Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 1977

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 1977

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Traffic Act Amendment Bill;

Police Superannuation Acts Amendment Bill.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Reports—

Air Pollution Council of Queensland, for the year 1976-77.

Queensland Police Superannuation Board, for the year 1976-77.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Acquisition of Land Act 1967–1977 and State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971–1974.

Forestry Act 1959–1976.

Orders in Council under—

Racing and Betting Act 1954–1977.

Workers' Compensation Act 1916–1974.

Forestry Act 1959–1976.

Regulation under the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977.

Reports—

Audit Inspector's Report on Books and Accounts of the Queensland Coal Board, for the year 1976-77.

Brisbane Milk Board, together with the Report of the Auditor-General on Books and Accounts of the Board, for the year 1976-77.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Accusations against Education Department Officers by Member for South Brisbane

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education and Cultural Activities) (11.7 a.m.): I refer to the address given by the honourable member for South Brisbane on Tuesday, 13 September, in which he attacked and named officers of my department. This particular speech was filled with inaccuracies and statements taken out of context and misconstrued to give another meaning. However, the main issue I wish to raise in response to the speech deals with the naming of and accusations against officers of my department. These officers, being public servants, have no right of defence, and it is obligatory on me to set the record straight in this House and to affirm my confidence in and respect for these loyal public servants.

Mr. Lamont seems to take delight for his own notoriety in making outrageous statements, and even when he is corrected in some of the inaccuracies still persists in repeating them. I could spend some time dealing with the inaccuracies in the particular speech I refer to, but there are three issues dealing with the public servants that I would like to raise.

During the speech Mr. Lamont stated—

> "One Director of Education—in fact the Director of Primary Education—said to me, 'No matter what you people in Parliament do, you won't change the way I want to run my schools'. Quite frankly, that appals me because he is after all a public servant".

Let me state, Mr. Speaker, most definitely that policy on education in Queensland is determined by me as the political head of the department, in some cases by Cabinet, or by this Parliament. The implementation of those policies then becomes the responsibility of the public servants in the department. This is the way it has always been, and this is the way it will be in the future.

It is deplorable that the honourable member should stoop to criticise and name a public servant who has no right of defending himself. I considered this accusation to be of such importance that I placed it in the hands of my Director-General of Education, Mr. Clyde Gilmour, and called for a report on its accuracy. I am now in receipt of a statutory declaration signed by Mr. Cullen, Director of Primary Education, in which he states—

> "I categorically deny that I made any such statement or statement resembling such a matter in regard to Parliament and schools at any time to any person".

Honourable members will be aware of the penalty associated with making a false statement in a statutory declaration. This declaration has been duly signed by my Director of Primary Education and I invite the honourable member for South Brisbane to provide me with a duly signed and witnessed statutory declaration by him stating that what he has said in his speech was said to him by the Director of Primary Education. If he is not prepared to do that, the very least he can do is to apologise to this Parliament for making an untruthful statement. I shall table Mr. Cullen's statutory declaration.

Mr. Lamont has consistently made derogatory remarks about my Deputy-Director-General of Education and other departmental officers. For example, in the "Sunday Sun" of 29 May 1977 he incorrectly attributed statements to Mr. Hamilton and referred to these as "stale old Marxist claptrap". I hasten to say that Mr. Hamilton is highly respected by teachers throughout the whole of this State, by educationists in other educational institutions, and by the public at large.

The inferences made by Mr. Lamont that either Mr. Hamilton or departmental officers are solely responsible for the introduction of teaching methods or curriculum is a slur on those hundreds of people, businessmen, teachers, principals, and others who give of their time voluntarily by serving on committees and boards to ensure that the students of this State receive the best education possible.

It is small wonder so many of them have expressed their concern at these consistent attacks of the honourable member for South Brisbane and have asked if their efforts have been in vain and are not appreciated. Queensland could easily lose the assistance of these experts who have freely given of themselves in the past, as they become disenchanted by the unjust criticism of Mr. Lamont. The loss of this expertise would be unfortunate and education in Queensland would suffer because of it.

As a further indication of the incorrect statements made by this member, I refer to his claim that Mr. Hamilton replied in my name to a charitable institution without consulting me—a claim that Mr. Lamont has repeated in spite of the fact that he has been told that the reply was made at my request while I was visiting schools in North Queensland and that the contents had been discussed with me.

Mr. Lamont has quoted Mr. Hamilton as saying in that letter that the development of the competitive spirit is bad for the social and psychological development of the child.

I have the letter in front of me and I cannot find these words. I am not surprised, because Mr. Lamont admitted last Tuesday during his speech that he has never read the letter.

I shall table three letters. The first is addressed to me from the divisional chairman of the Queensland Division of the Australian Red Cross; the second and third are replies to the divisional chairman from Mr. Hamilton, as Acting Director-General of Education, and myself.

Before tabling the letters I will read them to the House so that there will be no doubt in honourable members' minds that there is any excuse for Mr. Lamont's wilfully inaccurate statements. The first letter is addressed to me and reads as follows:—

"Hon. V. J. Bird, M.L.A.,
"Minister for Education and Cultural Activities,
"Old Treasury Building,
"Queen Street,
"Brisbane, Q. 4000.

"Dear Mr. Bird,

"Once each year the Red Cross Society in Queensland makes an appeal to the general public for financial support. This appeal is called 'Red Cross Calling' and will be conducted from 16th to 29th May in the Brisbane, Ipswich, Strathpine, Redcliffe and Gold Coast areas.

"To ensure the success of this appeal, it is necessary to have sufficient volunteers to call on as many households as possible.

"This year, in order to stimulate students' awareness of the activities of the Society, and to provide an opportunity for students to serve the community whilst at the same time representing their particular school, we have decided to award a trophy to the school raising the largest amount of money for the Society. It is proposed that the winning school will hold the trophy for 12 months and it will then be awarded to the next year's winner. We hope also to be able to present a set of Encyclopaedias to the winning school.

"We would be honoured if you would be willing to present the trophy to the school concerned during the last half of June.

"We would anticipate that the presentation will take place within the Metropolitan area.

"Yours sincerely,
"D. W. Picking,
"Divisional Chairman."

The second letter, from Mr. Hamilton to Mr. Picking, reads:—

"Mr. D. W. Picking,
"Divisional Chairman,
"Red Cross Society,
"G.P.O. Box 917,
"Brisbane, Q. 4001.
"Dear Mr. Picking,

"I refer to your letter of 13 April addressed to Mr. Bird. A reply from Mr. Bird will be forwarded when he returns from his country tour of schools. In the meantime, I believe that it is fair for me to follow up conversations held between Mr. Reader and myself so that there is no misunderstanding.

"I should point out that the subject was thoroughly discussed with Mr. Bird prior to his departure.

"This Department's attitude is as follows:—

1. Schools are requested to assist one major charity every year. The Freedom from Hunger Campaign and the Save the Childen Fund receive support in alternate years.

2. Approval is granted to other charitable causes to enter schools, with the principals' agreement, in order to address students or to distribute information through students. No obligation rests upon the school to participate in fund-raising on an organised basis.

3. Teachers, parents, or students are naturally at liberty to perform community service if they so desire, but this would be clearly a local initiative.

4. Directors of Education are against the provision of material incentives to children or schools to perform charitable or community services. The reasons are obvious, and we would prefer that State schools not participate in competitive 'good works'.

"Your Society, for which we have the highest regard, has approval to visit State schools in order to publicise 'Red Cross Calling' and to recruit collectors from among students. However, we request that you do not solicit participation in the fund-raising competition. If a school wishes to participate, that is a local decision.

"Yours faithfully,
"W. L. Hamilton,
"Acting Director-General of Education."

That was followed by a letter from me to Mr. Picking dated 8 June 1977, in these terms—

8 June 1977

"Mr. D. W. Picking,
"Divisional Chairman,
"Red Cross Society,
"G.P.O. Box 917,
"Brisbane, Q. 4001.

"Dear Mr. Picking,

"I refer to your letter of 13 April and the reply addressed to you of 12 May from my Acting Director-General.

"Shortly before the Director-General and myself left Brisbane to visit schools in North Queensland, I discussed your request with the Deputy Director-General of Education. In order to expedite a reply to you I asked Mr. Hamilton to advise you of my decision.

"There has been a long-standing departmental policy within this Department to allow schools to collect funds for one charitable organisation a year. The two organisations that were agreed upon and approved were related specifically to help for children. They are The Freedom from Hunger Campaign and Save the Children Fund. These two charities receive support in alternate years.

"It has also been a long-standing policy within the Department of Education not to involve children in raising funds on a competition basis. It is our belief that if children are to raise funds for a worthwhile cause they should do so for the benefit of the cause and not for any other reward.

"I have very high regard for your organisation and I wish you well in your collecting campaign this year. However, I am sure you will appreciate the position of the Department of Education and the long-standing arrangement that exists within it concerning organised fund raising by schools.

"Yours sincerely,
"V. J. Bird,
"Minister for Education"

The policy enunciated in this correspondence has existed, in principle, for at least 50 years, has from time to time been reaffirmed by the Government of the day, and has this year been re-examined and reaffirmed by Cabinet.

I invite the member for South Brisbane to review what he has said against the evidence I have produced. If he is truly an honourable man, if he is a man of conscience as he claims, if he does subscribe to the Australian way of life as he says, then he has only one course of action available to him—to apologise publicly to this House and to the individuals whom he has wronged.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the documents referred to.

CRITICISM OF WATER POLLUTION CONTROLS BY QUEENSLAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (11.18 a.m.): The Queensland Conservation Council spokesmen, in their carefully stage-managed, anti-Government public relations effort yesterday, have been something less than fair and honest in criticising the Government for its performance in the area of water-pollution controls. They have shown a lamentable lack of appreciation of what has been done so far, and what is being done —an appreciation which could have been achieved had they taken the trouble to make an objective assessment of the Water Quality Council's current annual report, and previous reports.

They have chosen, instead, to present carefully selected facts and figures related to the more serious pollution "problem areas" and set out to represent these as examples of "typical stream pollution", which, of course they are not. By no stretch of the imagination could Bulimba Creek, and the situation of city council sewerage treatment works pollution that the critics chose to highlight, be interpreted or regarded as typical of streams throughout the State, as claimed. It is a most atypical situation, in all honesty.

The critics, in this morning's Press and on television last night, were guilty of scare tactics, half-truths and distortions, in attempting to manufacture a health-scare situation which simply does not exist.

What is true—and this can be readily verified by checks with fishermen, marine authorities and others—is that fish and crabs are being caught in greater numbers further up the Brisbane River now than ever before. Even some of our former critics in the media, quite unsolicited, have highlighted this recently. Even Tommy Burns has been catching fish lately. On the one hand, our Queensland Conservation Council critics claim we are not doing enough in the field of water pollution control and, in the next breath, they tell us that pelicans are moving further up the river because food previously available through discharges from the Metropolitan Abattoir is not now available to them, because the discharges have stopped. The critics cannot have it both ways.

The Water Quality Section of the Local Government Department has grown from a staff of one to a staff of 38 in recent years, and it is simply a blatant distortion of the truth to claim, as the Conservation Council critics have, that "nothing has been done and little achieved in the area". In fact, a great deal has and is being done, and a great deal has been achieved.

There is no doubt that if the Water Quality Council had not been set up—and this was in 1973, not 1971 as the critics claim—the water pollution situation today would be much more serious than it now is. Under the guidance and supervision of the Water Quality Council, bodies such as the Brisbane City Council and industry have spent and are spending millions of dollars on water control measures.

In its expanding stream-monitoring programmes, the Water Quality Council directs most of its efforts on checking places considered likely to carry a measure of pollution, and the facts and figures in the annual report refer principally to these streams. These facts and figures cannot therefore be regarded as representative of the great mileage of streams and waterways throughout the State which carry little or no controllable pollution. Yet the critics, quite dishonestly, seek to present them as "Typical of the general situation throughout the State". Of course they are not, as anyone with an ounce of intelligence and sense of fair play would acknowledge.

In advocating prosecution as the answer to pollution, the critics really are displaying their abysmal lack of appreciation of how the system works. They need to get their feet on the ground and their heads out of the clouds and have a look at what is going on.

Pollution cannot be controlled by prosecution and by extra staff alone, but only by the provision of major treatment plants and other measures requiring large sums of money to construct and operate, and these measures have to be applied with common sense. At a time when many industries are closing down because of declining profitability, it is necessary to arrange programmes of works which can be carried out within the limits of finance available and over reasonable time periods, etc. If the adoption of unreasonable, unrealistic controls means sending more industries to the wall, and throwing thousands more people out of work, what has been achieved? Under the circumstances, to talk of prosecution come what may, displays a complete ignorance of the practical economics of the situation and the needs of the community, which, of course, the Government has to bear in mind in making decisions and applying controls.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. HINZE: I know that the honourable member intends to ask a question on this matter and what I am saying cuts the ground from under his feet.

One can only speculate as to whether the critics who advocate prosecution as the answer to achievement in the field of water pollution controls support the concept of prosecution when it comes to illegal street marches. I would suspect that they wouldn't.

Returning to the Bulimba Creek situation, which the Conservation Council spokesmen highlighted, it is acknowledged that the condition of the stream in this location is due to the discharge of sludge from the Brisbane City Council sewerage scheme, and it is acknowledged that the council has some difficulties in adequately maintaining the system, because of insufficient staff. I will be asking the Lord Mayor to take steps to ensure that the council employs the necessary staff to more adequately carry out maintenance of these sewerage works.

Most industrial pollution along Bulimba Creek has in fact been cleaned up, and it is recognised that the city council treatment plants would be the major contributor to the pollution levels now existing in the creek. The question of reconstruction of existing plants or the provision of a new regional plant to absorb the role of the smaller plants now operating is being investigated by my department.

