

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST 1977

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

PAPERS

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

Report of the James Cook University of North Queensland for the year 1976.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

Racing and Betting Act 1954–1977.

The Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926–1973.

Medical Act 1939–1976.

Regulations under the Health Act 1937–1976.

By-laws Nos. 1075 to 1080 under the Railways Act 1914–1976.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**ALLEGATIONS BY MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD AGAINST POLICE**

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Minister for Police) (11.3 a.m.): The honourable member for Archerfield, in this House yesterday, made some serious allegations

against police involved in recent raids on gaming establishments in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast.

I am deeply suspicious of the tawdry political motives of the honourable member in making these baseless allegations. Under the guise of a grand expose in the public interest, he is prepared to sacrifice the reputations of good policemen to score cheap political points. I hasten to come to the defence of these police and to categorically refute the naive insinuations of the honourable member. The police, as usual, carried out difficult assignments with skill, determination and impartiality.

It would seem that our friends on the Opposition benches want to have their cake and eat it too. Just a few short months ago, the Leader of the Opposition launched a bitter attack on senior police officers and politicians, alleging that they were receiving graft from massage parlours. He implied that this graft ensured that some health-studio and massage-parlour operators were able to operate with impunity in the community. Now we have the sorry spectacle of another member of the Opposition criticising the police for conducting a series of raids on one of the biggest gaming and massage-parlour operators and virtually forcing him out of business. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition must be deeply embarrassed by the hypocritical actions of his colleague.

Mr. Aikens: Wait until you hear some of the questions I am going to ask.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member doesn't behave himself he won't be here to ask them.

Mr. NEWBERY: Once again, without checking his facts, the honourable member has shown how eminently suitable he is as shadow Treasurer. He has added 2 and 2 and made it come out as 5½.

The honourable member for Archerfield yesterday made a series of allegations on the way in which police conducted raids on a number of premises owned and operated by Roland John Short in the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas. Among other things he claimed that certain police officers tipped off V.I.P.s present on these premises to allow them to escape arrest and prosecution.

The Police Department has been aware for some time of the involvement of Roland John Short in the ownership and operations of massage parlours. On 3 March this year the Matador Club in South Brisbane, owned and operated by Short, was raided and 50 people found on the premises were charged with a total of 71 offences such as keeping a common gaming house, assaulting police, resisting arrest, using premises for the purpose of prostitution, illegal sale of liquor, exhibiting obscene movies and various drug offences. The occupations of these people ranged from company directors, managers and accountants to taxi drivers and labourers.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I advise all honourable members that when a Minister is on his feet making a statement I will not allow persistent interjections. Anybody who does not obey the rule will be dealt with under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. NEWBERY: Those arrested included the Roland John Short referred to by the honourable member in his speech and Short's club manager, Geoffrey Luke Crocker. Short had received such advance notice of the raid from his "senior police contacts" that he was apprehended attempting to escape through the roof of a toilet on the premises.

Then on 22 June this year the Matador Club was again raided by police, and 41 people found on the premises had a total of 59 charges preferred against them ranging from keeping a common gaming house, being found on unlicensed premises, prostitution, illegal sale of liquor to exhibiting obscene films. Again those people charged included company directors, manufacturers, exporters, sales managers, shopkeepers and labourers.

As a result of this police attention, Short closed the Matador Club, moved his activities to the Gold Coast, and set up a new gaming establishment at Koala Court, Broadbeach. Police raided these premises on 4 July and 16 people found there had 18 charges preferred against them. Short was charged again with keeping a common gaming house. In each case the police had to use oxy-acetylene and sledge hammers to gain entry to the clubs, causing considerable damage to the entry ways.

It seems ludicrous to me that the honourable member for Archerfield should suggest that there were police tip-offs about these raids. Surely if anyone had been informed of police intentions on any of these occasions, there would have been empty houses and open doors to greet the raiding parties when they arrived. As it was, in the three recent raids some 107 people, including Short, were arrested and charged with various offences. Many of these held prominent positions within the community.

In the three raids on premises operated by Short, police confiscated more than \$10,000 worth of gaming and refrigeration equipment, some of which has already been forfeited to the Crown. Contrary to the allegations made by the honourable member that Mr. Short is receiving financial assistance from contacts in the South, it would appear that Mr. Short is in fact short of a quid as a result of the police attention being given to him. According to police information, Mr. Short is unable to pay his phone bill, is considerably behind in his rent at Koala Court at Broadbeach, and is in arrears in payments for the lease of his luxury motor vehicle.

The honourable member also complained about the establishment of a massage parlour in his own electorate at Inala. This establishment, known as the Seventh Heaven,

operated for little more than one month, during which time police levelled three prosecutions against employees. As a result of this police action the premises are now closed.

For the information of the House, I shall table statistics covering the last two financial years, which clearly show the increased attention being given by police to prostitution and gaming and betting offences in this State.

In passing, I want to draw the attention of the House to some of the figures contained in the table of statistics. In 1976-77 a total of 476 charges of using a massage parlour for prostitution were instituted. By comparison, in the previous year, 1975-76, the number stood at 192. Similarly, in 1976-77, under my regime, the number of charges of being found unlawfully in a common gaming house was 114, whereas in the previous year only two such charges were brought against offenders. I now table this document.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.

The statistics show that arrests for prostitution have more than doubled in the period and arrests for gaming and betting offences have more than trebled.

I am thoroughly sick and tired of wasting the time of this House, taxpayers' money and the time of busy police officers in refuting lies and innuendoes emanating from opportunist Opposition members. The honourable member for Archerfield once again has shown how biased the A.L.P. is against the police. He has lived up to his reputation that he will make any statement at all, regardless of the fact that he has not produced one tittle of evidence to support his baseless allegations. I now challenge the honourable member to name the senior commissioned officer whom Short allegedly visited a few days before the raid and who allegedly gave the tip-off.

I leave honourable members to make up their own minds where the truth of the matters raised by the honourable member for Archerfield lies. I would also like to make it absolutely clear that I and other members of this Government are aware of the Communist techniques of attempting to destroy democratic society by taking those key functions of these societies apart. We are fully alert to the attempts to undermine public confidence in the police, judiciary, and other forces of law and order so that the evils of totalitarianism can take over.

Attacks which are made from time to time on Government instrumentalities are nothing more than an attempt by the A.L.P. to woo the feeble mind. But there is no doubt in my mind that every clear-thinking person in the community is fully aware of the shabby and shoddy subterfuge.

ALLEGATIONS BY MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD AGAINST QUEENSLAND PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.14 a.m.): It is unfortunate that the member for Archerfield, Mr. Kevin Hooper, chose to attempt to create a crisis in the housing industry in this State. As Mr. Hooper would well know, this Government has recently made substantial amendments to the building societies legislation in order to protect home owners and investors. The honourable member knows that the Government's initiatives have resulted in improved employment prospects for Queenslanders in the building industry. I deplore Mr. Hooper's inflammatory comments, which are completely misguided and must further aggravate the employment prospects of a great number of Queenslanders.

In focusing his attention on the Queensland Permanent Building Society, Mr. Hooper has resorted to a series of generalities concerning the society's operations, and on those matters where he has attempted to be specific, he has quoted matters out of context in order to create what he hopes will be a panic situation. Mr. Hooper's comments are a cowardly attack made under the protection of parliamentary privilege. I, too, challenge him to repeat them outside of the House. Of course he would not do that. He knows that he would be liable for damages in an action by the parties who have been defamed by him in such a cowardly manner.

This Government has been prepared to take decisive and constructive action to protect Queenslanders who invest in the building society industry. These steps were supported and applauded by Mr. Hooper in this House. This is recorded in "Hansard."

That illustrates how many lies he tells.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. The Minister said that I told lies. I make it quite clear that I have never told a lie in the House. I object to that remark and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope that the Minister will accept the honourable member's denial.

Mr. LEE: I do not like arguing with you, Mr. Speaker, but quite seriously this matter is recorded in "Hansard" and therefore what I said must be the case.

Mr. Hooper would also be aware that one of the societies rescued by the Government was the former Trade Union Permanent Building Society and Bowkett. He has seen fit to gloss over the fact that had it not been for the efforts of this Government thousands of trade union investors with that society would have lost their savings, and many could have had their homes sold up.

The Registrar of Building Societies has been closely monitoring the activities of Queensland Permanent. I am shocked that the honourable member seeks to cast a doubt on the integrity of the registrar's staff.

In spite of his personal attacks on me as the responsible Minister in this Government, I have introduced legislation that is regarded as the most effective in the Commonwealth.

A firm of international chartered accountants has been commissioned to carry out a detailed investigation of all facets of the society's operations and has formed the view that the accounting difficulties arose prior to, or at the time of, the take-over of the Gold Coast societies, which he well knows was some three years ago.

As usual, Mr. Hooper has displayed irresponsibility in continuing his personal vendetta in this matter.

Mr. Byrne: He wants to be Treasurer of the State.

Mr. LEE: He could not be Treasurer whatever happened in Australia.

His statements can be interpreted only as a blatant political manoeuvre, which has had the effect of causing needless anxiety to many thousands of home owners in this State.

Mr. Campbell: Supported by his party.

Mr. LEE: And he is supported by his party. That is true.

It shows how low he will stoop when he is prepared to sacrifice the interests of these home owners to pursue his own selfish interest in gaining political mileage against this Government.

Government Members: Shame!

Mr. LEE: It is more than shame.

