

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 30 MARCH 1977

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

AVAILABILITY OF BILLS FROM GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.2 a.m.): During last night's debate a request was made for copies of several Bills that were laid on the table. These have been available for the last six months at the Government Printing Office. I have arranged for them to be supplied to Parliament House and they will be available to any member upon request. I should like to see the honourable member for Brisbane get two.

POLICE ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Minister for Police): 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 Police Act 1937-1973 in certain particulars and to amend the Police Superannuation Act 1968-1975 in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

TWELFTH NIGHT THEATRE BUILDING 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 Twelfth Night Theatre Building Trust, to

make provision with respect to the administration of that body and for purposes incidental thereto."

Motion agreed to.

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA BILL

INITIATION

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General): I move—

"That leave be given to introduce a Bill to make provision for the inauguration of The Uniting Church in Australia; to constitute The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.); to provide for the vesting of certain property in the said trust; and for connected purposes; and that so much of the Standing Orders relating to private Bills be suspended so as to enable the said Bill to be introduced and passed through all its stages as if it were a public Bill."

Motion agreed to.

RURAL FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

PSYCHOLOGISTS BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Dr. Edwards, read a third time.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AT CAIRNS WATCH-HOUSE

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

(1) In view of his reply on 24 March to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition concerning the Cairns Watch-house shower incident and his assurance that further inquiries are being made, will he give an undertaking to report fully to this House on the allegations?

(2) Will he ascertain whether a report concerning the incident was made by the police watch-house keeper who has since resigned from the force?

(3) Was a commissioned officer involved in the incident?

(4) On the following day, were two prisoners on trial at the time given medical examinations by a woman doctor in the presence of both their solicitor and the commissioned officer?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) As indicated yesterday in reply to the honourable member, the Commissioner of Police has not been able to trace

in his department any record of the receipt of such a complaint, that is, that prisoners were made to strip, take cold showers, then return to their cells in the Cairns Watch-house without clothing.

As I did not hold the position of Minister for Police at the time of the alleged incident, I have no personal knowledge of the claims. However, a search of departmental records has shown that on 3 July 1976 internal investigations were commenced by the Police Department into the running of the Cairns Watch-house by Brian Joseph Gill, the then officer in charge of that watch-house. This investigation included the aspect of general safety and security of prisoners.

On 21 July 1976, Brian Joseph Gill who was still at that date sergeant in charge of the Cairns Watch-house furnished a report, which I now table and I seek leave to have it incorporated in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the following document on the table:—

Cairns District,
Cairns Watch-house,
21st July, 1976.

Relative to:—Christopher Michael Duncan—allegations of being assaulted in cell on 20-7-1976.

Sir,

I have to report that on 21-7-76, I arrived at the Cairns watch-house at about 7.25 a.m. to commence duty. I was informed by Constable 1/C N. Stone, watch-house keeper on the 12 mn. to 8 a.m. shift, on that date, that the prisoner Duncan was refusing to get dressed and he stated that he would not get dressed to appear at the District Court on that date.

I went to the cell where Duncan was on his own. He was dressed in a pair of underpants. I asked Duncan:—"What is the matter. Why won't you get dressed". He replied:—"I won't get dressed until I see my solicitor, and I won't be going to Court till I do see him". I said:—"All the inmates have to move over to the other side of the watch-house. Come over there and I will tell your solicitor later to come up and see you".

The inmates were shifted so that concrete work in the yard of the Police station could proceed without interference from any prisoner.

As I was taking Duncan to the other side of the watch-house he said:—"I am going to take out summonses for assault and Police brutality". I said:—"Did someone assault you". He replied:—"Yes. It was some of your heavy mates".

Mr. J. Gayler, solicitor for Duncan later called at the watch-house and interviewed Duncan while I was at the Magistrates Court. I was later informed by Gayler

that he intended to have Duncan examined by a doctor. I then informed Sgt. 1/C Wilcox of the matter, and he said that he would bring the matter under your notice.

A short time later, Mr. R. Pack, Counsel for Duncan, called at the watch-house and inquired if the doctor had called. I informed him that he had not. He then said that the doctor was being called to ascertain if he was physically capable to continue his trial, and not to substantiate any allegations of assault.

Duncan then asked if he could have his clothes to dress for court. I then asked Duncan if he could identify his alleged assassins. He replied, "No. They were fairly old. One had grey hair and the other had a big stomach. They weren't in uniform". The doctor arrived and went on to examine Duncan in the presence of his solicitor and yourself.

B. J. Gill, Sergeant 2/C

The,
Inspector of Police,
Cairns

Answer (contd.):—

Despite Mr. Gill's claims in the Press, there is no mention in that report of persons having been stripped and made to take cold showers. The only allegation contained in Gill's report is of an alleged assault. The report is based on information which Gill said he had been told and not on his personal knowledge or observations. It refers to an alleged assault on Christopher Michael Duncan.

The report was submitted to Gill's superior officer and an immediate investigation was commenced. During this investigation Duncan, the person who allegedly made this complaint to ex-Sergeant Gill, when questioned by a commissioned officer of police in the presence of Mr. Gayler, his solicitor, and a doctor on 21 July 1976, stated he had no complaint to make and that he had not been assaulted.

The doctor who examined Duncan has supplied a statement to police in which she states she has no recollection of any injury to the prisoners she examined which would be consistent with their having been assaulted. She further claimed that the examination was made at the request of Mr. Gayler to ascertain whether the prisoners were fit to attend court and no mention was made by him of any alleged assault. The doctor stated that she was present with Mr. Gayler when the prisoner was asked by a police officer for details of the alleged assault.

It is apparent that ex-Sergeant Gill in making his statements to the Press does not appear to be basing them on fact or on any personal knowledge.

Whilst the investigation into the activities of Sergeant Gill was continuing a recommendation was received by the then Commissioner of Police, Mr. Whitrod, that Sergeant Gill be transferred from the Cairns Watch-house having in mind the serious nature of the allegations relating to his running of that establishment. Mr. Whitrod, on 23 September 1976, directed the transfer of Sergeant Gill to general duties at Cairns, such transfer to be effected forthwith.

There is no suggestion that Commissioner Whitrod acted in anything other than a proper manner and in the best interests of the Police Force in making this decision.

On 27 September 1976, Sergeant 2/c Brian Joseph Gill tendered his resignation from the Queensland Police Force. At that time investigations into his conduct had not been completed.

The application to resign tendered by Sergeant Gill shows his reasons as—

"1. I have decided to go into private enterprise with members of my family.

"2. My health is such at the present time, that I feel that if I were to enter some other employment with less strain, it would improve. I also believe that were I to stay in the Police, it would only be a matter of time before I was considered medically unfit. To try to improve my health I therefore believe it would be fairer to both parties to be allowed to resign."

I now table this document and seek leave to have it incorporated in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the following document on the table:—

Queensland Police Department

Application to Resign

District Cairns, Station Cairns, Date 27th September, 1976.

Name Brian Joseph Gill, Rank Sergeant 2/C, Reg. No. 4913.

I hereby apply to resign from the Queensland Police Service as from termination of duty on 3-10-1976.

Reason for Resignation

(1) I have decided to go into private enterprise with members of my family.

(2) My health is such at the present time, that I feel that if I were to enter some other employment with less strain, it would improve. I also believe that were I to stay in the Police, it would only be a matter of time before I was considered medically unfit. To try to improve my health I therefore believe it would be fairer to both parties to be allowed to resign.

Address following resignation 317 Kamrunga Road, Freshwater, Cairns. 4872.
Signed B. J. Gill.

Rank Sergeant 2/C, Reg. No. 4913.

Inspector of Police
Cairns

Comments.

Signed N. B. Butler.
Rank Senior Sergeant
Officer in Charge

Commissioner,

Remarks. I have interviewed Sergeant 2/C Gill, however he is adamant in his decision to resign.

I therefore recommend that his application to resign from 3-10-76 be accepted.

Recommendation

Leave due at date of resignation: The Sergeant 2/C is entitled to the following recreation leave:—

20-10-75 to 3-10-76	..	36 days
		—
		N.S.W.
		Rate
		36 days
Less Sick Leave Bank 1976		1 day
		—
		35 days
		—

Signed.....
Inspector

Date 27th September, 1976.

Answer (contd.):—

It should be noted that there is no mention of the allegation that the sergeant was hounded or harassed out of the Police Force as indicated in the Press as his reason for resignation.

Having in mind that there has been no official complaint lodged to the Police Department by the persons alleged to have been assaulted but merely a report by ex-Sergeant Gill of an alleged assault, which was subsequently denied by the alleged complainant, in the presence of his solicitor Mr. Gayler, there is no basis for a continuation or resumption of police investigations at this time.

Mr. Gayler, in answer to questions put to him by a commissioned officer, at Cairns in a record of interview on 11 March 1977, in relation to another matter, stated inter alia that whilst he had information in relation to the shower incident he had received no specific instructions in relation to that matter and was unable at that stage to disclose the names of his clients involved.

Mr. Gayler did, however, state in the same record of interview that a commissioned officer asked a client about the alleged assaults but this particular client had no complaint to make. The person interviewed by the commissioned officer, as previously mentioned, was Christopher Michael Duncan.

This record of interview was adopted by Mr. Gayler when he affixed his signature thereto and initialled each and every page.

In other words the solicitor, Mr. Gayler, has had two opportunities to submit a formal complaint to police about the alleged incident—namely, on 21 July 1976 and again on 11 March 1977. On both occasions he declined the opportunity.

It seems unreasonable that a complainant would wait for a period of almost eight months before instructing his solicitor to raise a matter on his behalf by way of publicity in the Press without also lodging a formal complaint to the Police Department.

Had Mr. Gayler been in possession of evidence as is now claimed by him, it would be expected that, as a member of the legal profession, he would know and utilise the proper channels through which to operate when making complaints against police officers. For reasons known only to Mr. Gayler he has not yet seen fit to utilise those channels.

These allegations have come from an ex-policeman who resigned while under investigation and now, it seems, from prisoners serving terms for serious drug offences.

It is reasonable to suspect the motives behind the allegations in view of the length of time that has elapsed since the incident was supposed to have taken place. It is also reasonable to expect that any person with a legitimate grievance against police should make a formal complaint setting out that grievance so that an investigation can take place based on that complaint.

Police man-hours and public funds cannot be expended pursuing allegations made by people who grab headlines without being prepared to detail and substantiate their claims to the proper authority within a reasonable time.

Should any person have any complaint of substance, and evidence to support that complaint, I would request him to furnish me with that information forthwith in order that his allegations may be investigated.

2. PROJECTS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRES

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

(1) On what date was the Queensland Government requested to provide information in regard to the priority of individual projects to be approved under the \$4,000,000 annual grant for senior citizens' centres in 1976-77, 1977-78 and 1978-79?

(2) Has the Queensland Government provided this information to the Commonwealth Government?

(3) In view of the Commonwealth Government's request for State Governments to provide it with information in regard to the priority of individual projects which will enable the final funding programme to be determined, will he table a list of projects supplied by his Government?

Answers:—

(1) The Minister for Social Security sought the views of the Queensland Minister for Health in relation to the order of priority for pending projects in this State on 2 December 1976. I would point out that the amount of \$4,000,000 allocated by the Commonwealth Government for the funding of senior citizens' centres under the State Grants (Home Care) Act during each of the financial years 1976-1977, 1977-1978 and 1978-1979 was for the whole of Australia, not for Queensland alone.

(2) Yes.

(3) The Minister for Social Security indicated in her original advice that she would wish to make a separate Press statement for each State, listing details of the priorities. For this reason I consider it would not be proper for me to supply a list of the projects as sought.

3. LAND DEVELOPMENT AT "KOORALBYN"

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) With reference to an article in the broadsheet "Kooralbyn Chronicle" of September 1976 published by Metrovincial Corporation Limited, stating that property development was planned for "Kooralbyn" near Beaudesert, is he aware that the project manager for the project is Mr. John Barrie Loiterton?

(2) Is he aware that the same person was described in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department report of inspectors on David Trend Pty. Ltd. and other companies published in 1974 as a man who either has little understanding of principles of commercial morality or, if he understands them, chooses to ignore them?

(3) Are any officers of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs monitoring or investigating Mr. Loiterton?

(4) Who are the directors of Metrovincial Corporation Ltd. and what other directorships do they hold?

Answers:—

(1) I am advised that a Mr. J. B. Loiterton is executive chairman of Metrovincial Corporation Limited, which company is understood to be the project manager for property development of "Kooralbyn" near Beaudesert.

(2) I am advised that the Federal Government appointed two inspectors to investigate David Trend Pty. Ltd. and other companies of that group and that a copy of their report was forwarded to the then Attorney-General.

Consequent to this report being made to the Attorney, proceedings were instituted in the court of petty sessions in the Australian Capital Territory against John Barrie Loiterton and Richard W. L. Van Coeverden.

The Supreme Court register in the Australian Capital Territory indicates that an order was made that the accused be discharged from their bail and I understand that no further proceedings were taken in this matter.

The honourable the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that the failure to proceed in this matter was the subject of adverse comment in an article in "The Australian Financial Review" dated 8 October 1975.

"The Australian Financial Review" stated—

"The Attorney-General, Mr. Enderby, unwittingly stymied the liquidation of a group of building companies when he stepped in to halt the prosecution of the principal directors.

"In taking this action he acted against the advice of his Department, the Companies Office in the ACT and the Crown Law officers.

"The Attorney-General filed a no bill application in the Australian Capital Territory which effectively stopped the prosecution of Mr R. V. Van Coeverden and Mr J. B. Loiterton, directors of the David Trend group of construction companies".

A copy of this report was not tabled in the Federal Parliament and no copy has been made available to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs or to me.

(3) No. However, the activities of Metrovincial Corporation Limited are being monitored by the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

(4) Names of directors of Metrovincial Corporation Limited and other directorships held by them, obtained from the New South Wales Corporate Affairs Commission are—

Name	Other Directorships
Loiterton, John Barrie	Vanbro Corporation Limited
Watts, Arthur Christopher	Vanbro Corporation Limited
Hall, Ian Robert	Metrovincial Investments Limited

4 and 5. VEHICLE LOAD LIMIT ON SIX MILE CREEK AND BEERBURRUM CREEK BRIDGES

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

(1) Is he aware that the Caboolture Shire Council has placed a gross load limit of eight tonnes on Six Mile Creek Bridge, Elimbah, and that the Landsborough Shire Council has placed a limit of eight tonnes gross weight on Beerburrum Creek Bridge?

(2) Did the Landsborough Shire Council place the load limit on Beerburrum Creek Bridge in order to assist the Caboolture Shire Council in its request to his department for assistance in repairing Six Mile Creek Bridge, and has the Landsborough Shire Council made any request for funds to repair Beerburrum Creek Bridge?

(3) Was the amount of \$10,216 requested by the Caboolture Shire Council in July 1970 to repair Six Mile Creek Bridge and Rose Creek Bridge used to repair the bridges or was the money used to repair the road pavement?

(4) When the Caboolture Shire Council in July 1970 requested a sum of \$32,400 to restore the road and both bridges to a satisfactory standard, why did his department only allocate \$10,216 to repair the two bridges?

(5) As the people of Elimbah are now being very severely inconvenienced by these load limits placed on Six Mile Creek Bridge and Beerburrum Creek Bridge, will he intercede with the Caboolture Shire Council and Landsborough Shire Council to have permits granted to allow persons in Elimbah to continue in business?

(6) Is he aware of any reasons for the load limit being placed on Six Mile Creek Bridge and Beerburrum Creek Bridge other than attempts to force the Main Roads Department to contribute towards the cost of repairing these bridges?

Mr. HINZE: I preface the prepared answers by saying that I am a little bit concerned about councils placing load limits on roads willy-nilly. It was done by the Brisbane City Council a couple of weeks ago and by the Redland Shire Council; now it has been done

by the Caboolture Shire Council and the Landsborough Shire Council. Councils must understand that people who pay their registration fees and all the rates and taxes associated with driving must be allowed to drive on the roads. Apparently the imposition of load limits is becoming a fairly common practice, but I am not very happy about it. I now read the prepared answers.

Answers:—

(1) Yes. I have known for some time about the load limit on the Six Mile Creek Bridge. Only yesterday did officers of the Main Roads Department become aware of a load limit on the Beerburrum Creek Bridge on the old highway, which, of course, is no longer gazetted.

(2) I do not know what motives prompted the placing of the load limit on Beerburrum Creek Bridge. No request for funds for the purpose mentioned has been received from the Landsborough Shire Council.

(3) An amount of \$10,216 was not requested by Caboolture Shire Council in July 1970 to repair the bridges mentioned. The amount requested was \$350. As the bridge was no longer on a gazetted road, I am not able to state whether the repairs were effected or not.

(4) The Main Roads Department did not allocate \$10,216 to repair the two bridges. It allocated \$10,216 to bring both the bridges and the pavement to an acceptable standard. The amount was decided following an on-site inspection by officers of the department. It included the full amount requested by the shire for repairs to the bridges. The reduction was caused principally because the department did not agree that a full bitumen reseal of most of the road was warranted.

(5) I am informed that the Caboolture Shire Council has already established a system for the granting of permits to local residents with vehicle gross weights in excess of the 8 tonne limit to use the Six Mile Creek Bridge.

(6) Yes, to deter the use of this road by overloaded vehicles bypassing the Burpengary Weighing Station on the highway.

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

(1) Is he aware that great inconvenience is being caused to primary producers in Elimbah by the imposition of an eight tonne gross load limit on Six Mile Creek Bridge and Beerburrum Creek Bridge?

(2) As one primary producer who contracts to supply broiler chickens appears to be having great difficulty in obtaining permits from the Caboolture Shire Council for a contractor's vehicle to cross Six Mile

Creek Bridge, has he the power to assist this primary producer to remain in business?

(3) As the producer has approximately 30,000 chickens to deliver and it would be uneconomical to use smaller vehicles, will he take appropriate action to see that justice is carried out?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) In view of the answer just given to question 4 by my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, it seems that any powers that may be able to be used to assist this poultry farmer are vested more in that Minister's department. Regrettably, I have no power under the legislation of my department to assist the primary producer concerned.