In all fairness, it must be acknowledged by the Queensland Conservation Council and other critics that the city council currently is spending large amounts of money on the treatment of sewerage. As Minister, I fully understand and appreciate the city council's problems and I am not prepared to institute prosecution against the council whilst it is pursuing a reasonable programme of sewerage works. It must be borne in mind, of course, that contrary to what our university friends on their academic ego-trips might imagine, money for sewerage treatment plants doesn't come from some magical bottomless bucket, but from ratepayers. And there is a limit to what ratepayers can afford, too.

The Director of Water Quality, Mr. Leon Henry, has just returned from a major water quality conference in Germany and his advice to me is that what is being done and achieved in Queensland in the area of water-pollution controls compares very favourably with what is being done elsewhere in the world. The same problems of lack of finance to do all desirable works plague local authorities and industries in Queensland, as elsewhere, but I believe we can claim to be better off than most.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAMONT (South Brisbane) (11.25 a.m.), by leave: I invite members of the House to have a look at the letters tabled and I invite them to find that the purport of one of the letters has substantially the same sense as the policy that I have criticised. Secondly, I point out to the House that the result is as I claimed, namely, that the department advised the charitable institution that the Minister would not participate in the presentation of a prize and did so in the context of a letter and in the name of disapproving of material incentives in competitions such as the one that the charity was conducting.

I wish to assure the House and the very loyal Public Service that supports the Government that I respect the right of every public servant to immunity from criticism, but only in so far as the Public Service retains its anonymity. I call upon the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities to view my comments last week in the context that the public servant in question has previously attacked me in the Press through letters to the editor. He has attacked and criticised other members of the Government in the Press and had, on radio station 4IP on the morning in which I named him in the House, criticised me personally by name and cast serious aspersions on my judgement, my educational qualifications and my professional integrity.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS ON FUTURE WATER REQUIREMENTS

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

(1) With reference to the debate on water projects in the House of Representatives on 14 September and the Joint Burdekin Project Committee's report in June, which stated that the choice between the Burdekin and Urannah Dam sites to meet projected water requirements for agriculture, industry and urban supplies in the Burdekin Valley and the Townsville region

revolved around the future role of hydro-electric power generation in the Queensland electricity supply network, have the Commonwealth Government and his Government discussed this basic question and, if so, with what result?

(2) In view of the critical water requirements established by the committee, if the Governments have not discussed it, when will they do so?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The report to which the honourable member refers was prepared by a committee established to reappraise the potential of the resources of the Burdekin Basin. The committee was made up of departmental officers of both the Commonwealth and State Governments.

The "basic question" referred to by the honourable member is only one of a number of major conclusions contained in the Burdekin Project Committee's report.

Upon receipt of this report my Government established a committee of State Government officers to examine in detail and report on the development options which should be pursued. The committee is engaged on this examination at the present time.

2. RAPE CRISIS CENTRE FOR TOWNSVILLE

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Has he been approached by the N.C.W. and W.E.L. groups for the funding of rape crisis centres in Townsville and other areas?

(2) If so, will he look carefully at the submission and consider the proposed location of these centres?

(3) Will he give consideration to liaising with the Minister for Health and have any centres which are to be established placed under the care and supervision of the local hospital and its staff?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2 and 3) If any such submission were to be received I would certainly seek the views of my colleagues the Honourable the Minister for Health and the Honourable the Minister for Community and Welfare Services.

3. SEX EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

Has a programme on sex education been initiated in high schools and, if so, will he direct that the details and guide-lines be publicly debated and made known to parents, so that the reaction of parents and the public may be assessed in depth?

Answer:—

I know of no State high school in Queensland where a sex education programme has been introduced as part of the school curriculum. The honourable member can be assured that if any action is contemplated to introduce sex education programmes into the school curriculum, all involved will be consulted.

4. BERYLLIUM IN MANTLES OF PRESSURE LAMPS

Mr. Moore for **Mr. Gygar,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to reports of United States research that has shown that some brands of mantles for pressure lamps may contain poisonous beryllium, which can vaporise when the mantle is first used?

(2) As a single inhalation of the fumes can lead to serious and sometimes fatal lung disease, will he take action to ensure that none of these dangerous mantles are offered for sale to the many Queenslanders who will be purchasing camping equipment over the next few months in preparation for the Christmas holidays?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I thank the honourable member for bringing this matter to my notice. In general terms gas mantles have been made from the rare earth series consisting of lanthanum, cerium and related metal oxides. It is true that beryllium can cause a very serious lung disease but the exposure has to be positively within the beryllium industry or any close association. It is unlikely that a small inhalation of the fumes, presumed to be beryllium, could lead to serious lung disease. I assure the honourable member that this matter will be further investigated by my department.

5. MEDICAL SCHOOL, TOWNSVILLE

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

In view of the disappointment widely expressed in North Queensland at the decision not to proceed with a medical school attached to the James Cook University and associated with the Townsville General Hospital, did the sustained opposition and casuistical arguments advanced by the Townsville City Council for some considerable time against the site while the project was being considered have anything to do with the procrastination that finally prepared the ground for the present unfortunate situation?

Answer:—

The one factor that has led to the postponement of the development of a medical school attached to the James Cook University in Townsville has been the lack of funding from the Australian Universities Commission. The honourable member can be assured that the development of the Townsville General Hospital will be on the existing site of the general hospital, as has previously been determined by the Government. In view, however, of the position with regard to the development of a medical school, the Townsville Hospitals Board, in consultation with my department, will be proceeding with the necessary developments of the Townsville General Hospital in accordance with the established needs of the area. In this planning, cognizance will be taken of the approval, in principle, for the development of a medical school in Townsville associated with the James Cook University.

I might add that the Townsville City Council originally opposed the redevelopment of the hospital. I had a discussion with the council and I am not sure whether I convinced them that this was the right decision. Certainly the Government did not have the co-operation of the Townsville City Council in the first stage of this matter and I had a discussion with the mayor and aldermen of the Townsville City Council and outlined to them the Government's position.

6. BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL'S DISMISSAL OF DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

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

(1) What reasons have been given by the Brisbane City Council for its extraordinary decision to dismiss the Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. I. C. Hawes?

(2) Will he ensure that Mr. Hawes is given every right to appeal against this decision by the Labor-controlled council?

(3) Is he aware that this is the second time the Brisbane City Council has moved to sack Mr. Hawes?

(4) Is he aware that on the first occasion, during the Jones regime, the then Town Clerk, Mr. McAulay, was himself sacked when he refused to sack Mr. Hawes?

(5) Will he ensure that Mr. Hawes is not made the public scapegoat for the corruption and mismanagement revealed in the city council by the car-park scandal?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) The City of Brisbane Act 1924–1977 prescribes that, when an employee is dismissed by the Brisbane City Council, it must furnish to the employee in writing the grounds of his dismissal and the employee has a right of appeal against such dismissal pursuant to the Act. I am not aware of any ground for dismissal that may have been conveyed to Mr. Hawes by the council.

(3) I understand there were moves by a previous administration in the council to dismiss Mr. Hawes.

(4) I am aware of the dismissal by the council of Mr. T. V. McAulay, a previous town clerk of the council.

(5) My function under the Act, if Mr. Hawes lodges an appeal thereunder, is to appoint a stipendiary magistrate to an appeal board to be set up to hear and determine the appeal, and the stipendiary magistrate so appointed will be the chairman of that board. The Board will also comprise a council's representative appointed by the Establishment and Co-ordination Committee of the council, and a member's representative appointed by the executive of the union of which the appellant is a member. Since appeal proceedings could be involved, I do not think it would be proper for me to comment further on the matter at this stage.

7. BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL CAR PARK FRAUD

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

(1) Is he aware that the A.L.P. aldermen of the Brisbane City Council have attempted to gag public discussion and debate on the Brisbane City Council car-park scandal by issuing writs against Queensland Newspapers Pty. Ltd.?

(2) Is there any way in which the council administration can be compelled to answer questions by the Liberal Opposition aldermen relating to this most important issue?

(3) If not, will he consider using the powers available to him to obtain the answers and the information which the people of Brisbane and their elected representatives are entitled to have?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of the issue of the writs.

(2) The matter would appear to be sub judice; consequently any public discussion on matters in issue could give rise to a risk of contempt-of-court proceedings. It will be a matter for the council itself to decide on what discussion of the matters should take place at any meeting of the council.

(3) While I appreciate that the matter is one of public interest, it must be realised that criminal proceedings are already in

train in respect of what is being termed the "car park fraud", and certain persons have been charged. The criminal courts are at the stage of hearing these cases, and any further publicity at this time would be imprudent. Honourable members should appreciate that the court hearings have been delayed by the continued publicity.

8. LABOR ADMINISTRATION OF BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a series of articles in the Left-wing journal "Nation Review", which makes very serious allegations against the Labor administration of the Brisbane City Council?

(2) What is the extent of the fraud relating to the King George Square car park?

(3) Does the fraud reveal inadequacies in the administration of the city of Brisbane, the largest municipal administration in Australia?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of the article.

(2) The matter is still in the hands of the police and before the courts. Therefore I am unable to comment further.

(3) The occurrence of fraud indicates inadequate internal control.

The Auditor-General in fact has drawn attention to the need for improved internal check and control in his last two annual reports upon the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council, and I understand that the council has taken action to effect improvements.

9. CARBROOK SCHOOL

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

(1) Is he aware that the Carbrook School has an attendance of approximately 50 children and that more are expected in 1978?

(2) Are plans in hand to provide extra accommodation for the 1978 school year?

(3) As the toilet facilities consist of only one for boys and two for girls, will more facilities be supplied to cater for the extra children and will the service be upgraded from once a week to biweekly?

(4) If so, will the extra toilets be supplied prior to the 100-year anniversary to be celebrated on 1 October?

(5) Has a decision been made on a date for the construction of a septic system?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) Yes.

(3 and 4) Yes, but the frequency of the service is a matter for the Department of Education.

(5) No, but planning is in hand in conjunction with site drainage investigations as previously advised by me.

10. PLACE-NAME SIGNS, CARBROOK AREA

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

As there is a lack of place-name signs and school signs in the Carbrook area, will he investigate this matter with a view to installing the necessary signs to bring this situation to an acceptable standard?

Answer:—

The erection of road signs in the Carbrook area is one for the Albert Shire Council and I will take this aspect up with the council and advise the honourable member of the outcome.

As to the provision of school signs, it is not clear which type of sign is referred to in the honourable member's question. If the reference is to a sign indicating the name of the Carbrook School, then this would be a matter for the Education Department and I would suggest that he take it up with that department. If, on the other hand, the question relates to the provision of traffic signs on the Redland Bay Road indicating the presence of the school, then I will have the matter examined by the appropriate authorities.

11. LOGANHOLME SCHOOL

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

(1) Is he aware of the population expansion in the area around the Loganholme School?

(2) Are plans in hand to construct more accommodation for the 1978 school year and, if so, will staff accommodation and tuck-shop facilities be included?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Yes, and two teaching spaces are being provided for the commencement of the 1978 school year. Ancillary accommodation will receive further attention at a later date.

12. ARCLINE POOLS OF SUMNER PARK, BRISBANE

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

(1) With reference to the firm Arcline Pools, Sumner Park, Brisbane, (a) who are its directors or principals, (b) when

was it registered, (c) is it a two-dollar company and (d) is he aware that the address used is the same as that previously used by the firm that operated as Pool and Outdoor Leisure Centre, which went out of business leaving numerous pool owners with useless warranties and half-completed contracts?

(2) Who were the directors or principals of Pool and Outdoor Leisure Centre?

(3) When does the Government intend to act to prevent such firms from voluntarily going out of business leaving customers in financial trouble and then soon afterwards starting again in the same business but under a different name?

Answers:—

(1) I am informed by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs that there is no record at his office of a firm known as Arcline Pools.

There is a record, however, of a company Arc Line Pty. Ltd. (now in liquidation) which was registered on 11 December 1974, and its registered office at the time of liquidation was situated at Kilroe Street, Milton. A previous registered office of the company was located at 17 Jijaws Street, Sumner Park, Jindalee. From records lodged at the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs the paid-up capital is shown to be $723.

The last annual return, made up to 23 December 1976, shows the directors of Arc Line Pty. Ltd. to be Michael James Durack, David William Stone and Valentine Tatzenko.

I am also informed that the company Arc Line Pty. Ltd. and a business The Pool and Outdoor Leisure Centre are known to have carried on business from the same address at Sumner Park.

(2) The proprietor of The Pool and Outdoor Leisure Centre is shown in the records of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs to be Pool and Outdoor Leisure Centre (Northside) Pty. Ltd. The name of this company was changed to P.O.L.C. Pty. Ltd. on 2 June 1977. The directors of P.O.L.C. Pty. Ltd. are shown in the Commissioner's records as Michael James Durack and David William Stone.

(3) Certain dealings of these companies are being investigated by inspectors of the office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and any further action will depend on the result of this investigation.

I have instructed the Commissioner to make an application to the court pursuant to Section 374H of the Companies Act seeking an order prohibiting a person from acting as a director or being concerned in the management of any company where there is sufficient evidence to support such an application.

As the honourable member will know, this Government has taken a number of significant initiatives in ensuring compliance by the commercial community in this State with statutory requirements.

Members of the public must exercise prudence in their commercial dealings and I would hope that the media will bring to the notice of the public the obligation of each individual member to exercise proper care and attention concerning all matters of a contractual or business nature and that where substantial expenditure is involved, only the imprudent would proceed without first seeking competent professional assistance.

13. ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR OF ADULT EDUCATION

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

(1) How many applications were received for the position of Assistant Supervisor of Adult Education?

(2) Who was the successful applicant?

(3) How many years' experience did the successful applicant have in the field of adult education?

(4) How many of the applicants were registered teachers?