Some of these home owners have, no doubt, supported his party in the past but, after the latest outbursts, they will, I am sure, vote for this Government. It is little wonder that Mr. Hooper's own leader was so embarrassed that he moved him from his position of housing spokesman.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (11.20 a.m.), by leave: The panic resort of the Minister for Works and Housing to attempt to focus attention away from a most serious issue by a personal attack on me is typical of his concern for building society investors; the Minister has no concern.

It is all very well to attack me personally, but a reasonable Minister would be prepared to deal with this matter in a frank and open way, not by a cowardly attempt at diverting attention from the problems existing in the Queensland Permanent Building Society. He would, as I reasonably suggested, allow a proper inquiry

into the Queensland Permanent Building Society with the interests of investors in mind rather than that of his personal friends.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. NEW TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY LINE FOR IRON-ORE AND COAL

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

(1) What progress has been made on the much-publicised plan for a railway line across Central Australia to carry Western Australian iron and Queensland coal?

(2) Has the Commonwealth or the Western Australian Government offered any financial assistance and, if not, how will it be financed?

(3) What arrangements will be necessary to acquire the land and who would control the rail operations?

(4) Has a study been made of the cost and, if so, does it approach the \$1,400 million that has been reported as being a frightful waste of money according to Professor H. M. Kolsen of the Queensland University?

(5) Has any investigation been made of Professor Kolsen's estimate that transportation would be 10 times more costly by rail than by sea?

(6) When will the project start?

Answer:—

(1 to 6) Whilst it is true that the construction of a railway linking Western Queensland with Western Australia has been canvassed as a long-term project, the proposal has not yet been subjected to the detailed feasibility study which would necessarily precede any commitment to its adoption.

2. TRINITY BAY HIGH SCHOOL

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

(1) Is he aware of the critical accommodation problems prevailing at the Trinity Bay High School, Cairns, and if so, what is the present position and priorities in relation to the provision of (a) the first-year centre for grade 8 students scheduled for the commencement of the 1977 school year, (b) the extension, remodelling and improvement of the home economics section, (c) a permanent school library facility, (d) general class-room accommodation and (e) specialist class-room accommodation?

(2) In view of the estimated total enrolments in excess of 1,300 students next year, with grade 8 increasing to

400 and grade 12 enrolments escalating because of the lack of job opportunities, will he confer with the Minister for Works and Housing to have urgent priority granted for this work?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that there are some accommodation problems at Trinity Bay High School, as is the case in a number of other schools throughout the State.

(a) Plans have been completed for the first-year centre.

(b) Documents are being drawn up for the extension, remodelling and improvement of the home economics section.

(c) Documents are being drawn up for the building of a new library.

(d) Interim class-room accommodation will be supplied as necessary for the opening of school in 1978.

(e) The provision of improved art facilities will be consequent on the erection of a new library block. The present library building will be converted to create an art centre of five spaces. Forward planning includes the provision of a music centre.

(2) My departmental officers and I have a close liaison with the Department of Works in the planning of new and improved facilities at schools throughout the State.

3. BAYVIEW HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Has the new primary school at Bayview Heights, Cairns, been placed on the Education Department's forward-planning list at the highest priority to open at the commencement of the 1978 school year and, if so, will the school be completed in time for the commencement of the 1978 school year?

Answer:—

No.

4. UPGRADING OF BRISBANE VALLEY HIGHWAY

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

Has the Main Roads Department any plans for upgrading the Brisbane Valley Highway to Fernvale and Wivenhoe Dam? If so, when will the work be carried out and at what cost?

Answer:—

Yes, the Main Roads Department has plans for upgrading the Brisbane Valley Highway to Fernvale and Wivenhoe Dam

and in fact has started to put these plans into effect. Currently under way is a scheme which runs for 3.6 km south from Wivenhoe Dam which is expected to be complete by December this year. A further 2.9 km scheme south to Fernvale is expected to commence in January 1978. The remaining 6 km between Fernvale and the Moreton Shire boundary will hopefully be undertaken in the following financial year, though of course a decision on this will depend on availability of funds at the time.

Within the Moreton Shire itself, it is proposed to start on the construction of the bridge and approaches at Fairney View Creek in the current financial year. Again subject to the availability of funds, construction of a further 5 km approximately extending the bridge approaches is proposed in the 1978-79 financial year.

The total estimated cost of these works is anticipated to exceed \$5,000,000, although detailed estimates for some of the work have not yet been prepared.

5. HYDROELECTRIC SCHEME, MT. BYRON AREA

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

(1) Have engineers from the electric authority commission investigated the area around Mt. Byron for a further hydroelectric scheme similar to the Wivenhoe scheme?

(2) In view of the necessity to provide for future electricity needs, what areas are being investigated?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Preliminary studies are being undertaken by the State Electricity Commission of Queensland into suitable sites for future pumped storage hydroelectric schemes. The Mt. Byron/Ready Creek area is one area that is being looked at in this way. It will be many years, however, before a site is chosen and a station constructed.

6. INSPECTION OF COMMUNITY KINDERGARTENS

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

(1) Is he aware of the consultant fee being charged by the Creche and Kindergarten Association to small country community kindergartens?

(2) As there is much dissatisfaction with the increasing fees being charged for a one-day inspection, will he arrange with officers of the pre-school section of the Education Department to carry out regular

inspections at no cost to community kindergartens, which are providing an excellent service in country areas without Government assistance?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. Kindergartens operating for five or more sessions per week pay an annual advisory fee of \$65 and centres operating for fewer than five sessions pay a fee of \$35.

(2) A review of advisory services to small community kindergartens not receiving Government subsidy is presently being undertaken by my department and I will advise the honourable member concerning the outcome in due course.

7. A.L.P. "RIDER FOR DEMOCRACY"

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

(1) What was the cost incurred by the Police Department, including overtime and motor vehicle expenses, in the recent search for the "Rider for Democracy" allegedly lost in the Childers area?

(2) Did the Leader of the Opposition request that the State Government aircraft join the search with police aircraft?

(3) Is he aware that owing to lack of interest by the public in the so-called "Ride for Democracy", a decision was made by the A.L.P. for the rider to become lost and thereby attempt to gain some publicity?

(4) Does the Police Department intend to send an account to the Q.C.E. to recover some of the public money wasted in the spurious search?

Answers:—

(1) Costs incurred by the Police Department, including overtime and motor vehicle expenses, have been estimated at approximately \$2,300.

(2) I am unable to answer this question. The use of the State Government aircraft does not come under the control of my department.

(3) It appears to me that the A.L.P. is prepared to seek publicity at any expense, and more particularly if it is at taxpayers' expense.

I am not surprised that the so-called "Rider for Democracy" could not stay on the right track. This is a fault common to most areas of A.L.P. policy, which suffers from too much rein to the Left.

I understand from newspaper reports that during a procession through the streets of Brisbane, the Leader of the Opposition attempted to point the animal in the direction of his view of democracy. But, to its great credit, the beast had enough horse sense to bolt into the crowd.

The honourable member was no doubt as interested as I was to read in a recent Press article that the gentleman involved in this mischievous prank is seeking A.L.P. endorsement for the State seat of Ashgrove, and that he intends to make speeches while on horseback.

I feel that the gentleman is certain to be successful in his attempt for endorsement. After all, any A.L.P. candidate who does not know where he is going and who uses someone else's back to get his work done would surely meet with Trades Hall approval.

(4) No. This is a service provided by the Police Department for the public. It is not the policy of my department to endeavour to recover costs of this nature unless there are special circumstances to warrant this action—for example, an offence under section 34A of the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act 1931–1971, "false representations causing investigations by Police officers." There is no evidence to suggest that an offence under the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act has been committed in this instance.

8. PRE-SCHOOL FOR DECEPTION BAY

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

Is it proposed to open a new pre-school at Deception Bay in 1978, as at present there is a waiting list of 40 at the existing pre-school and another is urgently required?

Answer:—

Yes. It is anticipated that a new pre-school centre will be completed by mid-1978 on the site of the proposed Deception Bay North Primary School.

9. RAIL LINK TO NARANGBA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

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

Has any progress been made towards providing a rail link to the Narangba Industrial Estate?

Answer:—

The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development is examining various aspects associated with the detailed planning of this project.

The actual implementation and timing of the proposal will be related to the demand for rail services on the Narangba Industrial Estate and this will be assessed as development proceeds.

10. COMPLAINTS BY CARINA STATE SCHOOL CHILDREN

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

(1) Is he aware that children in grade 7 at the Carina State School wrote recently to his department outlining complaints they had about the school?

(2) Is he aware that the children were interrogated by an inspector of his department this week about why they complained?

(3) On whose direction was this interrogation undertaken?

(4) In view of his letter to the editor in "The Courier-Mail" this week calling on the public to open the education debate and encouraging people to express their views, will he ensure that letters from schoolchildren will not in future produce such an absurd, petty and dictatorial reaction?

(5) Will he ensure that the principal, the teacher or children of the school will not suffer because of the absurd circumstances of this instance?

(6) Will he assure me that appropriate replies are sent to the quite reasonable letters of these well-intentioned schoolchildren in the normal form of letters from the department instead of the attempt to frighten them not to write again or even feel free so to do?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) I am informed that an inspector called at the school and spoke with the children about the letters they had written.

(3) The letters were referred by the Director-General of Education to the Regional Director of the Brisbane South Region.

(4) It is extremely unfortunate that the chain of events circumstantially made the whole affair appear to be something it was not—and was never intended to be.

(5) The honourable member has my assurance that no-one—the teacher, the children or the principal—will suffer in any way as a result of these occurrences.

(6) Appropriate replies will be sent to the students—in fact they have been sent—as is the case with all persons who write to my department. I believe that students should be encouraged to express their opinions about their schools but that this is best done through student councils or through student representations to school authorities or parents and citizens' associations.