6. LEGAL TECHNICALITY ON BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT

Dr. Crawford, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the anomalous situation reported in the Press of 29 March where a magistrate had to make a judgment on the basis of a pedantic legal point as to whether "to" and "per" were or were not synonymous in the assessment of blood alcohol levels?

(2) Is he aware that on one occasion in the past, blood alcohol level readings were inadmissible if one constable handed a blood sample to a second officer to take that sample to the laboratory?

(3) As these types of pedantic points have confused legal issues for years, can he urgently seek the opinion of his department to ensure that all necessary action is taken to prevent the continuation of these problems?

Answers:—

(1) I have now seen the report of the matter in "The Courier-Mail" of the 29th instant. Whether the magistrate's decision represents good law or not may ultimately be a matter for an appropriate appeal court. It would not be proper for me to comment at this stage on the validity of his judgment.

(2 and 3) I am not familiar with the other matter referred to. Undoubtedly the courts have taken a hard line in respect of this legislation. Much emphasis seems to have been placed on the letter of the law. However, the legislation is penal in character and the courts adopt a strict approach in the event of any ambiguity in expression. The legislation is administered by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Transport.

7. APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SCHEME

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

(1) Have the recommendations on the Queensland apprenticeship-training scheme following the three-month inquiry by Mr. V. J. Anderson been submitted to the State Government?

(2) What was the decision taken by the Government in regard to this inquiry?

(3) Are changes expected to the Apprenticeship Act?

(4) What concrete action will the Government be taking to ensure that more apprenticeships are provided for Queensland youths seeking skilled training and employment?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) The report and recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry into Apprenticeship 1976 was submitted by me to Cabinet on 25 January 1977. Cabinet decided that an inter-departmental committee be established to study the report and to report through me to Cabinet on the administrative and financial practicabilities of the matters contained therein. Following Cabinet's consideration of the policy aspects, I will make a statement to the House as to the Government's intentions at the same time as the report is ordered to be printed.

This committee has been established and has met on two occasions, but at least one further meeting is necessary to enable this report to be prepared.

8. QUEENSLAND STATE SERVICE UNION

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

(1) As he shows a distinct interest in the functioning of trade unions in Queensland and he has recently adopted the word scab in his vocabulary when describing his coalition partners, is he aware of the internal friction within the Queensland State Service Union, whereby certain elements are imposing external organisations' policies on union members?

(2) Is he aware that such outside influences are aimed directly at achieving a take-over at executive level?

(3) Will he see that any appointments or elections of Queensland State Service Union personnel are carried out in a democratic manner?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The honourable member's question is a prime example of political cynicism. Surely, if anyone should be aware of the take-over of trades unions by outside influences it must be he and his

A.L.P. colleagues, who have actively encouraged the subversion and infiltration of such unions by the Communist Party of Australia and the foreign masters it serves.

So far as the accuracy of his question is concerned, this is also non-existent. At an election of officers held on 1 March 1977, the president, senior and junior vice-presidents and treasurer of the State Service Union were returned unopposed. There were seven candidates for the five other vacancies. Four incumbent office-holders were re-elected and the fifth did not nominate. What a different picture we will see when the Federal leadership of the A.L.P. is contested in the near future!

9. INDEPENDENCE OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

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

(1) Have any State Governments endeavoured to introduce legislation which could force church schools to (a) introduce co-education against the wishes of the school, (b) allow students to live in a marital relationship at boarding school against the wishes of the school and parents and/or (c) employ homosexuals, Communists and atheists as teachers?

(2) Will he assure the people of Queensland that this situation will not be forced on church schools in Queensland?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I can assure the honourable member that no such legislation is contemplated in Queensland. It certainly will not be forced on church schools. I can well understand the anxiety being experienced by those schools on the points raised by the honourable member in his question, and I have no doubt that that anxiety is justified by A.L.P. policy on these matters, particularly when they have in mind what the New South Wales Labor Government has done in this regard quite recently.

10. DUPLICATION OF SECTIONS OF BRISBANE-WOODFORD ROAD

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

(1) What funds have been spent and/or allocated to each of the various sections of the project to duplicate the section of the Brisbane-Woodford main road between Bald Hills and Strathpine?

(2) What are the anticipated completion dates for the various sections of this project?

Answers:—

(1) It is currently intended that the project to which the honourable member refers will be undertaken as three separate

schemes. The first is for the earthworks and drainage, for which an allocation of \$1,321,000 has already been made. The second will be for the bridge over the South Pine River, for which no allocation has yet been made but for which the order of cost is anticipated to be \$350,000. The third scheme will be for the paving and surfacing of the earthworks and construction of the intersections at each end, for which the order of cost is anticipated to be \$200,000. Expenditure to date on the project is approximately \$200,000.

(2) Completion of the project is currently estimated at mid-1978.

11. NORTH PINE DAM STUDY

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

What is the present position regarding the implementation of the North Pine Dam study?

Answer:—

I propose to make a submission to Cabinet on the matter in the near future.

12. SCHOOL FACILITIES, ALBANY CREEK AREA

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

What provision is being made for additional (a) pre-school, (b) primary and (c) secondary school facilities in the Albany Creek area?

Mr. BIRD: Firstly, I thank the honourable member for his continued interest in the education of young people in his electorate and for his continued representations to me. I shall now read the prepared answer.

Answer:—

(a and b) At the present time action is well advanced in the acquisition of sites at Albany Creek South and Eaton's Hill for the establishment of pre-school and primary school facilities in these areas.

(c) A high school site has been selected at Albany Creek and steps are being taken to acquire the land. Objections have been received and dismissed, and the process of acquisition of the land is now proceeding within the Lands Department.

The new high school at Dakabin, to open in 1978, will relieve pressure on the Pine Rivers State High School, so that the provision of high school facilities at Albany Creek is not of immediate urgency. The provision of a new high school in the Albany Creek area is included in forward planning and the project can be slotted into the capital works programme when the need arises.

13. CHAIN LETTER, "POT OF GOLD"

Mr. Jensen, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

Will he warn the citizens of Queensland against participating in the sophisticated chain letter called "Pot of Gold" and investigate whether any banks are co-operating in this racket by forwarding bank cheques to the organisers in Canberra?

Answer:—

The scheme known as "Pot of Gold" is designed to solicit funds from the more gullible members of the public. It is a chain-letter system whereby members of the public are invited to participate in a chain-letter invitation to mail sums of money to an address in the Australian Capital Territory. Participants in the scheme are led to believe that they will receive back sums well in excess of the amounts invested. They are invited to involve others in the scheme. Chain-letter schemes such as "Pot of Gold" are illegal and have been held to constitute lotteries. Lotteries such as these are not permitted in this State. In view of the fact that the invitation emanates from the Australian Capital Territory, I intend to refer the matter to the Federal Attorney-General.

The public should ignore this blatant means of soliciting money.

14. YALLEROI POST OFFICE

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

(1) Has he read an article in "The Sunday Mail" of 27 March wherein it is reported that Australia Post is contemplating closing the Yalleroi Post Office?

(2) As this post office business is carried out by the station mistress in the railway station building at Yalleroi and this service is vital to this small township and district, will he approach Australia Post in an effort to retain this service?

Answers:—

(1) My attention has been drawn to an article in "The Sunday Sun" of 27 March, dealing generally with the closure by Australia Post of small one-man post offices in country areas of Queensland.

I am also aware that the Railway Department has received notification that Australia Post proposes withdrawing postal services from Yalleroi from a date to be determined and substituting a community bag service. The telephone exchange service will be maintained.

(2) As the honourable member will appreciate, this is entirely a matter for determination by Australia Post and Telecom Australia, but aspects of the matter

are still under negotiation with those authorities and in view of the honourable member's interest I will be only too happy to have an approach made to the Honourable the Minister for Post and Telecommunications.

15. EFFECT OF BRISBANE WATERFRONT DISPUTE ON MEAT INDUSTRY

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

In view of the disruption to services and shipping created by the union demarcation dispute on the Brisbane waterfront and the detrimental effect this is having on the beef industry and as countless thousands of jobs now appear to be threatened by the actions of these unions, what actions may be taken to assist the beef industry, which is already in a serious position, and also help to keep many meatworkers in employment?

Answer:—

As I indicated earlier this week, this tragic and irresponsible industrial dispute is a matter for the Federal authority involved and there is very little which the Queensland Government can do with respect to its settlement. I share the honourable member's deep concern for the disastrous effects it is having on not only the beef industry but on the State's and the nation's economy. The essential thing is to get the waterfront working again but the attitude of the union executives involved makes one despair for the future if this type of dispute is allowed to drag on unhindered. I would expect that the Commonwealth Government would be moving to use the powers available to it to solve this desperate situation. I certainly hope it is. I certainly expect it would, because it is well aware of the whole situation.

16. TRAIL-BIKES ON FOOTPATHS OR ROADS

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

(1) What is the position of trail-bike riders under 17 years of age who push these unregistered motor-bikes along a footpath or road to get to an area where they may use them?

(2) Are such trail-bike riders infringing the law by so using a footpath or road?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) So far as my responsibility is concerned in respect of the Traffic Act, I am advised there does not appear to be a specific existing traffic regulation dealing with this matter. However, while I am not in a position to give a legal opinion, I advise the honourable member that the Traffic Advisory Committee is presently considering the matter.

17. WORKING CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

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

(1) What are the criteria used by the Department of the Public Service Board in establishing whether State Government employees are working in cramped and unsatisfactory conditions?

(2) What does the department regard as adequate area per clerical employee?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) It has been neither customary nor practicable to determine Public Service office accommodation needs on a fixed-area basis per officer. The accommodation requirements of offices are assessed taking into consideration the nature of the accommodation available as well as any particular requirements of the offices or the classes of officers employed in them and any other particular factors which affect the allocation of floor space. Generally, accommodation for Government departments is satisfactory and there are few justifiable complaints. However, new accommodation is being provided progressively to overcome situations where there is some evidence of cramped or unsuitable conditions.

18. REGISTRATION OF OFF-ROAD MOTOR-BIKES

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

Must a trail-bike or any other type of motor-bike used solely for pleasure off the roads and in private paddocks be registered?

Answer:—

If trail or motor-bikes are used solely on private property, registration would not be required.

Motor vehicles and cycles used in areas declared as public places by a local authority are required to be registered as recreation vehicles under the Motor Vehicle Control Act of 1975.

This type of registration does not allow the use of the vehicle on a public road.

19. ACCIDENTS AND DEATHS, SEAMEN AND SHIPPING WORKERS

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

(1) With reference to newspaper reports that tankers of questionable safety standards regularly visit and revisit Australian ports, how many deaths have there been of workers and seamen involving shipping on the Queensland coast over the past five years and with what vessels were the deaths associated?

(2) How many accidents involving personal injuries have occurred on the Queensland coast in the last five years and with what vessels were the injuries associated?

(3) Have any vessels visiting Queensland ports been charged by the Australian Department of Transport with offences relating to safety and overloading and, if so, what were those vessels?

(4) Is he aware that reports also indicate that the Navigation Act gives the Australian Minister for Transport wide powers over vessels which are causing safety problems in Australian waters but that enforceable rules for tanker standards during normal operations have loopholes?

(5) What action can the Queensland Government take to fill the loopholes involving the visits of unsafe vessels to Queensland ports?

Answers:—

(1) I have not seen the reports referred to by the honourable member and I would be obliged if he could furnish me with names of the newspapers and dates thereof.

The responsibilities of the Marine Board of Queensland include investigations of marine casualties which fall within the jurisdiction of the State of Queensland. In incidents involving foreign and interstate vessels, the Commonwealth is often the appropriate authority and investigates accordingly. I understand that the honourable member is referring to large vessels and in this context I have no record of injuries fatal or otherwise occurring at sea during the past five years. I would suggest that the honourable member refer to the Commonwealth Department of Transport for information in this respect. Many overseas vessels use Queensland waters which are international on passage to and from their destinations outside the State or Commonwealth and, in consequence, unreported accidents could occur at any time without the knowledge of the Australian authorities.

(2) The situation in the previous answer also applies in this case.

(3) The Commonwealth Department of Transport has supplied me with the following list of prosecutions in Queensland dating back to January 1969:—

28/7/72 "Nikos": Faulty life-saving equipment.

22/11/71 "Venus Argosy": Faulty hatch boards, loose and out of place.

29/10/70 "Tirrana": Derrick over-loaded.

15/12/70 "Amita": Defective lifeboat.
12/1/71 "Islas Galapagos": Overloading of derrick.

22/10/69 "Delos": Using cargo gear when certificate expired.

8/10/69 "Acamar": Overloading.

9/1/69 "Eastern Argosy": Defective cargo gear.

(4) I am aware that the Commonwealth Navigation Act gives the Commonwealth Minister for Transport wide powers over vessels trading with this country. Surveyors authorised under this Act have an international reputation for being among the most stringent in the world and regularly visit vessels to check equipment, which includes cargo gear, fire-fighting appliances, life-saving requirements, navigational and radio installations. The validity of the international certificates is also verified.

Harbour masters in Queensland are also authorised under the Commonwealth Act and perform these duties. I am not aware of any loopholes for tanker standards in this country. Most operators use the International Tanker Guide to Safety, which incorporates all the necessary procedures to be followed during discharging and loading operations.

(5) Appropriate legislation and uniform codes endorsed by the Australian Port and Marine Authorities Council in regard to the carriage of dangerous goods and explosives are currently in force, together with complementary Acts in regard to pollution of waters by oil, and International Collision Regulations. Codes are updated as necessary to keep abreast of latest developments in this field.

A working group will shortly investigate safety precautions currently carried out in Queensland ports. This follows a recent seminar attended by representatives of State and local marine authorities, and the oil industry held in Brisbane recently, with a view to standardising equipment and contingency operations.

20. IMPROVEMENTS AT KARUMBA

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

(1) Is he aware that Karumba residents are looking forward to a record prawn season with approximately 235 prawn trawlers operating from Karumba as a base?

(2) As these trawlers plus 200 factory staff and several hundred persons who travel each year to Karumba looking for work will explode the population from 500 to over 2,000, what is the total amount of additional funds spent in Karumba since the last season?

(3) What State Government action has been taken to provide electricity for Karumba residents, who supplies electricity today and is it available to all residents?

(4) What State Government action has been taken to provide a proper water supply for Karumba residents, who supplies it now and is reticulated water available to all residents?

(5) What health and hospital facilities are available and are these facilities extended or supplemented during the prawn season?

(6) Will at least one extra policeman be added to the police staff for the 1977 banana prawn season to allow the night patrols to continue without undue hardship on the health of present staff?

(7) What State Government housing has been constructed since the 1976 season?

(8) What is the total length of wharves owned by the State?

(9) What provision is made for extra teachers at the school during the 1977 banana prawn season?

Answer:—

(1 to 9) I have visited Karumba on many occasions to ascertain at first hand the conditions in this remote area and to see in what way the Government can provide assistance to both the people and the local industry.

As a result of close consultation with the local member, Mr. Eric Deeral, my Government is making marked progress in overcoming difficult problems and I am confident that this progress will continue.

21. DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TOURIST SERVICES

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

In view of the importance of the tourist industry to this State and the importance of the Tourism Department, why is the position of Director-General of Tourist Services not classified at I-26 level within the Public Service structure in accordance with the level for permanent heads of other departments?

Answer:—

The Director-General of Tourist Services is not a permanent head as defined by the Public Service regulations. The classification of the position of Director-General of Tourist Services has been determined in accordance with the general practices applied in deciding Public Service classification levels, in which factors such as work value and relativity are taken into account. The position is considered to be correctly classified at its present Public Service level of I-18.

22. MOBILE SUN-CANCER CLINICS

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

(1) What action can he take to implement mobile sun-cancer clinics so that people, particularly those in country areas, can get clinical advice on how to deal with sun cancer?

(2) Could these clinics be a follow-on to the successful mobile T.B. X-ray units, which are being phased out?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I thank the honourable member for his usual interest in these very important matters affecting both the State and his own electorate. Again he has brought something to our attention that is worth investigating.

Skin cancer in the early stages can be dealt with adequately, however, at local hospitals. The advanced skin cancers, which are rare, require specialist treatment at centralised clinics at base hospitals. I would draw the honourable member's attention to health education on the subject provided by the department's Division of Health Education Council and in particular the pamphlet entitled "Skin Cancer". His suggestion will be examined in due course.

23. VISITS BY MEDICAL SPECIALISTS TO BELYANDO HOSPITALS

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

What action can he take to have medical specialists visit more frequently country hospitals in the Belyando electorate in an effort to make country people more secure?

Answer:—

As the honourable member is aware, the Flying Surgeon has been visiting hospitals in the Belyando electorate for many years. In addition, Rockhampton Base Hospital has been given approval for the appointment of a full-time physician who will make regular visits to hospitals in the area. The successful appointee has already commenced duties at Rockhampton Hospital and itineraries are being examined at the present time. Further visits by other specialists, as part of the rural health programme, will be examined from time to time.

24. FEMALES ATTENDING AUS GATHERING AT MONASH UNIVERSITY

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

(1) Did the Australian Union of Students pay a considerable portion of the air fares for female students who were delegates to the recent AUS gathering at Monash University if they were pregnant and would undergo abortion during the period of the gathering?

(2) Will he ensure that the fullest publicity is given to this unsavoury action of the AUS, which so gravely misused money conscripted from other students by

their relevant universities to be handed over unquestionably to the local students' union?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I have no knowledge of this matter, nor is any information available to my department to support this claim. I am very interested to note, however, a rising tide of criticism and questioning of the Australian Union of Students, its policies and activities and, particularly, its use of funds provided by students from throughout Australia. I sincerely hope that Australian students will forcefully question the Australian union's use of money which they have provided. In my view, there has not been enough of this questioning in the past.