(5) Is the successful applicant a registered teacher?

(6) When applications for the position were called, did the qualifications required include a degree at a university or tertiary institution or a relevant qualification?

(7) What were the academic or trade qualifications of the successful applicant?

(8) Did at least one of the other applicants have two degrees, together with many years' experience in Adult Education?

(9) How does this appointment of a person to a senior position in Adult Education from outside that field meet the promise made by a very senior Education Department official that more promotional opportunities would be given to Adult Education officers in any structural or personal changes in Adult Education?

(10) Why was the successful applicant selected?

(11) Was the sole reason behind the appointment the creation of a special vacancy in Technical Education so that a certain officer could be promoted?

Answers:—

(1) There were 21 applications received.

(2) Mr. Peter Lionel Tait was appointed Assistant Supervisor, Further Education.

(3 to 5) As appeals have been lodged against the appointment, it would not be proper for me to answer these questions at this time.

(6) I table the list of qualifications prescribed for the position.

(7 to 11) See answer to (3 to 5).

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the list on the table.

14. PROTECTION FOR TRAVELLERS IN ISOLATED AREAS

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

(1) With reference to the call made by the honourable member for Flinders for travellers to arm themselves as a means of defence in isolated areas, is this the official attitude of the Government or the Police Department?

(2) If not, is it responsible or sensible to encourage people to arm themselves for what could be seen as a shoot-out with would-be attackers?

(3) How many instances of shootings in isolated areas of Queensland have there been in the last 10 years and in how many of these have the victims been or been thought to have been shot with their own guns?

(4) Will he give urgent consideration to introducing a special highway patrol within, or as an additional arm of, the Police Force as a special deterrent to crime along the highways of the State, especially in the isolated areas of the North and West?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) No. However, I have no information that the honourable member for Flinders suggested either course as stated by the honourable member in his question. This would appear to be another instance where members of the Opposition have seen fit to misinterpret for political purposes statements by Government members.

(3) Statistics of this kind are not kept by the Police Department.

(4) This suggestion has previously received consideration and was not considered feasible owing to manpower commitments and the vast distances to be covered. However, police located in the areas do patrol extensively the highways within their jurisdiction.

15. ELECTORAL ROLL FRAUDS

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) What precautions are taken by the State Electoral Office to ensure that fictitious names are not placed on the electoral roll by persons desirous of rigging the vote?

(2) What punishment is given to voters who vote more than once by travelling around to various booths?

Answers:—

(1) A fictitious name on the electoral roll could be discovered during a roll canvass, which is held prior to each general election. The name would subsequently be removed following the issue of an objection notice by the Principal Electoral Officer.

There is also provision in the Elections Act 1912–1976 which enables a candidate, scrutineer or a presiding officer to challenge the identity of a voter. The voter is then required to answer certain specified questions as to his identity in writing and sign the relevant form. The ballot-paper is then set aside for separate custody. At the scrutiny it is only opened and counted if the returning officer is satisfied in every respect that the person who voted is entitled to do so.

(2) The Criminal Code provides in Section 100—

"Any person who, being an elector, votes or attempts to vote at an election oftener than he is entitled to vote at an election is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for two years.

"By the provisions of section 104, any person convicted of this offence committed with respect to a parliamentary election, becomes incapable, for three years from the date of the conviction, of being registered as an elector or of voting at any parliamentary election."

Following the State general election held on 7 December 1974, an elector was convicted and fined $500, in default three months' imprisonment, on a charge of voting twice in the same electoral district. This elector was automatically disqualified from voting at any State election for three years from the date of his conviction on 16 September 1975, in accordance with the provisions of section 104 of the Criminal Code.

16. SOCIAL WELFARE CRISIS CENTRE

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport—

After almost a year, what has been the outcome of a survey by an inter-departmental committee into a proposal for a 24-hour social welfare crisis centre?

Answer:—

The feasibility study into the need for a crisis welfare service has been completed and demonstrates that there is a need for this type of service. However, the provision of a 24-hour social welfare crisis service is staff-intensive and therefore costly. In the present economic climate, difficulties can be seen in the provision of sufficient finance to enable the service to be fully operated using departmental resources.

After giving very close consideration to this matter over a number of weeks, Cabinet has decided that a 24-hour service will be offered, working in conjunction with Life Line. This organisation has indicated willingness to accept all calls directed to the crisis telephone number and relay them to appropriate officers within the department. Arrangements have also been made for a survey of calls to be undertaken.

17. STYLE OF HANDWRITING TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Is he aware of widespread support among teachers to change the style of handwriting taught in Queensland schools from inclined cursive to modified cursive?

(2) As the present anachronistic style of handwriting has been described as an unobtrusive impediment to the future needs of pupils, will he advise teachers on how to correctly go about causing a review of the present outdated style?

Answers:—

(1) I am not aware of any widespread support for such a change. I am aware, however, of an article in the April edition of "Quest"—the department's professional journal for teachers—in which a teacher argued the case for the introduction of modified cursive writing.

(2) A standing committee on the teaching of language arts keeps issues such as this under continual review. Teachers are encouraged to make submissions to this committee on which a number of practising class-room teachers serve.

In 1971 the Language Arts Committee conducted a thorough investigation into the various styles of writing, and subsequently published a Curriculum Guide to the Teaching of Handwriting in the Primary School. In the light of this relatively recent review, there are no plans at present to implement further changes in writing styles.

18. HYDROELECTRIC POWER STATION, CABOOLTURE SHIRE

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

Are there any plans by the State Electricity Commission to establish a hydroelectric power station at Upper Caboolture or any plans by the S.E.Q.E.B. to establish a hydroelectric power station anywhere in the Caboolture Shire?

Answer:—

The State Electricity Commission of Queensland is constantly investigating possible sites for hydroelectric power stations in Queensland. The Upper Caboolture area will receive consideration in these investigations. It will be many years, however, before a site is chosen and a station constructed.

19. AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINTS AGAINST FIRMS

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

(1) May persons who contemplate entering into contracts with certain firms receive information from the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the Small Claims Tribunal regarding complaints made against those firms?

(2) Is he aware that many persons are fleeced by some fly-by-night firms and that this could be avoided if information were made available on request?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am at present considering recommendations from the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs as to the release by the Consumer Affairs Bureau to inquirers of information as to the bona fides of traders. Obviously this is a matter requiring very careful consideration, and I intend to take proposals to Cabinet for approval in the near future.

20. PAYMENT OF REGIONAL ELECTRICITY BOARD ACCOUNTS

Dr. Lockwood, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

Are regional electricity boards bound to accept money as payment for electricity accounts owing to a different regional electricity board and, if not, will he initiate a service whereby any regional board can accept moneys and issue interim receipts for any other regional board in Queensland?

Answer:—

The electricity boards in Queensland are not bound to accept money as payment for electricity accounts owing to a different electricity board. It would be difficult to institute such a procedure because of complications associated with the transfer of funds back to the consumer's board by the due date. This delay could result in disconnection of supply to consumers for non-payment of an account that may have been paid in another board area. However, if there is any particular problem, it should be referred to the board concerned for consideration.

21. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE AT K. R. DARLING DOWNS FACTORY

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

(1) Will he outline the ramifications of the present industrial dispute between the A.M.I.E.U. and the B.F.U.E. at the K. R. Darling Downs factory, Toowoomba?

(2) Has there been an attempt by the A.M.I.E.U. with its 11,631 members to capture the B.F.U.E. and its 1,805 members for the $72,000 union dues payable annually?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The facts on this matter as officially supplied by the Industrial Registrar are as follows:—

"On 26th August 1977 a Mrs. McLady employed in the beef boning room at the Willowburn works of Darling Downs Co-operative Bacon Association Ltd., was dismissed by the Association. The reason for the dismissal was alleged to be because she returned 4 minutes late for work following a lappo. It was further claimed that the employer stated Mrs. McLady and other women were warned earlier in the morning for late return to work.

"It is alleged that certain persons (described as 'works officials of the Australasian Meat Industry Union of Employees, (Queensland Branch)' advised management that unless Mrs. McLady was re-instated they would not resume work. As the dismissal was not withdrawn, meetings took place and employees refused to work or left their work-place and were terminated. Approximately 180 employees were involved.

"Over 20 employees have been re-engaged, and the Association is not prepared to re-employ the remainder due to operations of the factory being scaled down.

"Conferences have been held by the Industrial Commission without resolving the dispute and an application by The Bacon Factories' Union of Employees, Queensland for reinstatement of certain employees is to come before the Commission on Wednesday 21st September 1977.

"Recently the Australasian Meat Industry Union of Employees (Queensland Branch) has admitted to membership a considerable number of persons (over 200) who were members of The Bacon Factories' Union of Employees, Queensland.

"Whilst the A.M.I.E.U. under its constitution rule can enrol the persons concerned, the award under which they are working at Willowburn gives preference to members of the B.F.U.E. and has done so since 1950.

"An application recently has been lodged by the A.M.I.E.U. for hearing by the Commission seeking preference also under the award concerned."

There are, however, a number of other side-issues in relation to this dispute. With the matter coming on again before the Industrial Commission tomorrow, it would be undesirable for me to canvass the merits and demerits of these side-issues. However, when the time is appropriate, I will make further comment in the House for the edification of honourable members.

22. MUNGINDI HOSPITAL

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

(1) With reference to previous questions I have asked concerning the proposed new hospital for Mungindi, is he aware that the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, in a letter dated 7 September, said that this State did not seek funds for this project in its submissions to his department for funding of its 1977-78 programme?

(2) Does he agree with the sentiments expressed in this letter and, if not, what is the position so far as his department is concerned?

(3) What is the background and origin of the proposal to build this new hospital?

(4) As this proposed hospital will service an area in which there are many Aborigines, will he continue to press for the fulfilment of this Commonwealth Government promise?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) I am rather astonished to learn that the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Viner, said that

this State did not seek funds for the development of a new hospital at Mungindi. Such a statement is wrong.

Indeed, only recently Mr. Viner has advised me that following my most recent request for funds in the 1977-78 year, the request for $300,000 for a hospital at Mungindi was not included as an approved project. In effect, he rejected the proposal.

I can confirm to the honourable member that my department has, because of the very significant Aboriginal population in the area served by this hospital, been vitally interested in endeavouring to channel funds to the project.

As far back as 1973, based on representations in consultation with the Health Department, the Balonne Hospitals Board as well as the honourable member's personal efforts, application was made to the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs for funds and approval in principle was given on the 20 August 1973 with an allocation of $40,000 for the development of plans and specifications. The approval indicated that further funds would not be considered until Commonwealth officers had expressed satisfaction with plans and specifications. This did not materialise at that time and the amount of $40,000 was reallocated. In each subsequent financial year the project has been included on my State programme, with no positive result to date—the usual advice being "item unable to be approved".

I am very conscious of the honourable member's particular personal interest in developing this project and I am conscious of the very real need for such a complex to be developed, but somehow it appears extremely difficult to be able to convince the Commonwealth authorities that such a need exists and that significant numbers of Aboriginal people are being disadvantaged because of the Commonwealth's apparent unwillingness to recognise the need. Be assured that I shall continue in my efforts to secure funds so that a new hospital at Mungindi will become a reality in the service to the people throughout that important area.

23. LOCALITY ALLOWANCES FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS

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

(1) What is the present locality allowance paid to schoolteachers at Thursday Island, and when was this allowance last increased?

(2) What was the former locality allowance, and for what period was this payment paid?

(3) Will the Government consider a substantial increase in the locality allowances?

Answers:—

(1) Locality allowance payable to schoolteachers at Thursday Island:—

Married teachers—$38 per fortnight.
Single teachers—$19 per fortnight.

These rates have applied as from 1 October 1975.

(2) The former locality allowance paid to teachers at Thursday Island:—

Married teachers—$29 per fortnight.
Single teachers—$14.50 per fortnight.

These rates applied from 1 November 1972.

(3) Locality allowances apply to all public servants and not just to teachers. They are administered by the Department of the Public Service Board, which does not come under my control.

24. PENSIONER TAX REBATES

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

(1) Is he aware of a serious anomaly in the Brisbane City Council's administration of pensioner tax rebates, which denies this benefit to couples who hold their property in joint names where one partner, usually the wife, has not attained the minimum age for classification as an aged pensioner?

(2) Will he seek correction of this anomaly so that these unfortunate couples may better cope with the enormously increased burden of rate payments?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that the Brisbane City Council does not grant a pensioner's rate remission where a property is in joint ownership and one of the joint owners is not in receipt of a recognised pension.

(2) Local authorities, including the Brisbane City Council, have power under the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act, respectively, to determine their own policies on the granting of rate remissions.

Whilst I appreciate the position raised by the honourable member, the exercise of the power referred to is one for the Brisbane City Council, and the council must accept the responsibility for its decision. I am informed that the cost of the Brisbane City Council's current pensioner rate remission policy is of the order of $3,000,000 annually.

25. PAY-ROLL TAX RATES

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

(1) What are the total reductions in pay-roll tax payments by relevant categories of employers since he assumed the role of Treasurer?

(2) How do existing rates of pay-roll tax compare with those of other States?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) All States and the Commonwealth charge pay-roll tax at the same rate of 5 per centum of an employer's annual wage bill, net of the exemptions provided for.

In Queensland and in three other States, a minimum exemption of $24,000 applies. In New South Wales and Tasmania there is no minimum exemption. Queensland has by far the most generous level of maximum exemption of any State. In Queensland, employers with an annual pay-roll of less than $83,020 pay no pay-roll tax. In most other States the maximum exemption is $48,000.

In Queensland, where the employer's annual wage bill exceeds $83,200, the maximum exemption benefit of $83,200 tapers to the minimum exemption of $24,000 for annual pay-rolls of $112,800 and above. In other States the taper ranges between $48,000 and $84,000. Furthermore, the maximum exemption in Queensland will increase further to $100,000 as from 1-1-78, and will taper for annual pay-rolls of $130,400 and above.

