand-down was advised?

(4) Did the company, in standing down the men, fail to pay wages at the time of stand-down, were workers forced to go home and report back again to be paid and is this in accord with the spirit of the Act?

(5) Did one of the members stood down have a credit of seven weeks' annual leave due to him, did he apply to take portion of this leave owing to him instead of being stood down and did the company refuse this very reasonable request?

(6) Did the company tell other workers that it was not willing to grant holidays at this time?

(7) Have workers at K.R. Darling Downs at Doboy been told that they will be stood down from 1 April to allow a floor to be rebuilt, and what will their position be as far as Easter holiday pay is concerned?

Answers:—

(1 to 6) Members of the F.E.D.&F.A. employed by A.C.F. & Shirleys Fertilizers Ltd. commenced strike action on 1 February 1977. From that date onwards it was apparent that the total work-force could not be gainfully employed for any extended period. The State Industrial Commission was advised accordingly and the Australian Workers' Union was continually advised on the possibility of standing down some of its members. However, all employees were continued in employment from 1 February 1977 to 3 March 1977.

At that time the F.E.D.&F.A. refused to accept a recommendation of the Industrial Commission for settlement of the dispute and the company then reviewed its position. The company decided to stand down 72 members of the A.W.U. from a total of 103 members employed, and the A.W.U. was informed immediately. At lunch-time on 3 March 1977, the company met the A.W.U. delegates and informed them of the decision.

Those employees stood down had not, in the company's view, been usefully employed for at least two weeks immediately prior to that date.

Wages were paid to all employees on the normal pay day, Friday, 4 March 1977. However, I do not countenance the action of the employer in requiring employees stood down on Thursday 3 March to report in the next day to receive their pay.

Annual leave was not granted at that time because operators would have been necessary to resume normal operations if the F.E.D.&F.A. members resumed work. The whole question of annual leave was to be reviewed the following week, but the dispute was then settled.

A.W.U. workers went on strike for a period of 24 hours on 9 March in protest against the stand-down, but resumed work on 10 March.

Therefore, the company only stood employees down as a last resort.

(7) I have been assured that the management of K.R. Darling Downs at Doboy has not informed employees that they will be stood down from 1 April 1977. While it is planned to lay a new floor in the factory it is doubtful whether work on this project will be commenced before the end of April 1977. At this stage it is not known to what extent the normal duties of employees will be disrupted. Therefore the question of Easter holiday pay does not arise.

4. USE OF NEW SOUTH WALES TIMBER FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND HOUSES

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

(1) In an effort to protect the viability of North Queensland sawmillers, who have had to retrench staff because of competition from low-cost imported timbers, I requested the Minister for Works and Housing in 1976 to direct that all houses built for any Government department should be erected with Queensland timbers only. Although the Minister for Works and Housing was not prepared to agree to my proposal at that time, is he aware that a Brisbane-based building contractor, Peter Kurts, can erect a timber frame for a house in Townsville \$600 cheaper by using imported New South Wales timber as against northern and southern Queensland hardwoods?

(2) Will he investigate how this anomaly comes about and take some steps to protect the Queensland timber industry generally before all northern builders are forced to buy New South Wales hardwood in order to compete with southern builders?

Mr. Tomkins: I ask the honourable member to repeat his question tomorrow.

5 and 6. QUEENSLAND PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

With reference to a \$2,600,000 discrepancy in the accounts of the Queensland Permanent Building Society last year, have any of his officers been instructed to make any investigations whatsoever into this matter and, if so, for approximately how long have these investigations been taking place?

Answer:—

I have directed the Registrar of Building Societies to investigate the position relating to the \$2,600,000 discrepancy in the accounts of Queensland Permanent Building Society for the year 1975-1976. Preliminary investigations into this matter commenced in January 1976. At the present time the Registrar is awaiting the final report of the society's external auditors. The auditors are monitoring the society's staff in their endeavours to locate the reason for this discrepancy. The Registrar has been instructed to report to me as soon as the reasons for the discrepancy are known. I will then determine what course of action, if any, should be taken.

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Is he satisfied with the interest rates charged to borrowers at present by the Queensland Permanent Building Society?

(2) Does he support the principle of cost-cutting exercises by the society in an endeavour to marginally lower their interest rates instead of having the situation where the society's clients have to pay for the society's former mismanagement?

Answers:—

(1) The question of interest rates is a matter to be determined by the management of each individual society. As a responsible Minister, I am concerned that interest rates in all building societies, banks and other financial institutions in this State and throughout the other States of the Commonwealth are necessarily at a high level which can be attributed to the present high rate of inflation, brought about by the Whitlam Government over three years, when its members rampaged—

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. LEE: For three years they rampaged, wasting money everywhere—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LEE: We can thank the Fraser Government for bringing inflation under control—which is more than your mob did in three years.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You are protecting crooks.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Archerfield under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Answers (contd.)—

(2) Yes. The society is taking steps to ensure that all costs are kept to an absolute minimum in order that charges to borrowers are maintained at as low a level as possible.

7. MISLEADING PACKAGING ADVERTISING OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS

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

(1) Is he aware that the Victorian Consumers Association has investigated a number of products and has revealed that misleading packaging advertising is taking place in a wide variety of normal household consumer goods?

(2) Has he a copy of the report of the Victorian Consumers Association and is it the subject of review by his department?

(3) To protect consumers against false and misleading advertising, will he introduce legislation similar to the trade practices legislation?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that the various consumer organisations from time to time produce reports of the nature mentioned by the honourable member.

(3) In respect of those products for which my department has a responsibility, there is already adequate legislation under the Health Act and relevant regulations.

8. MRS. TREWREN'S JAM

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

(1) Is jam branded as Mrs. Trewren's, which is made in Melbourne, being sold in Queensland and is it claimed that it contains no added sugar?

(2) Does the 200 g jar contain about 480 calories and is the jam sweetened with sorbitol, a carbohydrate used in diabetic diets and having similar calorie content to that of sugar?

(3) What action will he take to prevent the advertising of this product from deluding Queensland consumers?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The claims made by the honourable member are presently being investigated.

9. FARES TO MELBOURNE FOR TREATMENT OF RETARDED CHILDREN

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

As the New South Wales Minister for Youth and Community Services provides fares to Sydney and Melbourne to allow retarded children to receive treatment, will he consider providing fares to parents and the child when a retarded child is required to travel to Brisbane and Melbourne to receive the Delecatto physical methods given by a Melbourne-based organisation known as ANSUA?

Answer:—

I would point out to the honourable member that I tabled in Parliament towards the end of 1976 a report of the Therapeutic Methods Sub-Committee established by the National Health and Medical Research Council to investigate the methods used in the Doman-Delacato physical methods. An extract from that report reads—

“There is no current scientific evidence that supports the theory of neurological organisation as proposed by the I.A.H.P.

“There is no current scientific evidence that the treatment techniques used by the I.A.H.P. and the modifications

thereof currently in use in Australia constitute any advance in the treatment of brain injured children."

10. KURANDA POLICE STATION

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

With reference to his visit four months ago to all the police stations in my electorate, what action is he taking to increase the size of the Kuranda Police Station and to employ a clerical officer on the staff?