25. ROAD DEATH OF COUNCIL EMPLOYEES AT DANGEROUS INTERSECTION, AITKENVALE

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Has he been informed of the existence of a letter from the Townsville Municipal Party over the signature of Alderman E. J. Lindsay, dated 11 November 1976, wherein it was clearly shown that the aldermen of the appropriate committee of the council knew of the dangerously poor visibility for road users at the intersection of Gulliver and Wellington Streets, Aitkenvale?

(2) Were two employees of the Townsville City Council riding in a council vehicle in the course of their employment killed at the intersection following a collision with another vehicle on 18 March?

(3) In view of the culpable homicide of the relevant aldermen of the council that cast these two men into eternity prematurely, will the aldermen be charged with manslaughter of the two employees or will any other criminal action be taken against them and, if not, what is the reason?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I am not personally aware of the letter and my officers have not been able to locate any evidence that the letter has come to the department. Whether or not the aldermen were guilty of any criminal negligence is a matter which a court might ultimately have to determine. Undoubtedly the police are aware of the circumstances of the collision including any deficiencies in respect of the intersection. Whether or not any person is charged with any offence in relation to the unfortunate deaths is a matter, in the first instance, for the police to determine and perhaps ultimately for a coroner. The matter is not within my jurisdiction.

26. PETROL STORAGE. BEENLEIGH POLICE STATION

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

(1) Is he aware that police at Beenleigh pump petrol out of drums into police cars and that there is a large quantity of petrol stored in a shed near the police station?

(2) Will he investigate this and if necessary allow petrol to be purchased from service stations or a depot until a safer system such as underground storage is achieved?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The method of storage of petrol supplies at Beenleigh Police Station is presently under consideration by the Commissioner of Police and appropriate action will be taken as soon as possible with the availability of funds.

27. SEWERAGE FOR NERANG STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Gibbs, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

When is it planned to connect the Nerang State School to the sewerage system?

Answer:—

Quotations for the work will be invited within three weeks. Subject to a reasonable price being received, the successful contractor will be expected to commence the work within a short time after acceptance.

28. PRE-SCHOOL FOR NERANG

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

Because of the rapid growth of the population of Nerang, will he supply up-to-date information regarding the establishment of a pre-school at Nerang?

Answer:—

Land has been acquired for the proposed Nerang State Pre-School Centre and investigations for locating the building on this site have been completed. The centre has been listed by my department on the provisional pre-school building programme for 1977-78.

29. PREFERENCE TO QUEENSLAND CONSULTING ENGINEERS

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

(1) With regard to the reduction in projects for consulting engineers and the associated loss of consulting engineers to

overseas projects, is he aware of the downturn in projects currently being undertaken by consulting engineers and the associated likely disastrous effect on future employment opportunities for Queenslanders?

(2) With a view to preserving the viability of our own consulting engineers and the continued growth and progress of our State towards the 21st Century, will consideration be given to the employment of Queensland consulting engineers on future design projects such as a tunnel under the Brisbane River?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) As much work as possible is being given to consulting engineers by the State Government and this policy will continue.

30. STUDY OF CURRENT VALUE OF THE THREE RS

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

(1) In view of the constant criticism and repeated claims made by employers, parents and some educationists that the ability to spell and numeracy skills are extremely poor both at the primary and secondary-school levels and amongst many school-leavers, what studies have been or are being carried out into these aspects of learning?

(2) If no such studies have been conducted recently, will he give consideration to carrying out same in order to ascertain the validity of the criticism and claims made?

Answers:—

(1) Periodic surveys have been conducted every five years since 1946 to gain measures of performance at the Grade 7 level of the primary school. A battery of seven tests, measuring performance in a range of skill areas, is used for this purpose.

Periodic surveys have also been undertaken at the Grade 5 level. These tests focus on aspects of reading. The last survey at this level was conducted at the end of 1976 and results are currently being analysed.

A national study of school performance was undertaken in 1975 to measure the reading, writing and numeration performance of 10-year-old and 14-year-old students in all States of Australia. The results enable comparisons to be drawn among students in Australia, Britain and the United States.

In October each year tests are administered to all Grade 7 pupils. Aspects tested include general learning ability,

reading comprehension, reading vocabulary, mathematical achievement and study skills. Although these tests are designed to provide secondary schools with information on new students, comparisons of performance from year to year are also monitored.

(2) At the present time a comprehensive test development programme is being undertaken to develop further batteries of tests for Grades 3, 5 and 7 in the primary school. No activities of a similar nature have been initiated at the secondary school level.

I would draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that Queensland is the only State in which periodic surveys of achievement of this type have been carried out regularly over such a lengthy period, and at a range of grade levels.

31. HOUSING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES;
ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) How many Housing Commission houses were built during each of the last five years for (a) rental, (b) private purchase on Housing Commission land and (c) private purchase on the purchaser's land?

(2) How many applications for (a) rental and (b) purchase are at present held by the commission?

(3) How many (a) rental and (b) private-purchase houses are planned for construction in the remaining months of this financial year?

(4) How many cluster-group houses for aged persons are planned for construction this financial year?

(5) How many of these aged-persons houses are planned for the Rockhampton district and exactly where will they be built?

Answers:—

(1) TOTAL HOUSES BUILT DURING
YEARS 1971-1976

Year Ending 30 June	(a) Rental	(b) Purchase on Commission land	(c) Purchase on Owners land	Financed through Co-operative Societies
1972 ..	1,474	119	157	496
1973 ..	1,560	120	99	532
1974 ..	1,325	46	72	677
1975 ..	2,095	87	101	1,123
1976 ..	1,777	28	199	722

For the member's information, I have added the figure for houses provided from commission finance through co-operative housing societies.

(2) (a) At 28 February 1977—6,363 families, 1,514 pensioners.

Mr. LEE: That figure is certainly very different from the 15,000 that has been quoted time after time by the honourable member for Archerfield. That is another example of the many untruths that we hear from the Idi Amin of Inala.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I asked the Minister last night not to use that term. I ask him again to address all members in proper terms.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I don't mind being insulted by sub-Norm Lee from Yeronga.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I am not prepared to tolerate slanging matches either way. The honourable member for Archerfield is being equally offensive. Members should take what I have said as a guide. All members and Ministers will be addressed in proper terms.

Answer (contd.):—

(b) The rental wait list includes people who apply on an either/or basis, that is, for rental or purchase.

In addition 443 names are listed for possible later re-contact for purchase schemes, but no application has been lodged; the drop-out rate is usually about 80 per cent.

(3) As at 24 March 1977—

(a) 1046 houses for which contracts let, 603 houses to go to contract;

(b) 238 houses for which contracts let, 151 houses to go to contract.

In addition, 804 houses were under construction at June 1976 and will be completed. A further 463 purchase houses will be supplied by 30 June 1977, by mortgage finance of new dwellings privately built.

(4) 14 groups comprising 106 units.

(5) Nil.

32. STATE BANK IN QUEENSLAND

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

(1) With reference to previous announcements that it was planned to establish a State bank in Queensland, has the proposal now been shelved and, if so, what is the reason?

(2) When does the Commonwealth-State Banking Agreement again come up for review?

(3) As the establishment of a State bank, with credit-creation powers, would be of tremendous benefit to Queensland, is he prepared to pursue this issue with the Commonwealth Government with the ultimate aim of combining the Agricultural Bank and the Housing Commission into such a banking enterprise?

Answers:—

(1) The question of the establishment of a State bank in Queensland is still under review.

(2) The term of the agreement extends to 30 June 1985 but review processes are allowed at five-year intervals. The next review date is therefore June 1980. However, this agreement relates only to the area of savings bank activities.

(3) See answer to (1).

33. YANDINA AND NOOSAVILLE CROWN INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

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

(1) Is he aware of the high level of unemployment on the Sunshine Coast?

(2) Is he also aware that the Government has purchased land at Yandina for an industrial estate and has commissioned and received development plans to develop this estate in 1977-78 due to the filling of Crown estates at Maroochydore?

(3) Has the Crown's Yandina Industrial Estate been leased back for the exclusive use of grazing?

(4) Have the negotiations for land for a Crown industrial estate at Noosaville been finalised?

(5) When will the Crown's Noosaville estate be developed to encourage and cater for industry and help reduce the high level of unemployment?

Answers:—

(1) Clearly as Minister for Labour Relations I maintain a careful vigilance on all matters affecting employment throughout the State.

(2) As Minister for Industrial Development I authorised the purchase of land at Yandina to meet the future needs of industry in that area. Subject to the availability of funds, it is proposed that the first stage development of the Yandina Industrial Estate be undertaken during 1977-78.

(3) In accordance with customary procedure in such cases, the previous owners of the land have been allowed grazing rights on the estate until such time as it is required for development.

(4 and 5) Negotiations for the acquisition of land at Noosaville for industrial estate purposes have been finalised. Development of the land for industrial purposes will proceed when demand so warrants and the necessary funds are available.

34. TRAFFIC OFFENCE BY MR. N. D. KANE

Mr. Lane, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Was a person named Neil Daniel Kane of Austral Avenue, Graceville, recently convicted at the Southport Magistrates Court on charges of being in charge of a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor and leaving the scene of an accident?

(2) Is this person secretary of the Electrical Trades Union and senior vice-president of the Queensland Trades and Labor Council and a member of the inner executive of the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labor Party?

(3) Is he aware that this information was not recorded in the daily Press and that the senior vice-president of the A.L.P. and State Secretary of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union used his influence and industrial muscle with Queensland Newspapers Pty. Ltd. to have this information kept out of the Press?

(4) Was the vehicle in which Kane was found extensively damaged and was it repaired with money from union dues?

Answers:—

(1) On 10 January 1977 convictions were recorded against Neil David Kane in the Magistrates Court, Southport in respect of the following offences—

(a) driving a motor vehicle whilst the concentration of alcohol in his blood was 140 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood;

(b) being the driver of a motor vehicle involved in an incident resulting in damage to property, failed to immediately stop such vehicle at the scene of such incident or as close thereto as possible and forthwith return to the scene of such incident.

(2) The defendant's occupation is shown on the bench charge sheet as secretary.

(3) No.

(4) I am not aware of the particular circumstances of the incident.

35. REPORT ON RIVER FERRY SERVICES, VOLUME NO. 2

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

With reference to the report on river ferry services recently received by the Metropolitan Transit Authority as volume No. 1, when is it anticipated that volume No. 2 will be received?

Answer:—

Inquiries of the university reveal that the final volume of the report should be available within a month.

36. DEEP-WATER BOAT RAMP, EDMONTON
AREA

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

(1) When will approval for a deep-water boat ramp on the Cairns inlet, in the Edmonton area, be granted?

(2) When will the work commence and the facility be available for public use?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Plans for a boat ramp at Fisherman's Reserve adjacent to the town of Edmonton have been received by the Department of Harbours and Marine from the Mulgrave Shire Council.

Funds for the construction of the ramp are not available in 1976-77 but the ramp will be considered for inclusion in the 1977-78 programme.

37. LIBRARY BUILDING, TRINITY BAY HIGH
SCHOOL

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) What consideration has been given to the lack of security for the temporary library building at the Trinity Bay High School, Cairns?

(2) Is he aware of the cost of equipment and material lost by unlawful entry and vandalism and, if so, what is the total cost to date and who was required to meet these costs?

(3) For security purposes, have alterations incorporating new overhang roof design on the western side to prevent ingress of water during the heavy wet seasonal rains and the construction of concrete masonry screen walls on the eastern and western aspects of the library building been approved and, if so, when will the work commence?

Answers:—

(1) My departmental officers report that the building is reasonably secured if doors and windows are locked and timber stops which have been provided are used in the sliding window tracks.

(2) No.

(3) No.

38. TUCK-SHOP, TRINITY BAY HIGH
SCHOOL

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) What is the present position regarding the reconstruction and extensions to the tuckshop at the Trinity Bay High School, Cairns?

(2) Were plans and cost estimates prepared and the parents and citizens' association advised in April 1976?

(3) Is he aware that the existing facilities have been operative since the school was established and that despite very high levels of school enrolments in the interim period the tuckshop remains inadequate to cope with the present situation?

(4) If so, to what extent can he reconcile this position with the undertaking given not being proceeded with, and on what date will the work commence?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) Plans and estimate of cost have been prepared but to date funds have not been available to permit this and many other works throughout every electorate in Queensland to be undertaken. The honourable member should know of the millions of dollars spent on public works in his electorate, although I might add this is not through his own representations.

39. MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTRATION
RENEWALS, TOWNSVILLE

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

As many Townsville motorists are still complaining to me about the embarrassment of not being able to attach current registration labels to their vehicles, even though the fees were paid up to three months ago, when will the Townsville office of the Main Roads Department be able to accept payment of registration renewal fees in order to overcome the present delays?

Answer:—

I cannot relate the complaints to the current situation, which shows that renewals of registration paid on 14 March 1977, received at Brisbane on 18 March 1977, are ready for dispatch on 30 March 1977—12 days later, which is not too bad. New registrations which were paid in Townsville on 8 March 1977 had certificates and labels posted on 28 March 1977. However, if the honourable member gives me details of any particular cases, I shall have them investigated.

It is intended that the Townsville office of the Motor Vehicle Registration Branch will be opened in the existing Main Roads Department building on 26 May 1977.

40. INDEPENDENT WITNESS FOR
BREATHALYSER TESTS

Mr. M. D. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Is there provision in the Traffic Act which prohibits a person from having an independent witness present when undertaking a breathalyser test in a police station?

(2) Is he aware that in Townsville recently a person charged with being in charge of a motor vehicle while under

the influence of alcohol has alleged that he did not undergo a test on a breathalyser machine, whereas two police officers signed a certificate stating that the accused did have such a test?

(3) In order to see that justice is seen to be done to people undergoing breathalyser tests in the future and for the protection and reputation of our police officers, will he request the Police Commissioner to allow persons undergoing breathalyser tests to have an independent witness present, such as a solicitor, parent or justice of the peace, to verify the blood alcohol reading on the machine?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that such an allegation was recently made during a court hearing at Townsville, the case presently being adjourned to 18 April 1977. As the matter is sub judice, I do not propose to pursue it further at this stage.

(3) Such a system has been considered on a number of occasions. Having regard to all the circumstances, I do not propose to request the Commissioner to alter the existing procedures.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HOUSTON OIL AND MINERALS; OAKY CREEK COAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. BURNS: I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to a statement in "The Australian Financial Review" yesterday that Houston Oil and Minerals had placed a tender for the German Creek Coal Development and that because it was, in his own words, "so attractive", it had been decided to give the company the opportunity to develop Oaky Creek. I ask the Minister: Can he advise whether this procedure for coal development has ever occurred before in Queensland? Can he state what are the ground rules for future coal development? Can he give an assurance that Queensland and Australian companies will at least have the opportunity of being considered for all future projects?

Mr. CAMM: Until five years ago any company had the right and privilege of applying for an authority to prospect for coal in Queensland. I personally took a recommendation to Cabinet at that time that the major coal-bearing areas in the Bowen Basin should be placed in reserve, because companies were coming in—with a majority shareholding, I might add—and taking up at least four major areas in that district and aggregating a tonnage of coal approaching 1,500 million and no development of any consequence was taking place. Those areas in the Bowen Basin were placed in reserve with the proviso that any area to be released would be released under tender and

that the tender document would be examined before a decision was made as to which company would take up a particular area.

After extensive drilling by the Department of Geological Survey and the Drilling Branch of the Mines Department, it was decided to open up one area—German Creek—because requests had been received from many companies, both overseas and Australian, for the right to participate in the mining of coking coal. Fifteen tenders were received, and I took to Cabinet for consideration four of the best tenders that were submitted and recommended that Capricorn Coal Developments Pty. Ltd. be the successful tenderer for German Creek.

At the same time, it was considered that the tender submitted by Houston Oil and Minerals was a very attractive one, in that the company was prepared to spend \$80,000,000 in the next three years. No other company was prepared to obligate itself to that extent; in the main, companies proposed spending \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000 on exploration activities within the next three years. Houston Oil and Minerals said that it was prepared to get on with the work straight away and spend that amount of money. In view of the employment opportunities that were offered to the State, it was decided that the adjoining area of Oaky Creek be made available to Houston Oil and Minerals.

If tenders had been called for the development of Oaky Creek, I presume that the companies which had tendered for German Creek could have been expected to submit virtually identical tenders for Oaky Creek, which is in the same area. There was no obligation on the Government to submit these areas for tender. I simply took a recommendation to Cabinet. That has been Government policy, because no-one had been allowed to take up areas for coal development in that region.

It must also be remembered that to start a project in that region would necessitate the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars. With the idea of easing the burden for the companies prepared to go into that area, it was decided that the development of two projects by companies that are prepared to start would ease the cost of the infrastructure for those particular companies.

We have heard talk about Australian companies wishing to participate. The opportunity is there now for Australian companies to participate. Houston Oil is obligated to bring in a 20 per cent Australian equity in the exploration stage of the Oaky Creek area—not in the development stage. When it comes to the development stage I presume it will be required to have 50 per cent Australian equity. That will be in the terms laid down in the authority to prospect. At the same time Capricornia Coal has been told that it will be expected to raise its Australian equity to conform with the requirements of the Federal Government. At the present time it

has a 26.6 per cent Australian equity in its project. The opportunity is there now for Australian companies to participate in both of these ventures if they so desire.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

DIVERSION OF EDUCATION WORKS FUNDS FROM LABOR TO GOVERNMENT ELECTORATES

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (11.59 a.m.): Many honourable members were appalled by recent Press reports to the effect that this Government had switched funds earmarked for schools in Labor-held electorates to Tory electorates, particularly the shaky Liberal and National Party seats held at present by political oncers.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Queensland Teachers' Union has evidence showing that this was going on, so let Government members try to deny it. As well, the Council of State School Organisations, the parent body, complained that money promised to schools in Labor electorates was not being spent there. I made a Press statement after learning that funds for schools in my own electorate had been diverted elsewhere and that funds for schools in the adjoining electorate of Salisbury had appeared, as it were, out of nowhere.

A "Sunday Mail" article of 13 March set out very accurately the way in which the Government was ripping money out of Labor electorates and reallocating it to Government-held electorates. It was reported that no reply was received to questions put to the office of the Minister for Works and Housing.