26. RETAIL PETROL PRICES

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

In view of the serious anomalies in retail petrol pricing, now exacerbated by the latest price increase approved by the Prices Justification Tribunal, will he examine this industry situation in Queensland with a view to effecting, without delay, a shift from the prevailing ad hoc discount structure to an across-the-board price rationalisation that would benefit the community?

Answer:—

I, too, share the concern of the honourable member with respect to the plight of some petrol resellers and it will be further aggravated by the recent wholesale price of petrol granted by the Prices Justification Tribunal.

As the honourable member would be aware, the Queensland Government because of its concern instructed the Commissioner of Prices to carry out a special survey of retail prices of premium grade motor spirit in the metropolitan area, from which it was discovered that many oil companies were selling below the recommended Prices Justification Tribunal wholesale price. At Cabinet direction I forwarded the findings to the Federal Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs with the object that this be taken into account when future applications for price rises were being considered.

The questions posed by the honourable member are ones for consideration by the Commonwealth Government on a national basis, as if each State were to introduce its own independent price structures, the whole system could become even more chaotic. It should be noted that, even with the present controls by the New South Wales Government, the resellers in that State are faced with the same problems as those of resellers in Queensland.

I am giving further consideration to this vexed problem.

27. SAFE REST AREAS FOR TRAVELLERS ON FLINDERS HIGHWAY

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

Following the murder of two innocent travellers at Richmond recently—as most travellers now pull up under the nearest shady tree, which is an extremely dangerous practice because of the loneliness and isolation and provides a perfect environment for committing a crime, will he consider providing rest areas at regular and close intervals along the Flinders Highway near small townships, as the provision of such areas, so sited, could possibly have prevented this tragedy and would most certainly help to prevent similar happenings in the future?

Answer:—

Everybody shares the concern of the honourable member with regard to the recent murders near Richmond and the possibility of a similar occurrence in the future. However, not everybody would agree with him that an increase in the number of rest areas would tend to decrease the incidence of vicious crime. Some argue that travellers these days prefer to exercise their own judgment on the best place to camp, and some quite deliberately avoid rest areas.

In the absence of any immediately available evidence that an increase in the number of rest areas would result in a decrease in the incidence of vicious crimes, I can only answer the honourable member by saying that I will certainly have his suggestion looked at more closely.

28. FIELD INTERVIEWS OF ITINERANTS; LICENSING OF GUN HOLDERS

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

(1) Will he direct his department to continue and increase the practice of field interviews of itinerants, as this practice would in all probability have prevented the Richmond tragedy?

(2) Will he introduce legislation to license gun holders, as one of the suspects detained in connection with the Richmond incident had a criminal record and the other was of dubious moral character, and such persons, presumably, would not have been given a licence and would not have been able to secure the murder weapon?

Answers:—

(1) The practice of field interviews of itinerants, criminals, and suspected persons is an essential part of police duties and will continue.

(2) This subject is receiving consideration.

29. LIQUID FUEL FROM COAL

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

Will his department commence a feasibility study of the viability of building a coal converter plant to produce a liquid fuel to replace ever increasingly costly imported oil, as this would provide ready markets for the coal deposits in and around Collinsville, which are about to be extensively developed by Mount Isa Mines, avoid any loss of markets, with hydro-electricity and solar energy replacing the high-octane coal as an electricity producer, and turn Queensland, with its huge coal reserves, into the petrol producer for all Australia?

Answer:—

The Department of Mines is already carrying out investigations on the conversion of coal to liquid fuels. A group of experts, including a senior officer of this department, is to visit Western Germany in the near future in connection with a proposal for a large-scale feasibility study on the production of synthetic motor fuels from various eastern Australian coals. Should this study proceed, it will certainly include among its terms of reference, the determination of the most suitable coals by virtue of their chemical properties and availability.

30. LIBRARY FOR THORNLANDS STATE SCHOOL

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

In view of the rapid increase in enrolments at the Thornlands State School and the pressing need for adequate library facilities in a school serving such a rapidly developing district, when will a library be provided?

Answer:—

There is no provision in the current programme for this building as funds are not available. In view of the honourable member's interest, I shall keep reviewing the matter.

31. MR. BRIAN RAY OF DONLAN PTY. LTD.

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

(1) Did he open a building at Karana Downs on behalf of Estate Sales and Management and Mr. Brian Ray?

(2) Until recently was this gentleman the managing director of Donlan Pty. Ltd.?

(3) Was Donlan Pty. Ltd. placed under management by Beneficial Finance and was Estate Sales and Management set up by Beneficial Finance to take over all Donlan activities?

(4) Were moves made by the Premier to get the Co-ordinator General's Department to arrange the purchase of Donlan's assets at Esk turn-off, on the Ipswich to Toowoomba road, as an industrial estate for the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development?

(5) What is the reason for his support of outsiders to Queensland who will not pay their bills to people in this State?

Answers:—

(1) Last month I opened certain community facilities at Karana Downs.

(2) I am advised by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs that there is no record of the registration of a company under the name of Donlan Pty. Ltd. The records in that office indicate that Mr. Brian Ray is a director of a number of companies of which the name Donlan is a part. Information concerning these companies is available to the public at the commissioner's office.

(3) As I indicated in my answer to question (2) there is no company of the name Donlan Pty. Ltd. registered in this State. From the records held by the commissioner it is not possible to determine whether a company, Estate Sales and Management Pty. Ltd., was incorporated by Beneficial Finance Corporation Limited to take over all Donlan activities.

(4) The Queensland Government has agreed in principle to the acquisition of an area of land within the Bambara New Town Complex to cater for the establishment of a Crown industrial estate, and has requested details of the firm plans which the company has for the area, including details of the proposed programme of development.

Donlan Holdings Pty. Ltd. initially approached the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development in June 1976, with the object of interesting the department in purchasing land for Crown industrial estate purposes in the Bambara New Town concept, which is located in the vicinity of the Esk turn-off on the Warrego Highway. The department receives many similar approaches from developers wishing to interest the Government in acquiring land for industrial purposes. Protracted negotiations between the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development and Donlan Holdings Pty. Ltd., which have involved the Co-ordinator-General's Department in so far as funding is concerned, have taken place with regard to the acquisition of certain Bambara lands, but these have not reached finality.

(5) See answers to (1) to (4).

32. WIVENHOE DAM

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Water Resources—

(1) Have there been any cut-backs in plans or change of dates for the completion of the Wivenhoe Dam?

(2) What is the situation in relation to pump storage at the dam?

Answers:—

(1) There has been no change in the programme for completion of Wivenhoe Dam and construction is proceeding on schedule. Tenders for the next major construction phase involving the first stage of the cross-river embankment will be called shortly.

(2) The pumped storage works are proceeding on schedule. Preliminary work related to preparation of the dam foundations and diversion conduit are well advanced.

Tenders for the Splityard Creek Dam close on 27 September.

I understand that tenders have been called for the supply and installation of pumps, turbines and generators for the power-station with a view to placing firm orders in early 1978.

33. SALE OF ANALGESICS

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

(1) What is the current position in the sale of analgesics in supermarkets, corner stores and chemist shops?

(2) Has he stated publicly that he wants analgesics out of supermarkets and sold only in chemist shops?

(3) Has he consulted with retailers and chemists on this issue, and when will a decision be made?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council are being considered by my department at the present time and discussions have been held with industry and the pharmacy profession. It is hoped that a decision will be made in the near future.

34. SALE OF BORACIC ACID AND BORAX

Mr. Moore for **Mr. Lane,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware that at least until recently boracic acid and borax, which can now be sold only by registered pharmacists and only on prescription, were being sold to the public in supermarkets?

(2) What is the justification for the restriction on the supply of this normal household commodity and, if it is justified, what action is being taken to supervise sales in supermarkets and grocery stores?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) Boron compounds come within the control of the Poisons Regulations of 1973 only when a claim is made for human therapeutic or cosmetic use with the exception that talcum powder containing two per cent or less of boric acid is exempted. Boron compounds for human therapeutic or cosmetic use with two per cent or less of boric acid are permitted to be sold by chemists only and with more than two per cent to be sold by chemists only on a doctor's prescription. Boracic acid and borax where the manufacturer makes no claim for human therapeutic or cosmetic use can be sold without restriction.

35. SALE OF VITAMIN B_{15}

Mr. Moore for **Mr. Lane,** pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware that at least until recently the vitamin B_{15}, which can be sold only by pharmacists and only on prescription, was being sold freely and openly by health food shops in Brisbane?

(2) What is the justification for a doctor's prescription being required for this vitamin and what action is being taken to supervise sales in health food shops generally?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am advised that calcium pangamate is marketed in health shops as vitamin B_{15}. Analysis of this product does not show it is within the schedules of the Poisons Regulations of 1973. A veterinary product diisopropydamine dichloroacetate has been described as vitamin B_{15}. This product is in schedule 4 of the Poisons Regulations of 1973 and requires a prescription from a veterinary surgeon before it can be sold by a pharmacist.

36. TAXI-CABS AT BRISBANE AIRPORT

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

As there is frequently a scarcity of taxi-cabs at peak arrival times at Brisbane Airport, will he have the matter investigated by the Department of Transport with a view to effecting an improvement in the service?

Answer:—

I am advised that the operation of taxi-cabs at Brisbane Airport, particularly at peak arrival time, is kept under continuous review by the department and random inspections are made from time to time. Generally the position is satisfactory but on occasions, due to unforeseen demand when several aircraft arrive during a short period, there is some delay, particularly at week-ends when other demands on taxi services are heavy. Nevertheless, wherever practicable every endeavour is being made to effect further improvements in these services and to this end the honourable member's request will be taken up with the Department of Transport and the Taxi Council of Queensland.

37. NUISANCE OF STRAYING CATTLE, TOOWOOMBA

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

(1) Is he aware of the vast nuisance caused to people in residential areas of Toowoomba and other cities by a few cattle straying from properties owned by people who show an utter lack of awareness of their responsibilities to the community?

(2) As present laws and regulations have proved utterly inadequate to properly deal with the nuisance, which also constitutes a serious traffic hazard, causes further spreading of cattle ticks and poses a serious potential problem to small-crop areas as well as private gardens, will he investigate ways of better handling the problem?

Answers:—

(1) No.

(2) Under the Local Government Act 1936–1977 a city council may impound any animal found at large or depasturing on any road or on any reserve or other land under the control of the local authority. The Act contains extensive provisions relating to the seizure and detention of animals in such circumstances.

In addition, there are extensive provisions included in the Act relating to the seizure of animals by the occupier of any land upon which any animal is found trespassing. In these circumstances the occupier has the right to claim the damages, charges and fees applicable to the trespass and impounding.

The existing provisions of the Act are considered to be generally adequate to provide properly for the control of straying stock. However, I will examine the matter raised by the honourable member and advise him of the outcome.

38. WATER SPORTS ON PERSEVERANCE DAM

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

As the Toowoomba City Council has decided to permit water sports on Perseverance Dam and as persons in the Crows Nest Shire who draw water before it is treated at the Mt. Kynoch plant have expressed concern that the quality of their drinking water may be affected, will he assure these people that the council and I made extensive investigations prior to the decision and that there are no grounds for concern?

Answer:—

Consumer protection is the first consideration in the examination of water supplies reticulated for human consumption. The use of urban water storage areas for recreational purposes has been considered by the Water Quality Criteria Sub-Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council and no recommendations for restrictions have been made at this stage.

It has been reported that all open waters, from whatever source, are contaminated or polluted to some extent but that if such waters are used for recreational purposes there is a possibility of increased contamination. However, under normal conditions of use the degree of increased contamination would be minimal. It is believed that as long as the water from the water storage areas used for recreational purposes is suitably treated, it can be rendered completely safe for human consumption.

Water supplied to the residents of the Crows Nest Shire is chlorinated and the chlorine concentrations have been found to be maintained at a satisfactory level. However, improved water treatment procedures in addition to chlorination are always to be encouraged.

39. HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, HELIDON AND GRANTHAM

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

As there is an apparent need for Housing Commission houses at Helidon and Grantham, owing to the desire of railway workers to remain in the area after retirement, and as the infrastructure and amenities for development already exist there in the form of water, power, surveyed blocks, schools, rail and bus services, and shops, will he have the possibility of constructing commission houses thoroughly investigated?

Answer:—

Yes. I might add that there are currently some very good options open to the people mentioned through the home-ownership finance made available by a generous State Government.

40. PETROLEUM FROM COAL; GALILEE BASIN AREAS

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

(1) What is the latest position with regard to the extraction of petroleum from Queensland coal?

(2) Have the two areas in Galilee Basin that were opened for exploration in 1973 been further developed and, if so, by what companies?

Answers:—

(1) A group of experts, including a senior officer of the Department of Mines, is to visit Western Germany in the near future in connection with a proposal for a large-scale feasibility study on the production of synthetic motor fuels from various Eastern Australian coals. Investigations on the production of solvent-refined coal from deposits in the Millmerran area are also proceeding.

(2) No.

41. STAMP DUTY ON FIRST HOMES

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

What revenue was received by the State Government in 1974-75, 1975-76 and 1976-77 in stamp duty collected from persons purchasing their first home?

Answer:—

The commissioner does not have the authority to request information as to whether the conveyance being stamped is a "first home" purchase. Such a question might well be regarded in some circles as an invasion of privacy.

42. MORNINGSIDE POLICE STATION

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

(1) What is the numerical strength and the rank of each officer at the Morningside Police Station?

(2) What vehicles are assigned to the station?

(3) During what hours is the station open to the public?