Answer:—

The Department of Works has prepared plans for additional accommodation at Kuranda and these have been forwarded to the district inspector of police for urgent examination and advice. The carrying out of the work will depend on the availability of funds. No provision has been made on the current estimates for clerical staff for this station and the matter has been listed for consideration in 1977-78.

11. NOAH'S ARK TOY LIBRARY, CAIRNS

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

Why is there a delay in the provision of a subsidy for the salary of a part-time librarian for the Noah's Ark Toy Library for Handicapped Children, Cairns, which has now been operating for almost a year with only voluntary help?

Answer:—

The value of the services provided by the Noah's Ark Toy Libraries and by similar facilities operated by other voluntary organisations is well recognised.

It is considered that these libraries meet an educational and social need rather than provide a health-related service. This project, not being a health-related service, would not normally attract subsidy from Department of Health funds.

Advice to this effect has been conveyed previously to the honorary secretary, Noah's Ark Toy Library for Handicapped Children (Cairns).

As a result of further representations made to me concerning this matter, I intend to advise the organisation, through the honourable member, that, in view of the educational function of their service it would seem appropriate for an approach to be made to the Honourable the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities for consideration and assistance.

12. POLICE ROLE IN FIRST-AID PROCEDURES

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

(1) With regard to the apparent increase in vehicle fatalities and crimes of violence, is the Queensland Police Force trained in current first-aid procedures?

(2) As a general rule, do police vehicles arrive at the scene of a fatality prior to the ambulance?

(3) Is he aware of recent cases where victims have been covered with policemen's coats?

(4) Does he share the view held by the people of the Everton electorate that police vehicles, particularly those operating away from the city centre, should be equipped with a blanket and first-aid kit?

Answers:—

(1) For a great number of years all persons undergoing training prior to being sworn in as members of the Police Force have been instructed in first-aid procedures.

(2) It is impossible to answer this question correctly, as information of this kind is not recorded and collated. However, every effort is made to have a police motor vehicle at the scene of a fatality at the earliest possible time.

(3) I have no personal knowledge of this occurring, but it would not be unreasonable for a police officer to cover a road-accident victim with any article immediately available to him to counteract shock if that person was not already receiving treatment.

(4) Information presently available does not justify the supply of this equipment.

13. STATE GRANTS TO SECONDARY STUDENTS AT INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

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

(1) With regard to State Government grants for secondary students attending Queensland independent schools, is the existing grant less than 20 per cent of the cost of educating a child in a State secondary school?

(2) What percentage of the cost of educating a child in a State school is allocated by way of grant for children attending independent schools in (a) New South Wales, (b) Victoria, (c) South Australia, (d) Western Australia and (e) Tasmania?

(3) Do the figures indicate that parents sending their children to Queensland independent schools are disadvantaged in relation to parents sending children to independent schools in other Australian States?

Answers:—

(1) The present per capita grant payable to non-State secondary schools is \$195 per student. This is almost 17.5 per cent of the anticipated costs of educating a secondary student in a State school this financial year.

(2) As the expected per student costs of operating secondary schools in the other States in this financial year are not known, percentages are unavailable. However, preliminary data indicate that the amounts payable are:—

New South Wales—\$202;

Victoria—\$260;

Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory—\$195 (presently under review);

South Australia—Amounts in the range \$191.50 to \$246.50 depending on need;

Tasmania—Amounts up to a maximum of \$158 for secondary students and \$251 for matriculation students;

Western Australia—\$105 for six months to the end of 1976. Current rates are not known.

(3) It is inappropriate to compare Queensland's assistance to non-State schools simply on the basis of direct grants, as it is only one of a number of forms of assistance. Textbook allowances in Queensland, for example, are among the highest in the Commonwealth. Furthermore, allowances and scholarships for students, particularly those resident in remote parts of the State, are generally much higher in Queensland than in the other States. In view of these other forms of assistance, it would be inappropriate to conclude that parents whose children attend non-State schools in Queensland are disadvantaged.

14. MEANS TEST FOR TEACHER-TRAINEE ALLOWANCES OR SCHOLARSHIPS

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

What is the present means test used for determining the eligibility of students to obtain teacher-trainee allowances or scholarships?

Answer:—

There is no means test related to the award of teacher scholarships from the Department of Education.

Means-tested allowances applicable to all tertiary students under the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme are administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY BOARD

Mr. BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy, I refer to recent publicity over the decision of the South West Queensland Electricity Board to establish its headquarters in Dalby. I ask the Minister: Can he advise the procedure involved in the appointment of the chairman of the board? Can he dispel suggestions that the name of the person appointed was drawn out of a hat, and can he advise the number of people considered for the chairmanship?

Mr. CAMM: The election of the chairman of the South West Queensland Electricity Board was carried out in accordance with the practice adopted in this Parliament for the election of Mr. Speaker. Under that system, if there is a deadlock as a result of the same number of votes being cast for each nominated person, another vote is taken. If there is still a deadlock, the matter is decided by lot. That is the procedure laid down in Standing Orders for the election of Speaker of this House and I should imagine that any procedure followed here should be suitable for the election of the chairman of a regional board.

I have no idea how many persons were nominated for the position of chairman but in the final analysis the selection was made from two.

EGG AND I PTY. LTD. AND QUEENSLAND COMPETITORS

Mr. GOLEBY: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: With reference to the Minister's statement to Parliament yesterday concerning a Tweed Heads egg producer who claimed that some 50 persons would be sacked following the actions of the Department of Primary Industries, is the Minister aware that farms with a similar egg production in South Queensland that are highly efficient and producing a top-quality product employ only three to four persons?

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is true that there are in South Queensland egg-producing farms with production similar to that of Egg and I that operate with three, four, five or half a dozen workers. However, I understand the principal of Egg and I is a very astute businessman and if he is employing 50 people I would expect them to be gainfully employed. It would seem that his field of operation is wider than that of family concerns such as Darwalla.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN METAL TRADES AND ELECTRICAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Mr. JONES: I ask the Minister for Transport: In view of his undertaking and assurances to the Leader of the Opposition in

reply to a question on 10 March last about contract work in connection with the Brisbane suburban railway electrification programme and in view of the current unemployment in the metal trades and manufacturing industries in Queensland, is he aware of the present situation of Fox Engineering Pty. Ltd. and other Queensland shops where retrenchments are the order of the day? What are the prospects of railway and other Government contracts being granted to Queensland firms?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I think I indicated when I answered the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition that I could make no announcement until tenders were in fact let. This just would not be appropriate. All I can say is that every endeavour is being made to see that Queensland firms get their share of the work that is available.

PUBLICATION OF NAMES OF PERSONS CONVICED

Mr. HARTWIG: In asking a question of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General I draw his attention to an article in last night's "Telegraph" regarding fines imposed on 20-odd men caught in a recent gambling raid in Brisbane. Is there any good reason why the names of these people are withheld from publication when other people who commit crimes of a minor nature have to face the prospect of a degrading Press report?

Mr. LICKISS: Quite frankly, I would have to look at the background to this matter and I ask the honourable member to place the question on notice.

Mr. HARTWIG: I do so accordingly.

PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL CRABBING

Mr. HARTWIG: As I wrote to the Minister for Fisheries on 18 August 1976 requesting harsher penalties for the illegal taking of female mud crabs, can he inform the House what are the penalties or fines now imposed on people caught illegally crabbing and what steps is his department taking to police the waters off the Central Queensland coast with a view to stopping this open slaughter of female crabs?

Mr. WHARTON: The Fisheries Bill received royal assent before Christmas and the regulations are now being framed and will be available shortly. They will provide for an increase in the fine from \$100 to \$400, and if there is a boat involved the fine will be \$1,000—these are maximum fines, of course. In addition, a proposal is being investigated to provide a mobile support patrol of four men which would move from place to place in the State to assist the already efficient patrol officers we have. It would be virtually impossible to have enough patrol officers to patrol the whole of the Queensland coast, and so it is proposed to provide a kind of mobile support patrol which will effectively police this problem.

STAGE II OF CALLIDE DAM PROJECT

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask these questions of the Minister for Water Resources in an endeavour to clarify the situation regarding Stage II of the Callide Dam project. Could he advise—

(1) What expenditure is the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission committed to for this financial year on Stage II of the Callide Dam, and how does this compare with other schemes?

(2) Why was the reticulation channel to Kroombit and Kariboe Creeks given priority over the installation of crest gates on Callide Dam?

(3) Is the Government committed to the installation of crest gates when finance is available, or could the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission abandon the proposed crest gates at Callide Dam?

Mr. N. T. E. HEWITT: Expenditure on Callide Dam this year will be \$1,300,000, which places it second on the list of expenditure from State funds. He asked also how it compares with other projects throughout Queensland. Expenditure on the Bundaberg scheme is about \$6,175,000, on the Clare scheme about \$2,900,000 (of which \$2,645,000 is carry-over funds from the Commonwealth Government), and on the Eton scheme \$2,049,000 (of which about \$850,000 is carry over from Commonwealth funds). If one deducts the Commonwealth funds from those schemes, one finds that Callide is placed second in the State.

I should like to point out to the member for Callide the problems that inflation has caused in schemes being undertaken throughout Queensland. Phase 1 of the Bundaberg scheme was originally estimated to cost \$21,300,000; today the estimate stands at \$55,200,000. The estimated cost of the Eton scheme, for which the Whitlam Government made available a grant of \$5,000,000 without any allowance for inflation, now stands at \$33,300,000, compared with an original estimate of \$21,800,000.

The answer to part 2 of his question is contained in a letter that I forwarded to him and to the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service on 22 March, so I do not think it is necessary for me to give an answer in the House. However, to put the record straight, I should like to place on record in "Hansard" the Cabinet decision relating to the Callide Dam. It was made on 7 August 1972, and it reads—

"1. That approval be given to the proposals set out in the Report attached to the Submission for the construction of Callide Dam Stage II and associated works at an estimated cost of \$2,495,000.

"2. That the time of implementation of the works be subject to availability of finance for this and other schemes approved and under consideration.

"3. That approval of the scheme be subject to acceptance by a majority of irrigators of the proposals, including measurement and control of use.

"4. That copies of the Report be made available to interested local organisations prior to submission of the scheme to landholders."

Callide is one of the four major recharge schemes in Queensland, and by the end of this financial year the Government will have spent \$2,400,000 on it, as against expenditure of about \$460,000 at Giru, \$1,360,000 at Cania, and nothing on Stage II of the Leslie Dam. Therefore, I think that if the Callide Valley irrigators are fair in their criticism they will admit that they have been very well treated.

DIFFERING TREATMENT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. HOUSTON: I ask the Premier: Why has the Government applied differing treatment to various Government employees such as the teachers who were sacked for breaking the law, the railway electrician who was sacked for breaking the law and now certain police officers who are in a similar situation? Why is there this difference in Government policy?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is no difference in policy. Cabinet has decided to give those people in those different areas the right of appeal in those different instances. Of course, that is what has taken place and is taking place.

REPRESENTATION AT INTERNATIONAL SUGAR CONFERENCE, GENEVA

Mr. CASEY: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Who will represent Queensland at the forthcoming International Sugar Conference at Geneva, and who will lead the Queensland delegation?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The delegation will be led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade (Mr. Anthony). The Queensland Minister for Primary Industries will be leading the Queensland delegation. If I attempted to name all the personnel, I might miss out some of them. I therefore suggest that the honourable member put his question on notice and I will supply the names tomorrow.

Mr. CASEY: I do so accordingly.

PREMIER'S ABSENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL SUGAR CONFERENCE

Mr. CASEY: I ask the Premier: Why is he not following the practice of former Queensland Premiers, which he did previously, of leading the Queensland delegation to the International Sugar Conference at

Geneva next month? Is it because he is not sufficiently interested in the sugar industry—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has asked his question. Is there any further matter that he wishes to raise?

Mr. CASEY: . . . or is it that the Premier does not want the Liberals to handle redistribution in his absence?

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I point out for the benefit of all honourable members that questions are meant to be just that—questions without embellishment or any extraneous information. I will allow the question because it is important and the Premier no doubt wants to answer it. I warn honourable members that questions they ask with such additions may be disallowed.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member knows that the Government and I personally are very interested in the sugar industry, which is vital to Queensland and its economy and to so many of its people. We follow with great interest every step and detail of its history. I have long since discussed the question of the forthcoming International Sugar Conference with my deputy (Mr. Camm), who is a sugar man and was the chairman of a sugar-mill. He has a tremendous background and great experience in the sugar industry, and will deputise for me in those crucial talks. The Minister for Primary Industries (Mr. Sullivan), who will be with the delegation, will take part in the initial proceedings at the conference, which will be quite a long one. I am very happy indeed to have the Minister for Mines and Energy represent me at the sugar conference in Geneva. I know that I could do no better.

RESTRICTED TRADING HOURS ON SUNSHINE COAST

Mr. SIMPSON: I ask the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs: In relation to restricted trading hours—

(a) Is he aware that if the application for a restriction is successful, most business in the Coolum/Noosa/Tewantin area will be affected, leading to further unemployment in that area?

(b) Will he support a move by the Coolum/Noosa/Tewantin businesses, particularly small family businesses, to liberalise the trading hours in that tourist area to allow tourists to be catered for seven days a week, and in particular at week-ends and on holidays?

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member: Is his question on notice or without notice?

Mr. SIMPSON: It is without notice.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I am sorry, but I did not hear the honourable member say that his question was without notice. Had I been paying complete attention to it, I could have answered it; but, for reasons of accuracy, I would ask him to put it on notice.

Mr. SIMPSON: I do so accordingly.

FORM OF QUESTION

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! That question invites comment. I ask the honourable member to consider rephrasing it.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! By agreement, the time allotted for questions has now expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

COLLINSVILLE

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (12.1 p.m.): I desire to place before this Parliament today just a few points concerning the town of Collinsville, its people and their ideals. Collinsville people are good, decent Australians all playing a part in the development of Queensland and Australia. In view of this, I feel it my duty from the floor of this House—the highest platform in the State—to say a little about the good things of this town and its people.

In the early 1800s the people of the Breeaba and Durroburru tribes frequented the areas around Collinsville.