11. ROAD-WORKS IN FAR NORTH

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

Which works are programmed for 1977-78 on roads in the Far North, in particular the Gulf development road and the Peninsula development road?

Answer:—

On the Gulf developmental road, provision was made for the completion of the section to Green Creek between Normanton and Croydon and completion of the Sandy Creek Bridge between Georgetown and Croydon. The former section is now complete and the latter bridge has been accepted from the contractor and placed on maintenance. A start has been made on the approaches to the bridge and it is proposed to start on two further sections between Georgetown and Croydon later in the financial year at the King of the Springs section and from 20 Mile Creek to the shire boundary. Late in the financial year also, a start will be made on a section of 14 km in Carpentaria Shire including sections of floodway.

With regard to the Peninsula developmental road, it is proposed to make a start on the Bamboo Range section between Laura and Coen and to continue with minor improvements such as removal of rock bars in cuttings, re-forming and gravelling etc. on selected sections of the road.

12. NEWSPAPER REPORT ALLEGING MARIJUANA RACKET

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

With reference to the report in "The Sunday Mail" of 24 July under the heading "Queensland pot racket", subtitled "Public figures may be taking rake-off", what is his Government doing to investigate the report and take appropriate action?

Answer:—

Information received tends to indicate that some people in the commercial world may be involved in the supply of finance for the unlawful purchase of drugs as a profitmaking venture. However, they do not handle or become involved in the physical part of any transaction.

For obvious reasons, information received concerning any matter involving unlawful trafficking or cultivation of drugs must be treated as strictly confidential, and legislation for this protection has been provided by the Government under section 157 of the Health Act 1937 to 1976.

Recently the Drug Squad has been expanded; additional finance has been allocated to assist in inquiries being made in connection with offences of this nature;

and police generally are being educated in the detection of drug users and identification of various illicit drugs.

All possible action is being taken with a view to obtaining the necessary evidence to have this type of offender dealt with by the courts.

13. MEDICAL BENEFITS FUND DEDUCTIONS, WORKS DEPARTMENT

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

Further to his answer to my question on 29 September 1976 concerning Works Department employees having Medical Benefits Fund payments deducted from their wages, as do other public servants, as it is now compulsory for all employees to pay into some form of medical fund, will his Government alter its policy as stated on 29 September and deduct the required amount from all Crown employees' wages to cover the employee's commitment to Medical Benefits Fund of Australia or any other recognised medical benefit fund?

Answer:—

Consequent upon the changes to hospital and medical insurance which became effective as from 1 October 1976 it was decided—

(a) that deductions from the salaries of permanent officers and employees to private health insurance funds continue to be made by the Public Service departments concerned;

(b) that this deduction scheme would not apply in respect of wages employees where the continuity of employment is dependent upon the work and funds available.

It is not proposed to vary these long-standing arrangements.

14. FUNDING OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES

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

With reference to financial assistance towards the wages of teachers and assistants at pre-school centres, as it has been reported that a change in Commonwealth Government financing will leave a shortfall in covering the current wages being paid, will the State Government make up the difference by increasing the percentage from 25 per cent so that these very essential pre-schools can continue to employ the required number of teachers and assistants in conformity with the demand from local residents for their children attending those centres?

Answer:—

I, too, am concerned about the effect of the Commonwealth's funding policies on the community kindergartens. It is not

normal State practice to pick up shortfalls in Commonwealth funding but I am keeping the matter under review.

15. COURT-HOUSE FOR MORANBAH

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

What can be done to establish a court-house in Moranbah, as the town is a centre for 7,000 persons?

Answer:—

Preparation of the necessary documents is being expedited to enable tenders to be invited in mid-October.

16. BENEFITS FROM BELYANDO VISIT OF MINISTER FOR HEALTH

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

What benefits for my electors have arisen following his recent visit to the Belyando electorate, and has a clinic sister been secured?

Answer:—

It is very difficult to list the great number of benefits that result from such a visit but many matters were brought to my attention by the honourable member and all are being actively investigated. One such benefit following my visit is the appointment of a sister to the Division of Maternal and Child Health on a full-time basis at Moranbah.

17. FLYING SURGEON UNIT BASED IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

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

As the Central Highlands will have a population near 35,000 persons owing to the expansion of the Emerald irrigation area and coal development, will a new flying surgeon unit be set up and based in the Central Highlands?

Answer:—

The honourable member will agree that the present Flying Surgeon Service has been an enormous success and in addition to allowing people to undergo surgery in their own district hospital has been an important part of the rural health policy, which at present is being improved with visits to country areas of other specialists, the setting up of pathology laboratories at strategic hospitals and the recent lifting of the means test for public patients needing to be transferred to a base hospital for other specialist treatment.

Discussions have been held in the department with the idea of extending the Flying Surgeon Service and the exact

location will depend on recommendations after review of the whole of the surgical services as part of the rural health programme under investigation at the present time.

18. PUBLIC TRANSPORT, ALGESTER

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Transport—

(1) Concerning the need for public transport in Algester, what were the findings of the preliminary inquiries carried out by his inspectorial section?

(2) As the matter has been referred to the Metropolitan Transit Authority, what have been its findings?

Answers:—

(1) I am advised that although Algester does have adequate school services, a weekly shoppers' service to Acacia Ridge and some urban services which travel via Beaudesert Road to the city, preliminary inquiries by the inspectorial section of the Department of Transport indicate that a further detailed study of all factors, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Transit Authority, including a possible rearrangement of existing services, will be necessary before any firm recommendation can be made as to the provision of additional urban bus passenger services for the area. Inquiries are continuing.

(2) As indicated in part (1) of this answer, the matter requires further study before a recommendation is made. The President of the Algester Progress Association, Mr. R. Lippiatt, has had discussions with officers of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and is to assist with the accumulation of information to assist the study.

19. OVERPASS AT COMPTON ROAD BRIDGE, WOODRIDGE; SEALING OF ACACIA ROAD

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) As both the Albert Shire and the Brisbane City Councils have promised \$100,000 each towards an overpass at Compton Road Bridge, Woodridge, what has caused the delay in its construction?

(2) As the Albert Shire Council is responsible for the greatly increased traffic on Compton Road by rezoning in industrial zones, why has not that council taken some initiative towards sealing Acacia Road and re-routing the heavy traffic?

Answers:—

(1) In answer to a question on the same subject, which the honourable member asked of me on 5 April last, I indicated

that my efforts on her behalf had resulted in there being in excess of \$200,000 of the estimated cost of \$400,000 which would be contributed by the Albert Shire Council, the Brisbane City Council and the Main Roads Department. However, to date the Railway Department, which also has some responsibility in this matter, has not indicated the level of the contribution which it proposes.

(2) There could be several reasons, all of which are within the jurisdiction of the council, I therefore decline to enter into conjecture on the matter.

20. GREENSLOPES REPATRIATION HOSPITAL

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Will the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital have a multi-storey casualty block built within the next 10 years?

(2) As it is obvious that repatriation hospitals will eventually be general hospitals, to what extent does this hospital now take public patients?

(3) As Greenslopes Hospital now has a visiting psychiatrist, does he receive public patients who are not repatriation benefits recipients?

Answers:—

The honourable member would, I am sure, realise that the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital does not come under the administration of my portfolio. However, I have made appropriate inquiries relative to the matters raised and I have been informed that—

(1) The provision of a multi-storey ward block and the provision of a casualty department within existing buildings is at present under consideration by the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs.

(2) Civilian patients are accommodated when accommodation is available in excess of that required to cater for the needs of eligible veteran patients.

(3) Yes.

21. RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSING WARNINGS, MACKAY

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

(1) What are the respective warrants for the installation of (a) flashing lights, (b) boom gates and (c) grade separations at railway crossings?

(2) What are the current ratios of vehicles and trains per day for the railway crossings of the main north coast line in Mackay at (a) Juliet Street, (b) Milton Street and (c) Bridge Road, and on what date was each count taken?

Answers:—

(1) At those level crossings at which the installation of electrically operated warning devices has been approved, flashing lights are provided when one set of tracks traverses the crossing, and boom gates are provided when the number of sets of tracks is more than one.

The need for a grade separation in any particular location is determined on the merits of each case, regard being had to such considerations as the importance of the road concerned, the volume of rail and road traffic respectively, the extent of delays to road traffic being encountered and the savings which would be achieved by the elimination of the level crossing.

(2) No recent survey has been made of the number of road and rail vehicles using level crossings at Mackay.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As to what part the honourable member plays in it—I am prepared to say that I am not aware of what that is, or whether he does play any part in it.

It is quite clear that the worker has taken from him very large sums of money by way of union dues.

Mr. Houston: Where do you get your money from?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We certainly don't —

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Houston: Well, he has challenged me.

Mr. Marginson: That's got nothing to do with it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston that if he interjects again I will deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member asks where does the National Party get its funds from. As the honourable member knows, they are provided on a voluntary basis. We do not obtain our funds compulsorily, as the unions do. They stand over men who do not join the unions. We do not make any rip-off.

I have with me a very interesting letter stating that it is about time that the Commonwealth Government started to impose a tax on unions because they make enormous profits yet they are unproductive. I think that may be one of the things the Commonwealth Government will look at. Unions invest money in various areas; they are involved in all types of activities; but I would not be able to give the details.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What about the Queensland Permanent Building Society?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member for Archerfield ought to be ashamed of the comments that he has made over the past few days in relation to that society, and he ought to be ashamed of his attacks on the police.