We all know that the Minister for Works and Housing is no Rhodes scholar, but surely he should have been able to understand the simple questions put to him by "The Sunday Mail". Obviously the allegations were true and the Minister refused to answer them.

However, in another publication—and I have a copy of it here—the Minister said that these claims were not correct. Whether intentionally or not, the Minister was misleading the readers of this suburban newspaper. He is in fact presiding over a public scandal—a scandal, I might add, that is concerning the public servants who are charged with advising the Government. It is despicable and immoral to use school children as political pawns. But that is just what the Bjelke-Petersen Government is doing.

All honourable members know that spending on school buildings is made according to a list of recommendations drawn up on

the basis of need. However, State Cabinet decided to delete projects planned for Labor-held electorates in the 1976-77 education works programme and to substitute works of a corresponding value in Government electorates. They were in three categories. Eight projects to be built from loan funds, at a total cost of \$376,000, were deleted from Labor electorates, and five projects in Tory electorates, to a corresponding value, were substituted. Other projects involved Federal money. Karmel grants of \$746,234 for nine projects at schools in Labor seats were canned and 12 projects in Tory seats—also costing \$746,234—were substituted. Isn't that some coincidence! And it's true! Other Federal funding involved 13 projects in Labor electorates valued at \$683,600. They were shelved in favour of 12 projects in Government seats, again, coincidentally, to the value of \$683,600.

In other words, the scandal administered by the Minister for Works and Housing involved the transfer of \$1,805,834 in funds for much-needed works in Labor electorates to works in Government-held electorates.

Mrs. Kyburz interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not listening to the spangled drongo; she is only a oncer.

There is no denying the injustice that has taken place. It is unbelievable that any Government could stoop so low.

So that parents throughout the State can appraise for themselves the modus operandi of this shoddy, dishonourable Government, I propose to read into "Hansard" the projects that were tampered with for political expediency. I shall read only a certain number on the list but I will make the rest available to the Press if the reporters so desire. Deletions from State Loan Funds were as follows:—

State School	Allocation \$
Wynnum West	11,000
Bundaberg West	20,000
Frenchville	25,000
Bundaberg High	60,000
Trinity Bay High	100,000
Cairns Special Education	10,000
Cairns Technical College	30,000
Mackay Technical College	120,000
	<hr/>
	\$376,000

For those projects that were deleted, the following were substituted:—

State School	Allocation \$
Woodridge	70,000
Moorooka	82,000
Oxley	10,000
Cavendish Road High	146,000
MacGregor High	68,000
	<hr/>
	\$376,000

I point out that the Moorooka State School is in the electorate represented by the Minister for Works and Housing. Again, coincidentally, the total cost was \$376,000.

Shortly after I drew attention to this tampering in January, certain extra funds were released for capital works projects. I then assumed that the purpose was to restore the projects deleted from the Labor seats. But that was not to be. Almost \$2,000,000 was spent in Government electorates. On the Government's own list many of these projects were much lower in priority than the ones deleted from Labor seats.

I have provided the House with proof. The Minister is not fit to be charged with administering taxpayers' money for the taxpayers' benefit. He plays political favourites. Any Minister who interferes with the opportunities of children on the basis of the way their parents vote is not fit to be in office. No other Government in Australia would even consider such low, cruel political chicanery. But political humbug with base overtones seems to be part of this Government's platform. The Premier's comparisons of himself with Idi Amin are no longer a joke.

I will take the opportunity today of commenting on the way in which the Minister for Works and Housing misleads the public in another way. Each time he announces the expenditure of money in Tory electorates (from funds it is fair to say his Government filched from Labor seats), he throws a bouquet to the incumbent Tory.

Mr. KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is consistently using the word "Tory". I find it offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: When he announced the new class-room block for the Leichhardt State School in the electorate of Ipswich West, on which the current member has a very shaky hold, he said this—

"In response to Mr. Hales' representations, the new class-room block will provide accommodation for a double teaching area with withdrawal area, infant mistresses' room, play area and store."

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the fact that the honourable member is continually reading his speech.

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He attempts to give the impression in his announcements, Mr. Acting Speaker, that if it was not for the local Tory member the project would not have gone ahead. This happens not just occasionally. I have seen copies of his announcements from all around the State lauding himself and the local Tory member.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention nevertheless to the fact that while reference to copious notes is permitted, the reading of speeches verbatim is not.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, but let me say that in the case of the Leichhardt school he has clearly made the member for Ipswich West equally culpable in ripping off Federal funds which the Government's own advisers said should be spent elsewhere and would have spent elsewhere before it began using children as innocent political pawns.

Mr. HALES: I rise to a point of order. I think—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I am not interested in what the honourable member thinks. I would like the point of order.

Mr. HALES: His remarks are objectionable to me and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member please withdraw the remarks.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He is only wasting my time. I withdraw them.

In the same way the member for Hinchinbrook is equally culpable in the taking of funds from a Labor electorate to build the Tully State School library block. No doubt Tully will make good use of its library, complete though it is with carpets and storytelling rooms. But I do question whether it had a higher priority than the first stage of the replacement school at Bundaberg East State School, which was shelved.

The once-upon-a-time member for Stafford has been claiming credit for the new library block at Somerset Hills State School. Now that this claim-jumping exercise has been exposed, he may not be so ready to admit that he has been involved.

The member for Gregory, which will be lost to the Country Party unless the Government gerrymander the gerrymander in that area, is given the credit by the Minister for the Government's decision to switch funds to a first-year centre at Longreach State High School.

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is continually reading his speech.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on that matter.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I believed the member for Gregory to be more responsible. I did not believe that he would be a party to such skulduggery. But politics, Mr. Acting Speaker, makes lions out of lambs when it comes to holding a seat.

I could go on with examples of the way that the Minister has administered these fund allocations given into his trust. He has

betrayed that trust. An honourable Government would dismiss him. I ask the parents of children throughout the State to look at what the Government's preparedness to meddle with the lives and chances of children in order to buy itself votes, has done.

I noticed the Minister for Works and Housing in the Chamber earlier. Probably he has raced out to get his Press secretary to write him a couple of notes. He has no chance in the world.

(Time expired.)

LEGAL TECHNICALITY IN DESCRIPTION OF BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT

Dr. CRAWFORD (Wavell) (12.9 p.m.): For years we have had difficulty in this State in implementing certain sections of the Traffic Act. Following the publication in yesterday's Press of a magistrate's dismissal of a case, some aspects of this whole matter should be looked at. We need to bring rational proposals before Parliament to amend the Act. The anomalous situation of a magistrate having to make a judgment in law on the interpretation of the words "to" and "per" exhibits a nicety in legal judgment but does not, in the long term, assist the implementation of that law. Doctors and others who have been concerned with the actual implementation of the Act have had their own problems but they have been, I believe, quite minor compared with those faced by magistrates. It is the duty of a barrister to use any legal device to have his client acquitted but, although a person would be grateful if his case were dismissed because of a legal technicality, this is not in the best interests of the legal system, especially when the legal mechanism employed is in no way related to the charge that the client is facing.

The words "to" and "per" in the context used in court to indicate milligrammes of alcohol in a set volume of blood are synonymous and other prepositions can be used in this manner. For example, "in" is an appropriate substitute. The word "per" is the Latin word for "through", which is literally translated as "through" in such words as "pervade", meaning to filter through, walk through or go through. In the usage of a biochemical measurement, there is no relevant medical or legal argument of which I am aware to say that the word "per" has any connotation of meaning other than that implied by the other words used. It is necessary therefore to make sure that the law is exactly stated and that there is no equivocation, ambiguity or room for legal manoeuvring when these other words are used in a medical sense.

In past days the law relevant to blood alcohol was so badly drafted that at one time in Queensland if a constable secured a blood alcohol sample from a patient and transferred it to another officer to take to the laboratory, this manoeuvre was interpreted as contravening the exact word of the law and it was a loophole by which barristers had

their clients acquitted. This, for obvious reasons, was a smart manoeuvre by a barrister and, as I said before, no doubt many grateful clients were acquitted by reason of the technicality; but I do not believe that this provides justice under the law in the usually accepted sense of the term.

It is important therefore that ambiguity and any shadow of doubt or loophole should be eliminated from pedantic legal terminology and that the relevant sections of the Act pertaining to traffic offences should be very clearly spelt out in basic English. It may be necessary to amend the section relating to blood alcohol levels. The current level beyond which people can be convicted in this State is 80 milligrammes per 100 millilitres of blood. It certainly will be necessary, irrespective of any change that may be made to the blood alcohol level, to state unequivocally that "to", "per", "in" and any other words used in the context of expression of the biochemical levels of alcohol in the blood be classed as equivalent to each other.

I believe this to be the major point that has arisen from the case that was reported in the Press yesterday. I believe it is a matter of urgency that action be taken to correct this anomalous situation. If this is not done, and done expeditiously, anomalies will continue and the pedantic points so beloved by the legal profession, and which can be argued in perpetuity and ad nauseam, will continue to be a hindrance to the execution of justice.

I have brought this matter before the House because I believe it to be of major importance to the community. It is important to realise that if those who draft laws do not word them in such a way that they are easily understood, a constant strain is imposed on courts in making interpretations. I do not believe that that should be part of the system under which they have to function.

The Traffic Act is administered by the Minister for Transport. He has become aware of the anomalies to which I have referred and he is prepared to introduce during the current session of Parliament the necessary legislation to overcome the problems. I therefore have pleasure in congratulating him in advance on taking an enlightened view of this whole matter. I believe that a very important part of the law of this State will operate much more expeditiously when this amendment has been made. It is therefore necessary, I think, that all members should realise the importance of these matters and be prepared to look at the facts so that not only can justice be done but it can be seen to be done, clearly and unequivocally.

GOVERNMENT WORKS ON SCHOOLS; HOME INTEREST RATES

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (12.15 p.m.): Today I wish to refer to home interest rates, but before doing that I want to refer to the poisonous invective that was introduced

into this Chamber by the honourable member for Archerfield. Each Parliament has a buffoon, and I believe the honourable member for Archerfield is the buffoon in the Queensland Parliament. I am just sorry he is not in the Chamber at the moment. He mentioned the Leichhardt State School, and I am quite happy, in fact thankful, for the money being spent at that school. I invite the honourable member for Archerfield and any other member of the Labor Party to come and inspect the Leichhardt State School. It is attended by 900 children and 45 per cent of them are housed in demountables. I doubt very much whether there is another school in Queensland faced with that situation.

Mr. Wright: What are you doing about it?

Mr. HALES: Money is being spent there now after representations from this side of the House. That is what the Opposition is complaining about; that is the problem—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Gibbs: That would be caused by bad representation before you entered this House.

Mr. HALES: That is exactly right. I was about to make that point. There is nothing wrong with the schools in the electorate of Wolston for instance. In fact, there is a pre-school attached to just about every school in the electorate. The same applies to Ipswich, and again that has been brought about by good representation.

Mr. Marginson: Good representation.

Mr. HALES: That is right, good representation from Wolston and Ipswich, and we in Ipswich West are just trying to catch up with what has been done in those electorates.

Coming back now to the subject I wish to discuss today, I think everyone in the community is concerned about home interest rates. I have in front of me many newspaper articles on the subject, and in a recent one the Federal Minister for Housing (Mr. Newman) said he had written to the State Premiers suggesting an inquiry into home-ownership, home interest rates and associated matters. He was replied to very succinctly by the Premier, who was reported in "The Courier-Mail" as having said—

"Mr. Bjelke-Petersen said 'blind Freddie' could tell Canberra what was wrong with land and housing in Australia—it was too dear, finance was unavailable and interest rates were too high."

He said that it seemed the policies of both the previous and present Federal Governments were wrong in that area.

Mr. Newman went on to say that the proposed inquiry would try to stabilise prices while giving buyers better-served property and greater protection.

I would say the only way we are going to get interest rates down in the long term is by beating inflation, and on that point I think the Federal Government is headed in the right direction. Figures available to me for last October show that the price of building materials in that month went up by only 0.4 per cent, which goes to show that the Federal Government is headed in the right direction. However, we will not get interest rates down until we beat inflation. Mr. Newman referred to better-served properties, but at the moment in South-east Queensland, particularly in areas serviced by the Brisbane City Council, it is costing \$8,000 a block just to provide services.

Mr. Jensen: How are we going to beat inflation?

Mr. HALES: It is up to the Federal Government to beat inflation, but in a moment I will give it some suggestions about how to help the home owner with lower interest rates. At present a home owner is allowed a deduction on his income tax for home interest rates. A person with a net income of \$4,000 receives a deduction of 100 per cent, but in this day and age, who earns only \$4,000 a year? A person earning \$4,000 a year could not afford to pay off a house, anyway. It cuts out completely at \$14,000. I could say to Mr. Newman that if he used this scale and increased the maximum to \$20,000 and worked into the system a provision that the home owner receive a reduction of 4 per cent on his interest rate, which would be included in his taxation payment, that would alleviate the plight of the home owner.

I have made a simple calculation under which a person earning \$12,000 would receive a net deduction from taxation of \$216 provided he borrowed \$20,000 at 12 per cent interest. Working that back, there would be \$2,400 interest on a \$20,000 loan at 12 per cent, so the \$216 would represent an effective reduction in interest of 1 per cent. Using the scale effective at present, a man with a net income of \$12,000 would receive an effective reduction of 1 per cent.

I am sure that the Federal Government ought to take cognisance of that fact. I have already written to Mr. Newman and to Mr. Eric Robinson and explained the situation to them, and I believe that a scheme could be introduced to give home owners who are paying off houses an effective reduction of 3 or 4 per cent in interest.

INADEQUACIES OF BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (12.22 p.m.): I enter the debate to ventilate what I consider to be grave inadequacies in Queensland's Builders' Registration Act, and I am pleased to see that the Minister for Works and Housing is again in the Chamber after being involved in the debate earlier.

The regrettable situation is that neither the Government nor the Act goes far enough in protecting home builders. Before I refer to the specific case that I have in mind, it is necessary for me to remind the House of some of the background to the Builders' Registration Act.

In March 1973, when major amendments were introduced, the Minister said in part of his opening remarks—

"The main purpose of the principal Act was, naturally enough, to protect the building owner, and in particular the home owner."

He continued—

". . . by setting standards for registration of builders which would ensure a satisfactory standard of competency; and by providing for the deregistration of registered builders, plus a statutory penalty, for failure to correct faulty work."

Those quotations are the essence of the matter that I will endeavour to bring before the honourable members today.

In a Press statement in 1973, Mr. K. D. Morris said—

"The purpose of the Act is to regulate the building industry so as to protect the community against any inefficient and unscrupulous practices within the building industry."

That additional statement by the Chairman of the Builders' Registration Board further highlights the arguments that I will put forward.

Having touched briefly on these examples of intent in the legislation, let me now describe the case history of a young home builder in my electorate in recent months. The couple in question arranged finance for the purchase of a new home that was to cost about \$30,000, which honourable members will agree is about the average cost of a home these days. Naturally, the buyers were not qualified in any way to judge the standard of the builders and would have relied on the inspection of the home by either the lending house, the local authority or inspectors of the Builders' Registration Board.

I digress slightly to say that I agree to a large extent with the comments made in the Chamber yesterday by the honourable member for Landsborough. He said that he was concerned about the situation in the building industry in which inspections are carried out by inspectors representing local authorities, home builders or financial or lending institutions. It is time that action was taken to tidy up that situation.

The couple I referred to took up residence in their home in the latter part of last year. It was not until rain fell fairly steadily that major defects in the tiled roof of that new home showed up very clearly. When the leaks in the roof were noticed, the owner immediately ascertained who was responsible for the construction of the house. It was a

spec home in a new housing area and had been sold through agents. From its general outward appearance it seemed to be of equal standard to a number of quite substantial homes in that area. The persons responsible were identified as two partners described as subcontractors. We all know what subcontractors are. It was further ascertained that they used the number of a registered builder to carry out that construction. Approaches were made by the owner to the subcontractors, but very little satisfaction was achieved. The owner then approached the registered builder. While the owner was making all these endeavours to obtain a reasonable amount of satisfaction, the inclement weather persisted. Honourable members would all agree that at that time of the year we get a lot of wet weather. The owner was forced to make some provision to protect the furniture and the floor coverings in his home. He put plastic in the ceiling in an endeavour to stop the seepage of water.

The owner approached the local authority in Rockhampton but was advised that it had no jurisdiction and could not help. He then approached the local inspector of the Builders' Registration Board and explained the case. The inspector visited the home, inspected the tiled roof and gave an impression of what he thought about the roof itself. The subcontractors were approached by the Builders' Registration Board inspector, and the major contractor, or the registered builder, was approached also. Again no result was achieved. Being completely frustrated and having exhausted all avenues, the owner of the home then came to my electoral office and asked if I could assist him. He gave me all the details and outlined all the circumstances to me.

I immediately took the matter up with the Builders' Registration Board. Apparently the registered builder whose number was used for the building of the home was then working for an employer on wages in another part of the area, and was in some financial difficulty. To my knowledge the subcontractors were and still are undertaking subcontract work in the area. I explored the matter in innumerable telephone calls to the secretary of the Builders' Registration Board, but still no solution or answers were forthcoming. We developed a number of proposals in discussion, but unfortunately the board gave me the impression that it does not have the power to do much about this particular situation.

The owner had to return to the finance house—in his case, the Commonwealth Bank—and tell the loans manager that something had to be done about his roof. It was necessary for him to negotiate a further loan of \$3,000 and have his entire roof replaced. That gentleman, his wife and young baby were put in this position because of standard work by subcontractors working with a registered builder's number. In addition to having to negotiate a loan for the purchase of that \$30,000 home he was forced to

negotiate a further \$3,000 loan to completely replace his roof. All I have been able to do to alleviate his problems is to obtain an interpretation from the Minister about the Small Claims Tribunal. I have been advised that the owner would probably be eligible to submit a claim to that tribunal, but for a maximum of \$700. The only satisfaction he may have at this time—I say “may” because there is no guarantee he will get a decision in his favour—is that the Small Claims Tribunal will find in his favour for an approximate amount of \$700. Even if he gets that decision he has still got to get the money out of the registered builder or the subcontractors. The Minister should look at situations such as this very closely indeed.