Mr. Casey: Are there any still around?

Mr. LESTER: In 1845 Ludwig Leichhardt came into the area and set up near the junction of the Burdekin and Suttor Rivers near Mt. McConnel. In 1861 "Strathmore" station commenced operations. There was then a slump in the pastoral industry and the people of the area went searching for minerals.

Mr. Casey: Was it worse than this one?

Mr. LESTER: I wonder if the honourable member would mind allowing me to speak of what is happening to the people of Collinsville and not be so rude as to interrupt me. He had better not come up to Collinsville and campaign in the next election. He will see how he gets on then.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LESTER: Here we are, the Labor Party is not allowing me to say the things about Collinsville I should be saying, and yet it is going to have the effrontery to come up to Collinsville during the next election campaign and campaign against me. It is taking the Collinsville vote for granted as these people usually vote for the Labor Party. The honourable member for Mackay has shown his true colours here today and, my goodness me, his exhibition in not allowing me to talk will mean another 200 votes for me in the next election.

Coal was discovered in the Collinsville area by Henry Hatcher in 1860, and shortly after that, in 1867, gold was discovered at Mt. Wyatt. The State Coal Mine commenced operations in 1919 under the management of Mr. Peter Hill. The Bowen consolidated mine commenced operations in 1920 under the management of John McLachlan. In 1921 the town was named Collinsville after the M.L.A. for the area, Mr. Collins, and it was connected to the port of Bowen by rail in 1922. Progress was steady and in 1924 there were 700 people living in Collinsville with 300 in the adjoining town of Scottville. The Bowen Consolidated mine and Deacon colliery have amalgamated.

The huge powerhouse which was built in Collinsville commenced operations in 1968. It brought with it a lot of new people and new homes and gave a new character to the town. Collinsville's population is now 2,200; it has a State school and a convent school and there is a State school at Scottville. Collinsville has a swimming-pool, a hospital, an ambulance, two hotels, one hotel-motel, a workers' club, of which I am proud to be a member, golf, bowls and racing clubs, a show society, churches, kindergartens, a Lions club, etc.

Mr. Jones: I hope you are going to print this in Collinsville.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gunn): Order!

Mr. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just cannot understand the attitude of the Labor members who are trying to interject on me. They should be thoroughly and utterly ashamed of themselves. My goodness me, the people of Collinsville are going to know about this treachery here today in the Parliament.

The State school, under the guidance of the principal, Mr. John O'Donohue, became known Australia-wide for the community involvement project in the town. I might add that recently I have been successful in having additions made to the Collinsville State School providing for manual arts, a library and a pre-school. Only today I have received notification that carpets are to be laid there. Other additions have been made to the school in the last 2½ to 3 years, and I thank the State Government for them.

Perhaps the biggest advantage to Collinsville in the field of education has been the reduction in numbers required for a secondary department from 200 to 150. This means that in the not too distant future the people of Collinsville will be able to have their children educated right through to secondary level in Collinsville.

The Scottville State School is also very well run, and it is not very long since an extension was provided there. The principal, Mr. Flanagan, is doing a good job, as is the new principal of the Collinsville State School.

The convent also is doing an excellent job. It has a very active parents and citizens' association which, of its own volition and with its own money, has recently carpeted the convent school.

A maternity section costing \$79,000 and a laundry costing \$100,000 have been added to the Collinsville Hospital, and tomorrow Dr. Lew Edwards is to visit Collinsville with me. I remind honourable members that both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Tomkins have already been to see the people of Collinsville. Representatives of the National Party certainly do not neglect the people of that town. Dr. Edwards will see the work that has been done and also see what else can be done to make the life of the people of Collinsville better. Help has already been received from Mr. Neville Hewitt.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gunn): Order!

Mr. LESTER: With his assistance, a fish ladder has been installed on the Clare Weir on the Burdekin River. This means that the fish in the Bowen River will not be taken away from the people of Collinsville, who will be able to continue fishing as they have done in the past.

Improvements have been made to the Collinsville-Mt. Cooloolon Road, and more Housing Commission homes have been built in the area.

I do not deny for one minute that much more remains to be done in the Collinsville area. However, as the representative of the people there, I have made it my business to visit Collinsville once every six weeks to find out what they need. No other member of Parliament since the days of Dr. Delamothé has given that service. The Labor Party has tended to take the people of Collinsville for granted. I did not want to make this speech in any way political because it is going to be circulated to every home in Collinsville.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESTER: I did not want to make it political, but the Labor Party has goaded me into doing so. Honourable members opposite have displayed their ignorance by trying to interject and not allow me to say what I wish to say. If they had not tried to interject, I would not have attacked them as I have in this Chamber. They have displayed their true colours; they deserve to be shown up in their true light.

I apologise to the people of Collinsville for having to make such references to the Labor Party while making what I hoped would be a non-political speech about what is happening in Collinsville and what the Government is attempting to do for the people there. No matter what opposition I get from the Labor Party in this House, I shall fight tooth and nail and unrelentingly for the people of Collinsville. I will make sure that the people there are made aware of the dreadful interjections that have been made while I have been speaking in this debate, simply because I have tried to put forward the view of the people whom I represent. I will continue to represent them. I will fight with everything I have for the people of Collinsville, and I will not be belted down by the irresponsible thuggery in the ranks of the A.L.P. today.

GATEWAY BRIDGE OR TUNNEL, BRISBANE RIVER

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.9 p.m.): I hope that my speech will be in conformity with the usual tone of the Matters of Public Interest debate.

I call on the Government to begin planning immediately for a cross-river bridge or tunnel at approximately the present site of the "Sir James Holt" vehicular ferry. In my opinion, the time has long since past for the commencement of such a project. Going back many years—the Wilbur Smith Report recommended a bridge or tunnel at that point as one of the urgent needs to improve Brisbane's traffic flow. Whether it is more economically sound to build a tunnel or a bridge is an argument that I will not come into, but by now the Government should have had planning carried out and made up its mind as to which of the two projects it should proceed with. According to my information no decision has yet been made.

I warn the Government that unless such a project is commenced immediately, within a very short space of time we will have chronic traffic congestion in the built-up suburbs from Murarrie towards the city, including Cannon Hill, Morningside, Hawthorne, Bulimba, Norman Park, East Brisbane and even the Mowbray Park area. With the building of the new port there will be more traffic using roads in those areas on the south side of the river. It will be heavy vehicular traffic carrying massive loads. At this stage no-one can say how much larger road transport vehicles will be or how much heavier the individual loads carried. But

without doubt there will be an enormous build-up of traffic in those areas. Without the construction of a tunnel or a bridge at the point suggested, we will have to rely on the Story Bridge. At peak periods even now there are long delays as traffic tries to proceed to the Story Bridge. It is not uncommon to have a build-up of traffic from the Story Bridge back to the top of Galloways Hill.

Now is the Government's opportunity to get on with the job. Today we have unemployment in most callings. A start on the planning of a bridge or a tunnel would engage the minds and activities of many professional people, semi-professional people, tradesmen and semi-skilled workers. It is not only a project to overcome foreseeable traffic congestion but also a project that would provide employment for many hundreds and later thousands of Queenslanders. Not only would the on-site project create jobs but the associated work for private enterprise in the building of the components and the manufacture of much of the material required, including road-works, would create employment for many people.