I am pleased that the honourable member for Townsville South has drawn the attention of the House to the huge fees that trade unions rake off from their members and to the manner in which the A.L.P. spends and invests the money collected.

LONG-TERM SUGAR CONTRACT WITH JAPAN

Mr. CASEY: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Under the terms of Australia's long-term sugar contract with

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LABOR INVESTMENTS

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the Premier: Can he inform the House if Labor Investments, the financial company established and controlled by the A.L.P. (Queensland Branch), now has a favourable balance of funds of several million dollars and, in addition to its many other business activities, lends money to people who desire to acquire and operate "lumber joints", that is, buildings containing rooms that are rented at an hourly rate to people, usually prostitutes, for immoral purposes, and that before any such loan is made the bona fides of the applicant must be certified to by the member for Archerfield? If so can the Premier give the House any estimate of the annual profit made by Labor Investments from this segment of its business activities and any commission paid to or other emoluments received by the member for Archerfield?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It was rather a long question but I would say that there are no two doubts in my mind that the A.L.P. and the organisation generally—the various unions—receive enormous amounts of money through the very high union levies they rake off from the worker. Obviously they have untold millions at their disposal. That is quite clear to anybody who sits down and works it out quietly. Obviously they are investing it in many areas. That would be clear also to anybody who stops to think.

Mr. Knox: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a director of that company.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am just informed that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a director of that company.

Mr. Houston: Your information is completely wrong.

Japan, who will pay the demurrage on the sugar still remaining unloaded from ships in the various Japanese ports? How will the cost of producing and milling the sugar that is on these ships be financed by the Queensland Sugar Board if the dispute continues any longer?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am quite confident that the discussions that have taken place in Tokyo over the past two months in relation to the long-term contract with Japan will resolve the situation either this week or early next week. I have been accused by my shadow Minister, the member for Mackay, of not keeping the industry informed of what is taking place, of not showing concern, and of not being in Tokyo. He has also said that the Premier should be there.

As recently as last Friday the deputy general manager of CSR came to Brisbane at my invitation and in the Premier's room, in the presence of the Premier and representatives of the sugar industry, briefed us on the present situation.

Mr. Casey: Who will pay the demurrage? That is what I have asked you.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The honourable member should let me answer his question in my own way. I will not be dictated to, nor will I have words put into my mouth.

Mr. Jensen: The CSR doesn't want Mr. Casey's interference in sugar matters.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Some of the embarrassing questions that have been asked would not have been asked if the honourable member for Bundaberg had still been the shadow Minister for Primary Industries. He is fully aware and conscious of the excellent job that the Sugar Board and its agents, CSR, do.

Mr. Casey: He never was shadow Minister.

Mr. SULLIVAN: He was certainly the adviser to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who used to lean heavily on the member for Bundaberg. He used to handle his responsibilities very sensibly.

Because of the offer that is on the table from the Japanese refiners and importers—members will have read about it in this morning's Press—I am not going to say anything that might embarrass the negotiations that will take place. However, when everything is finalised I will make all the information available. We will not hide anything.

STRIKE BY LIFT-REPAIRMEN AND ACTION OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. DOUMANY: In asking the Deputy Premier and Treasurer this question, I refer to the inconvenience being caused to thousands of office workers and other citizens by

the current strike by lift-repairmen. In view of the claim by the Leader of the Opposition that he alone can achieve industrial peace, can the Deputy Premier inform the House whether or not the Leader of the Opposition has tried and, if so, succeeded in ending this strike by members of the union to which he belongs, that is, the Electrical Trades Union?

Mr. KNOX: When talking to people involved with the lift business in the past few days—and we all know the inconvenience caused to the public in many public buildings and other places—I have found that no effort has been made to solve this dispute by the leaders of the relevant union. Not only is the Leader of the Opposition a member of it, but also two of the political candidates who were forced on him by the Trades Hall are leading figures in the union. No effort has been made by them to resolve the dispute which has held the public to ransom for two or three weeks and caused enormous inconvenience in public places. The Leader of the Opposition utters a lot of platitudinous, hogwash statements about how, if he were in control, he would be able to solve problems. He has the influence now to fix a problem that he will not even face up to or try to do anything about.

ABSENCE OF STATE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FROM MR. WHITLAM'S QUEENSLAND TOUR

Mr. DOUMANY: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer if he is able to explain the conspicuous absence from the current Queensland visit by Mr. Whitlam of his close friend and protegee, that is, the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament.

Mr. KNOX: It surprised all political commentators that the Leader of the Opposition, who claims to be the alternative Premier of this State, was not with his Federal Leader during his tour of the State and acting as his host. No doubt there is a reason for that. In spite of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is a former Federal officer of the A.L.P.—in fact, I think he was the Federal president of the Labor Party—and is still a senior Federal executive of the Labor Party, he is not to be seen with his Federal leader in any public places in this State. But is it any wonder?

Mr. Casey: That's not true!

Mr. KNOX: That's not true?

But is it any wonder when his apparent beloved Federal Leader on visiting Brisbane and addressing the Labor Party on 19 January 1977, at the Labor-in-Politics Convention, said—

"There is no point in pretending that the state of the Labor Party in Queensland—its organisation, its morale, its numbers, its effectiveness—has been anything but parlous."

Later, in the same speech he said—

“I don't think we need go beyond the obvious for an explanation of our troubles.”

I am sorry that I cannot do this with the flamboyance used, no doubt, by Mr. Whitlam, but he said—

“I don't think we need go beyond the obvious for an explanation of our troubles: the party has been run-down and defeatist, our policies have been too little explained and too little understood.”

No doubt the Federal Leader of the party is trying to explain everything, but obviously without the help of the Leader of the Opposition in this House.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF MT. ISA CITY COUNCIL

Mr. BERTONI: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: Because of the wide publicity that has been given to the subject of financing the Julius Dam, would the Minister comment on the financial position of the Mt. Isa City Council and will it be necessary to appoint an administrator?

Mr. HINZE: Under the Local Government Act, every local authority has to provide a balanced budget each year, and make and levy rates and charges sufficient to balance its budget. The local authority is responsible to its electors every three years for the financial management of its area. The Mt. Isa City Council is bound by these requirements.

I understand that the Julius Dam was built by the Mt. Isa Water Board at a cost of \$33,000,000. I understand also that Mt. Isa Mines Limited contributed \$14,900,000 towards the cost, the State Government gave a subsidy of \$4,000,000 and a grant of \$1,900,000, and the Commonwealth contributed a repayable loan of \$2,000,000. The balance of the cost has been met by the Mt. Isa Water Board.

Portion of the cost has to be met by the council under an agreement entered into between it and the board, the board having an entitlement to a quantity of water from the dam. Approaches to successive Federal Governments for further financial assistance have been unsuccessful, but further approaches have been made.

As I said earlier, the Mt. Isa City Council, like every other local authority, has to meet its financial obligations and produce a balanced budget. I have not yet seen a copy of the council's budget for 1977-78, but I expect the council to act in a responsible manner. I have no intention of appointing an administrator. I do not believe that the council is going broke. I think a fair amount of window-dressing is going on up in that area, particularly because it is an election year. All I expect the Mt. Isa City Council to do is to act responsibly.

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE TO OVERSEAS LOAN RAISINGS BY NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA

Mr. MARGINSON: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Did the Queensland Government, as a member of the Loan Council, oppose approval being granted to the Labor Government of New South Wales for additional loan raisings to upgrade the New South Wales railway system following the tragic Granville train disaster? Are the current reports correct that Queensland will not oppose an application by the Liberal Government of Victoria to be granted approval for an additional loan raising for certain works in Victoria?

Mr. KNOX: The affairs of the Loan Council are supposed to be secret, but the Premier of New South Wales saw fit to reveal communications between the various Premiers about the application that he had made to the Loan Council for funds amounting to \$200,000,000 to upgrade that State's railway system, quite irrespective of and in spite of the tragedy at Granville. Of course, all States have problems in upgrading their railway lines, and Queensland is included in that. The view of the Queensland Government in this matter was that if funds of that type are available they should be available to all States. We did not oppose it simply on the basis that it would be going to New South Wales. Our position was that, if funds were being made available for the purpose of upgrading rail systems, Queensland was entitled to its share.

As to the Victorian situation—of course we are supporting that, as has been announced by the Premier.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION TAKE-OVER OF PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (12 noon): My purpose in entering this debate today is to draw public attention to what I regard as a very real matter of public importance, namely, the forthcoming take-over of the parliamentary Labor Party by the Electrical Trades Union. This union, which is one of the most militant in a very militant Trades Hall, has slowly but surely increased its influence in the Australian Labor Party machine in this State and is now about to strengthen its hold on the parliamentary party as well.

Honourable members will be aware that both the present leader of the Labor Party here and his deputy are members of the Electrical Trades Union. They are here under E.T.U. sponsorship and they will stay here only for as long as that patronage remains intact.

The Leader of the Opposition has endeavoured to give the people of Queensland the impression that he is prepared to stand up

to the Trades Hall. The record shows that he is little more than a sham fighter or a third-rate prelim boy. When the bell rings at the Trades Hall, the Leader of the Opposition throws in the towel. It is little wonder that he does so, because he is here only under the sufferance of the E.T.U. and the Trades Hall bosses.

The man who really wields the power in the A.L.P. in this State today is Mr. Neal Kane, who is the State secretary of the Electrical Trades Union and vice-president of both the Q.C.E. and the Trades and Labor Council in this State.

Mr. Frawley: Kisser Kane.

Mr. LANE: Mr. Kisser Kane; that's right.