Answers:—

(1) The basic strength establishment is eight police officers and one civilian stenographer. The police officers comprise one sergeant 1/C and seven constables. In addition two constables (training) and one graduate cadet are performing duty temporarily at Morningside.

(2) One sedan.

(3) Shifts at Morningside cover the period 8 a.m. to 12 midnight Monday to Saturday and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

43. KARAMUNGA TRAFFIC BRIDGE

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

(1) Has a site been chosen for the new Karamunga traffic bridge and, if so, when will plans be drawn for the bridge and when will tenders be called?

(2) When will the bridge construction commence and when will it and the approaches be completed?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. Since the Commonwealth Government has not announced firm allocations for the 1978-79 and 1979-80 financial years, any planning undertaken by the Main Roads Department is subject to some change depending on the availability of funds. The current planning in the department is to commence design of the bridge in the near future.

(2) It is hoped to call tenders early in the 1978-79 financial year, to have construction started late in 1978 and to have both the bridge and approaches complete by mid 1980.

44. SIGNING VISITORS INTO LICENSED CLUBS

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

Are there any requirements under the Liquor Act or any other Act under his control covering licensed clubs which make it obligatory for visitors to be signed into that club by a member of the club?

Answer:—

There is nothing in the Liquor Act or any other Act which requires a member of a licensed club to sign in a visitor. However, most club rules provide for this. Under the provisions of the Liquor Act, liquor may only be sold and supplied to a member of a club and his invited guest, which guest has to be in the company of the member.

45. SALARIES OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

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

What salaries and wages are currently being paid by the department to departmental officers at the different levels from the Director-General of Education down to the various grades of teachers?

Answer:—

My department employs more than 23,000 salaried officers, 4,607 wages employees and more than 4,500 teacher aides. Altogether, 15 different industrial awards are involved. To collate the information requested by the honourable member in a form suitable for tabling would require the diversion of officers from other work. I do not feel that such a move could be justified.

Some figures on salaries paid by my department will be published in the Budget papers on Thursday and these may give the honourable member at least some of the information he is seeking.

46. PRODUCTION OF PAPER FROM BAGASSE

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

(1) Is he aware of the recent commissioning in South Africa of a new pulp and paper mill that uses bagasse from the South African sugar industry to produce a high-quality paper?

(2) As a similar plant has also recently come into production in Brazil, why has the proposal to construct such a plant at Mackay some six years ago in conjunction with W. R. Grace & Co. of the United States of America never been started?

(3) Will he now make approaches to other companies engaged in the production of paper from bagasse in order to get some action on this matter in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) The principal reason why the Mackay bagasse pulp project did not proceed at the time was that a long-term contract for its output could not be obtained at a price that would have yielded an appropriate return to the potential investors.

(3) As the honourable member will be aware, the underlying high costs of establishing projects in Australia, which were a direct result of the unrealistic economic policies of the Whitlam Government, have been a major factor inhibiting decisions to proceed with such projects.

Nevertheless, the Government is continuing its efforts to attract investment in Queensland, including activities based on the processing of the co-products of the sugar industry.

47. ANIMAL QUARANTINE STATION, COCOS ISLAND

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

(1) In view of the opinions being expressed within the beef industry that the fight against the cattle tick by chemical methods is being lost and that the need to introduce further tick-resistant breeds into Australia is now becoming urgent, what is the present situation regarding the establishment of the animal quarantine station on Cocos Island and why has there been a two-year delay in this matter?

(2) As Queensland is the State worst affected by the cattle-tick problem and as it has more offshore islands than any other State, can the Government offer an alternative site and, if not, what are the reasons?

Answers:—

(1) Chemicals are playing a valuable role in tick control and this will continue for many years. However, it is recognised that means of tick control other than complete reliance on chemicals should be developed, as the tick has shown a remarkable ability to develop resistance to chemicals. Many types of cattle have a natural resistance to ticks and increasing numbers of these are being used in breeding programmes in Queensland. The number of breeds available are considered to be adequate for the purpose, but it could be

desirable to bring in other selected breeds for the hotter parts of Australia to take advantage of other attributes which these cattle possess, in addition to tick resistance.

I understand funds have been made available in this year's Federal Budget towards construction of the Cocos Island Quarantine Station. As this is a Commonwealth project, I am not aware of all of the details which might have been responsible for delays in its commencement.

(2) The selection of a suitable island for an offshore quarantine station was made only after a great deal of investigation and discussion. Islands off the eastern seaboard of Australia were considered before choosing the site and there would be no point at this time in looking for an alternative site.

48. COAL-LOADING FACILITIES, FISHERMAN ISLANDS

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

(1) What is the current situation in relation to plans for a coal-loading plant on the Fisherman Islands site at the mouth of the Brisbane River?

(2) Is he aware of the conflict between statements issued by the member for Ipswich West and the member for Wynnum on this matter, with the member for Ipswich West claiming that West Moreton coal was saved by the decision to build a coal loader at Wynnum North and the member for Wynnum claiming that coal-loading facilities were not included or planned at this stage for the port?

(3) Are coal-loading facilities planned for the site and will West Moreton coal be exported through the site, and, if so, when will the facilities be built?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) This question should be referred to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services.

49. ROCHEDALE SOUTH SCHOOL RESERVE

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

(1) Has the Works Department commenced clearing the Rochedale South school reserve?

(2) Were tenders called for this project and, if so, what was the tender price, what was the name of the lowest tenderer and what is the estimated cost of the clearing works?

(3) If no tenders were called and if the job has been let on hourly rates without tenders being called, what are the reasons?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Emergent clearing of this site was necessary to lessen the bushfire hazard.

The two contractors involved were—Akwicka Hire Service, originally for a fire break for $800, and latterly Roberts Earthmoving for $3,200 for further clearing.

Both prices are considered reasonable, and in emergencies such as now exist delay in calling quotations in the normal manner is dispensed with. Speed is of the essence of the contract, or would the honourable member prefer to fiddle like Nero and sit and watch the fires burn?

50. RESERVE 13220, UPPER MT. GRAVATT

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

What does his department intend doing with the 4.758 ha of land described as Res. 13220 Upper Mt. Gravatt, Parish of Bulimba?

Answer:—

This site has been acquired for a State primary school to meet the future needs of the Wishart area. No forecast has been received from the Department of Education as to when the school will be established.

51. TAXI-CAB SERVICES, WOODRIDGE, ROCHEDALE AND SPRINGWOOD

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

(1) What are the taxi-cab boundaries in the Woodridge, Rochedale and Springwood area?

(2) Are passengers required to pay a return fare when engaging a taxi in this area to go to Garden City?

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GUNPOWDER MINE CLOSURE; PROTECTION FOR WORKERS IN MINING LEASES

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: What action has the State Government taken to save the jobs of over 200 workers at the Gunpowder copper mine? Are there any clauses in mining leases that provide protection for workers whose jobs are threatened owing to fluctuations in prices of minerals?

Mr. CAMM: I am very interested to read and hear of the concern of members of the A.L.P. for workers at Gunpowder. I, too, am concerned, as is the Government. I visited the area quite recently to make an appraisal myself. However, I am intrigued by the knowledge that, although a mining operation in Central Queensland, which will employ nearly 1,000 men and provide ancillary employment for an additional 2,000 men, is held up by a coterie of unions that refuse to abide by the industrial laws of this State, we have not heard anything from members of the Opposition about that while the House has been in session. The honourable member for Mackay says he is vitally concerned about that issue, yet we have not heard one word from him as to where he stands in relation to the employment of men in the Norwich Park venture.

I answer the question of the Leader of the Opposition by saying that we are concerned about Gunpowder, but we do not intend to implement in our mining-lease legislation suggestions such as he has made.

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Premier: What submissions has he made to the Prime Minister for financial assistance or natural disaster relief for the State and for people who have suffered severe loss due to the recent spate of bushfires throughout the State?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There have been a number of bushfires, particularly in this city, as we have all become aware because of the smoke. However, they have been individual fires, here and there, and to date no report has been furnished to me by local authorities in the area as to what damage has been suffered. Usually, Commonwealth and State Governments are concerned only with catastrophies of greater magnitude or when a calamity occurs in a certain area and affects the lives of many people. In cases in which individuals are affected, as in this instance, Governments usually do not come into it. It is expected that the landholders or the people concerned should have insurance to cover themselves. Until it hears from local authorities or police of any tragedy or hardship, the Government cannot make any approach.

SOCCER POOL DIVIDENDS

Mr. BURNS: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, I draw his attention to the case of a man in New South Wales who qualified for a first-prize dividend in the soccer pools but seems unlikely to receive his money because the entry form was not forwarded to the pools company. I now ask: As the pools operate under State Government authority, what protection exists for Queenslanders in such circumstances? If no such protection exists, what action does he plan to take to safeguard subscribers in the event of a repetition of the circumstances in the New South Wales case? Does he know of the case?

Mr. Knox: No.

Mr. BURNS: The man paid his money to the local agent and he has a receipt to show that he picked all the winning pools numbers. Then, when he went along—and it was a dividend of about $500,000—he found that there was no money. He was told that his entry had not been sent in to the pools people. Queenslanders are doing the same thing. They are going to newsagents, casket agents, or someone else, paying their money, putting their pools coupon in and getting a receipt. Are these people in a similar position, either trusting to luck that he has sent it in, or trusting the honesty of the agent who is handling it?

Mr. KNOX: I found it difficult to follow the honourable member's question. I think it was probably meant to be a worthy question. I will certainly make the necessary inquiries and let the honourable gentleman know the answer if he cares to put the question on the Business Paper.

Mr. Burns: I will put it on notice.

STATEMENT BY MR. E. ADSETT

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask the Premier: Has his attention been drawn to a reported statement in "The Courier-Mail" by Mr. E. Adsett, chairman of the Container Complex Combined Union Committee on the Brisbane Wharves, in which Mr. Adsett said that container cargoes could rot on the wharves unless consignees employed Storemen and Packers' Union members? Is he aware that Mr. Adsett in his statement said he had been doing for years what Storemen and Packers' organiser, Ted Zaphir, was convicted for, that is, threatening to cause a detriment? In view of these arrogant and provocative statements, what action will the Queensland Government take if containers are left to rot, as Mr. Adsett puts it?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Queenslanders are well aware of the tantrums of the Storemen and Packers' Union and others. "Tantrums" is the word one commentator used. I think it fits Mr. Adsett, Mr. Nichols and their henchmen very well.

The conviction of Mr. Zaphir is a warning to all union organisers and union officials that their position does not make them immune from the laws that govern every other Queenslander. They can go about their lawful union business, but they cannot employ illegal or standover tactics. In Mr. Adsett's case, my answer is simple. The first container that is left to rot is the day that Mr. Adsett is charged under the Crimes Act. The goods and services of Queenslanders are not Mr. Adsett's property, or the property of any other union standover merchant to turn on and off at will to blackmail the public.

I won't waste words on Mr. Adsett except to say what every Queenslander knows—when the Queensland Government says it will act, it does, and neither the Trades and Labor Council nor the A.C.T.U. (or anyone else, for that matter) will save Mr. Adsett from facing a court to justify his actions.

ILLEGAL PROTEST MARCH

Mr. HARTWIG: I ask the Premier: Has his attention been drawn to statements in today's "Courier-Mail" that students and some unions are planning a march on Thursday to protest against the ban on street demonstrations? Is he aware that the spokesman for the Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Group is quoted as a Ms Carol Ferrier? Is this the Carol Ferrier who is a well-know member of the International Socialists—an extremist revolutionary organisation that preaches violence? Will the Premier again warn the naive, the gullible and the Council of Churches whom they are associating with and being manipulated by?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes; Ms Ferrier is very well known as an extremist, revolutionary type of individual, and a well-known member of the International Socialists. For the benefit of the House, let me read the aims of the International Socialists as published in their newspaper "The Battler" on 23 July this year—

> "Revolution not Reformism—we believe in overthrowing the capitalist system, not patching it up or trying gradually to change it. The State—Parliament, Courts, the Law, police and army—is a weapon of capitalist class rule and can never be used to serve the interests of the working class. There is no Parliamentary road to socialism."

That is the philosophy of these people and that particular person who belong to the International Socialists. That is the sort of person and organisation that will be marching on Thursday, and is heavily involved in the anti-uranium issue, East Timor, Peace and all the other Marxist-front organisations. This is why I keep saying that the protest movement is led by the Communist Party and others, not by genuine people.

The students who took part in the march a fortnight ago numbered 300 out of a total of 16,000 at Queensland University. Who was in the front rank of that march, just as they will be on Thursday? The same old faces, including that of Mr. Derek Fielding of the Council for Civil Liberties. Doesn't the council have some strange friends in people such as Ms Ferrier who preach violence and the violent overthrow of our society! Then there was Mr. Grassie of the International Socialists, Mr. Bradley Bowden of the Communist Party of Australia, Jim Alexander of the Communist League, Peter Annear of the Socialist Workers' Party, Peter Swan of the Communist League, Murray Broad of the Communist Party of Australia—all right in the front rank.

The Communist Party sees the opportunity to try to rally a front organisation, and again I say that only the gullible and the stupid will become involved with it on Thursday. If the marchers have no permit to march, any action taken by the police will have the full backing of the Queensland Government.

If honourable members opposite would like photographs of all those persons I have named, I could let them have them—but then Opposition members probably know all of them, so I shall not bother handing them over.

FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS ON IWASAKI SANGYO GROUP

Mr. HARTWIG: In directing a question to the Premier, I inform him that the Livingstone Shire Council has been advised by the Iwasaki Sangyo group that Mr. Iwasaki is being prevented by the Federal Government via the Treasury benches in Canberra from bringing sufficient funds into Australia. I ask: Can the Premier either confirm or deny this? If he can confirm it, will he be prepared to take up this matter with the relevant Minister in Canberra with a view to obtaining approval for Mr. Iwasaki to obtain sufficient finance to allow him to complete the planning and design of his multi-million-dollar complex at Yeppoon?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member has asked a question concerning a project that is of interest to a great number of people. Many people want to see the project get off the mark so that the development of the area can proceed and it can become a tourist attraction. Since my visit to Yeppoon last Saturday with the honourable member for Callide, I have made some preliminary inquiries, which reveal that certain hold-ups have occurred in Canberra and that these are preventing Mr. Iwasaki from bringing money into Australia. I am not quite sure why these hold-ups have occurred, but I shall ascertain the reason for them.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OF AUSTRALIAN INLAND MEDICAL SERVICE LIMITED

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of the grave financial position of the Australian Inland Medical Service Limited and the tremendous burden that the payment of Queensland pay-roll tax is imposing upon that body? Has he discussed with the Attorney-General the incorporation of this medical service as a charity, with a view to allowing the people of the North-west of the State to continue to be served by this medical service?

Mr. KNOX: I am not aware of the circumstances to which the honourable member referred.

FINES FOR ILLEGAL CRABBING

Mr. ELLIOTT: I ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries: As there is considerable public concern regarding fines for illegal crabbing, is he considering an increase in these fines?

Mr. WHARTON: Honourable members have probably noted a good many Press reports indicating that fisheries inspectors have been very active, in that they have confiscated numerous consignments involving more than 5,000 female and undersized crabs, which have been returned to their habitat. Offenders have been taken before the courts under the normal processes of law. Many consultations have been held with the New South Wales authorities and, following upon them, legal measures in that State are being put in train.

The Fisheries Act and regulations, which will be proclaimed shortly, provide for maximum fines of up to $400 and also for the confiscation of a vessel used in committing an offence. My department is continuing professional and technical surveillance of the crabbing industry. Extensive research is continuing, and I assure the honourable member that, in the circumstances, all necessary steps have been implemented and are continuing to be implemented.

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

CORONERS ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Coroners Act 1958–1976 and the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962–1974 each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971–1975 in certain particulars and for another purpose."

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND FILM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (12.29 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to constitute a corporation for the purpose of encouraging the development of the film industry in Queensland; to make provision with respect to the functions and powers of the Corporation and for related purposes."

Over the past 18 months the State Government has been approached by a number of companies and individuals wishing to produce feature films in Queensland. Some of these approaches involved requests for financial assistance while others have involved requests for support in the form of Government facilities and technical advice.

With the rebirth of the Australian film industry, following the establishment of the Australian Film Commission, the frequency of requests for assistance has been increasing. Accordingly, the State Government established an inter-departmental committee in December last year to investigate ways and means by which assistance would be provided to film-makers in Queensland. The committee was also requested to investigate the means by which this assistance could be administered.

In pursuing these tasks, the committee gave persons working in or associated with the film industry the opportunity to present their views as to the nature of the assistance that the State Government could contribute to furthering the development of the film production industry in Queensland. In addition, the forms of assistance provided elsewhere in Australia were examined.

On the basis of the committee's report, the Government decided to establish a film corporation, which would have powers to invest in film production. An interim committee, chaired by the Co-ordinator-General (Mr. Schubert), but composed predominantly of non-government members was established to assist in this task. The Government is grateful to the members of this committee, who have devoted considerable time and effort in providing their advice.

Film production in Queensland will mean the injection of cash into the State economy. Both preparatory and shooting work require expenditure on the construction of sets, and on transportation, accommodation and services for cast and crew.

The number of major feature films already shot in Queensland, such as "Eliza Fraser", "The Mango Tree", and "The Irishman", demonstrate that this State has much to offer the film producer.

Obviously, Queensland's excellent weather is an important consideration, while the geography and patterns of development provide a wide variety of locations in close proximity to each other.

In addition to this, there is the full co-operation of the State Government in the use of Government facilities and services, such as personnel, uniforms, vehicles, buildings, technical advice and information. This type of assistance will be made available to producers provided it can be conveniently arranged without disruption to the normal services provided by the State to the public. In future the film corporation will be able to co-ordinate and expedite the provision of such assistance.

A major problem of the Australian industry since its demise in the 1930s has been the unwillingness of the private sector to back production. With this in mind, the Queensland Film Corporation will have funds enabling it to assist film producers to bridge the gap between the industry and private investors.

The lack of interest by the private sector in Australian feature-film production is reflected in the fact that in recent years the Australian Film Commission and the State Governments have provided 50 per cent of investment funds. While the activities of the Queensland Film Corporation may initially maintain or even increase the proportion of Government funds in Australian films, the State Government's ultimate aim is to develop the industry on a self-sustaining base of private-sector financing.

It must be emphasised that the Queensland Film Corporation will not be competing with private investors for a share in Australian film productions. The corporation will, however, provide assistance as a means of bridging the gap left by the private sector while pursuing all the means at its disposal to close that gap. If in the course of the next 10 years the situation warrants continued Government assistance, then the functions and powers of the Queensland Film Corporation will be reviewed in the circumstances prevailing at that time.

The Australian Film Commission and the other State corporations have been empowered to actually undertake the production of films. In Queensland, the objective of the State Government is to achieve a maximum of private-sector involvement in the film industry. In view of this, the production of commercial films by the corporation is considered to be inappropriate. Furthermore, this would necessitate the staffing of the corporation with production crews, resulting in very costly overheads.

A number of other Government film bodies have also assumed control over the film activities of various Government departments. The films involved are mostly promotional, training and educational films, which individual departments consider necessary in pursuing their normal functions. The State Government believes that each department should retain its existing responsibilities in controlling film activities. However, in order to facilitate the co-ordination of Government film production, both within the State and between States, State Government departments in Queensland will be required to keep the corporation informed as to their film production activities.

The final point to which reference should be made in considering the State Government's initiative to encourage the development of the film industry is the Government's attitude to financial assistance. In general, the major component of the corporation's expenditure will be expected to earn a return and demonstrate to private investors that opportunities for profitable ventures in the Australian film industry do exist.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (12.35 p.m.): The proposal for the establishment of the Queensland Film Corporation is most desirable but long overdue. I remember that the Premier made such a promise in his election policy speech in November 1974. From a "Sunday Mail" cutting of 18 July 1976 I see that he rang from London calling for an immediate Cabinet submission on movie-making as an industry for Queensland. He now tells us that in December last year a departmental committee was set up to look into this matter. It therefore took four or five months from the time he telephoned from London to get that committee established.

Mr. Casey: Is this an election year?

Mr. BURNS: This is, of course, an election year and the election policy of 1974 is now being put into effect on the eve of another election.

Since the Premier's promise, "Eliza Fraser" has been made by Hexagon Films on Fraser Island. "The Irishman" has been made at Charters Towers, either subsidised or assisted by the South Australian Film Corporation. Whilst speaking of Charters Towers, I might make the point that this town could be of great assistance to the film-making industry. It has many wonderful old buildings and the National Trust and the national estate programme have assisted in the restoration of buildings such as the stock exchange. "The Mango Tree" has been in production at Gayndah and Bundaberg, and I think there is a crew now in Chillagoe making "Crocodile". The lady from Normanton who is setting up "The Cattleman" has been in the Boonah area.

During all this time promises were made but nothing has really happened and opportunities to become involved in films of this type and to ensure that Queenslanders are connected with them have passed by. I recall a submission made by Ugo Mariotti and Barbara Eite in relation to a movie to be called "Gina between Changes". They suggested Ingham for its production. In fact, I think they have been there. This suggested movie received the Augie award in 1975 for the best unproduced script. The young lady concerned in the story is a Queenslander who has lived in the Ingham area. I believe that Ingham, and the North Queensland sugar area in general, would be an ideal place to make a start in helping this industry. The Australian Film Commission has said that it will invest $250,000 in that movie. I know that a submission has been made to the Queensland department and it should be very closely considered.

As I have already said, this move should have been initiated by the Government five or six years ago to allow Queensland to become the pace-setter in this creative area. Members will be aware that the South Australian Film Corporation was set up by the Dunstan Labor Government in March 1972. Since then it has had outstanding success with productions such as "Picnic at Hanging Rock" and, of course, "Storm Boy". "Picnic at Hanging Rock" is one of the most successful movies to be shown in this country for some time. I am told that per capita Australians are among the greatest film-goers in the world, spending over $800,000,000 annually attending cinemas. In the first year of its distribution in Australia, "Picnic at Hanging Rock" was second in box-office receipts only to the overseas movie "Jaws". This shows quite clearly that Australian movies will receive support.

It is well to recall and place on record that Australia was producing movies before they were made in many other countries. I remember that, when the Australian Film Commission was being set up, people referred in speeches to films made about Ned Kelly, Captain Starlight and Ben Hall. Only last night I saw that Ned Kelly was back on the television screen again, this time with an overseas actor in the leading role.

Mr. Casey: Poor old Ned must be turning over in his grave these days when he sees the way Joh acts.

Mr. BURNS: That is right. There could well be another film of the Ned Kelly type if one were made about the Premier.

Remember, too, the days of "Forty Thousand Horsemen" and films of that type. I also recall George Wallace, a leading comedian on the stage, being involved in film-making during the depression; "Gone to the Dogs" is one movie that comes to mind. A fellow named Dobbie, who used to do radio announcing from the stadium for station 4BK, was also involved in film-making at that time.

The point I am making is that films were being made in Australia many years before they were made in many other countries, and today Australians are making films that receive world acclaim. I think "Storm Boy" is to be featured in Warana this year. Despite the fact that Queensland, compared with other States, is six years behind the times, there is no reason why the Queensland Film Corporation cannot learn from the experience of the South Australian Film Corporation and others within the industry in Australia and apply that knowledge to film-making in Queensland.

Queensland is a great State and should be ideal for film-making. Our climate is envied by all and should be an added bonus to entice people to become actively involved in the industry in this State. The Queensland Film Corporation will also help to further promote the growing Australia-wide film industry.

I have started to read the debates in the South Australian Parliament when a similar Bill was introduced in 1972. Because of the changes in film technology that occur in the provision of sound, stage and processing facilities, the South Australian corporation was advised to set up a production group that did not have more than the most limited of film-making capabilities. I think our Premier said that the Government is going to try to help private enterprise to create movies in this State rather than become involved in making them itself.

The South Australian people were advised that the technical capacity to make a film should be drawn from outside the unit for two reasons. The first was that it was a means generally of promoting employment within the industry rather than creating a group without adequate flexibility—this probably would be so with a Government-controlled group—and in this regard the South Australians in 1971 carried out a close feasibility study of the film units of both the Commonwealth Government and the Tasmanian Government. I hope that similar action has been taken by the Queensland Government. The second reason was that the South Australians were also advised when setting up their proposals that a limited number of people were available in Australia with the highest technical capability.

If the proposed Queensland Film Corporation is to have major beneficial effects on a Queensland film industry, it will have to involve itself in positive projects to help and encourage film makers and technicians to gain more experience. I suggest perhaps scholarships to promising technicians to work with experienced companies in the South or overseas, and requiring southern production companies to use a certain proportion of

Queensland people in their crews, which would be an excellent way for them to obtain on-the-job training. We could also run seminars with prominent writers, producers and technicians to further help Queensland film-makers. If we did that a young person who does not have a lot of capital to go to the southern States or overseas could learn here. If we give a young person that involvement in the production process here we might be able to assist him or her to reach the top.

To his credit—and I say this quite sincerely —one of the better decisions by Sir John Gorton when he was Prime Minister led to the establishment of the Australian Film and Television School. This school has an outstanding reputation and the Queensland Government should perhaps consider the awarding of scholarships to creative Queenslanders who have a proven ability to develop in the film industry. There are plenty of qualified cinematographers, sound recordists, editors, etc. in Queensland, but few of them have had the opportunity to work on features and therefore they lack experience.

Another big disadvantage faced by film-makers in Queensland is non-availability of equipment. I am told that in many cases items which are often essential in productions, such as dollies, cranes, big lighting set-ups and panavision cameras, have to be hired from Sydney. As many of these items can cost up to $500 per day, and just as much again to freight up here, it has often become uneconomic for a small group to make films in Queensland. There are vast markets into which we must assist the introduction of our films.

One of the suggestions that have been made to me concerns the need for assistance in the distribution of those movies produced here. National theatre distribution can be obtained for quality 35 mm documentaries, and enormous television audiences also could be reached with our help. Colour 16 mm films of good quality also could find their way into both national and international markets, again if we can assist them. Ultimately, if local films are good enough to win festival prizes, the International Film Festival circuit becomes available. Combined with the cinema and television outlets, this form of distribution can have a powerful influence on Queensland's image. Because of a lack of positive action during the 1970s towards setting up a film corporation, these enviable goals have been delayed and will be more difficult to achieve.

Some people in the industry express the fear that the proposed Queensland Film Corporation might not be of any great benefit to the industry in Queensland. From the information I have been able to gather, the corporation will be an investment body only, geared mainly to investing in feature films. Owing to the nature of the industry in Queensland, this might mean only providing money to bring qualified people from the South. That fear has been expressed to me by local movie makers. While this might benefit the Queensland tourist industry—showing plenty of Queensland scenes, etc.—it will not be much help to local film makers.

There is also, of course, the problem of Australia-wide distribution. All the major distribution companies are American owned or controlled. Their rake-off from box office grosses makes it very difficult for a film maker to cover costs. In the past a Queensland film maker has had to hire his own theatre to get his film to the public and at the same time try to cover costs. I am told that this is one of the areas about which local film makers have expressed concern. They are interested in obtaining a copy of the Bill, and I hope that there will be enough time for people in the industry to have a quick look at it and to study it before the second reading.