Last night, during the debate on the House-builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Bill certain members claimed that people should resort to common law and to the courts to settle their arguments. Take the case of a young couple who are heavily committed to paying off their land and home and who find themselves in a home with a tiled roof that is so porous as to allow water into the home saturating their property. They then find themselves forced to obtain a further loan, thereby adding to their already heavy financial burden. Under the present set-up they are not likely to be given any redress. What redress they would obtain in a court of law, I don't know; but I am sure that their immediate thought would be costs amounting to thousands of dollars that would face them just to get their case before the court. And there is no guarantee that they would win it.

Some people claim that the consumers are given too much protection. I certainly do not agree. I am extremely sorry for the young couple to whom I have referred, and I am raising their plight with the Minister so that he can be made aware of it. I am pleased to see him in the Chamber. I shall provide him with the facts in writing. His officers connected with the Builders' Registration Board are aware of it, and if the board does not take action against the registered builder concerned or if it fails to clean up the practice of some subcontractors to carry out substandard work, the Government must be held answerable to the people.

(Time expired.)

ALLEGED DIVERSION OF EDUCATION WORKS FUNDS FROM LABOR TO GOVERNMENT ELECTORATES

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (12.32 p.m.): It is with reluctance that I find myself in the position of having to reply to a speech made by a member who has handled the truth very carelessly.

Mr. Moore: A hired mouth.

Mr. LEE: That is true, a hired mouth in the sewer or gutter. Last week I heard him referred to, for several reasons, as the Idi Amin of Inala. He continually castigates people, yet he really does not know a thing about what he is saying. I say that quite positively. In his desire to gain some political mileage, he hopes to gain the Press and have his speeches reported, even though his statements are based totally on untruths.

I don't mind anyone gaining political mileage from the truth, but let it be said here and now that no member should try to use this House as a means of protecting himself against what he says. On every occasion that the honourable member speaks outside the Chamber, he is served with a writ. That shows how dreadful he is and how he uses the House as a means of protecting himself when he utters so many untruths. His credibility must surely be down in the gutter where it belongs.

I have here figures that prove that his claims are totally inaccurate. They show that of the 82 seats in this Parliament the 11 represented by the A.L.P. will have had the sum of \$51,000,000 spent in them. The total spent in all electorates is \$239,000,000, so on a percentage basis the Labor-held electorates have done very well indeed. So the honourable member should not get up and say that I am not handling my portfolio fairly and that I am not allocating funds equally.

If Opposition members give their electors decent and proper representation, they will always be given a fair go. Never have I or this Government treated Opposition members harshly. What is more, I am told that when the Labor Party was in power it treated the then Opposition as though it was a bit of dirt.

Mr. Casey: Never.

Mr. LEE: Never, my foot! A.L.P. members would not know the first thing about fairness. Sometimes I think I should do some of the things that I am accused by Labor members of doing just to show that the honourable member is not telling the truth.

Mr. Turner: You are too decent.

Mr. LEE: Yes, I am. I believe that all children all over Queensland should be represented on an equal basis. That is what I believe. The Idi Amin from Inala is telling untruths, and I hope that the Press will take up what I am saying and publicise it instead of just giving publicity to everything he says.

I will be making a ministerial statement tomorrow that will prove that the honourable member is the biggest liar that this Parliament has ever heard. The figures he gave are completely incorrect. I cannot carry all of them in my head to answer him in detail but I have here a table of expenditure

embracing every honourable member's electorate, including those represented by A.L.P. members, and I will be giving the details tomorrow. Opposition members will find that they have done extremely well. In fact, they have got more than they deserve, because some of them are not representing their electorates properly. The honourable member for Cairns has received things in his electorate that he did not know were in train until he got a letter.

As for the honourable member for Archerfield, he has not made one representation to me about anything. He has got what he has in his electorate because the Government, the Education Department and the Works Department have seen that his people and their children, need some help—not because he made representations to the Government. He has not enough gray matter to make decent representations.

Mr. Herbert: He is never in his electorate.

Mr. LEE: No.

Mr. Herbert: He is always hanging around the races.

Mr. LEE: As the Minister says, he is always at the races.

Mr. Yewdale: Do you know of any moneys that have been allocated for jobs or works in any electorate—

Mr. LEE: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. Yewdale: Let me finish.

Mr. LEE: I know what the honourable member is going to say and it is untrue.

Mr. Yewdale: Do you know of any?

Mr. LEE: No. I run the department. The honourable member is not going to tell me where I will spend money or how I will spend it.

Mr. Yewdale: You are not answering; you are not game to answer.

Mr. LEE: I shall not take up the time of other honourable members who wish to enter the debate, but I cannot allow untruths to be told in this House without making a rebuttal. I assure honourable members that tomorrow, in a ministerial statement, I will be answering every detail of everything the honourable member for Archerfield said. I will certainly reply to the honourable member for Rockhampton North after looking into the matters he spoke about relative to the Builders Registration Act.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT COURT OF APPEAL

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (12.38 p.m.): I believe that the most regrettable item to appear on the Business Paper since I entered this House is the Notice of Motion under General Business which stands on the Business

Paper for today in the name of the honourable member for Townsville South. I believe that the honourable member misunderstands the function of this House and misuses his position as an elected member of this House.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. If the honourable member cares to grovel and genuflect to the judiciary in the hope of getting a favourable decision from them, that is his business, but I represent the people—the ordinary decent people.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member must make his point of order.

Mr. Aikens: Let him get off his belly.

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

Mr. LOWES: It is not my intention to debate the notice of motion but to point out how regrettable it is that it should be on the Business Paper. The matter underlying the notice of motion may well have been avoided if there were a permanent court of appeal in this State. If a court of appeal had been established in Queensland, I believe that a magistrate, such as the one in Townsville, would be aware of the uniformity of penalties imposed—penalties that the court of appeal would have determined by considering appeals lodged with it from inferior courts.

Mr. AIKENS: I again rise to a point of order. By law, the magistrate at Townsville is required to impose the penalties decided by this Parliament, not the penalties decided by the judges.

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

Mr. LOWES: Because the uniformity of penalty would have been known to the magistrate, such an unfortunate occurrence would not have occurred. A court of appeal was established in New South Wales and came into operation on 1 January 1966. It is the one State that has such a court of appeal. It followed the example set by New Zealand and Ontario and the system that operates in the United Kingdom. It is a system that has worked very well in New South Wales since 1966.

One might well ask the reasons for establishing a court of appeal, and why there should be a change from the Queensland court of appeal as constituted by judges of the Full Court to a court of appeal constituted by permanent members. The present Full Court of Queensland is made up of three of the 17 judges, with judges coming occasionally from Rockhampton and Townsville—the Central and Northern judges. Three judges constitute the Court of Criminal Appeal or the Full Court, depending on whether civil or criminal appeals are being heard. The honourable member for Townsville South said that the members of the

Supreme Court who constitute the Full Court scratch each other's backs. There is no suggestion of that.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not want to keep taking points of order, but let us get this straight.

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

Mr. AIKENS: The motion was not put on the Business Paper because of the action of the judges but because of the loutish-like language used.

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

Mr. LOWES: The advantages of a court of appeal are numerous. That court is more efficient and the quality and status of the court is higher. It is recognised readily that it is much better for judges sitting on appeal to be able to work as a team. In that way there is uniformity of thought in all of the judgments that are given. The judges adopt a common approach to certain matters. This is revealed in the decisions of such courts, which decisions are binding on all inferior courts. It is proper that the judges who write their decisions have ample time and all facilities necessary, including the advantage of reference to their brother judges to discuss the matter that has been argued.

At present, the time spent by a judge in Brisbane on appeal work is divided equally between the time taken to hear the appeal and the time taken to write the judgment. It may seem to some people that an extraordinarily long time is taken up in writing judgments, but this is an important function because those judgments are binding on all inferior courts.

Speed and efficiency are two matters to be considered. Speed is not a problem here. At present there is no delay in the Full Court. Efficiency is a matter which may be increased due to the constant writing of judgments.

I have been informed that the Queensland Bar Association has already put a recommendation to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General that such a court be introduced. I have discussed the matter with several Ministers and they appear to be in agreement on the institution of such a court. I therefore recommend to the Minister for Justice that he bring down legislation similar to that introduced in New South Wales in 1966 and I recommend to all honourable members that they support that legislation when it is introduced.

TAIL-TAGGING OF CATTLE

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (12.45 p.m.): I wish to speak this afternoon on tail-tagging in the beef industry and to refer to amendments to the Stock Act that were introduced here and approved by Parliament. The reason

given for the legislation brought down by the Minister for Primary Industries was to make it possible to trace back disease in slaughter cattle at meatworks. As a member of the Minister's committee, I objected strongly to this legislation.

I represent a large cattle-producing area and I claim to have a good knowledge of animal husbandry and the management of properties and livestock. I acknowledge that the Department of Primary Industries has over the years conducted a very comprehensive campaign in the testing of herds for brucellosis and tuberculosis. We are told that unless cattle can be identified, overseas beef markets will suffer to a great extent.

The Minister's committee and his department investigated a method of back-tagging. I opposed it because the tags did not stay in position. After much further deliberation the Department of Primary Industries recommended a system of tail-tagging. Under this system the number of the property from which the stock came was placed on the tag. Legislation requiring such tail-tagging was passed by the House last year.

This requirement has not been received very favourably in the cattle industry. It has always been the aim of good management to have cattle arrive at meatworks free of bruising. The less handling there is of beasts, the less likely they are to suffer bruising. To tail-tag cattle for slaughter, they have to be placed either in a crush or in a yard where the tagger has to put one hand on the tag, the other on the tail, and somehow get the tag around the beast's tail. I know of a case in which a producer received a letter from the meatworks which said in effect, "Beast tail-tagged No. so-and-so was diseased", yet the cattle sent from that property had not been tail-tagged. They were sent direct for slaughter. Tail-tagging is therefore not a very efficient way of identifying cattle as the tags can become mixed up. When one lot is killed the next comes on line, and in this situation identification by tail-tagging is not infallible.

I should now like to make some comments on bruising of cattle. Bruising has over the years cost the cattle industry millions of dollars. From time to time animal husbandry officers of the Department of Primary Industries advise cattlemen how to eliminate bruising. The tail-tagging legislation would be one of the greatest contributors to the bruising of livestock ever implemented by any Government. The benefits derived from tail-tagging of cattle for slaughter have to be weighed against the exceptional increase in bruising that has recently been brought to my notice by two managers of meatworks in Central Queensland.

I would also like to make a few comments on the tail-tagging of store cattle. To me this is a complete waste of time—a completely futile exercise. All it has done is create problems on properties because the landowner is inconvenienced and put to great

expense. Tail-tagging takes time, and time is money. Land-owners have been put to great expense but it is a futile exercise because it is quite possible that a store beast can change hands two or three times before it ever reaches a fattening paddock. I would like to know why stock inspectors are making people tail-tag store cattle. During the deliberations of the Minister's committee I opposed this provision. I pointed out how ridiculous it was because, as I said, from the time they are weaned until they end up in a fattening paddock they could pass through three or four properties, yet it is the property at which they were tail-tagged to which the inspectors go to check on disease. The disease could have been contracted during the weaning stage, probably three or four properties removed, and a tail-tag would not indicate to the person concerned where that beast had been bred, whereas a fire brand would. This is the point I come back to.

I believe that ultimately we will have to rescind this stupid regulation requiring that cattle be tail-tagged for identification purposes. I believe we must return to the practice of fire-branding because this at least gives some indication of where a beast has come from. I oppose tail-tagging because of the high labour costs, the incidence of bruising and the inconvenience it causes. The regulation clearly states "cattle for slaughter", yet we find that because somebody sends two cows with 18 bullocks for slaughter he is told to tail-tag all of the cattle. I know cows should not be mixed with bullocks for slaughter, but even if the two cows are on their own and are to follow the 18 bullocks to be slaughtered they still have to be tail-tagged. These regulations were introduced by the bureaucracy at the expense of people on the land, and this reflects the inexperience of some officers in the department. I stress that the high incidence of bruising should be eliminated, and this can be achieved only by identifying stock by fire-branding as set out in the Brands Act.

NEED TO CATER FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (12.53 p.m.): In rising to speak in the debate on Matters of Public Interest I wish to draw the attention of the House to a situation that exists in education in Queensland but not to speak specifically to those areas that seem to have taken up all the space in the Press in the last couple of years, such as primary school education and internal assessment as required by the Radford Scheme. When we speak about education today we seem to talk about Grade 7 and then go straight to Grades 9 and 10 and then on to the internal assessment in Grades 11 and 12. All along the line Grade 8 is left out.

It is quite some time—I think back in the early 1960s—since the last Scholarship examination was held, and since that time there appears to have been a change in the maintenance of standards in the tasks of reading,

writing and arithmetic. By that I mean that when a student in Grade 8 had to sit for the Scholarship examination he strove to achieve a standard of competence in that public examination and to prove he had a certain amount of ability, particularly in the basic skills. When the system was altered and Grade 8 was no longer a primary school class it became more or less a transition year. It is a year in which children who have not really had sufficient habitual experience in the skills of the first seven grades of primary school, are expected to tackle the much more broadly based and detailed subjects that they have to study in secondary school. So the 8th grade year is a sort of carry-over period in which they begin to get information about what is involved in their secondary studies. Instead of improving and capitalising on the competence that they have gained during their seven years at primary school, the concentration on the level of competence altered. There is no longer a concentration on seeing that the level of competence is maintained; rather they are expected to take on more broadly based and detailed subjects. The emphasis is on knowledge and understanding rather than experience and expression of their own particular abilities.

I believe that the research section of the Education Department needs to look carefully and closely at the 8th grade. At a time when primary schools throughout the State are facing some difficulties because of the decreasing number of students attending them, it would be of positive benefit to these schools if the 8th grade became a final year of habitual confidence in the primary school, and this would also reduce a great deal of pressure on secondary schools.

Mr. Jensen: In my day children who could not pass Scholarship could not sit for a technical college entrance examination.

Mr. BYRNE: Examinations for standards of entry to technical colleges are held indirectly. Apprenticeship education is another area of priority, but I am speaking now specifically of the gap period. It is the year that is not spoken of by the media or by educators; it is the year that seems to be a missed year for schoolchildren. They are outgoing, optimistic children in 7th grade. Suddenly they go into 8th grade, at the bottom of the secondary school, and they feel that they are squashed. Much of their initiative is taken away from them by that fact alone. If they knew they had achieved the necessary levels of competence and standards in English, and particularly the ability to write it, they would go into grades 9 and 10 and handle with much more confidence and much greater knowledge detailed subjects such as science, history and languages. At the moment it is like a battering ram. In the education of 8th graders, I think it might be more suitable, instead of going into the area of secondary subjects as they do now, for them to try to

maintain the habitual standards of competence that they have achieved up to the 7th grade year. That would certainly be of benefit to primary schools and to the children. It would also be of benefit to the community to know that children had acquired the basic skills before going on to more detailed subjects where knowledge is more important than the means of expressing that knowledge. It would enable the required standard of excellence and competence to be achieved.

The problem existing in education today is not so much the system, as the implementation of that system in the present structure. For example, it is totally absurd to have a study course based on two semesters that operates on a three-term year. Perhaps that can be done away with by the end of the year so that children can go into studies rationally the following year. Children will then be studying in semesters and will have a break at the end of each semester. They will be able to assess their position and know the results of one semester before beginning the next semester. As I said, the present system is completely absurd. Children finish their exams on a Friday and begin the next semester on a Monday, and they are unable to assess where they stand. The problem is structural rather than systemic. We must look at it from two points of view: firstly where 8th grade students stand in the level of competence; secondly, where semesterisation stands in the system of assessment.

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

GREENVALE AGREEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (2.15 p.m.): I move—

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

I think that it would be correct to summarise the debate at the introductory stage to the effect that honourable members are in agreement that the Government has taken the correct action in giving the undertakings that it has given so as to ensure that the project continues to operate as planned.

I have already clearly outlined the purpose of the legislation and the details of the Government commitments contained in the restructuring agreements, and replied to some of the aspects raised by honourable members in the introductory debate.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the question as to whether the future prospects of the project have been carefully studied prior to the decision to make the commitments contained in the agreements scheduled to the Bill. I can assure honourable members that all information that is presently available concerning the project's future prospects has been carefully examined and assessed by Treasury officers. However, the

decision recently taken and resulting in the measures now before us obviously could not be taken only with regard to whether the project now appears sound. A decision was taken in this light when the State originally involved itself in the large guarantee commitment and, as I have pointed out, there was every reason to believe at that stage that the project would be a success. Obviously, because of the factors which have since reacted against the project, one cannot now have the same degree of confidence that existed at that time. Nevertheless, the benefits which the State will receive in rail profits, royalties, employment, and in many other ways continue to justify the State's involvement.

Now that the project has got into difficulties, the decisions which the State now has to make are similar to the decisions which have to be made by the unguaranteed lenders, that is, what is the approach which would enable the best return from the project for the benefit firstly of the lenders and later for the equity holders. There can be no turning back at this stage and reconsidering whether the State should or should not be involved. The decision to participate in the new arrangements so as to ensure that the project continues in the hands of the present partners is the only logical one that could be made in the circumstances. I would point out, in this respect, that similar assessments have been made independently by all other lenders—including large German, United States and Japanese organisations and some of the largest financial institutions in Australia—and that each has come to the same decision as the Queensland Government. Each of the lenders has made very substantial concessions, similar to those made by the Government, in order to see arrangements made to pull the project through.

While I can assure honourable members that the correct decision has been made at this stage, I wish to make it clear that it is impossible to predict what the future will bring. Much depends, in particular, on future movements in the world nickel price, and that depends on a large number of unpredictable factors.

Mr. Jensen: I would hate to have my money in it like those poor beggars who lost millions.

Mr. KNOX: They are not going to lose their money.