Mr. Kane is probably the last of the really powerful back-room manipulators of the Labor Party and Trades Hall machine. The people of Queensland seldom see him. That is a pity, because they would not like what they saw. He is not a front man. I give him credit at least for recognising his own glaring limitations in this regard. In fact, he is mostly drunk. But let there be no doubt about it, when he cracks the whip, the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy are the first to jump. Despite his public shyness, Mr. Kane is the source of the real power in the A.L.P. today.

He was the one who manipulated the numbers to ensure that the Trades Hall boys won endorsement on Monday a couple of weeks ago. If poor old Vi Jordan is looking for someone to blame for her quite tragic demise, she should lay the blame at Neal Kane's feet.

Honourable members will recall the claim in the Press that the Leader of the Opposition wanted Catholics and intellectuals to receive Q.C.E. endorsement for some of the plum and marginal seats, because he thought they were more attractive candidates. Obviously, Mr. Kane had other ideas and prominent Catholics such as Frank Melit, the president of the Brothers Football Club, was thrown onto the scrap-heap.

Even the darling of the Council of Civil Liberties, barrister Lou Wyvill, was rejected in Chatsworth in favour of an unknown and unimportant Trades Hall stooge called Mackenroth.

In Everton, the loquacious alderman Brian Mellifont was rejected in favour of the son of the late Senator Bert Milliner, who was a prominent Trades Hall official, belonging to the same union as the president of the A.L.P. (Mr. Burton).

The only success that Mr. Burns can claim—and I would hardly want to boast about it if I were in his shoes—was in Woodridge where Bill D'Arcy, a man of very doubtful background, just scraped home over the Trades Hall choice, the Reverend Ray Busch, of Action for World Development fame.

Mr. Frawley: He is a drug addict.

Mr. LANE: The honourable member for Murrumba suggests that he is a drug addict. That may very well be so. He behaved in a rather peculiar manner in the short time that he was in this House.

If D'Arcy is the best that Burns can do, is it any wonder that the back-room boys are already plotting and planning the early demise of the Leader of the Opposition?

Whilst the academics and the Catholics were rejected, the Trades Hall team won again, and on this occasion the Electrical Trades Union is the real victor.

The A.L.P. candidate for Nudgee is Ken Vaughan, the E.T.U. assistant secretary and the front man for Neal Kane. He expects to be in the next Parliament as Kane's message boy so that he can pimp on other Labor members. I have bad news for him. The Liberal candidate is going to do him like a dinner down there. However, it just goes to show the influence which Kane and his crew exert in the A.L.P. machine.

In the adjoining seat of Sandgate, where Mr. Dean is retiring, the A.L.P. has chosen yet another Kane protege as its candidate. I refer to Alderman Neville Warburton of the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Dean: He will win, too.

Mr. LANE: Another E.T.U. member. Another Electrical Trades Union member. The honourable member must be ashamed of handing Sandgate over to him. He must be ashamed of trying to hand Sandgate over to a Left-wing character like Warburton. The honourable member should be ashamed of himself. He should dissociate himself from Warburton.

Before his election to the Brisbane City Council barely a year ago, Alderman Warburton was a full-time Electrical Trades Union organiser under the control of none other than the drunken Neal Kane. He has also been endorsed under Kane's patronage and, like Vaughan, is totally dependent upon him for political office. I think it is deplorable that, after barely a year as an alderman in the Brisbane City Council, which is a well-paid and full-time job, Warburton wants another job as well, that of the State member for Sandgate. He wants two jobs. He wants to deprive someone else of employment. His type should be made to crawl before they try to walk.

My friends in the city council tell me that he has been an abject failure there and that he would be a complete nonentity here, and I could not help but agree with them. It is little wonder that he wants to get out of the city council because he knows only too well that the Labor city council is on the skids and headed for certain defeat at the next election when Syd McDonald becomes the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. What other conclusion could

people come to when aldermen such as Warburton, Mellifont, Shaw and Ardill—how appropriate that name is: “A dill”—are breaking their necks to get into State Parliament.

I have some sad news for Alderman Warburton as well because the Liberal candidate for Sandgate, Don Connolly, is a first-class candidate who is well regarded by the people of the area. Unlike Warburton, he is not greedy. He does not want two jobs at public expense, and unlike Warburton he is not beholden to either the Trades Hall or Neal Kane. The honourable member for Sandgate should disassociate himself from him. He should have the guts to stand up to him before he retires.

Don Connolly will make a first-class member of Parliament after the next election. His opponent, Warburton, is not fit to lick the boots of the man he wants to succeed, Harry Dean. The honourable member for Sandgate should show some courage and stand up and say just that. The people of Sandgate know that, just as they know where his loyalties lie. They will vote for Don Connolly in Sandgate. The last thing Warburton would do would be fight for his constituents in this place. He will do just as he is told by the Trades Hall. It is Trades Hall first, Trades Hall second and Trades Hall third for these E.T.U. stooges.

The Leader of the Opposition is obviously aware of what Neal Kane is up to, but he is totally powerless to do anything about it. Only yesterday we saw the latest E.T.U. appointment. A former Electrical Trades Union organiser now has the job as State organiser for the A.L.P. I refer to Nick Bos, another E.T.U. man in a position of power in the Labor Party.

Mr. Dean: A good man.

Mr. LANE: I see the honourable member for Sandgate nodding his head and acknowledging that what I say is true, and I respect him for that. If by some mischance Warburton and Vaughan are returned in the next election, the E.T.U. will have an unequal influence in the parliamentary Labor Party, with Burns and Houston, the two stooges it has here now. That is the best Labor can do in terms of leadership and deputy leadership. When we throw in the honourable member for Archerfield, who is the representative of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, and Brian Davis, who is protege of Arch Bevis and his bag carrier in this place from the Transport Workers' Union, and who has been endorsed once again, the full extent of the Trades Hall influence can be appreciated. I should also mention the Waterside Workers' Federation stooge, the honourable member for Rockhampton North.

Last week we saw the sorry spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition being called before his Trades Hall masters to be told who was to receive endorsement. He is

now a greater captive of the E.T.U. and Trades Hall than ever before. I do not believe that the people of Queensland want a small, unrepresentative, but all-powerful E.T.U. clique to run the Opposition in this Parliament, yet that is the alternative the A.L.P. offers in this place and it will strengthen its hold after the next election if these fellows are accidentally elected. It has come about because the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy are weak and ineffectual. When the whip on the hill cracks, they are the first to jump into line. The people of Queensland will not buy it at all. They rejected the same kind of Trades Hall heavy-handedness just 20 years ago last week, and they will reject it whenever the next election is held.

The E.T.U. has a record of industrial disruption and blackmail surpassed only by a few Communist-led unions. In the period from 1 January 1975 to 2 August 1977, the Electrical Trades Union was involved in no less than 70 major industrial disputes in Queensland. In just 2½ years the E.T.U. was involved in 70 major industrial disputes that had to be notified to the Industrial Commission, and on not one occasion did we hear the Leader of the Opposition, the man who suggests he is the alternative Premier of this State, stand up and condemn these strikes, attempt to mediate in them or attempt to get some sort of rational behaviour from them. Yet he claims that he alone can achieve industrial peace in this State. He is just as much a part of the machine which instigates strikes for unnecessary reasons as anyone else at the Trades Hall.

(Time expired.)

TENDERS FOR GARBAGE COLLECTION IN GLADSTONE

Mr. PREST (Port Curtis) (12.9 p.m.): I rise to speak in the Matters of Public Interest debate about a matter that I mentioned briefly during my speech in the Address-in-Reply debate some two weeks ago. A matter of great public interest in the city of Gladstone is the letting of a garbage contract by the Gladstone City Council to the highest tenderer, Berkeley Sanitation (Qld) Pty. Ltd., to the detriment of lower tenderers, namely Kenlaw Pty. Ltd. of Brisbane and Frank Duggan, a local contractor who had done the job for the past 16 years.

Since the letting of the contract and the bringing down of the council budget, many letters have been written to “The Observer”, the local newspaper in Gladstone, relative to the contract and the reasons why the tender was accepted. Unfortunately, up to date neither the mayor nor the Gladstone City Council has given the ratepayers a satisfactory answer, nor has one been received from the Director of Local Government, the Ombudsman, or the Minister for Local Government. I have been told that, through his solicitor,

Mr. Duggan objected strongly to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads about the letting of the contract. However, he has not yet received an answer.

The contract comes into operation tomorrow, and figures published in the paper indicate that Mr. Duggan's tender was much lower than that submitted by Berkeleys. Berkeleys' tender was 39c a service, Mr. Duggan's was 35.5c, and Kenlaws—they were originally Hunter Bros., who had the contract in Brisbane for some time—was about 30c. Mr. Duggan says that the figures released to "The Observer" by the mayor were incorrect. Since then the mayor has made another statement on the letting of the contract, and now we find Kenlaw Pty. Ltd. saying that the figures supplied by the mayor were figures that he picked out of the air, that they were not true and correct. Mr. Kenlaw has said that the ratepayers of Gladstone City are to be asked to pay an additional \$300,000 for garbage collection because the council did not accept a lower tender and the contract is going to Berkeley Sanitation. As the contract is for a period of four years and 10 months, I think that is a very harsh imposition on the ratepayers.

The garbage rates in Gladstone have increased from \$17 last financial year to \$39 in this financial year. That is a very big increase, and I believe that the reason for it should be investigated. As I said in my speech in the Address-in-Reply debate, ratepayers are now being asked to pay an average of \$560 a year for rates and services while ratepayers in other cities such as Brisbane are paying about 100 per cent less. I suggest strongly that the letting of the contract should be investigated.