I suggest again that we look at some of the movies that are now being discussed in Queensland—the ones that will be shot in areas of Queensland where they will create some employment and some interest in this State and its wonderful assets. I think we ought to be trying to help with the movie proposed for Ingham; I think we ought to be trying to do the same for "Crocodile" in Chillagoe and "The Cattleman" at Boonah; and I think we ought to be trying to assist the people who have made such wonderful movies as "Caddie", "Eliza Fraser" and "Sunday Too Far Away", which have been highly successful and very entertaining.

On behalf of the Opposition, I welcome the Bill, and I hope that the corporation will ensure that Queensland becomes the Hollywood of Australia.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (12.46 p.m.): It is quite obvious that this is a measure which none of us is going to oppose; indeed, all of us are going to welcome it.

The Leader of the Opposition has been good enough to suggest that there is tremendous merit in the proposition involved in the Bill, but he thinks that it is a little late in coming. Well, probably it is all the better for being later rather than earlier, because we can learn from mistakes that have been made in other States in which corporations have been set up for film production.

The important element in the Bill is that the corporation it not to be a film-producing authority. It is a body that will give assistance to the private investors and the groups that want to produce films in this State and the type of co-operation that will make it a much better financial proposition for them to operate here, cut down their costs enormously, and perhaps give them the expertise that they might have had to pay for if they had to get it from other places. The financial assistance promised on a rational basis is good, too.

Mind you, Mr. Hewitt, it is important for us to remember the mistakes that have occurred in other places and not spend money unwisely—not that I expect this particular corporation to do that—in producing films for the eclectic few, because that can very easily be done. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the film-making that was done in this State in the early days, and Queensland has a very notable film history, as, indeed, has Australia. It is a good thing to know that the first moving-picture feature of any sort was made in Australia, when the Salvation Army made "The Soldiers of the Cross". We in Australia also made the first full-length drama film. If I remember rightly, it was "The True Adventures of the Kelly Gang", which was about five times as long as "The Great Train Robbery", which the American film people think was the first feature drama film produced.

I had a personal association with this industry when I was a young man—perhaps I should say, "When I was a very young man"—because I helped conduct the voice tests for Charles Chauvel when he was finding extras and feature actors and actresses for the film "Heritage", which, although about the early days of Sydney town, was in fact shot on location in the Canungra Valley. That film featured Mary Maguire, one of the delectable Maguire sisters who adorned the Bellevue Hotel in those days. Film makers then were a very dogged and rugged lot. They had to be, because they did not expect much help from anywhere and they did not get it. Again if my memory serves me rightly, I think that Charles Chauvel, after making "Heritage", went on to make "Forty Thousand Horsemen" and the New South Wales State Government put up \$30,000—£15,000—and that was the maximum amount that had been put up by anybody to that date, and I think it was probably the last amount that the New South Wales Government ever gave to film production.

In this area of the arts, making movies and giving assistance, we must be careful that we do not go too far too fast and unwisely. We have the history of the Australian Arts Council before us of recent years to enable us to realise how very easy it is to build a private little empire in which good things are given to the people you like and withheld from the people you do not like. The Arts Council, of course, started off by spending \$1,600,000 in 1968-69 and finished up by spending over \$20,000,000 in 1974-75. One is bound to ask what really came of it all. How much worth while for the arts was really produced?

We must ask ourselves the same question about the work of this film corporation. It is very easy to believe that if money is spent on some sort of artistic effort, it must necessarily be cultural and good for the community. It is quite a wrong notion to believe that culture resides only in developing exclusive art forms, and that films have to be of the precious type to be worth while. A lot of money can go into these things. I know that it costs over \$100,000 to stage one opera performance, let alone the fees of the artists. The Australian Opera Company has produced 17 operas at a cost of \$7,000,000. Many of us will wonder just how enriching, culturally, that is for the great mass of people, because probably only 0.001 per cent of people ever go near an opera.

We have to be very careful about developing this exclusive notion that something odd, unusual and little understood is necessarily artistic and cultural, for instance, the buying of paintings like "Blue Poles" and Braque's "Grand Nu" for something like \$3,000,000 between them—those extraordinary, grotesque, peculiar things that nobody can truly understand. I cannot for the life of me believe that they do anything to enrich the community in a cultural sense. Indeed, when Marshall McLuhan, the great Canadian sociologist, was out here a few months ago, he defined art today as being anything that one can get away with. Unhappily, I believe that there is a great deal in that.

The problem with our films in Australia has been that with a few rare exceptions—these were cited by the Leader of the Opposition, and some by the Premier—the film makers have tended to believe that they have to exploit the trends and patterns that have been established in other countries. For the life of me I cannot see why this is true. After all, the movie industry in general is playing to ever-declining houses. The attempt to introduce soft-core pornography into R-rated films and films that hope to escape the R rating is having no effect other than to produce fewer and fewer people in cinemas, which means ever-rising prices to go into cinema houses. To my mind that is no direction at all for a film industry in this or any other State to take. I would hope and I would expect that this corporation would aim to stimulate production of those films that the greatest number of people might enjoy, and that it would not lend itself to what we have seen in other places that have produced vulgar trash compounded of infantile stories, with cut-out cardboard characters that have no validity in real life at all, with a great deal of frontal nudity thrown in, and all of this designed to satisfy sick minds and to obscure the paucity of the story line. I think of the Alvin Purple films and films of that nature.

As a practising professional playwright, I used to talk of the catharsis of drama. I think the only thing that would make one sick from drama today is the extraordinary puerility and the vulgarity of many of the plays and films that masquerade as the real item. I know that in many areas it is believed that people want this sort of thing, that we have been moving away from censorship, from the normal bounds of moderation, because this is what the great majority of people want. But in real fact throughout the world there has been a return to moderation; there has been a return to the standards that the great bulk of people obviously have never departed from.

A Government Member: It was only a novelty.

Mr. PORTER: As the honourable member suggests, it was a novelty, and it is wearing out. When talking about a film corporation I might permit myself this observation: we might well look at the general concept of films in this State. I wonder whether what are now R-rated films showing in open movie houses should be shown only in private membership clubs and societies where the membership would be under tight control. It is very interesting to see that the United States Supreme Court only recently reversed its previous ruling on what was called the permissive licence; that is, a play or a film was banned only if it was utterly without redeeming social values. Now the United States Supreme Court has ruled that a play, a movie or a novel can be banned if, taken as a whole, it appeals to a prurient interest in sex and portrays sexual conduct in a particularly offensive way. There is a tremendous amount of merit in that decision.

Our form of censorship, in which we try to look at matters such as obscenity, creates a great number of perplexing problems. Perhaps we would do a great deal better if censorship were based on notions of what were good manners and good sense as well as on the normal acceptance of avoiding vulgarity.

The proposal to establish a film corporation is to be commended. I certainly trust that the corporation will lend its financial and other weight to ensuring that whatever films are produced in Queensland are films that reflect credit on the film industry as a whole as well as on the corporation that assists to produce them and are films that give satisfaction and gratification to the overwhelming majority of ordinary people in the State.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.56 p.m.): As previous speakers have indicated, all of us support this concept whole-heartedly. I should like to go on record as saying that the way we in Queensland are going about encouraging the film industry is the right way. It is important that we support private enterprise to make films. It possesses the technical ability as well as the drive, initiative and enthusiasm that are necessary to enable the job to be done well. On the other hand, if the State itself were to become involved in this type of activity, it might not have at its disposal personnel with the necessary artistic or technical ability to enable the job to be done well. It is right that the Government support those people who do have such ability.

It is interesting to hear claims to the effect that the Australian film industry is short of technical people. I should like to dwell for a few moments on the ability of a certain person who is involved in the industry. I refer to Philip Warner, the son of one of the members of this Parliament. He possesses considerable ability and initiative and was involved in the embryo stage of the Queensland Film Corporation. He talked to the Premier about setting up this body. I congratulate him and all those other people who were involved in the setting up of this corporation. Philip Warner has been involved in the production of such films as "Sunday Too Far Away", "Picnic at Hanging Rock", "Picture Show Man" and "Storm Boy", to name only a few.

The Australian film industry is assured of success while it continues to make films of the type that it has made over the past few years. Australian films have a freshness and display an attitude totally different from that of films made in, say, Hollywood or Pinewood. Australian films have not degenerated into the rather gimmicky and slightly sick types that have been churned out to us from many overseas countries.

I look upon "Picnic at Hanging Rock" as probably the most outstanding film I have ever seen. It moved me to such an extent that when I was in Melbourne I felt impelled to visit Hanging Rock. It is possible to see how the producers of that film were motivated by that magnificent setting. Technically, the photography in the film is outstanding.

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

Mr. ELLIOTT: I am sure that if films yet to be made in Australia have the same freshness of style as "Picnic at Hanging Rock", they will have the same strong appeal. The musical score for "Picnic at Hanging Rock" has a haunting quality that appeals to many people for different reasons. If future films are in the same vein, the film industry in Australia will have a great future.

I like to think that the attitude of people working in the industry will remain the same. They are prepared to be involved in more than just their own little area. They are prepared to do things which people in overseas studios would consider to be beneath their dignity, or something equally absurd. Demarcation problems in overseas film industries impose tremendous production costs. So far this problem has been avoided by the Australian industry through co-operation and comradeship, whereby those associated with the industry have not allowed pettiness to creep in. As has been said, if the industry continues on its present footing, Queensland could become the Hollywood of Australia. It is blessed with all the climatic and scenic attractions that one could hope for to make almost any film. Queensland's scenery covers virtually the whole spectrum.

Because many other members will undoubtedly want to make a contribution to this debate I shall now resume my seat.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (2.18 p.m.): Until the introduction of this measure, the Government's participation in film-making has been confined to promoting the image of Ministers, and activity has always accelerated prior to, and during, election campaigns. To prove my point, I advert to the 1972 and 1974 election campaigns and to the public relations activities associated with them. I am pleased that the buildup of public relations exercises is not indicated by this measure.

Mr. Casey: If they were to make one with the Minister for Police as the star, would they get the same results?

Mr. JONES: He would have to improve his image but, on his past record, I do not think he could. To answer the question directly, he probably would not. From the Premier's reply this morning, I understand that a number of mug shots have been taken but whether he will star in these, or cut them and produce them, I am not too sure. I do not believe that the honourable member for Mirani or I would want to star in any film produced by the film corporation, the Police Department or any of the public relations offices within the Ministry.

I hope that the introduction of this measure has nothing to do with the announcement of an early election. I might mention in passing that in my view, and in the view of quite a number of Queenslanders, taxpayers' money has been used to provide free venues for Ministers of the Crown to have their television images consistently placed before the viewing audience in North Queensland. That does not augur well for the concept of what we are trying to achieve under this legislation.

I join with other honourable members in welcoming this new concept and approach to financial support for film production. Such assistance is commendable. At least it will prevent future Governments, whatever their colour, from being tempted to engage in making propaganda films, as this Government has done in the past.

As has been proved by this Government, any direct Government involvement does and can provide a number of pitfalls. I am speaking of Government intervention, Government intercession or Government interference. We should take a lead from what has been done by the Don Dunstan Labor Government in South Australia, by the film commission in New South Wales and by the Australian Film Commission. If we proceed in that direction and not follow the previous experience of our Government in Queensland in film-making, we will receive only commendation from the taxpaying public.

We in Queensland have the climate, we have the history and we have the locations. The number of days of sunshine per year enjoyed in Queensland enhance our film-making prospects. I have travelled quite a deal in Queensland. For instance, I have travelled from Darnley and Murray Islands south along the Great Barrier Reef. I know that films have been made on the Great Barrier Reef. I can recall one that was made on Green Island shortly before the 1939-45 war. I cannot recall its name but to have film stars participating in film-making on Green Island was a great social occasion.

Mr. Lowes interjected.

Mr. JONES: The honourable member for Brisbane mentioned Zane Grey's "White Death". It was filmed outside the Great Barrier Reef. I cannot say that it was a great film. The Great Barrier Reef and Green Island were the sites for a number of the scenes in "A Town Like Alice". Queensland has many locations and sites that would certainly stir the interest of film makers. I instance Camooweal or Phosphate in the West, the Darling Downs in the South-west, the scenery in the Central West and the jungles and scrub in Far North Queensland or on the islands in the Torres Strait.

I endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on using locations such as Chillagoe for the film "Crocodile". I think it would be a shame if the production of "Gina between Changes", projected for Ingham, were not supported as an initial project by the Queensland Film Corporation. The story was written by Barbara Mariotti, a Queensland woman whose maiden name was, I think, Eite. She was a schoolteacher and journalist who spent her childhood in Ingham. As recently as July of this year it was reported in the Press that the production of the film in North Queensland, as contemplated by Eldorado Films Queensland Pty. Ltd., was being chased into New South Wales to obtain cane-growing locations. It seems a great shame to have driven away from Queensland the production of a film the script for which was written by a Queensland-born writer who won an Artists' Guild award for it. I hope productions of this type will be encouraged within our great State. Already this company has received a grant of about $250,000 from the Australian Film Commission and I would hate to think that North Queensland was going to miss out because of lack of Government support.

I think the setting up of this corporation is merited. It is a great shame that "The Irishman" and "The Mango Tree" were not supported by Queensland finance and the

Queensland Government. However, I suppose it is never too late to make amends and the criticism directed at the Queensland Government for allowing the South Australian Labor Government to show the way in the film-making industry, without political interference, may have highlighted what can be done and moved the Government to initiate this measure.

The proposal will have its pitfalls. Some I have outlined, and there will be others. But I do not think we should hesitate to do something simply because mistakes will be made. I am pleased to give my support to this new industry. I hope that it will not only be a creative influence on the culture of Queensland and a means of depicting our way of life but that it will be a new field of endeavour and employment for Queenslanders throughout the entire State.

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (2.28 p.m.): I support the Bill for the creation of a film industry in Queensland and I should like to thank the honourable member for Cunningham for giving a plug to my son, who has been pushing for support of this industry in this State ever since he was a small boy. At present he is overseas gaining more experience. It is boys like him who will make the industry in Queensland develop as it should develop in the future.