I have asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads several questions in this House, and no doubt he answered them on behalf of the Government. His answers left much to be desired because he seemed to indicate that the next project would be one at Norman Park. That might save the area between the Norman Park site and the Story Bridge, but it would do nothing at all to eliminate the problem of the suburbs to which I referred. A bridge at Norman Park would add to congestion in that area. What is at present a very lovely suburb to live in would become a suburb of noise and pollution. Proceeding with that bridge at the present time would not only be a disservice to the people of Norman Park and the surrounding areas where connecting roads and freeways would have to be built, but it would interfere with the welfare of many other people and delay the building of the Gateway crossing. Of course, the Gateway crossing has been paramount in my mind for many years. I have long advocated it and I will continue to do so.

On 9 March I asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads a question about increased traffic density caused by the new Port of Brisbane at Fisherman Islands. I do not know where he got his figures from, but he said in part—

“Were the facilities at Fisherman Islands not constructed, it is predicted that in 1991 the traffic volume in Wynnum Road from Norman Creek to Junction Road would reach 55,000 vehicles per day.

“With the construction of the new port the comparable 1991 traffic figures are 58,500 vehicles per day.”

In other words the Minister said that the port will add only an extra 3,500 vehicles a day. Surely more than 3,500 vehicles are presently servicing the wharf structure on the northern bank. When wharf facilities on

the north bank go to the south bank, that heavy volume of traffic will have to get over to the south side by some route. With the present facilities it would have to proceed along Kingsford Smith Drive, cross the Story Bridge and then proceed along Main Avenue and Lytton Road, Mowbray Park—as distinct from Lytton Road, Bulimba—and then travel right through to the port. I repeat that even at present a far greater number than 3,500 vehicles (which the Minister says will be the difference in number) are presently servicing the port facilities.

In the same answer, the Minister said that by 1991 16,500 vehicles a day would use Junction Road if the new port were not developed and that upon its construction it was estimated that 20,000 vehicles a day would use this road. Again the difference is 3,500. I suggest that that, too, is not a realistic figure because the number of vehicles requiring to cross from the north to the south and vice versa at the present time far exceed that figure.

It is one thing to change the situation of the wharf facilities from the north to the south bank, but that will not change the location of industries or the fact that heavy vehicles travelling to northern areas will have to get from the port on the south side to the north side.

I stress to the Minister and the Government that there is plenty of evidence to show that the new bridge is urgently needed now to provide work for people, and it would provide work for many years to come. It is more important than ever to build this structure to relieve pressure on existing bridges and avoid the congestion that I foresee, as well as overcome some of the noise problems for residents in affected areas.

Once traffic from the new port passes Cannon Hill, it will traverse high-density residential areas. It is all very well for the Minister to say that heavy vehicles will not pass through Bulimba, Hawthorne, or Norman Park, but he has admitted that they will get to the intersection of Junction Road and Wynnum Road. I do not know how he expects this traffic to get to the Story Bridge unless it travels along Wynnum Road and back into Lytton Road, Mowbray Park. Apparently the Minister has lost sight of the fact that industries such as the P.M.G. and Rheem are established in the Bulimba area and have to be serviced. Vehicles going to and coming from the wharf to service this area will travel along Lytton Road, Bulimba and then through into Oxford Street.

(Time expired.)

SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY
BOARD

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (12.19 p.m.): For some 10 months electricity consumers of Toowoomba and surrounding districts have been very concerned about the

proposal to implement the 1976 Electricity Act. Repeated assurances have been given to me by the Minister for Mines and Energy about electricity tariffs. The Minister has stated—and I have said it on many occasions—that there will be no difference in tariffs between the south-east zone (which includes places such as Ipswich and Gatton) and the south-west zone, which includes Toowoomba. I do not believe that the placing of Toowoomba in one zone or the other will affect the tariffs. I have said so before, and I say it again. However, from the very first meeting of the board on 23 February 1977, Toowoomba has been in a state of dismay at its performance. I refer principally to the election of a local government representative to that board and, further, to the election of the chairman.

Section 110 of the Act states in part that the members present shall elect from the nominated members a member to be chairman—in other words, from the members of local government. The election of the chairman and the way in which the chairman himself was nominated to the board were both out of the ordinary. In the first instance, when a difference of opinion arose between members of the local government region as to which member should be on the board, the Minister for Mines and Energy himself intervened to break the deadlock. In fact, he used his ministerial prerogative to elect a member to the board. That member was Alderman Aland. So far, so good.

However, when a similar position arose on a determination of who was to be chairman of the board—the vote was four all—a procedure took place which I am afraid as a member of Parliament I cannot lend my weight to. When the members could not agree, they settled the matter by casting lots. There are some famous biblical references to casting lots. I had a question to place on notice this morning about the casting of lots, but the Leader of the Opposition asked it without notice.

The Act states that the members will “elect”. I believe that “elect” means to choose in preference to an alternative—to choose by vote. I do not believe that it means to choose as in a “chook raffle”. It is fair enough for somebody running a chook raffle—with a permit, of course, from the Justice Department—to pluck a name out of a hat. But I do not believe that we can sanction this method of determining, in a deadlock, who will be the chairman of a board, especially as the next matter to be decided is where the board shall be situated. Basing all this on plucking names out of a hat is, I believe, quite despicable. It is totally against the spirit of the Act, which I believe is a great piece of legislation. I still back the Act, but I believe that the Minister has to intervene in this matter.

The Act is only as good as its administration, and that is an aspect in which we have been sadly let down.

Section 110 (5) should have been applied immediately. It states—

“If for any reason . . . the chairman . . . is not elected . . . in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this section, the Governor in Council may appoint by Order in Council a chairman from those members of the Board who are nominated members”.

In that case it means members from local government—not the two members appointed by Governor in Council and not the member from the electricity board, who in this case is the Commissioner for Electricity Supply for the State of Queensland.

The requirements of the first part of section 110 having failed, subsection 5 is instantly, automatically and legally binding upon the Minister. I would like to see the whole matter brought before the Minister, who has the power to rescind every action taken following the deadlock on the board.

The defiance of section 110 (5) means, I believe, that everything is automatically null and void. This story got out first of all through the pubs in Dalby, where the residents had quite a chuckle. At last they had put one over the big city of Toowoomba. By 9 March the people in Toowoomba knew about this, despite the silence of the board members. Somewhere or other there was a leak—chuckling, boast or whatever. Someone whom we do not yet know proposed that this be the method of settling the matter. I think that the Minister is still honour-bound to look into it.

The key word is “elect”, and I fail to see that plucking names out of a hat is an election. I ask honourable members to cast their minds back perhaps only a week or two when they might have seen the celebrated magician, David Nixon, on television. He can pluck names, cards, or anything else from anywhere. I want to know and I think this Parliament should know whose hat was used and who checked it; was any person there a practising magician; and was any person there adept in the art of sleight of hand?

We cannot accept a secret meeting. If we did, members of the board could not go back to their councils and report on the board's functions and deliberations, particularly in this one regard. This should be done out in the open.