The pensioners in Gladstone have called on the mayor and the city council for a fair go over garbage. Because of the charge that has been made, and for some other reason that is not apparent, under the contract the people of Gladstone can now have a two-bin same-day service. That is not fair. If there had been a two-bin service on different days—say, on Monday and Thursday, or something like that—people could have accepted it for health reasons. However, the council and the health authorities say that no health problems have arisen. They were quite satisfied with the service provided by Mr. Duggan, who had the contract for the past 16 years, and no real objections or complaints about the service had been lodged with them.

That is why I am raising the matter today and asking the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads to take some positive action on the letting of the contract. If an inquiry is held and he can provide me with a good answer as to why the highest tender was accepted by the council, I think the people of Gladstone will be satisfied. But even a former mayor of Gladstone, Mr. Bill Golding, says that garbage issue is even more clouded. Although Mr. Golding is a very old man—he is 87 years of age—he is still

very active and knowledgeable. He has said that he does not want two garbage services a week, especially if the bins are collected on the same day, and he is only one of many pensioners throughout Gladstone objecting to the two-bin service, which will mean an increase of more than 100 per cent in the charges that they have to meet.

The Gladstone "Observer" carried out a small survey on the two-bin service. One of the questions was, "Are you in favour of a single weekly garbage bin collection service?" The majority replied "Yes". Readers were asked, "Are you in favour of a double service, collected on the one day (as introduced by council)?" The answers were "Yes", 2; and "No", 215. A further question was, "Are you in favour of a double bin service, but collected on different days?" The answers were—"Yes", 27; and "No", 186. A further question was, "Are you in favour of choice of either a double bin or single bin collection, and the right to pay accordingly?" The answers were—"Yes", 224; and "No", 28.

We would like to know who is getting the rake-off. Previously the service could be provided for 30c. Under the new contract an extra \$300,000 will be charged over a period of 4 years 10 months. There must be an explanation given. I again ask that the Minister take action now. It is almost too late, but it is never too late for an explanation. Threats have been made against persons taking up the petition. On the latest information I have approximately 1500 people signed the petition, indicating that they did not want a 2-bin service on the one day.

This is not the first contract that has been given to the highest tenderer. It is not only this contract that should be investigated but the entire workings of the Gladstone City Council. Although last year's budget was only a holding budget, rates and charges went up by 28 per cent. This year with a maintenance budget again, we find there is a 15.8 per cent increase in rates and charges.

I would ask the Minister to give this matter very serious consideration. It is a matter that concerns not only the people of Gladstone. The same thing has happened in other areas throughout the State. I would like to see an immediate investigation into the letting of this contract.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BEEF INDUSTRY

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (12.18 p.m.): I rise to make a very strong plea to the Federal Government to assist the great industry known as the beef industry. Let us remember the hundreds of millions of dollars being paid out in social unemployment benefits and foreign aid. The suggestion I make is that the Federal Government inject \$300 million a year into the beef industry over the next three years. This would represent 6c a

lb. on all meat slaughtered over that period. If producers could get an extra \$6 per \$100 at this time, it would go a long way towards solving their difficulties. The day has come when producers have to put their pride in their pockets. They used to say, "We don't want hand-outs." The industry is in such a situation that they must be offered and they must accept immediate aid. What were once considered to be overdrafts have now become non-repayable debts. Producers are plagued with exorbitant interest rates, higher shire rates, and higher living costs, all of which they cannot pass on. It is alarming to note in the latest statistics relating to rural shires that 55 shires out of a total of 131 in Queensland are losing population. Tambo Shire lost 4.27 per cent in the period 1971 to 1976. In that area people are paying in excess of \$1 a gallon for petrol.

Consider meat selling at 20c a lb. today and make some comparisons. A 10oz. glass of beer costs 40c, which represents 2 lb. of meat. A bottle of beer costs 75c, which is nearly equal to the price of 4 lb. of beef. If the cattleman buys a large bottle of soft drink for his children he pays out a sum equivalent to 4 lb. of meat. The cost of a mere postage stamp represents 1 lb. of meat. That is what country people have to put up with.

In 1973 a 600 lb. bullock, at \$42 per 100 lb. was worth \$252; today, at \$21 per 100 lb. it is worth \$126. A Holden V8 Premier sedan, which is a very popular car, cost the grazier \$4,100 in 1973, or the equivalent of 16 bullocks; today, at \$7,700, it is equivalent to 61 bullocks. In other words, the grazier has to sell an additional 45 bullocks to purchase a motor car. Similarly, today the price of a gallon of petrol is equivalent to that of 1 lb. of meat. The price of a meal for a man and his wife in an hotel—say they order steaks at \$6.50 each—represents 65 lb. of meat. If a man takes his family on a week's holiday to a popular resort he pays \$350 for the week or the equivalent of 1,750 lb. of meat. The situation has grown out of all proportion. The beef cattleman cannot afford to go on like this.

Recently Mr. Whitlam made a tour of Central Queensland. During his tour he had the hide and audacity to say that a Federal Labor Government would take immediate steps to help the ailing beef industry. Let me read some of his earlier remarks. On 12 September 1973 he urged the imposition of an export tax on beef. In August 1973 our Premier said that we must fight the meat tax.

Mr. Casey: What was the price of beef then?

Mr. HARTWIG: I have it here; the honourable member can come and read it. In 1973 Canberra said that there would be a tax to cut meat prices and that meat prices

were too high. On 2 April 1974 Mr. Whitlam said that the rural industries must stand on their own feet. He warned primary producers that they could no longer rely on Government hand-outs and taxpayer subsidies to support them.

On 24 June 1974 "The Financial Review" claimed that the Labor Government in Canberra had cost farmers a total of \$360,000,000. What short memories some people have! It was the Labor Government that put the primary producer in his present desperate position. Mr. Crean predicted that there would be a world beef shortage in 1976. How wrong he was! He conned a lot of people to go into the beef industry.

On 5 July 1975 the Press carried headlines stating that the beef industry had to carry the loss on beef sold to U.S.S.R. The industry had to repay the debt incurred under Whitlam. Whitlam's second Ministry did not include one farmer. I will admit that it contained Dr. Patterson, but he had only an academic background.

On 26 March 1974 Mr. Whitlam was in Perth, where farmers hurled eggs, pies and tomatoes at him. And he is the man who is touring our State today promising that he will assist our ailing beef industry. Whitlam's mad administration put the people of Queensland in a hell of a mess.

Mr. Jones: You'd better go out and throw something at Fraser.

Mr. HARTWIG: I will conclude by answering that interjection. Whether we engage in what is referred to as Canberra-blasting or anything else, we must make the Federal Government of the day aware of the fact that no longer can the beef cattleman stay in business in this tremendous industry. In one year the value of the beef industry to this nation was about six billion dollars.

When our Federal parliamentarians do not appreciate the plight of the cattle industry, God help us. The producers must look to Governments to assist them with their problems and to ensure that all aspects of the beef industry receive their due consideration.

The tremendous increase in fuel costs cannot be borne by people living in remote areas. Communication by motor car or aeroplane is part of their way of life. If the price of fuel is increased their daily living costs increase, but they cannot pass them on. Surely someone in Canberra must appreciate that, despite what Whitlam did to the primary industries, concessions must be reintroduced for them and assistance given by way of subsidy, which is the quickest way to render help.

Although the Queensland Government has done everything possible to help, we do not seem to be making much progress with the stabilisation of meat prices. I understand that tomorrow our Queensland beef cattle committee will try to bring a stabilisation scheme through the Minister for Primary Industries

to the Government so that the machinery will be ready to implement a minimum floor-price scheme whenever agreement is reached with the other States. Let the other States follow suit! Let us show them the way! Let us back our Premier and our Ministers to the hilt in their attempts to foster the future prosperity of this State and nation.

UNIONISING OF THE PROFESSIONS

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (12.27 p.m.): Today I shall draw attention to the growing peril this country faces through an accelerating process of unionising the professions. In recent years we have seen quite determined and successful endeavours to leach traditional ethics and concepts out of professional bodies with the idea of transforming them into union-type bodies, with their eventual affiliation with the T.L.C.s and the A.C.T.U.

This is being achieved through what is called the "tier organisation" or the "peak council" technique, whereby rank-and-file control exercised at the primary or State level is lost as primary levels are absorbed in umbrella organisations which often set up professional secretariats to make Left-wing policy that may well be at variance with what State rank-and-filers believe.

The present struggle within the Queensland branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation is a classic illustration of what is happening. The R.A.N.F. is a national body with branches in each State. Until now the Federal body has been affiliated with the umbrella body known as the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, or A.C.P.S.A. Many white-collar professional groups have affiliated with A.C.P.S.A. for greater strength in dealing with the Commonwealth Government and industrial arbitration bodies.

The Queensland branch of the R.A.N.F. is split between those who believe that A.C.P.S.A. is too ineffective to meet their needs and too Left Wing and want to disaffiliate from it, and those who are Left Wing but want the branch to affiliate directly with the A.C.T.U. Some moderates believe that it would be better to move out of A.C.P.S.A. and not move directly into the A.C.T.U. but into another umbrella body known as the Combined Association of Government Employee Organisations, or C.A.G.E.O. This gobbledegook alphabet is part of the operation. C.A.G.E.O. is another umbrella for a large group of professional bodies covering those in governmental, semi-governmental and statutory body employment. But C.A.G.E.O., in fact, is also Left-wing controlled and very largely identified with the A.C.T.U.