Mr. Jensen: No, they will come out just square, probably.

Mr. KNOX: Maybe. At least they have the confidence and the ability with their knowledge to say that the project should go on. They are prepared to take the risk, and so are we.

The Leader of the Opposition also asked whether the project was in possession of guaranteed contracts for the sale of the

nickel product. My predecessor, Sir Gordon Chalk, made this very clear in August 1975 in his answer to questions from Opposition members, including the Leader of the Opposition. He pointed out that, before the Government had entered into any guarantee undertakings, Government officers first examined the firm long-term contracts which the partners already had for the sale of approximately 80 per cent of the proven resources of the field. These contracts are of course still valid and binding on the project's customers. They lay down a price to be paid for the Greenvale nickel, and include a provision for the escalation of that price based on any increases which may occur in the world nickel price. I do not need to remind honourable members again, however, that the determination of the world nickel price is beyond the control of the joint venturers, and that increases in that price have not occurred in line with the general level of inflation over the past five years or so.

With respect to questions asked by honourable members concerning the possibility of converting processing facilities to coal from oil-burning, I would point out that it is technically possible to reduce only approximately 50 per cent of the project's oil usage by so doing. The remaining 50 per cent is unavoidable. Conversion has at times been completed in respect of those facilities which it is technically possible to convert to coal-consuming—the ore dryers and the power station—but major additional capital resources would be required for this, and such resources are just not available to a concern which is known to be already facing financial problems. Such a decision also, of course, involves difficult predictions as to how relative oil and coal prices will move in future. The conversion costs are much too heavy and the work involves too long a lead time to be chopping and changing from one fuel to another. If a decision were made to convert to coal-burning, it could take some four to five years before conversion could be completed.

There was some discussion as to the hurried passage of legislation affecting the project in the past, and I would like to take the opportunity to explain to honourable members the reasons why this Bill has been introduced late in the session of Parliament and why it has been important that the Bill be proceeded with quickly.

Negotiations concerning the restructuring have been continuing for some considerable time with a view to having the proposals in operation before the project's loan instalment date of 31 March 1977 falls due.

I might say that this has been one of the greatest problems I have had since I took office as Treasurer. Almost weekly I have had it as a continuing problem.

Mr. Burns: As I understand it, they have been saying for two years that they were going to have trouble with these repayments

in April, and now we have to rush it through late in March. Why couldn't we have done it last year?

Mr. KNOX: Even between Christmas and New Year I was talking to people on the phone as to whether it should be wound up or proceeded with.

Mr. Burns: You actually got down to talking about winding up?

Mr. KNOX: There were people who were deeply concerned about the project and about whether it should continue. A lot of discussions have been held between lenders and lenders, between lenders and the joint venturers and between myself and just about everybody in an effort to convince one another that it was worthy of continuing support.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. KNOX: This is the homework that has had to be done, and I have been involved in it on a weekly basis since August of last year. An enormous amount of work is entailed.

Tremendous difficulties arise from having such a multiplicity of lenders involved. I have never met such a large group of people with so many interests all over the world. It is difficult to convince them that the project has some future prospects. As I say, everybody had to be convinced—not by argument, but by facts and studies put before them showing that it was worth while continuing.

Negotiations with me were commenced last August or September and it has taken all the time since then to get everybody together. It was only three weeks ago that everyone assembled together in Melbourne at a two-day conference, at which all lenders said they would continue their interest in it, on the condition that the arrangements that were made would be formalised by the Queensland Parliament—not by the Government but by the Queensland Parliament. This is important. If that were not done the talks would amount to nothing more than conversations around the table.

The schedule sets out the new arrangements, and they are very precise. They provide for a lot more checks and balances and controls than those placed on any other company in Australia. Audits will be carried out, reports are to be provided and so on.

Mr. Jensen: Have you got the unions to give any guarantee on this at all?

Mr. KNOX: No, I have not. I shall dwell on that aspect in a moment.

Mr. Jensen: It's about time you did.

Mr. KNOX: I do not think I have an obligation to do that.

There are 24 lenders involved and it was, of course, necessary to arrive at a conclusion on principles and to document those principles in a manner acceptable to all parties.

It is understandable that this proved to be a long and drawn-out process, which has only just been completed in time to bring the legislation before the House and have it considered by the 31 March deadline. If the matter had been permitted to stand over until the next quarter date, the project would have been in an impossible situation.

A lot of discussion took place during the introductory stage on the effects of industrial disputes. The project has had its problems in this regard but no purpose is served in reviving past experiences at this crucial stage. However, it has to be borne in mind by all of those involved that the future of the project is going to depend greatly on co-operation between management and employees to maintain overall costs at a level which can be supported by market prices. Otherwise what we are doing here today will have no lasting value and the joint venturers, the lenders, the employees and the State as a whole will all be heavy losers.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (2.26 p.m.): The Opposition supports the purpose of this Bill, that is, to allow the State to enter into an agreement between the two partners in the Greenvale nickel project and all of the lenders. I understood the Treasurer to say that there are 24 lenders but I see that 28 are referred to in the Bill itself. Two major companies are engaged in the project, namely Freeport Nickel and Metalsex, but 28 groups are mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. Knox: They are the lenders.

Mr. BURNS: The Minister said that there were 24 lenders.

Mr. Knox: There are the State, itself, and the joint venturers.

Mr. BURNS: That makes 27.

Mr. Knox: I will find the other one for you.

Mr. BURNS: As I said at the outset we support the Government's intention to introduce a Bill to allow agreements to be signed between the State, Freeport, Metalsex and the lenders, to enable us to set out our own obligation as a State in the debt restructuring arrangements designed to overcome what has now been called the financial difficulties faced by the project.

I accept the Treasurer's assurance that the current restructuring arrangements are necessary because of the inability at current nickel prices to generate sufficient cash flow to meet debt payment obligations falling due in respect of the project. I still take umbrage at those who want to blame anyone or anything but the worker for problems associated with the works.

From a reading of all the stories written about this project it is apparent that the price of fuel oil is a major problem. The oil-cost factor was estimated at \$5,000,000 a year but the cost of oil has gone up 500 per

cent since then. Reference was also made to the depressed world demand for nickel. I again reiterate my original suggestion that INCO and other companies involved in nickel world pricing arrangements are responsible for keeping the prices down.

The more I look at information supplied by the Parliamentary Library, the harder it is to see how we can get away from the fact that INCO and others can keep the world nickel price depressed if they want to. It is clear that INCO, with Falconbridge Nickel Mines Limited and Sherrit Gordon Mines Limited—they are the three major companies—establish a world price and are able to manipulate it to suit themselves. INCO will continue to do that.

I recall that the original project was to cost \$173,000,000, that Metalsex could find only \$40,000,000 in Australia and had to find the other \$133,000,000 through Freeport and others borrowing around the world. At that time there was no Government guarantee. As we can see from the list of borrowers, most of the money came from Japan, the United States and Germany. Later, we found that the \$173,000,000 associated with the project had increased to \$223,000,000. At that time on Sir Gordon Chalk's advice, the Government decided to guarantee the insurance companies who were to lend the extra \$50,000,000.

I understand that a major flaw in the plant design was discovered then; the metal cores sent overseas for testing in the pilot plant in America contained a certain amount of dirt. When we tried to get the project operating, the jaws were torn out of the plant by the hard material that was being crushed. As a result we had to find a further \$20,000,000. In 1971, when we started, we guaranteed to pay principal and interest to a maximum of 8 per cent on \$50,000,000. By 1974, as a result of the flaw in the design of the plant, that amount escalated to \$70,000,000.

In 1975 the insurance companies decided they wanted to pull out. I can remember the headlines in those days and I can remember Sir Gordon Chalk's explanation in this Parliament about his having to spend a considerable amount of time convincing them not to pull out and that we would have to come to the party and extend the guarantees. At that time we were told—

“... the Government agreed to provide guarantees in respect of the payment of interest at 10½ per cent per annum on those interest payments deferred under the arrangements which had been previously guaranteed. Totalling \$12,746,036. The repayment of principal and interest on \$7,000,000 of the Metals Exploration contribution was also guaranteed by the Government. The interest payments which were deferred under the 1975 arrangements will recommence to attract interest after 1985.”

I suppose that 1985, if not before then, will be the next time that we debate this matter.

I am concerned at the totals, because 8 per cent on \$70,000,000 is \$5,600,000 a year; 10½ per cent on the other \$12,000,000 is at least another \$1,200,000 a year and 10 per cent on the \$7,000,000 that we guaranteed is another \$700,000. So we are talking of \$7,000,000 or \$8,000,000 a year in interest payments that we could be called upon to guarantee. I am told that any money we pay will be recoverable later, but—

“The State will be required to meet deficiencies in interest payments up to the guaranteed rate (mainly 8 per cent per annum) and in principal payments in respect of loans guaranteed by the State after the project has applied all excess cash over \$10,000,000 towards debt-servicing commitments.”

This is only recoverable at a later date if and when the project becomes profitable.

I should like an explanation of the exceptions because, from reading the 1975 agreement and the debate at that time, I still find difficulty in knowing where we clearly spell out the terms of this clause, which reads—

“There will be an exception to this in the case of interest accruing between 1 January 1977 and 31 December 1985 on the interest which was deferred under the 1975 arrangements.”

Was that one of the capitalisation arrangements at the time—that all interest payments were to be added to the capital cost? We are now told that these items will not be recoverable against the project and that—

“These irrecoverable amounts, which will total approximately \$11,600,000, including interest up to the date of payment by the State, will not have to be paid by the State until 1981 and later, and mainly over the years 1986 to 1988.”

I cannot remember the explanation being given in 1975 that we would accept as a commitment of this Government the \$11,600,000 worth of irrecoverable interest. When we were talking of going from \$70,000,000 to \$86,000,000 the \$11,600,000 could have been somewhere in the middle. But I cannot find it in Sir Gordon Chalk's speeches or anywhere else in “Hansard” at that time. I should like an explanation of why we are placed in the position that we cannot recover some parts of our interest repayments.

In his introductory speech the Minister said—

“The State will, under the arrangements, be required to outlay quite substantial amounts. The precise amounts will, of course, depend upon the future profitability of the venture, and this in turn depends very largely on the movement in nickel prices relative to movements in production costs.”

Later on he said—

“The State will not be at an overall loss unless unrecovered advances to lenders exceed the level of rail profits and royalties relative to the project.”

At that stage he is saying that we might lose.

Mr. Knox: If the project fails, we all lose.

Mr. BURNS: Of course, but the Treasurer did not say, “If the project fails”. What he is saying is that we might lose if we do not get enough out of the railways and the royalties. Probably we ought to give some credit to Jack Houston because for 10 years he tried to get the Government to increase royalty payments.

Mr. Knox: We put the royalties up and we have a very profitable railway line and what could happen is a fall in the nickel price.

Mr. BURNS: The nickel price has been fairly stable for some time. The American price has been \$US2.20 since August 1975. That indicates a fairly stable nickel price. The increase in Australia resulted from the change in the value of the dollar.

In the Minister's reply at the introductory stage he did not mention the loss on the railways. He said—

“What we can say with certainty is that whatever the State's commitments to the project, they are more than covered by the railway profits and royalties that we gain—assuming that each year it is able to be productive.”

That, of course, is the great assumption.

I should like to know the amount obtained in rail freights from the Greenvale project last year. We should know this when we are talking about what we might have to pay next year and the \$11,600,000 that we will not be able to recover in interest payments. What was paid to the Government in rail freight last year?

What happens if the project goes broke? This is the only reference to this point that I have been able to find in the Minister's speech—

“In so far as concerns security for recovery of these payments, the State will participate with other lenders in the first charge over the project's assets in the event of a default situation arising.”

I suppose that means that the Government is a first mortgagee. It is guaranteeing \$86,000,000 for this project and in doing so it is taking a rather responsible stand because the partners in the venture require ratification of the proposal by this Parliament so that they can wave it around and show it to lenders around the world as proof of the Government's support.

I again say that the Opposition has no objection to the proposal. In fact, we strongly support any move to keep the project viable and the work-force engaged. But what happens if we do get into trouble? The Minister said in reply to an interjection of mine that last Christmas there was a possibility that the project would be closed down. Under those circumstances, we should have a clear idea of what would happen if it closed. Would the Government be up for repayment of the loans? Obviously it

would be. The major point is to make certain that we are aware of our total commitments in the near future. We are told that we have commitments in interest payments and other payments. What is the total sum involved?

The Opposition has no objection to the Bill. I believe that we should be watching closely all the time the operations of this project. We should require of it continuing feasibility studies not only in relation to the operation of the mine and its viability but also the operation of the plant.

Mr. Aikens: Don't talk to the Townsville Trades and Labor Council.

Mr. BURNS: The honourable member for Townsville South spends most of his time attacking workers and complaining about them. Whilst some workers could possibly be criticised, the average working man works fairly hard, does his job and believes in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Almost every worker I know would want to see this project continue. The few who, like the honourable member for Townsville South, hate workers and get upset by the very mention of them should hang their heads in shame when others are trying to do something about keeping projects such as the Greenvale operation viable.

The problems experienced by the project were tied up with fuel oil costs. They were tied up with bad design and a flaw in the plant. Another factor has been the price of nickel on the world market. We welcome this move but we want to know on behalf of the people of Queensland how much it will cost each year to keep the project going and what will happen to the plant and our guarantees if the project goes broke.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (2.38 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support of the legislation. Both he and I have indicated its importance. On the question of what would be involved if the project wound up—I think it should be clearly understood that we would have to find \$86,000,000. But, as I have been able to point out to the lenders, and I think Parliament should know, because of the commitments over a period of time to meet principal and interest, we would not feel obliged to meet that repayment in a lump sum.

Mr. Burns: Only if it went broke?

Mr. KNOX: Not even if it went broke, if I may use that term. We believe that we would not be obliged to make a lump-sum payment.

Mr. Houston: There is a doubt?

Mr. KNOX: There would be a doubt. We can never be certain about this until somebody takes us into a court and decides what it should be. There is no way in which this can be termed a matter of fact until a court

decides it. This was one of the important levers in convincing many lenders, who might have had doubts, that a guaranteed lender could not pull out of the project and expect the Queensland Government to find its commitment pronto.

Mr. Burns: A lot of them did, though, in 1975. A lot of those insurance companies wanted to pull out.

Mr. KNOX: I am not aware of that in those terms. Nobody expressed that to me in those terms. They may in their own board rooms or somewhere else have considered it, but as far as the State is concerned the advice that we have is that the terms of our guarantee are such that all we are obliged to meet is that part of the guarantee which is due, not the total amount in one lump sum. So that if a lender—I am speaking hypothetically because no lender actually put this to me as bluntly as this—thought he could pull out or cause the thing to be wound up and get his money, he would be wrong. He would have to fight for it. The Leader of the Opposition can work out how much that would cost and how much time it would take. The lender would probably be better off accepting the sort of advice that we have accepted. We are not trying to be devious or smart with the lenders. That was the way in which we thought it was designed, and when it was looked at—I asked for it to be looked at—we came to the conclusion on the advice we received that that was in fact the situation. I believe the lenders may have looked at it in the same light as ourselves and come to the same conclusion. So if it were to wind up tomorrow we would not have to find \$86,000,000 by 6 o'clock tomorrow night. I think that should be clearly understood.

The Leader of the Opposition asked me where the 28th lender was. The A.N.Z. Bank is mentioned twice because it is a lender as well as representing other lenders. It has two roles. In fact, the A.N.Z. Bank's interest in this agreement is rather crucial to the whole operation because it represents the main Australian interests in the project outside the Queensland Government.

Mr. Burns: Might I by way of interjection ask a question I forgot to ask when I was on my feet? What about Intermarine Australia or Patrick Marine after the collapse of Patrick Partners? Is it still in the same position?

Mr. KNOX: I cannot answer the question. The Leader of the Opposition has asked me a question without notice and I have not looked at it, but I understand everything is in order.

He also raised the matter of the \$11,600,000 which I mentioned in my introductory speech yesterday. It is a new initiative. It is not part of the 1975 arrangement, and therefore he would not have heard it mentioned until I mentioned it yesterday. It is interest on interest which the guaranteed lenders, along with other lenders, have, with

our backing, agreed to waive, and if it is not met we have to meet the losses in this respect.

Mr. Burns: We have decided this is part of it?

Mr. KNOX: Yes, it is part of the deal, and that is the only major commitment that I can see at the moment.

Mr. Burns: That would be the first time we have guaranteed cash. In fact we lose it. We give them \$11,600,000.

Mr. KNOX: One could say that we lose it, but as I said yesterday, we are more than covered. One has to do a plus and minus operation. We are more than covered by royalties and rail freights—rail profits, not just rail freights. This concession we have to make, and this is the only concession I hope we have made (it may not be a very serious concession, either), was necessary to enable the project to see some degree of light at the end of the tunnel.

One of the alternatives that was put to me was that the Queensland Government should sacrifice rail profit. Quite early in the piece I refused to accept that because I did not believe that that proposition should become part of a long-term agreement. I was not even prepared to consider it as a short-term proposition, but that was not the proposition that was put to me. I do not believe that we should be looking at sacrifice of rail profit as part of the contribution to meeting interest due. That would certainly have provided some cash straight away, but that was not the nature of the project. We are not only providing employment for a number of people; we are also obtaining royalties and profit from the railways as a benefit to the State. Otherwise, why begin the project? The mineral might as well have stayed in the ground. So I was not prepared to have the rail profit put into the ring as one of the negotiating points.

If interest kept going up on unpaid interest, the lenders would never see any possibility of success. So we had to look after the question of interest on interest to that extent, otherwise the proposal would never have been considered.

The other matter which probably is overlooked is that there is no interest on deferred interest, as I mentioned yesterday. If there had been interest on deferred interest—and this can be worked out very quickly with a computer—the project would have become financially non-viable. The lenders made that sacrifice, and they made it after consulting their own principals, the people with whom they deal at the other end, whether in the United States, Germany, Japan, or somewhere else. It has been a major task to get in touch with all the people involved with whom we have no direct dealings.