If a representative of the Justice Department had been there we would know that, instead of a hat, an empty tin with no

crevices in it was used and that everything was done under his supervision and met his strict standards. No honourable member would advise a tennis club, a cricket club or a golf club to run an art union along those lines. I think this was something of an art union because the chairman receives an increase in salary and the very big plum, which Dalby has, is the siting there of the board's headquarters.

The way out of this is for the Government to appoint a board that cannot reach a deadlock, which can be achieved by making it a nine-member board. This can be done in two ways. One is to appoint an extra member to represent the large body of consumers in Toowoomba. The other is to appoint a member, with a watching brief, from those areas along the border from Goondiwindi, through St. George and Thallon to Dirranbandi, which are supplied by the North West County Councils in New South Wales. The people there pay a great deal more for electricity than the people in South-east Queensland or Toowoomba. A member appointed from that region could have a watching brief.

As he is not being supplied with electricity from the South West Queensland Electricity Board, he could not be said to have a vested interest. However, on behalf of his local authorities, he could take an interest in seeing that his area is included in the board area as quickly as possible or, if his area is not to receive electricity from the Queensland net, that it does receive the same advantages as are enjoyed by other Queenslanders who come under the all-embracing provisions of the Electricity Act 1976.

As I said, there are two ways out. The Minister can appoint an extra member so that the board cannot reach a deadlock. The board could then re-elect a chairman. I have no objection to any person who is presently on that board. If an extra member could be appointed to the board, then, at the very worst, the chairman would be elected on a 5 to 4 vote. The board could then convene to deliberate on the siting of its headquarters. If Dalby is chosen again, good luck to it.

Why has there been so much outcry about this matter? The commissioner's brief of 23 June 1976 reads—

"The Board will be made up of eight members. In short, the Board will be a truly representative body of members who are thoroughly acquainted with the needs of the area served. Their responsibility will be to serve the interests of the whole Board and all consumers, not just their local area."

After having been informed of this in June 1976, the people of Toowoomba were appalled at what they called a parochial

decision to establish the board in Dalby. This responsibility, as outlined in the commissioner's brief, has never been met and I do not think it could be met by a deadlocked board.

The Minister did intervene when there was a deadlock between Councillor Saal and Alderman Aland for the local authority nomination to this board. He should also intervene in the matter I have outlined, which is in breach of section 110. I realise why he is reluctant to intervene. The commissioners' brief further reads—

"The commission believes that a Board which can concentrate its whole attention upon the matters which count in this area will give better service to the people who live in the area than for example, a Board which was located in Brisbane and dominated by the needs of the more populous capital city and nearby areas."

Substitute "Toowoomba" for "capital city" and the commissioner's beliefs are summed up in a nutshell. No-one can blame the Toowoomba people for claiming that the constitution of the board, the election of the chairman and the location of the board's headquarters were decided before 23 June 1976—months before the legislation was passed in this Parliament.

(Time expired.)

CHOLERA OUTBREAK

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (12.30 p.m.): I wish to speak today on the recent very serious outbreak of cholera. It was traced back to Beenleigh and it created a very grave problem within the community. I considered my role in this problem and saw it as not a political one or one dealing with Government policy. Here was a very serious health problem of concern to people in the area, and indeed throughout Queensland, and I adopted the role of watch-dog working with the Health Department and the Albert Shire Council.

I should like to pay a tribute to all those who worked hard on the problem and finally isolated its source. If this had not been traced, Queensland could have been faced with a disaster. I commend the authorities who have the responsibility of investigating, isolating and controlling outbreaks of this type that will occur from time to time, especially in these days of fast travel to and from all parts of the world. We are indeed fortunate that there have not been more potential disasters of this type and this no doubt is a fine reflection of the worth of the World Health Organisation and our own health authorities in Queensland. The cholera outbreak allowed them to show their true colours and they did a wonderful job.

I should like to pay a tribute to all who took part in dealing with the outbreak. In the first place, I refer to the Health Department and the Minister for Health. At all times he made responsible statements and I believe that he handled the situation very capably indeed. I also make specific mention of Dr. Patrick, Director-General of Health and Medical Services; Dr. Rogers, Health Officer, Department of Health; Dr. Rao, pathologist, Princess Alexandra Hospital; Dr. Tonge, Director, Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology, Department of Health; Mrs. Cossins, bacteriologist, Department of Health; and Mr. Cuffe, Chief Inspector of Environmental Sanitation, Department of Health. They were the main officers of the Health Department who handled the cholera investigation and I congratulate them on the way in which they discharged their responsibilities.

Thanks must also go to the police in the area for the job that they did, to the media for carrying the message to the people, and to local doctors, including Dr. Cliff who made some very responsible statements. The shire chairman (Mr. Hughie Muntz) and his councillors played a very important role in the whole emergency. The Beenleigh Ambulance Centre carried suspects who showed symptoms that suggested they might have cholera. I am very happy with all aspects of the action taken to date to overcome this problem.

Very quickly a public meeting was called in Beenleigh and it was attended by many people, especially parents with young children, who were particularly concerned about the possibility of a cholera outbreak. The meeting was handled very well by the Albert Shire chairman, by Dr. Patrick and other members of the Health Department. They informed the people of Beenleigh of the action that should be taken, such as boiling all water, and the indications of possible infection. Swift action was also taken to cut off the temporary water supply from the Luscombe Weir, to which finally the infection was traced.

The first statement on this outbreak appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 22 February 1977. The article was headed, "Cholera case in Brisbane" and it reported that an English migrant 56 years of age living in an outer southern suburb had been admitted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital suffering from cholera. The article went on to say that her condition was first diagnosed as gastro-enteritis but in subsequent tests cholera bacteria were isolated. Dr. Edwards made a statement that there was no cause for alarm, as tests carried out on 20 of the woman's contacts, as well as on garbage disposal and in many other areas of the district in which they live, proved negative.

In "The Courier-Mail" of 25 February a front-page article stated that the contaminated water in the Beenleigh area caused a

local woman to contract cholera. An announcement by Dr. Edwards that the cholera victim came from the town had residents very concerned. Of course through the quick action of the chairman of the Albert Shire Council, Mr. Hugh Muntz, and his officers the water supply was cut off immediately. This prevented the chance of any further infection. The residents were quickly reconnected to the Brisbane water supply. We know that the Luscombe Weir was reticulated into Beenleigh on only a temporary basis while a new main to serve the area was being installed.

State health authorities confirmed that traces of cholera organisms were found in the Albert River at Plunkett, 25 kilometres upstream from Luscombe Weir, where cholera organisms had been found. It is quite amazing how quickly these officers in the Health Department located the origin of this problem, and they are to be congratulated on their efficiency.

Beenleigh residents were told to boil all water and take all necessary precautions. The Beenleigh public swimming pool was closed down and many families queued up to obtain cholera vaccinations. The hotels, of course, served only spirits with carbonated drinks, and as an illustration of our traditional humour it was reported that the hotels were serving a new drink named "Rum and Cholera".