So the Queensland nurses can vote till they are blue in the face but they will achieve nothing. Members of the Queensland R.A.N.F. branch have no real options in this matter. They can be in A.C.P.S.A. or C.A.G.E.O., which are both Left-wing and affiliated with the A.C.T.U. (even if

they do not want it); they can fragment and break away from the Federal body, which I am sure they would not want either; or they can sit helplessly and watch while their Federal body takes them into this Left-wing trade union orbit.

The A.U.S.—the Australian Union of Students—is another example of how the tier system works. The body controlling A.U.S. is not elected directly from the campuses of universities throughout Australia but by groups purportedly representing those campuses—and a very intricate system of voting it is, too. Thus the various university unions find A.U.S. taking action which commits them to national and international policies and political expenditures, all very extreme, with which they do not agree. All this is done by a council that the students did not elect. A similar type of situation exists for colleges of advanced education.

This process is working for a new structure of unionism in which white-collar professionals are organised at State levels, probably on quite a democratic base. But, with the best of intentions, they form a national body, which in turn is either manipulated by, or through naivety joins with, some other national umbrella group. In its turn this group is either controlled by or affiliated with the A.C.T.U. So it is quite inevitable that as the erection of this tiered structure proceeds the top moves further away from its democratic base and the State organisation or branch loses any control of its national voice, becoming totally the creature of policy determined by some distant secretariat.

Consider, for example, the teachers. Teachers' unions are currently right in the throes of this form of change. Recently the Queensland Teachers' Union decided by a two-to-one majority at its annual conference not to affiliate with the Queensland Trades and Labor Council; but it is certainly highly probable, with the strong Left-wing influence of the New South Wales Teachers' Federation and the Victorian sector, that the Australian Teachers' Federation, of which the Queensland Teachers' Union is part, will move into the orbit of the A.C.T.U. Certainly it must be more than a coincidence that Mr. R. Costello, the Left-wing oriented president of the Queensland Teachers' Union, has already announced his intention of moving to a position with the Australian Teachers' Federation.

There are ample indications that a similar pattern is occurring with other formerly professional bodies such as the A.B.C. Staff Association, the Australian Journalists' Association, the Australian Council of Social Workers, the Federation of University Staff Associations, and others.

A major factor working for growth of union attitudes in hitherto aloof professional bodies is today's very large quantum of Government employment. Australian

Bureau of Statistics figures show that there has been a marked decline over the last decade in the number of professional people acting in a private capacity. More and more doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, nurses, teachers, social workers and others in professional fields find themselves employed by government in one form or another. They then come under pressure either to join unions or to transform their own professional bodies into union-like structures. It is very notable that a substantially larger proportion of each year's output of doctors is now joining the Hospital Employees' Federation in preference to the A.M.A.

Some of us may think that members of professions can act like blue-collar unionists without impairing their professional attributes and status. I do not think this is at all likely. Apart from the fact that members of a recognised profession usually require longer and much more advanced training than is required in other callings, there was acceptance by members of professions that they were dedicated to serving society and the ethics of their profession first, and themselves second. In other words, the community came before consideration of self-advantage. They therefore had both the freedom and the obligation within their professional competence to make decisions based solely on the best interests of client or patient, unaffected by any outside considerations.

But if professions fall within the A.C.T.U. area of influence, then increasingly their decisions will not be made solely on what their competence suggests is best for client or patient, but on what political line an A.C.T.U. is adopting at the time. It is quite proper for professionals to have private political views; it is utterly improper and unprofessional for politics to intrude into professional decisions. History has shown us the very dire effects of this in countries where all branches of science and learning have to conform to political dogmas.

Equally with this concern for the professions there must also be concern in the community over what an all-powerful A.C.T.U. must mean to that community. With major professions attached to it, the A.C.T.U. would become quite literally the only organisation able to treat with the Commonwealth Government or any other Government. In real terms, it would exercise in vast areas a veto power greater than the power of Government itself. It would have access, of course, to vast increases in funds.

Remembering that the professions are deeply involved with all of those vital services involving security, health and the moulding of minds—all essential to a stable community—the increased capacity of an A.C.T.U. both for mischief and for leverage based on the threat of mischief would be massive. I say to this House that no society worth its salt can be expected to

sit back and passively watch the enactment of its own doom. It is therefore incumbent on responsible Government to act in this matter.

I want to say here and now—and I will use my best endeavour to ensure that this occurs—that it is both necessary and urgent that attention be given to what is happening and what is already far advanced in some areas. It should be possible to define in law the nature and the role of a professional body and its membership and to prohibit such bodies from joining with Trades and Labor Councils or the A.C.T.U. for trade union political purposes.

UNION-BASHING BY GOVERNMENT MEMBERS; EMPLOYMENT OF AUSTRALIAN SEAMEN ON UTAH SHIPS

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.37 p.m.): What prompts me to enter this debate today is the spate of union-bashing by Government members in the Address-in-Reply debate. It is quite obvious, with an election coming up in the very near future, that Government back-bench members realise that the Government is bereft of policies.

Mr. Porter: Then what are you worrying about?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will come to the honourable member. I have not forgotten him.

Because the Government is bereft of policies, it will manufacture a sham campaign for the forthcoming election and it has picked on union-bashing because it thinks that it is a good subject.

I have noticed in the House some back-bench members of the Government who usually do not speak on trade union matters getting to their feet this time and engaging in union-bashing.

One is the honourable member for Fassifern, whom I hold in high regard both personally and for his ability. He is one of the better members on the Government side of the House. In view of the calibre of the Ministers, it is a travesty that the honourable member for Fassifern, after his years in the House, is not sitting on the Government front bench. The honourable member for Toowong, with all of the so-called grey eminence of the Liberal Party, is still left languishing on the back benches, because no leader of the Liberal Party in this House has been brave or foolish enough to put him on the front bench.

In his speech yesterday, the honourable member for Fassifern spoke about the trade union movement and it was quite obvious that he had as little knowledge of the trade union movement as he has of the mating habits of the South African racing duck. The knowledge of the trade union movement of the honourable member for Albert, who is normally a fairly moderate fellow, was acquired while he was the proprietor of a wrecking yard on the Gold Coast.

The matter of public interest that I desire to raise today concerns the current dispute between Utah and the Seamen's Union of Australia over the use of Australian seamen on Utah's vessels. After a discussion I have had with some unemployed seamen in my electorate, I was amazed at how blatantly this issue has been misrepresented. For the benefit of honourable members, I will quickly recap what the present situation is.

The seamen's union has sought to negotiate with Utah on the manning of Utah's ships with Australian crews. I think we would all agree that this is a reasonable request.

Mr. Jensen: It is a reasonable request, but they will not accept the international rates. They want the Australian rates.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Bundaberg is pretty au fait with what is going on in the industrial world, but on this occasion he is way off the beam. These people are employed in Australia under Australian conditions and they are entitled to Australian award wages. I do not think that any honourable member would cavil at that. So I am rather surprised that the honourable member for Bundaberg has lost his union principles so quickly. To my knowledge the Seamen's Union have suggested they wanted the sole right to crew all ships carrying Australian mineral exports. Unfortunately, Utah have declined to negotiate with the Seamen's Union. It is interesting to note that the American Government is about to legislate that 10 per cent of American oil be carried in American-flag ships. Contrast that with the current attitude in Australia. At the present time the eight ships in the Utah fleet fly the flag of Liberia. I think the kindest thing one could say about Liberia would be to classify it as banana republic. As we all know, Liberia is a small West African banana republic which is the shipowners' haven.

Mr. Casey: Will they take Joh?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I think they would be doing us a public service if they did. Under Liberian registration taxes, and more importantly, maritime safety regulations are virtually non-existent. Conditions on these ships leave a lot to be desired. As a matter of fact, they are not far removed from conditions on the old slave ships that used to ply between Africa and the United States some 150 years ago. The Utah fleet is manned—

Mr. Jensen: What about the kanaka ships that used to come in from the islands?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is a good interjection and I will take it. As a matter of fact, they probably would be on a par with the kanaka ships which used to ply between the Solomon Islands and Queensland.

As I was saying, the Utah fleet is manned by non-union seamen engaged by a crewing agency set up in Spain, and even the honourable member for Toowong, who is renowned for his conservative views, would agree that Spain is not regarded in the Western World as a bulwark of democracy. These seamen are grossly exploited by any standards. The Seamen's Union recently exposed this exploitation on the ship "Lake Berryessa". The Spanish crew on this ship were being paid \$US382 per month and the International Transport Federation rate is \$US507 per month. Honourable members can see there is quite a difference in those rates. However, the Seamen's Union, being a very good union which looks after the interests of its members, managed through negotiation to obtain back pay of \$48,900 for the seamen on this ship, which I think you would agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a good indication of the manner in which the Seamen's Union looks after its members. Much has been heard of a certain Elliott V. Elliott, who is—

Mr. Elliott: No relationship.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I believe he is the grandfather of the honourable member for Cunningham. Great play has been made of the fact that he is a member of the Communist Party. That is his own business. A lot of people in the National Party are members of the League of Rights, so where is the difference? To my mind Utah wants it both ways. It makes huge profits out of the sale of our coal and it wants to make a huge profit carrying it overseas in its own ships. In my opinion, as Utah is a multinational company mining Australian resources, Australians should be entitled to a share in mining those resources and also insist that the coal should be carried on Australian railways, and certainly on ships manned by Australian crews.

I would just like to quote some figures to show that Utah is doing very well in Australia. I want to quote from an article in "The Australian Financial Review" of 28 July 1977. It reads—

"Quietly, and without attracting any of the adverse publicity which marred its first big repatriation in 1975, Utah Development Co. has shipped more than \$150 million back home to the U.S. during the past year."