I have not at my fingertips what rail freights amounted to last year, but I can get that information—it is available—and let

the honourable gentleman know what it is. The important thing about rail freights is not so much the freights themselves as the profit.

Mr. Burns: Can you get the profit figure?

Mr. KNOX: I might be able to get the profit on what has actually been handled. I cannot tell the honourable gentleman what the profit might be in the future. It is a profitable venture for the railways. As everybody agreed right from the beginning, we got virtually a free railway line, and I think the honourable member for Mourilyan pointed out what has flowed from having that new railway line available. It has provided services that were not available previously. I remember flying out from Townsville over this area before the railway line had even been surveyed, and I certainly believed then that the opening up of the country by the railway line in itself would be an intangible benefit that must be represented in dollars—someone might care to make a study of it—for that area of the State and, indeed, possibly for the benefit of the State directly.

Mr. Houston: It would not be viable without the nickel, would it?

Mr. KNOX: No, it would not be. We had to do some discounting. As I pointed out in my speech earlier today, we are in a locked-in position. We cannot afford to let the project go, but in the consideration of it—and we looked at it very seriously—we believed that it was not worth winding up, that there was too much value in it to wind it up, not only in terms of human and social values but also in terms of funds. Indeed, it would cost between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000 to wind up the project.

Mr. Burns: Is that what it would cost?

Mr. KNOX: Yes, it would cost between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000 to wind it up. It would be very foolish for us to do that in the light of information supplied to us by independent examiners who looked at the cash flow and the viability of the project over the next few years. They satisfied not only us but also all the lenders and the subordinate lenders that this was a project worth supporting and continuing to support, even though some sacrifice would have to be made at this end. When it reaches the 25 years' stage or the 20 years' stage, the profit at the other end is so impressive that all the lenders, including ourselves, believe that they will be able to cover their situation.

Mr. Jones: You may have run out of ore by that time.

Mr. KNOX: Everybody knows that the viability of this project is based on a fixed term.

Mr. Burns: When did the term start? 1973?

Mr. KNOX: I couldn't say offhand.

Mr. Burns: I was working out a period of 20 years. We could expect the plant to be finished in, say—

Mr. KNOX: I think it could be safely said that by the turn of the century it should not be there, but the railway line will be.

The other thing which has been overlooked is that there are not many people in the world with the capacity to handle this lateritic nickel. Freeport Nickel can. Not many others know the processes involved and how to treat this very difficult ore. Because of the nature of the processes involved, it is a rather specialised undertaking.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. KNOX: All I can say is that the project is helping considerably to make sure that that part of Queensland gets the development it deserves. The people who risked their capital are still prepared to continue to risk it—not only the people who are guaranteed lenders but the people who are not guaranteed. Most of the lenders in this project are not guaranteed. They are prepared to risk the capital involved because they have enough confidence in the project to be able to see a future in it. And so do we.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Execution of agreements authorized—

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (2.53 p.m.): I just have one question. The clause states—

“The Premier of Queensland is hereby authorized to make on behalf of the State of Queensland with the other parties named in the agreement—

(a) the agreement in the form set out in Schedule I or an agreement substantially in that form but with such variations from that form as he approves;”

Does that alter any of the original suggestions in the principal Act that any variation in the agreement in future will come through the Parliament? It is only on these particular schedules, and that alone?

Mr. Knox: Yes.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4, and schedules, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

RAILWAYS LAND ACQUISITION BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 29 March (see p. 2680) on Mr. Hooper's motion—

“That a Bill be introduced to make provision with respect to the power of the Commissioner for Railways to take or otherwise acquire land for railway purposes and for related matters.”

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (2.57 p.m.): I have nothing further to add.

Motion (Mr. Hooper) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

POLICE ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Minister for Police) (2.59 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Police Act 1937–1973 in certain particulars and to amend the Police Superannuation Act 1968–1975 in a certain particular.”

The rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police was abolished by amending legislation in 1970, when the rank of assistant commissioner was created. That legislation provided for not more than three assistant commissioners to be appointed at any one time and for one of them to act as the Commissioner of Police during the absence of the latter from office.

Recommendations to the Committee of Inquiry into the Enforcement of Criminal Law in Queensland have included strong references to the need for increased supervision in the Police Force at senior level to ensure higher morale, increased efficiency and eliminate malpractices or corruption.

Since 1970 there has been considerable growth in many areas affecting police operations. In that time Queensland's population has increased by some 250,000. Between June 1970 and June 1976 the incidence of reported crime in Queensland has doubled to more than 87,000 reported offences a year. Since 1970 the actual strength of the force has increased by approximately 600 personnel—adding to the administrative tasks of senior officers.

Because of these and other factors the administrative work-loads of the assistant commissioners are heavy and becoming heavier. The time available to them to inspect stations throughout the State and to investigate efficiency at regional, district and divisional level is insufficient and becoming less sufficient. To overcome this situation, it is proposed to restore the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police.

The deputy commissioner would be engaged in duties related to increasing the efficiency of police services throughout the State and would institute corrective measures as required, including disciplinary matters. It is intended that the deputy commissioner will retire at the age of 60 years. The duties of Commissioner of Police, during the absence of the commissioner, would be carried out by the deputy instead of by an assistant commissioner as presently defined by the Police Act. The rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police or its equivalent exists in other State police forces in addition to that of assistant commissioner.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (3.1 p.m.): This appears to be a very simple measure in that it is re-creating only one position. If it improves the efficiency of the Police Force, naturally we have no objection to it. However, it seems strange that every so often we play around with administrative positions in the Police Force. As the Minister said, in 1970 the then Minister for Police saw fit to give Parliament very many reasons why we did not need a deputy commissioner. He said that on all counts it was wrong to have one and that we should have three assistant commissioners, one of whom was to be appointed as commissioner when needed.

At that time the Opposition argued that we should maintain the position so that someone could know that he was next in line. We suggested that it would be a good training ground for a commissioner, and so on. We did not oppose the measure. In fact, we accepted it as being what the Government wanted, on the assurance that it would increase efficiency. Now we are going back to the former position except that, I suppose, we will have three assistant commissioners as well as the deputy commissioner.

It is remarkable that the Government should introduce the Bill on the basis that there is no real problem. The present Minister for Police and his predecessor have been at pains to tell us that nothing at all is wrong with the Police Force; that everything is right. Every time we challenge the Government about Cedar Bay and other incidents the present Minister defends the force and says, "The picture is not as bad as you are painting, or as bad as suggested by the news media."

Mr. Porter: You have determined what has happened at Cedar Bay?

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not wish to debate Cedar Bay. I am sure the Chair would call me to order. I do not want to prejudice anybody.

Then there is the latest case, and the one in Cairns—

Mr. Newbery: You got the answer to that today.

Mr. HOUSTON: I don't know whether we did or not. I have not studied the Minister's reply.

Mr. Newbery: Well, some of the answer.

Mr. HOUSTON: That would be nearer the point.

Mr. Newbery: A report is still to come in.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister said that he is to give us some more information. When we get it we will analyse it.

I think the Minister will agree that he objected constantly when we questioned the Police Force and some of its activities. Yet, in his speech, he said—

"Recommendations to the Committee of Inquiry into the Enforcement of Criminal Law in Queensland have included strong references to the need for increased supervision in the Police Force at senior level to ensure higher morale, increased efficiency and eliminate malpractices or corruption."

Those were his words which, I imagine, were well chosen. They indicate to me and, I am sure, to the public that there has been a drop in police morale and he wants to see it lifted.

Mr. Newbery: The morale is up already.

Mr. HOUSTON: Why did the Minister make his statement today if morale is up already? Does the Minister expect it to go higher? If he does it must be lower than desirable. The Minister mentioned increased efficiency. Therefore, he must want something better than he has. In addition, he must want to eliminate malpractice or corruption. If he claims that there is no malpractice or corruption, there is no need to appoint a deputy commissioner. That is the argument he is putting forward to justify the re-creation of a position that only six years ago he said was no longer necessary.

Mr. Newbery: I did not say it at all.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister's predecessor did. Just as a son sometimes has to accept the omissions of his father, I am afraid that the Minister, as a politician and a member of the National-Liberal Government, has to accept the omissions and failures of his predecessors. That is the difference between private life and politics.

I have defended policemen and women police on many occasions. But I am not satisfied with the safety of the people of this State. I can remember when women and children could walk our footpaths in safety at any hour of the day or night.

Mr. Newbery: I will never be satisfied. I am the kind of man who will never be satisfied, but I am a lot more satisfied than I was six months ago.

Mr. HOUSTON: Time will tell. I hope that the Minister is right.

Mr. Newbery: The public are too; they are already telling me this.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not debating whether the public think so or not.

Mr. Newbery: I will never be completely satisfied.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister has the right of reply. I am saying that he said he is not satisfied, and I agree. I am saying that the women and children today will not walk our streets at night-time.

Mr. Newbery: It is a lot better now than it was six months ago.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister should talk to the women and children.

Mr. Newbery: They are telling me.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not know how many are telling the Minister. Perhaps they are the people who travel everywhere in motor-cars. The Minister should go into the areas where people walk. Why does he think that every day the police charge a person with rape or with attacking people in the street? Surely the Minister is not trying to tell me that the women and children today are not concerned. If the Minister can clean this problem up, I am all for it. I want our women and children to be able to go out at any time of the day or night.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: We all know about the honourable member.

Mr. Frawley: They are a mob of hypocrites; that's what they are.

Mr. HOUSTON: It has been said freely that a woman is not safe walking with her dog in some areas frequented by the honourable member. Do not let us start dodging the issue.

Mr. Frawley: If it was a greyhound the honourable member would probably try to bait it in case it won next start.

Mr. HOUSTON: Greyhounds could certainly beat the honourable member any day. Anyway, I do not want to argue about that.

The point is that the crime rate has increased. That is according to the Minister's own statements.

Mr. Young: With the world-wide population increase.

Mr. HOUSTON: Ridiculous! The population has increased? It is a pity that all of the big noises in the Government ranks did not listen to what the Minister said.

Mr. Hartwig interjected.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Hartwig: It is just a lot of rot.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am trying to listen to the honourable member's speech.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister said that between June 1970 and June 1976 reported offences in Queensland have doubled to more than 87,000 a year. Is the honourable member trying to tell me that the population of Queensland has doubled in that time? Those are the words of the Minister, and I do not doubt that they are dead accurate.

There has been an increase in crime which indicates that more people are being affected. Because of that, our people are not prepared to go out. They do not even feel safe in their own homes. Until the problem is cleaned up so that I feel safe in leaving my home and family—and this applies to everybody—and people can go about their private business as they want to, our Police Force is not as effective as we want it to be.

Mr. Moore: What's the answer?

Mr. HOUSTON: The first thing is to re-open suburban police stations. I ask the Minister to recall the telephone call that he received on Monday of this week from a resident of Wellington Point who found on Saturday morning that his home had been burgled. I am quite sure that the Minister recalls this case. On Saturday morning this person realised that his residence at Wellington Point had been robbed. He looked for certain articles and, when he could not find them, he realised that the house had been burgled. I ask honourable members to listen to this story because what happened to this person could happen to any one of us.

He contacted the Cleveland Police Station on Saturday morning, but no-one was there to answer the call. He then contacted the Wynnum Police Station and was told, "We'll send someone to see you." No-one had arrived by Sunday morning. He therefore rang the Wynnum Police Station again and once more he was told, "O.K., we'll send someone down." By Monday morning, still no-one had turned up, so the gentleman concerned got in touch with the Minister, who said, "Leave it to me." But this man is still waiting for a call from the police; still no-one

has been to his place. And the Minister talks about Police Force efficiency! He says that the force has become more efficient in the last six months. If the case that I have just mentioned is an indication of its present efficiency, what was it like before?

Mr. Hartwig: They robbed the police station at Yeppoon.

Mr. HOUSTON: Who robbed it?

Mr. Hartwig: Someone broke in and robbed it.

Mr. HOUSTON: And I'll bet they haven't found the culprit. As an indication of their efficiency, they cannot even find who robbed their own police station.

There are two things in particular that worry me. They are the increase in crime and the fact that crimes are not being solved. I support any Government move to increase the number of police and to re-open suburban police stations and keep them open 24 hours a day. I do not suggest that men and women should have to work 24 hours a day; what I suggest is that the stations should be open all the time. In the days when they were open all the time we had a very contented Police Force. I recall very clearly that in those days the local policeman would know immediately of any new people coming into the area. He knew everything that was going on in the locality, and many crimes were prevented because of his local knowledge. I do not want to knock the new Commissioner of Police; neither do I want to suggest that everything that is wrong with the Police Force was the fault of the former commissioner, because he had to work under certain ministerial direction.

The Minister suggests that the creation of the new position will improve the situation. I hope it does, but I think that there should be a difference between Police Force administration and police investigations. The treatment of the call from the Wellington Point resident whose case I mentioned is, to me, purely a matter of administration, and I would expect a senior officer to carry out that sort of function. The investigation of complaints against policemen who have done something wrong or have failed to do what they should have done should be conducted by a separate Public Service department.

There are Public Service inspectors who investigate ordinary Public Service operations. They do not belong to any specific department but they are men and women who are expert in investigating general Public Service administration. The Auditor-General's Department looks after the financial side of things. As the Minister knows, all police stations and police operations are subjected to a regular audit by the Auditor-General's Department, a separate department. The police audit is not done by policemen—even if they are qualified accountants—and I

say to the Minister that the Government should create a separate body to conduct investigations of complaints against policemen.

The members of such a section should not be policemen. They could be persons with a tremendous amount of police experience. I would not care if senior police officers were the first appointees; but we have to make them separate from the Police Force, away from the control of the Minister for Police and the Police Commissioner, and perhaps place them under the control of the Premier's Department. When complaints are made against policemen, instead of sending senior police officers to investigate, the Government should have an independent inquiry. Certainly they could ask police officers to assist in their inquiries, but an outside body should conduct the investigation. We have had enough of appealing from Caesar unto Caesar. The public do not accept that as the best method of investigating complaints.

We talk about improving police morale, and the best way to do that is to see that policemen are properly treated within the service in matters of transfers, housing and this kind of thing. It is important, too, that the public have a high regard for the Police Force. In fact, that plays a very important part in their operations in the community.

Mr. Moore: You are improving, Jack.

Mr. HOUSTON: I have been listening to the honourable member and reading some of his speeches. I must say he talks a little bit of common sense sometimes and I try to take note of that.

I do not want to prolong the debate, but I want to stress a couple of points. Firstly, the deputy commissioner should have the authority to carry out his job properly; secondly, a separate investigating organisation should be created under the control of the Premier; and, thirdly, we should start putting police back into our suburban areas. If we do not re-open stations which have been closed down, we should at least have the existing stations open 24 hours a day so that people can go about what they consider is their normal business, provided they are not interfering with anyone else's welfare, feeling that when they do so they can safely leave their homes locked up securely. I know from personal experience that it is a tremendous shock, particularly for women and children, to come home and find a home burgled and personal effects scattered all over the place.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (3.18 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill. I believe it contains a lot of common-sense proposals and as a member of the Minister's committee I support it fully. I believe that police in Queensland or anywhere else must have all the assistance and respect that they can possibly get. I believe that the appointment of a deputy

commissioner will go a long way towards providing better administration of the Police Force in this State.

However, I would like the Minister to remember that Queensland is a very big State, and now that we have three assistant commissioners and will in the very near future have a deputy commissioner, I hope that one of these men will spend many weeks in the northern part of Queensland. I believe this is most important. On a great number of occasions over the past five or six months we have seen the Opposition bring forward complaints against the Police Force. If there was not something wrong in Cedar Bay, it was in Cairns or somewhere else. Its members never come out and say how good the police were in arresting a mob of crims, drug-smugglers or drug growers. All they do is constantly complain about the Police Force.

Mr. Hartwig: Knocking the Police Force.

Mr. TENNI: Yes, knocking the Police Force all the time.

A short while ago, the honourable member for Bulimba told us how unsafe it is for women to walk the streets. What a lot of rot! Why does he have to alarm people in this day and age? He will get headlines in the Press, for sure, and again the Police Force will be rubbished. In my opinion, that is a terrible state of affairs.

He should give the police a pat on the back for some of the good work they are doing instead of continually knocking them. He again knocked them in his speech today.

The honourable member said also that the Minister is not satisfied. Of course the Minister is not satisfied. If he were satisfied, he would be a poor Minister. He must try to improve the Police Force in every possible way and by all available means for the benefit of the people of this State. No-one is satisfied. The honourable member for Bulimba is not satisfied with his position. He might have been when he was Leader of the Opposition, but he is not satisfied now. He wants to be the leader again. The point I am stressing is that no-one is satisfied. It is no good the Leader of the Opposition's saying that the Minister is not satisfied. Of course he is not satisfied; no-one is.

I believe that the public has a high regard for the Queensland Police Force, and what the Minister is trying to do in the proposed Bill will further assist the public. With this type of assistance available to him, I would expect the Minister to ensure that either the deputy commissioner or an assistant commissioner travels to the North and get members of the Police Force together in, say, Cairns or on the Tableland and has free debate with them. Let them explain the problems they face in their jobs and get that information through to the top. In that way it will be possible to overcome problems now

existing in the Police Force, and problems in other Government departments could be dealt with in a similar way.

I hope, too, that the appointment of an additional man will allow one of the high-ranking police officers to visit, as the Minister did, the police stations in my electorate and throughout the rest of the northern part of Queensland. He would then be able to report back to the Minister, who is a very busy man, on problems relating to vehicles, accommodation, housing, and run-down police stations. If someone were made available for that purpose, he could report directly to the Minister. Obviously it is impossible for the Minister to do jobs such as that himself, and I should think that the Deputy Commissioner of Police would be the right man to do them.

Overall, I think we will have a more satisfied Police Force than we have had in the past. I believe that policewomen are doing an excellent job.

Mr. Moore: You've had your time; sit down.

Mr. TENNI: An honourable member on the opposite side of the Chamber is trying to sit me down. I will not sit down until I have got my message across on the floor of this Chamber. I represent 16,000 people in the electorate of Barron River. If I have something to bring forward, I will bring it forward in this Chamber. No-one but the Chair will sit me down until my time is up, if I feel it necessary to continue.