It was thought that the infection may have originated at Canungra, but this was not the case. In the "Sunday Mail" of 27 February a brief statement by Dr. Edwards claimed that the cholera-contaminated stream in the Plunkett area would be superchlorinated to destroy all traces of the germ. Even though Beenleigh's reticulated water supply had shown no trace of cholera at that date, residents were urged to boil the water. It was suggested that the affected area could be back to normal within two weeks.

On 3 March 1977 Dr. Edwards announced in "The Courier-Mail" that residents of Beenleigh receiving reticulated water no longer needed to boil it, which to me implied that Beenleigh had been completely cleared of any danger from cholera. Of course, the newspaper reported that a couple of school football teams, because they were frightened of the cholera threat, would not come to Beenleigh to play. In fact at that stage there was no danger.

It should be made quite clear to the public now that in Beenleigh there is no problem caused by cholera. Only one isolated case has occurred and there is no danger of any further occurrence.

Up till now it was thought that all cholera cases were introduced by people travelling from overseas and that it was not contracted

locally. The cholera strain found near Beenleigh was isolated in the Middle East 77 years ago. It was the El Tor strain, which had completely replaced the "classified" strain of Vibrio cholera. El Tor spread from the Middle East into Africa. Only a small percentage of people infected with the organism develop symptoms of cholera, and it is very resistant to adverse conditions such as heating, drying and disinfectants. On Wednesday, 16 March 1977 the Minister for Health made another statement that in this age of jet travel cholera could appear in Australia at any time. This shows that our health authorities have to be more vigilant than ever. In these days, when people are being sent to the moon and to the other side of the world and back at the drop of a hat, it is quite easy for a disease of this sort to appear in Australia. The whole community should be very grateful to the Health Department for the way in which it and other authorities handled their responsibilities in this area.

(Time expired.)

PRICES FOR MOTOR VEHICLE SPARE PARTS

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.40 p.m.): Honourable members will be well aware that the Prices Justification Tribunal is at present examining the costing and pricing of motor vehicle spare parts. Those who have been following the proceedings will know that 15 retail distributors from New South Wales and Victoria are involved in the inquiry.

Personally, I am pleased that the inquiry is being held. But, after considering the matter very carefully, I have written to Mr. Howard at the Federal level and also made inquiries as to exactly what the Prices Justification Tribunal is doing. I have come to the conclusion that the inquiry is not nearly broad enough, that it is extremely limited and that it is too restrictive. I suggest that it should not be limited to the retailers but should also involve manufacturers and those distributors who are importing spare parts from overseas. That is the real issue at the moment, because I have been able to obtain specific costings of the various products being imported for the spare parts industry. As I release these later in my speech, honourable members will realise that it is one of the greatest rackets that has ever been perpetrated on the Australian people.

I am not alone in what I am suggesting. The Australian Automobile Association really moved first on this and asked that the inquiry be broadened. It has asked also for a complete examination of what is known as backward discounting, which it suggests is inefficient and costly and makes the distribution chain too long. If the distribution chain is too long, costs are incurred which eventually are passed on to the consumer.

The principle behind backward discounting is that the manufacturer fixes the retail price and then discounts backwards, setting

the price at each link of the distribution chain. So there would be the retail, or consumer, price, a trade price, a wholesale price, and even a special price for quantity purchases. Finally the price would come back to the landed cost or the production cost. It will be appreciated that if each one of these links has to make a profit, the final cost to the consumer will be very high.

In the study that I have made of this through the Consumers' Association, I have found that claims have been made—and these have been backed up—that retail mark-ups have been in the vicinity of 300 per cent on the manufacturer's actual price. The Australian Automobile Association has asserted that the total cost of the spare parts to rebuild, for example, an HQ model Holden would be in excess of \$20,000, even though the price of the complete car originally would have been only about \$2,500. As I said, it is one of the greatest rackets ever perpetrated.

From statistics that have been put forward and the evidence that has been submitted, it will be seen that, although the brake cylinder for a Volkswagen sells for \$87.85, the recommended price is \$44.98 at many distribution points. The brake cylinder for a Torana sells for \$72.39, yet the recommended price is \$51.51. I have a complete list of these prices, and it may be interesting for honourable members to go through them at a later date. The list covers Volkswagen, Datsun, Toyota Crown, Holden Kingswood and Ford Falcon, and it covers doors, panels, grilles, headlight assemblies—in fact, virtually every part. These prices affect every person who wishes to fix a car or who is involved in an accident and has repairs carried out under an insurance policy.

In my opinion, the inquiry ought to be broadened to cover agricultural machinery. Primary producers are being ripped off on spare parts for their tractors and for their farm equipment. I have here details of one case in which a hydraulic pump was charged out to the farmer at \$275.45. The invoice that was sent to him is in my possession, so honourable members can see it if they wish. The people who sold it made a mistake and also sent the dispatch notice from Brisbane. That dispatch notice clearly shows that the price is only \$156.69. That was the price when it was dispatched from Brisbane; but from the Central Queensland firm it suddenly became \$275.45. It will be noted that there is an increase of more than \$120 on the Brisbane price for exactly the same item. As I said, a real rip-off is taking place.

I have been making inquiries for some time, but it is very difficult to get prices because of the inquiry that is being held. Fortunately, through some of the contacts that I have in the Consumers' Association, I was able to get hold of the documents that I have in my hand. I am not going to say where they came from, but they include about 3,000 or 4,000 actual listed prices, from the landed cost right through

to the list price to the consumer, plus sales tax. I will cite some of these to have them recorded in "Hansard". I point out that these are 1974-1975 prices. One wonders what the 1977 costs would be. Here are some examples—

Item	Landed Price	Recommended Retail Price	Sales Tax
Shira Push Button Radio	\$ 19.74	\$ 54.00	Plus 27½
Fitting Kits for Radios— (Austin 1800) ..	3.41	10.20	Plus 27½
(Holden FC) ..	3.06	9.20	Plus 27½
Temperature Gauge ..	2.09	6.50	Plus 1
Tachometer (6 cylinder car) ..	4.46	13.50	Plus 15
Fog Light (50W) ..	2.86	8.50	Plus 15
Fog Lenz ..	{ 2.20 0.51	8.00 2.00	Plus 15 Plus 15
Short Push Pull Switch	0.25	0.75	Plus 15
Toggle Switch ..	0.44	1.50	Plus 15
Red/Amber Light ..	0.34	1.90	Plus 15
6-Pin plug and base (Trailer connection)	1.23	3.92	Plus 15
Rolls of 3 mm Wire (used by Automotive Electricians) ..	1.35	7.00	Plus 15
Cigarette Lighters (Stanley complete) ..	0.82	3.00	Plus 27½
Car Vacuum Cleaners (Jumbo Medium 777)	2.71	8.70	Plus 15
Spark Plugs for Chain Saws ..	0.31	1.50	Plus 15
Acelite Globes (Dash and Indicator) ..	0.04	0.20	Plus 15
Festoon Lamps ..	0.05	0.37	Plus 15
Flasher Lamps (for indicators) ..	0.07	0.45	Plus 15
Bosch-type Headlamps	0.23	1.45	Plus 15
Ignition Coil (6V standard) ..	1.76	7.75	Plus 15
Distributor Lead Kits (Cortina) ..	0.54	1.99	Plus 15
Distributor Points (Non-vented (Holden)) ..	0.54	1.80	Plus 15
Condensers ..	0.57	1.20	Plus 15
Fuses (7.5 Amp) ..	0.08	0.46	Plus 15
Brake Linings ..	0.23	1.10	(Plus Sales Tax)
Clutch Plates (Holden)	6.25	16.94	(Plus Sales Tax)
	3.40	12.07	(Plus Sales Tax)
	5.50	22.07	(Plus Sales Tax)

They go on and on.