The article then goes on to list the structure of Utah and its take-over by General Electric. However, then we come to another interesting paragraph, which reads—

"In 1976, Utah Development sent back about \$90.8 million to the U.S. and, in the previous year, about \$63 million. A quick calculation shows that, during a space of fewer than three years, Utah Development is likely to pay Utah International the staggering amount of \$300 million."

After all this profit Utah is saying it cannot afford to employ Australian seamen. This is the same company that is spending a fortune on advertising. Its theme, as we all know, is, "Utah, we're backing Australia." I would suggest that this be changed to, "Utah, we're banking Australia." The star of this advertising, and I use the term "star" very loosely, is an ageing expatriate "B" grade actor who never quite made it. The company could not even employ one of the hundreds of excellent actors who reside in Australia.

To return to the "Australian Financial Review" article, the writer points out that General Electric acquired Utah International in a share exchange deal and no cash changed hands. It seems that the Australian assets of Utah Development constituted about half the total assets of Utah International, which owned mines in various parts of the world and bulk ore carriers.

We now come to what, to my mind, is the crux of Utah's attitude to Australian seamen—

"With the Australian assets alone currently returning about 12 per cent a year on the total imputed Utah purchase price, the General Electric killing looms into perspective. And it would appear that General Electric is out to take as much of the rewards from its newly acquired Australian interests back home as fast as possible."

There it is in a nutshell, Mr. Deputy Speaker! Utah profits are to be taken back to the U.S.A. as quickly as possible and in quantities as large as possible. The question of employing Australian seamen to take our own minerals out of Australia is not to be allowed to get in the way of taking maximum profits back to the United States.

Utah's profit record is revealed for the fraud that it is when it is considered that B.H.P. employs 60,000 Australians to earn its \$100,000,000 profit, yet Utah employs only 2,600 Australian workers to make its enormous profits. These profits make B.H.P.'s profit look like petty cash.

Utah gets away with murder in this country. It would not last five minutes in other comparable countries. Of course, it keeps the State Government on side. During the recent air strike, the Minister for Mines and Energy was ferried back to Brisbane in a Utah executive aircraft. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I notice that the Minister for Mines has completed a visit to Utah headquarters in California. With a State election so close, there are no prizes for guessing what the main topic of conversation was.

I think I can confidently say that the actions of Utah with regard to the employment of Australian seamen has finally given the lie to the line constantly peddled by the Premier, namely, that the overseas miners have the interests of this country at heart.

I repeat: Utah is not backing Australia; it is banking Australia. And what is more, it is banking our wealth in the U.S.A.

In the little time that I have left, I wish to make a few comments on the speech made by the honourable member for Toowoong about unionising professional employees. Let me say quite clearly that whether one is a professional person or a layman, one has to work—

(Time expired.)

COST TO MT. ISA RATEPAYERS OF JULIUS DAM

Mr. BERTONI (Mt. Isa) (12.47 p.m.): I once again draw the attention of this Parliament to the serious situation facing the people of Mt. Isa because of the Federal Government's failure to provide finance for the Julius Dam project. Many of my colleagues will be well aware of the number of times that I have spoken in the House on this issue and the events that have led to the city council's present financial crisis.

Without a doubt the main cause has been the inflation that occurred under the Whitlam Government in Canberra, when the original cost of the Julius Dam of \$21,300,000 shot up to \$32,000,000. In the Whitlam era, the contribution of Mt. Isa ratepayers to the cost of building the dam increased from \$4,500,000 to about \$7,000,000. This has placed an enormous burden on the people of Mt. Isa—not only the ratepayers but every resident—because landlords paying high rates will pass the cost on in higher rents and business people faced with increasing costs during the present economic downturn will, naturally, pass those costs on in higher prices.

Residents of Mt. Isa are presently paying rates that are amongst the highest in Australia, and this was shown clearly in a recent issue of "Woman's Day" in which rates were compared. The proposed increase in rates this year will cause an exodus from Mt. Isa. People can hardly be blamed for leaving, although Mt. Isa is one of the best examples in Queensland of the Government's decentralisation policy. The Mt. Isa City Council urgently needs assistance so that the people of the city can enjoy a way of life comparable with that of residents of other cities.

Water is a basic necessity, and the cost of developing an arid region and providing it with water should not be borne solely by the ratepayers of the area. As I said, originally the dam was expected to cost \$21,300,000; but because of inflation and other wage factors, the cost increased to \$32,000,000 over the three-year period during which it was under construction. Mount Isa Mines paid a fairly large proportion of that \$32,000,000—\$14,900,000—and the contribution of the Mt. Isa Water Board, which is really the Mt. Isa City Council, has now reached \$5,778,000. The Queensland Government provided a subsidy of almost

\$4,000,000 and a loan of \$3,298,000. Honourable members might also recall that last year I announced that the Queensland Government had given \$800,000 and an additional \$1,100,000 to the Mt. Isa City Council to assist it to alleviate the rate burden in 1976-77. What did our Federal colleagues give us? They gave us absolutely nothing as a grant but merely a repayable loan of \$2,000,000. The blame lies solely with the Federal Government.

If we take the chronological order of the development of the Julius Dam we see that in October 1972 the then mayor of Mt. Isa, Alderman Bill Weigh, signed an agreement committing the council to pay its then contribution of \$4,500,000 to the dam. When I came into office in 1973 my council foresaw the tremendous burden that would be put on the ratepayers and therefore we made an all-out effort in approaches to the State and Federal Governments to help us in the financing of this dam in order to alleviate the burden of rates. In July 1973 we had a deputation to Mr. Uren, the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, at that time, and we saw Dr. Rex Patterson, the Minister for Northern Development. We also saw our Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Out of all this came a cost-survey analysis, which had to be forwarded to the Government. In April 1974 the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, promised that he would give us assistance for the dam. As usual we got the run around by his department. We were told in September 1975 that no money was available. With that we renewed our efforts with the State Government. We spoke to the Premier about financing the Julius Dam. In March last year I spoke in the House on the same subject and requested urgent assistance for the Mt. Isa City Council to the extent of \$800,000 to help alleviate the rates position. In May Cabinet decided to give us \$800,000, and in June it announced a \$1,100,000 grant to the Mt. Isa City Council. We thought we could then go back to the Federal Government. We received a sympathetic hearing from the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, regarding assistance for the dam. We went through the usual processes again in talking to a new Government. This all led up to where we are at the moment. The Federal Government's last Budget resulted in nothing for us.

If the picture is looked at clearly, the result in a nutshell is that the McMahon Government gave us \$2,000,000 as a repayable loan, the Whitlam Government gave us absolutely nothing, and the Fraser Government also gave us absolutely nothing. The only Government that has really showed its concern and care for the whole project has been the Queensland State Government with its \$1,900,000 grant, its subsidy of \$4,000,000 and the additional \$3,300,000 as spare Supply, making a total of approximately

\$9,100,000. It is clear that the State Government is the only Government that has really shown that it is interested in the people of Mt. Isa.

We hear a lot of promises from representatives of the State and Federal A.L.P. They have promised that they will pay the first three interest and redemption payments for the Julius Dam project, knowing full well that the first one was due last year, the second one is due this year and the third one next year, and that they will not be in office to worry about it.

It is ironic that in a letter to the editor the president of the A.L.P. in my area announced that the A.L.P. will make all the payments for the Julius Dam. I wonder which of his colleagues here would like to confirm that. I notice that they are very quiet. They are not interested in the Julius Dam, nor are they interested in the people of the West. They never have been interested in the people out there. I am sure the people of Mt. Isa realise exactly what part the A.L.P. is playing out West. All that party does is bandy promises around. I notice that its spokesmen have not promised anything for the Toowoomba dam; they have not promised anything for the Bundaberg dam; they have not promised anything to the other cities.

Simply because the Julius Dam is an election issue in my area, the A.L.P. has promised all the assistance in the world. It knows, of course, that it will not be required to keep its promises. After the election the A.L.P. will forget the whole matter. It will not worry about the people any more. But of course it never has worried about the people, and I am sure that the people of Mt. Isa remember that.

HANDICAPPED PERSONS' WEEK

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (12.56 p.m.): I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me in the few minutes remaining to remind the people of Queensland that this is Handicapped Persons' Week. I thank the news media for the wonderful plugs they have given to the various events that are taking place throughout Queensland this week.

Handicapped Persons' Week was opened yesterday in Toowoomba by the Minister for Health. I say to those people who have not yet had anything to do with Handicapped Persons' Week that it gives them an excellent opportunity to go forth and meet handicapped persons and to discover their strength as well as their limitations. I am sorry that the honourable member for Sandgate is not in the Chamber at present. His heart belongs to handicapped persons and he backs them in everything they do.

People will discover that handicapped persons are quite lovable human beings. Many of those with a specific handicap suffer from a second handicap as well in that they are not able to complete their education. People who discuss with handicapped persons the problems

that confront them will find that they can help handicapped persons to lead full and active lives. They will learn, for example, that they could take a blind person shopping, that they could push a wheelchair, or that they could help a person confined to a wheelchair in and out of motor vehicles. It is incredibly difficult for a paraplegic to learn how to get in and out of motor cars. Furthermore, people could visit elderly handicapped persons, particularly those suffering from certain mental conditions, and offer them cheer and comfort.

We should adopt an all-year-round approach. I hope that the community will take this opportunity to discuss with the service clubs, the leaders of religion and other public-spirited persons the problems confronting handicapped persons so that they can see for themselves what is being done for them not only by private organisations but also by the State and Federal Governments. We can all help to make next year's Handicapped Persons' Week a much bigger event than this year's, for the betterment of the whole community.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.