There are very big problems in parts of my electorate, because the northern part of the State of Queensland up to the Bloomfield River, which is in my electorate, is infested with a crowd of hippies. I think it is absolutely necessary that more members of the Police Force be stationed in that area. The Mossman Police Station, which the Minister and I visited, urgently requires—and I stress the word "urgently"—a policewoman and a detective. Police stationed at Mossman cover the northern part of the peninsula where drugs can be brought in in various types of boats. I again urge the Minister to consider the possibility of having a policewoman and a detective stationed at Mossman as soon as possible. With a four-wheel-drive vehicle and the panel van that is there at present, the police at Mossman could handle any problem that might arise. In my opinion, that is very important.

The problems associated with police housing in this State create a sad state of affairs. Thanks to the present Minister, for the first time in history two houses have been purchased in Mareeba for police accommodation for the police district set up in that centre 18 months ago. I congratulate the Minister on that. At least they will be let at a reasonable rent. The Police Force of the State would

be much happier with more of that type of co-operation between the Minister and the rank and file.

I had the pleasure today of speaking to one of the young policewomen downstairs.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. TENNI: She was a very nice young lady, and there is no point in anyone being jealous. She is the type of policewoman I would like in the areas I represent. She probably went through the academy. She has the ability to talk to people and knows how to represent her uniform—the Queen's uniform. She knows how to act and behave, which is very important to me.

As the honourable member for Bulimba said, we do have a few problems in the Police Force.

Mr. Houston: Don't agree with me, please.

Mr. TENNI: I will agree with the honourable gentleman when he is right. I do not disagree with him all the time. It is not very often he is right, but I will agree on this occasion.

We have difficulties in any organisation. I probably have my doubts about some occupants of the Opposition benches. But they can be overcome. The way to overcome them is like what this Bill is doing. It is giving us someone up at the top to control and sort out problems. There must be men to manage, which is the principle of this Bill.

I thank you, Mr. Gunn, for the opportunity to speak about the Bill. I certainly congratulate the Minister for bringing it down. I congratulate him on the way he is handling his portfolio throughout Queensland. I sincerely hope that Opposition members will stop knocking the Police Force. Let the boys out there know that for once they are supporting the Police Force, which is doing such a mighty job for the State. Let them do that instead of talking about what happened at Cedar Bay, at the Cairns Watch-house and all that sort of rubbish.

Mr. YOUNG (Baroona) (3.28 p.m.): I support the Minister in his introduction of the Bill, which provides for the return to the situation of having a Deputy Commissioner of Police. During my time in the force I was very fortunate to serve under the then deputy commissioner, Mr. Fred Palethorpe, who is currently a constituent in the Ashgrove end of my electorate. In the years I served in the force under that deputy commissioner I feel that he relieved the commissioner of a great deal of his responsibility in day-to-day administration, which allowed the commissioner to deal more with the overall situation instead of being bogged down in the nitty-gritty that a deputy can quite easily handle.

Today we have heard emotional pleas from members on both sides. The return to foot patrols in city areas in Brisbane and along the coast was a great step forward in crime prevention in Queensland. If this principle can be given even greater acceptance across the board, it will help to reduce the type of crime that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was talking about—assaults, rapes, etc. It is extremely dangerous for those men and women who are prepared to walk the streets in the dead of night, sometimes alone and sometimes in pairs. We should be very thankful that we have men and women who are prepared to take on these hazardous duties in an endeavour to keep the community safe.

Mr. Moore: John Citizen does it every night, without a rod in his pocket.

Mr. YOUNG: I bet that John Citizen does not walk in some of the places that police officers do; perhaps some of the members in this Chamber might.

I congratulate the administration of the Police Department on the revamping of the Juvenile Aid Bureau. This is a tremendous step forward and one that will result in the extension of crime-prevention work in Queensland. Thought should be given to returning to the practice of having police officers in the Traffic Branch deal with road safety as well. The community benefited greatly from the former practice of having police officers lecture schoolchildren on road safety, on the danger associated with accepting lifts from strangers, on accidents that could result from handling explosives and so on. Police officers used to travel throughout the State giving such lectures at schools. Their value was not fully appreciated. Both the Crime Prevention Bureau and the Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association should be greatly enlarged.

The main point I wish to raise concerns complaints against police officers. I have always held the view that a complaint submitted by a person who chooses to remain anonymous should not be investigated. If a person is not willing to sign his name to a complaint laid by him, he does not deserve to have that complaint inquired into. I know of anonymous complaints that have been investigated, and I feel that any person who lodges a complaint should be prepared to stand by what he has set out in his complaint.

More attention should be paid to false complaints laid against police officers. Action should be taken against anyone who deliberately makes a false complaint against a police officer. After all, action is taken on any complaint that is lodged against a police officer and proved.

I have great pleasure in supporting the Minister on the introduction of this legislation. A Deputy Commissioner of Police

will be of immense benefit to the Police Force generally and will allow the Commissioner of Police to move throughout the State and carry out the duties that should rightly be carried out by him.

Mr. GOLEBY (Redlands) (3.32 p.m.): I think all honourable members as well as the community will appreciate the fact that by introducing this measure the Minister is trying to improve the efficiency of the Police Force. It is certainly a step in the right direction.

I want to direct my comments at some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Bulimba concerning an incident that occurred last Saturday morning. On that morning I happened to be with the Cleveland police when they received a call to proceed to Wellington Point to investigate the alleged stealing of a tool-box. The police officers left me to go to Wellington Point. Later on I checked with them and found that they had gone to the address given to them and made inquiries from neighbours but could not find the person who made the complaint. They cruised around in the area for 10 minutes and then called the Wynnum Police Station on their radio for further directions. Again they went to the home of the person who made the complaint, but he did not answer. I suggest that the honourable member for Bulimba check his facts before he makes accusations against police officers. As I say, in this instance, I happened to be with the police sergeant and the senior constable who conducted the inquiry.

Everyone would agree that generally speaking there has been an upturn in the Police Force. Admittedly more police are required but they cannot be plucked out of a hat. Every police station in the metropolitan area could do with more police. Cleveland, in particular, urgently needs a 24-hour service. I know that the Minister has increased the staff at Cleveland to 14, so that the area is well on the way to receiving a 24-hour service. When that is achieved the Cleveland area will not have to rely on the Wynnum Police Station after hours.

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (3.34 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the Minister's introduction of these amendments. It is evident from them that the Minister is continuing his programme of upgrading the Police Force and in particular is continuing to give greater impetus to improved performance on all fronts. However, I am concerned particularly about the inner suburban police stations in my area and their manning. Whether we like it or not, they have undoubtedly become run down. The task of the Police Force in inner suburbs, with density of population and increasing problems caused by the close proximity in which people have to live and the resultant socio-economic problems, places an ever-increasing burden on the police which is often extremely difficult and

frustrating. Their difficulties are increased because we do not always have laws to support them.

I should like to see an upgrading in terms of experienced staff in police stations like the Annerley Police Station, which is in my electorate. It is important that officers be kept at the same posting for a lengthy period so that they may get to know an area and its people. In turn they would then become known to the people. It is the trust that people repose in the police which determines a great deal of the success that they enjoy.

In many suburban police stations, particularly in the inner suburbs, the level of experience of officers has been run down sadly. A great burden is placed on a sergeant in charge who has a complement of young rookies, with no-one to take over from him when he has to attend to urgent or critical business.

Grave difficulties are caused by the scarcity of facilities such as police cars. For example, Annerley has only one car. When it is absent from the station, the station staff are immobile.

Another problem is caused by limited hours of operation. It is vital that suburban stations be open 24 hours a day. In my mind we cannot afford to be stingy about expenditure on our Police Force. Stinginess in this field is the most serious instance of false economy that a Government can practise.

Mr. Miller: It should have absolutely No. 1 priority.

Mr. DOUMANY: Without question.

I congratulate the Minister on the impetus embodied in the amendments outlined by him. I sincerely hope that the Minister takes to heart some of the suggestions made this afternoon. From my own point of view, and that of the people of Kurilpa, I should like an intensification of effort to upgrade inner-urban police stations to ensure that more experienced officers and better facilities are available, so that a better image will be the order of the day for our police officers.

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (3.38 p.m.): I shall speak briefly in support of the Bill. Apart from the fact that the committee of inquiry recommended an increase in supervision at senior level, at this time in history we need increased supervision to get rid of malpractices and corruption in the community, which exist at a fairly high level. Anything that can be done should be done to preserve law and order and protect the life and property of citizens. At the moment the police are solely responsible for this task, but I believe that the people generally also have a responsibility to see that law and order are preserved.

I should like to think that there is some way to stop the downgrading of the force and its efforts to bring about law and order

in the State. We should allocate sufficient funds to let the police have conditions under which they can work more effectively. If we are to have an effective Police Force, which is able to do its job properly, we must not continue to restrict it by the laws that we make. More and more, police officers are being taken before the courts on the most trivial matters that arise in the performance of their duties. In most cases the Opposition calls for an inquiry.

All of us at some time or another turn to the police in times of trouble and in most cases we get the necessary help. If we did not, we would start to scream. It is becoming more and more apparent that police are being involved personally in court cases. I believe that this is inhibiting them in their efforts to carry out their duties. If we want a Police Force that will go out and do the right thing by the community, we must see that it is not hindered in carrying out that duty. Not long ago we all had great respect for the police. Now, even some members of this Parliament look on them as if they were interfering in all sorts of ways.

Mr. Houston: Speak for yourself.

Mr. WARNER: That is the way I look at it.

The prevailing thought seems to be that they deserve little respect and they are abused in one way or another. If we do not give them the necessary protection, in this House and outside it, we are not doing the right thing by them. Therefore I believe that by creating this position we will be doing something that is very necessary. I support the Minister.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (3.42 p.m.): I enter the debate briefly. I agree with the Minister about the urgent need for the appointment of a deputy commissioner to lighten the load of the commissioner. I place on record that personally I know the present Police Commissioner (Terry Lewis). I have always found him to be an extremely capable, dedicated, conscientious, hard-working officer. He will do a great deal to improve the image of the force. If he is treated properly by this Government and is not subjected to the same political interference as his predecessor, I am sure he will do an excellent job in administering our Police Force.

Regardless of how competent and capable he is, the Police Commissioner of a State as large as Queensland, which is one of the most diversified States in the Commonwealth, has his hands full in trying to restore the tarnished image of the force. I say without malice that the force in Queensland does not enjoy the support of the general public, as it should. This was brought to my notice, and no doubt to the notice of other honourable members, by a Gallup Poll

recently which indicated that the image of the Queensland Police Force was the lowest in Australia.

Mr. Hartwig: What about the Premier's popularity?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He is a different type of person. He is in a category of his own. I have discussed him on numerous occasions but I am not discussing him today.

It is incumbent upon the Minister and the new commissioner to try to improve the image of the force.

I shall deal briefly with the incidents at Cedar Bay and the Cairns fiasco. I hope that justice will prevail there and that the police officers convicted for what they did on Thursday Island are kicked out of the force and not merely reprimanded.

Over the years I have been disturbed at the tendency of the Government to use the Police Force as a paramilitary force to protect the establishment. This is always on. One of our problems today is that the police spend more time protecting property than life and limb. If a person is convicted of breaking and entering, he is usually given a fairly stiff sentence, whereas if a person is convicted of a crime of violence, he is usually fined or put on probation.

I do not think we have enough police officers. There is an urgent need for the numbers in the force to be increased dramatically. Something must be done to combat the rising crime rate. The statistics reveal regularly that the crime rate is rising. More police should be recruited to solve some of our unsolved crimes.

As the honourable member for Baroona said, there is a complete lack of police on the beat. But there is no shortage of police to man radar units and breathalysers. They are pretty well deployed throughout the State.

I think most members would agree with me that radar units are a lucrative source of revenue. I have serious doubts about whether they deter speeding on the roads. Usually they are located in areas in which there have been no fatalities and very few accidents. I have heard other members—on the Government side, too—say that they are sneakily hidden at the bottom of hills where they catch unwary motorists who may be travelling at a few kilometres an hour over the speed limit. A lady who came to my office a few weeks ago showed me a ticket that she had received for travelling at 64 km/h, just 4 km/h over the speed limit, outside Jondaryan. I think most members would agree that that sort of thing is a little rough on motorists. She had probably been travelling at 100 km/h coming into Jondaryan and found the transition to 60 km/h a little difficult. I think it is a little rough to issue tickets for driving at just 4 km/h over the speed limit.

Dr. Lockwood: There is a bad bend in the road there. Have you been there?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I know the town.

I suppose this is an opportunity that I should not allow to pass to work the old parish pump. In Inala Avenue, which runs through Inala, I have seen three radar traps operating on the one day. They are usually situated at the bottom of hills where they catch unwary motorists who may be travelling just a little over the speed limit. I have received many complaints about these traps. I make it quite clear that I am not seeking to protect speeding motorists or young people who do "wheelies" and generally drive dangerously; but usually the people caught in radar traps are ordinary, decent citizens. Only this week I read in the Press a letter which stated that decent citizens can become upset by this sort of treatment. Detectives frequently rely on information received from the public in the solving of crimes, but when a person has been apprehended for driving at only a few kilometres an hour over the speed limit, possibly because a police officer has a quota to fill, at some time in the future he could well withhold from police information of value to them.

I agree that better use could be made of the police by returning some of them to the beat.

Mr. Moore: We don't need another commissioner; we need more underlings.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am inclined to agree with the honourable member for Windsor. What he is saying in effect is that there are too many chiefs and not enough Indians in the Police Force. I do not usually agree with him but on this occasion he is talking sense.

Mr. Moore: There are far too many chiefs.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true.

Mr. Moore: Start by lopping a few off the top.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The force is a little top-heavy, I agree. I feel that some police would be better deployed on the beat, but only in the inner city. I do not think they would be much good on the beat in the outer suburbs such as Inala and Acacia Ridge.

There is another matter on which I made representations to a previous Minister for Police and I should like the present Minister to give it some consideration. There is an urgent need for an additional police car in the Inala area. Inala encompasses a very large area and only one car is on duty there in the evening.

Mr. Houston: You are lucky to have one.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Inala is one of the most salubrious suburbs of Brisbane and is quite entitled to it. But if the car is called away to an accident, the Inala area is unprotected for the whole time it is away.

I would also be remiss in my duty to the citizens of Inala and Oxley if I did not mention the Oxley Police Station. I think the Minister would agree that this would be the worst and most dilapidated police station in the metropolitan area. It is a relic of the past.

Mr. Warner: Toowoomba is worse.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have seen that one. It is not as bad as the Oxley Police Station. It would be a criminal offence, of course, but I think the best thing a police officer there could do when leaving one night would be to drop a match inadvertently and put the red steer through the building. It is in a shocking state. Every time I raised the matter with the Minister's predecessor, who was a very capable fellow, he used to say it was going to be pulled down. But he told me that in 1972 and it is now 1977. I know the Minister is trying to do his job efficiently and correctly and I know he will have a look at the matter for me. It is a disgrace that members of the Police Force have to work under these primitive conditions and for the life of me I cannot understand why some of the officers of the Police Union, particularly Detective Sergeant Redmond, do not do something about it.

Mr. Moore: You're starting to waffle.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Bear with me. Detective Sergeant Redmond, who is the president of the union, is never loath to come out and defend the members of the Police Force when they are under attack and have been accused of crimes of violence and so forth, but he is silent on conditions for his members. I would say if he were doing his job effectively he would go out and have a look at the Oxley Police Station and then get on the Minister's back.

Mr. Newbery: He has been out there.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have not seen it mentioned in the Press.

While I agree with the appointment of a deputy commissioner—I think it is long overdue—I also appreciate some of the remarks of the honourable member for Windsor that the Police Force might be a little bit top-heavy. I cannot understand why the same privilege is not afforded to the deputy commissioner as is afforded the commissioner. I think both these gentlemen should be allowed to retire at 65. It is passing strange because at the moment this Government expects the deputy commissioner to retire at 60 and yet it supports judges going on until they are 90. I think that if there were any consistency at all, the deputy commissioner should be entitled to retire at 65, the same as the commissioner.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (3.52 p.m.): I would like to pay a tribute to the Police Force, and to the Minister on the introduction of this Bill, which deals with the appointment of a deputy commissioner. I think we

all owe the Minister and the commissioner such a debt that we should insist, and I mean insist, that the Police Department receives an additional allocation in the next Budget. Everyone I have listened to in this debate wants something extra for his electorate, but the department can only work within the amount of money that is allocated to it. In the State of Queensland the Police Force has to cover a tremendously vast area. Many police stations in remote areas have only one police car. At Yeppoon, for instance, when the police have to transfer somebody to Rockhampton, there is no vehicle left at the police station and I do not think that this is in the interests of the welfare of the public or the police.

Members are always asking that additional police be appointed, and from the advertisements which appear in the newspaper it appears that the Police Force is trying to recruit additional members, but we were told years ago by Mr. Whitrod when the Police Academy commenced operations we would have plenty of police by 1977.

We also need better police communications in country areas. It surprises me that there is such a lack of communications in country areas. In Biloela, for instance, if the sergeant goes away and the other men are away from the station it is impossible to make contact with the Police Force. I had the experience of not being able to get in touch with anybody at the police station for at least two hours, and that in a township of 2,000-odd people. This should definitely be looked into.

We continually hear calls for an inquiry into police activity. I recently rang the police because some dark people were causing a little bit of a fracas outside my residence. I asked them to come round and settle the matter and they said, "Look, if we come around there and touch those people we will do our jobs." If people are going to insist on an inquiry into the Police Force every time a policeman makes an arrest or something goes wrong, they will get the Police Force they deserve. The police will be very reluctant to take any action at all.

I conclude by extending an invitation to the Minister to visit the Callide electorate—I know he covers the State—with the commissioner or the deputy commissioner and look into the requests that I have made from time to time for improvements in the Police Force.

Motion (Mr. Newbery) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 3.57 p.m.