I referred to condensers at a recommended retail price of \$1.20. I checked recently with one Brisbane firm and it was charging \$5 for condensers. I have given recommended retail prices but the actual selling price is usually much greater than the recommended price. Some of the mark-ups are massive. The consumer is paying it! I believe that the Prices Justification Tribunal inquiry must surely investigate the price of all imported spare parts. The figures I have here relate to some 30 Australian firms

and many overseas firms. I am prepared to make this information available. I will not reveal the names of the firms at this time, because dozens and dozens of others are doing exactly the same thing.

The point I make is that action must be taken to curb the rip-off and the profiteering that is taking place in the spare parts industry. I do not know what the Queensland Government can do, but at least the Federal Government should be clearly told that it has a responsibility to broaden this inquiry. It is most important that every aspect of the spare parts industry should be investigated—not only the retailing but the manufacturing, distributing and wholesaling sides of it, and also that part of it which affects farmers and others in agricultural industry.

SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND ELECTRICITY BOARD

Mr. BOURKE (Lockyer) (12.50 p.m.): Part of my electorate is in the city of Toowoomba. Under the recent Electricity Act Toowoomba is to be part of the south-western zone. The newly constituted South West Electricity Board at its first meeting on 23 February made two major decisions. Firstly it elected a chairman and secondly it selected a site headquarters. Previous to this there had been rumours that a deal had been made whereby Dalby was to be the site headquarters.

The chairman of the board is now Alderman Aland, the mayor of Dalby. Alderman Aland came onto the board as the result of a tie in the voting of a group of local authorities. Four voted for Alderman Aland and four for a councillor from Millmerran. An offer was made at that stage to resolve the matter by drawing a name from a hat, but the gentlemen declined this offer and the two names were forwarded to the Minister, who duly chose Alderman Aland.

This board seems to be beset by ties in voting. Maybe it would have been better to have nine, or some other odd number of representatives, on these boards. In this context, I support fully the suggestion put forward by my colleague the honourable member for Toowoomba North that perhaps the Minister should examine putting a further representative on this board, or we may have to furnish each board with a special hat. The vote for chairman was also tied four all. This time a draw was made from a hat and Alderman Aland had another win. It is not recorded who owned the hat.

I have no real objection to any of this. Drawing from a hat may be as good a method as any other for the board to select its chairman. However, it is relevant and disturbing that Alderman Aland was apparently supported from the outset by the Commissioner for Electricity Supply. I say "apparently" as members of the board have been forbidden right of public comment on any matter connected with it.

The board proceeded to choose a headquarters site. Again the commissioner supported Dalby and again there was a four-all draw. The hat was not required and Alderman Aland used his casting vote as chairman for his own town of Dalby. That means Dalby got two votes from its own mayor, one vote from the electricity commissioner and two others. Four of the members of the board voted against Dalby. It is not strictly honest to claim, as the chairman has claimed subsequently, that this represents a majority decision of the board.

There is no suggestion that Dalby cannot function successfully as the site headquarters, but what is beyond dispute is that Toowoomba is a superior site, being the geographical, population, cultural and economic centre of the region. What is scandalous is that the board made such a crucial decision without any investigation or even apparent interest in the economics involved. Without any inquiry the decision was made on selfish, shallow and parochial grounds. The site headquarters was seen as a prize for which Dalby, by prior arrangement or otherwise, had the numbers. It certainly had the commissioner's support.

It is patently ridiculous for a city like Toowoomba to have its electricity headquarters at Dalby, which is 50 miles away. Does Townsville have its headquarters at Charters Towers, or does Rockhampton have its headquarters at Emerald?

The only person on the board allowed to make public comment is the chairman, the mayor of Dalby. The comment and justification, of course, is that Dalby needed the people more than Toowoomba—and what a wonderful boost it will be for Dalby! That is all quite true. However, I should imagine that a body like the South West Queensland Electricity Board has an obligation to its consumers to base its decisions on sound economic grounds alone. Its members, including Alderman Aland, are on the board to protect the consumer, not to push the interests of their own local authorities. Alderman Aland is also there as the nominee by proxy—or appointment by the Minister—of shires such as Crows Nest and Pittsworth that are based on Toowoomba.

No detailed or expert information was presented to the board about existing facilities, staffing arrangements or abilities of the existing electricity distributing organisations within the board area, or about how these organisations can best and most economically be integrated into a functioning unit. There was not even an attempt at such a report. These facts should surely be paramount in determining the board's headquarters site if the board is to show any semblance of responsibility to its consumers.

The economic fact that the board seeks desperately to avoid is that 44,399 of the board's total of 65,099 consumers are in the present Toowoomba district of the

S.E.A.Q., while in the Dalby area there are only 8,599 consumers. Electricity staff in Toowoomba city itself presently number 158, but in Dalby there are only 52. The S.E.A.Q. recently built a \$900,000 stores depot in Toowoomba. The present S.E.A.Q. staff in Toowoomba have already expressed their opposition to the site decision, which will place the headquarters about 50 miles away from the majority of employees.

It is obvious that the board's decision will cost the consumers of the whole area dearly. The Toowoomba City Council has already seen the Minister and requested that he rescind the decision. I fully support that approach on the grounds that, by deciding such a vital matter in such an amateurish, careless fashion, the board of the south-western authority may have demonstrated its incapacity to serve the electricity consumers of the area faithfully. At its first meeting it has alienated its biggest consumer, the bulk of its staff and the bulk of its consumers. It has imposed additional expense on the people it has been set up to serve.

I repeat that it cannot be said that Dalby cannot function as the site. It is the nature of the decision and the obvious fact that Toowoomba is a vastly superior headquarters site economically that causes disquiet to the consumers. It is surely essential in the interests of consumers that all the board's decisions be based on sound economic logic. It is not valid for a mayor of Dalby, supported by the Commissioner for Electricity Supply, to quote encouragement of decentralisation as a function of the board.

Mr. Houston: You supported that in the Bill. That is why you took it off the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. BOURKE: It is the only justification offered for the decision. The consumers are entitled to know the facts of a decision such as this. In the light of it, I have appealed—and I do appeal—to the Minister to rescind the decision of the board, to direct the board to reconsider the matter and to inform the board that such a decision should be based on sound economic criteria.

I make it quite clear that I supported the Electricity Bill and its aim—which is entirely laudable—to introduce the rationalisation of tariffs to all the people of Queensland. Any right-thinking person must be 100 per cent in support of the concept that people should pay the same for their electricity, no matter where they are situated in the State. However, Toowoomba has its own problems. It is growing very rapidly. It is the largest inland city in Queensland. I feel it is essential in view of economic factors, that the headquarters of this board should be in Toowoomba.

The House adjourned at 12.57 p.m.