A film industry will create employment opportunities for many youngsters with artistic talents who until now have been unable to express themselves in Queensland. They have had to go overseas or to South Australia to gain experience of this type. I believe that what is happening in Queensland at the present moment should be supported to the full and, whether it is late or early and whether it is or is not an election promise, the Premier has shown that the Government is willing to establish this industry and back it to the hilt.

It has also been said this afternoon that if one is backing an industry, one must see that it works. I believe that when this industry gets going we will have to watch it closely to see that it does not fall by the wayside, as the film-making industry did in the past. I refer, of course, to the industry that was started in about 1923 by Americans in Australia, though certainly not in Queensland. Many silent films were made in those days and people flocked to see them. I believe the miming in those days was very good and it is an art which we have lost, although colour is perhaps some compensation.

As to the quality of film-making in Australia today, although the stories are great in concept they are probably a little immature whereas the technical ability of those engaged in the industry is something to see. As I have said, my son has constantly brought to my attention just how wonderful these films now being made in Australia are. His first film was "Sunday Too Far Away", followed by "Picnic at Hanging Rock", "Storm Boy" and others which are seen on the circuit today. These films have won awards at the Cannes festival in France, and in addition they have been sold overseas. They have been bought by American companies which have recognised the freshness of Australians and their new approach to the film industry. Certainly this approach has been successful because, as has been said by other honourable members, people are becoming heartily sick and tired of all the R-rated films screened in our theatres today. The films with the new approach are a great credit to our Australian directors.

One of the great names of the film industry is Charles Chauvel. I hope that we never forget what he did and tried to do for the Australian film industry. Most people probably do not know that he made the first talking film in Australia and he also started the film industry here in Brisbane. I am told that several films were made at premises in Ann Street. Cinesound is certainly to be congratulated for backing this man for so long. Charles Chauvel made an enormous number of what I consider to be famous films, and he made them on a shoe-string. In those days apart from a couple of individuals he received no backing at all. His first film was "In the Wake of the Bounty" followed by "Heritage" and then a tremendous film which very few of us have ever seen—"Uncivilised"—which was one of the best documentaries ever made of the North as it was. Then followed "Forty Thousand Horsemen", and "Rats of Tobruk", which was created out of a desire to give some backing to our fighting forces at that time. "Sons of Matthew" was filmed in Queensland. These films all point to the fact that Charles Chauvel was a Queenslander who wanted to promote Queensland to the rest of Australia and the world.

Another great thing Charles Chavuel did for the film industry was to create stars such as Errol Flynn, Mary Maguire, Chips Rafferty, Peter Finch, Michael Pate and Betty Bryant together with many others who became famous throughout the world.

Mr. Frawley: Ken Hall.

Mr. WARNER: Yes; he was another very good actor. I believe we are now going to see the rebirth of an industry which began back in 1923 and I hope that the enormous amounts of money that have been put aside for it will be properly managed. I hope that the industry can be as great as it was years ago in the days of Charles Chauvel. I believe that it will, and I support the Bill whole-heartedly.

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (2.35 p.m.): I support the introduction of the Bill. Like the honourable member for Cairns, who spoke earlier in the debate, I am aware of the presence in Queensland earlier this year of Mr. Ugo Mariotti and his wife, formerly Barbara Eite, who was a young girl in my home town of Ingham before marrying and going overseas and achieving some distinction. I was very pleased that these people called on me in my electorate some months ago and had a long discussion about the possibility of the introduction of a film corporation in Queensland. I promised them then that I certainly would support any such action by the Government, because I was impressed by the sincerity of Mr. Mariotti and his proposal that Eldorado Films should come to Queensland and make a film here, the title of which was to be "Gina". It was to be the story of a migrant family from Italy and of the process of assimilation.

In North Queensland in particular, this process of social assimilation over a couple of generations has been an outstanding feature of development. In saying that, I must pay tribute to those people, particularly those in my electorate, who originally came from Europe and who, only a couple of generations ago, did a great deal of hard work under rugged conditions in tropical North Queensland and made that region of Australia the very stable, prosperous and reliable producer of exports that it is today. I had the privilege of reading the script of "Gina" and I was quite impressed with the story.

My mind goes back to when I was a boy and I had some friends who were instrumental in maintaining the only picture theatre in Ingham at the time. Some members of that family became involved in film-making in the early days referred to by the honourable member for Toowoomba South. I think Fox Films did a bit of pioneering work in the film industry in Queensland, but somehow or other that work seemed to go by the board. Therefore, it is pleasing to see that the Government is prepared to acknowledge that it has a role to play in this very important industry.

There is no doubt that the film industry in Australia has progressed considerably and, as has been said by other honourable members in this debate, there have been some very famous Australian productions which have received awards and world acclaim. I am very pleased to know that the State Government is going to enter into the field of sharing in the responsibility and the promotion of this very important medium of entertainment. It will enable the portrayal of our history and fulfil many other important functions. I hope that the film industry prospers in Queensland. I have been very concerned to read and to hear of the prospects that have been lost by this State, not only in the production of films but also in the advertisement of the State as a venue, which would, of course, increase its prestige greatly.

I have much pleasure in supporting the introduction of the Bill, which I am sure will be accepted without any opposition.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (2.39 p.m.): Friedrich Schiller, in "Letters upon the Aesthetical Education of Man", said—

> "It would appear to be unseasonable to go in search of a code for the aesthetic world, when the moral world offers matter of so much higher interest, and when the spirit of philosophical inquiry is so stringently challenged by the circumstances of our times to occupy itself with the most perfect of all works of art—the establishment and structure of a true political freedom.
>
> "I hope that I shall succeed in convincing you that this matter of art is less foreign to the needs than to the tastes of our age; nay, that, to arrive at a solution even in the political problem, the road of aesthetics must be pursued, because it is through beauty that we arrived at freedom. But I cannot carry out this proof without my bringing to your remembrance the principles by which the reason is guided in political legislation."

This legislation is important because it shows the Government's concern about the pursuit of art forms via society, for which the Government is responsible. Pursuit of all of the possible art forms available to society is the expression of the maturity of that society. And, indeed, the Government of the day is not only seeing that they are pursued but also encouraging them.

One wonders why we should let our society be continually moulded and influenced—be dictated to—by overseas ideas. Those ideas come to us today in perhaps the most acceptable and most prominent form of influence in art forms, namely films. We need to see that the ideas represented mainly in the United States and Great Britain are indeed the ideas and the mores of our society.

As to films—Australia is indeed young in that pursuit. Since the introduction of television in Australia, we have made television series here. Indeed the television series produced in Australia are noticeable to Australians themselves as being distinctly different from series received from overseas. The difference is not so much in technical qualities, but rather in the content. Those series represent and express to the community a distinctly Australian content. The Australian society is a society that is distinctly different from the society of the United States, the society of Great Britain and the society of the various European States. It is important that Governments assist private industry to pursue and encourage the expression of art forms by individuals in a particular society, because those art forms are an expression of that society's cultural and civilisational possibilities.

Many people no doubt will think that the words I say and the ideas I develop here are either irrelevant or impractical, but, indeed, in an artistic sense they are absolutely real and essential. All art forms are the expression of the culture of a society; all art forms reflect the intelligence of the day; all art forms, whether they be in the modern art forms of film-making or the older art forms that have existed for thousands of years in architecture, painting and music, are an expression of the basic mind of the community at that time. That is the essential reason why art forms as expressed by Australians, and therefore by people in Queensland today, are found both by the community and the art world itself to be different from the types of forms we receive from overseas countries.

So it is important that we see this Government encouraging the development of the film industry in Queensland. There is indeed an originality in Australia that must be pursued. Australia has yet to play a very significant part in the world community. Over the last 200 years we have been absolutely influenced by European society and by the developing society of America, which itself had its own European base. But the United States is now quite distinctly a society of its own, and we should not continue to appear to be a pawn or an offspring of overseas countries. We have in the development of our own generations the foundation and base of our own form of cultural expression. If Governments fail to allow that pursuit to be followed, they fail tragically and their failure will be seen in its true historical perspective.

It is true that we could get by without our own film industry. Governments, however, should not be concerned merely with getting by. An important aspect of government is the development and expansion not only of economic well-being but also of cultural well-being. Governments must create circumstances in which the minds of today are able to have an influence on tomorrow.

Many Australians have played important roles in the film industry. Two who readily come to mind as having had some influence in television and more recently in films are Diane Cilento, a Queenslander, and Rod Taylor, a Sydneyite. Along with many others, those two Australians have had a great impact on the film world. Their impact, however, has been formed and shaped by international or overseas thought rather than by Australian thought. If Australia is to have a great impact on the world in cultural terms—the sign of a society's maturity is its influence on other societies in a cultural sense—it is important that we pursue all courses available to us in our modernised society.

The encouragement of a film industry in Queensland is the encouragement of another art form, one that will create employment. And employment is an important matter in this whole question. It is important to utilise the ability of those people who have grown up and developed in, and are products of, our society to so influence that society that it is not dictated to by people in overseas countries. For years Australia has lost its talent to overseas countries, and I hope that by this legislation we will be able to take the first step towards altering that situation.

I have much pleasure in supporting this legislation. I ask everyone not to forget that our society has a culture of its own and a mind of its own and that its art forms must have an expression of their own.

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Leader of the House) (2.49 p.m.), in reply: On behalf of the Premier, I thank those honourable members who have spoken to the motion. The Premier has indicated that he will reply to them at the second-reading stage.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

CORONERS ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.50 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to amend the Coroners Act 1958-1976 and the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962-1974 each in certain particulars."

The principal reason for the introduction of this Bill concerns the jurisdiction of a coroner in the case of persons who have disappeared in waters adjacent to Queensland.

Section 9 of the Coroners Act gives the Minister power to direct the holding of an inquest where a body has been destroyed or cannot be discovered.

Section 6 (3) provides that every Coroner "shall have and may exercise jurisdiction, powers, functions and authorities throughout Queensland including the territorial waters of Queensland."

As a consequence of the Commonwealth Seas and Submerged Lands Act and the High Court's judgment in relation thereto, the State of Queensland does not, with certain exceptions, include external waters. Some doubt has therefore been expressed about the jurisdiction of a coroner to hold an inquest in the case of a person who has disappeared at sea off the Queensland coast. The object of this Bill is to ensure that a coroner does have jurisdiction to hold an inquest in such circumstances.

A consequential amendment will be made to the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act so that the coroner's findings in those circumstances will be forwarded to the Registrar-General.

Section 7 (1) (a) (v) of the Coroners Act gives jurisdiction to a coroner to inquire into the death of a person who has died while under an anaesthetic in the course of an operation. Uncertainty appears to exist as to the stage when a person ceases to be "under an anaesthetic". Medical opinions have been expressed that such stage is reached before the person has regained consciousness. To avoid uncertainty, it is proposed to give a coroner jurisdiction to inquire into the death of a person who has died while under or as a result of or within 24 hours after the administration of an anaesthetic in the course of an operation.

The Coroners Act provides that the persons authorised to request a coroner to hold an inquest are the husband or wife, father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter, or guardian of the deceased person concerned. This Bill proposes to amend this provision by including any person who has, in the opinion of the coroner, a sufficient interest in the circumstances of the death. Similar amendments are proposed in respect of requests to reopen inquests and requests to hold inquiries into missing persons.

Many instances occur where an elderly person sustains injury in a fall resulting in confinement to bed and subsequent death, often from pneumonia. The initial common injury in these circumstances is a fractured femur. This brings the death within section 7 (1) (a) (viii) of the Act—where a person has died within a year and a day from the date of any incident. In these cases, it is proposed by this Bill to allow a medical practitioner to issue a certificate of cause of death without the consent of the coroner where he is of the opinion that the injury—

(a) was attributable to the person's advanced age;

(b) contributed to the death of the person but was not related to the disease or condition that caused the death;

(c) did not involve any suspicious or unusual circumstances; and

(d) was not caused or contributed to by an act or omission of any other person.

The medical practitioner will be required to state on the certificate that it is issued pursuant to the particular section.

It is considered the proposals contained in this Bill will improve the administration of the Coroners Act.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (2.56 p.m.): The Opposition appreciates the clear and precise way in which the Minister introduced this legislation and outlined the reasons for it. I cannot see any objection to it at all. It is quite obvious that if anomalies exist and there is a need for clarity to clearly show what are the responsibilities and obligations of a coroner to carry out an inquest following the disappearance of a person, that law ought to be changed accordingly, and that is being done. While we will look at the Bill when it is printed, at this stage we have no opposition to the legislation.

Whilst I am on my feet I shall bring to the Minister's notice a couple of matters that have been put before me relating to the Acts being amended. I realise that the first one pertains mainly to Commonwealth law but I ask the Minister to raise at the next Attorney-Generals' conference the difficulties faced by relatives when a person dies at sea.

I know of two instances in the past two years and one very recently where a person died whilst on a South Pacific tour. There has been nothing but trouble trying to get a death certificate and finding out the details of what took place. I have made representations to the Federal Government but, to this moment, to very limited avail.

I am sure that the Minister is aware of the type of problem that has been raised. Other honourable members have spoken to me about it. It seems that the Federal Government is lax in this respect, that the laws are not clear and that we are creating problems for relatives. It is unfair that relatives should have to spend six or seven months going through all sorts of traumatic experiences in trying to get information about the death of a daughter, son, brother, sister, or even parents. I bring this matter to the Minister's notice and ask that he delve into it and make the appropriate representations in the Federal sphere.

The other matter I raise pertains to the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962–1974. Recently I received a letter from a young woman whom I do not intend to name. I want to outline the circumstances. This lass was living in a de facto relationship with a man in Queensland. She had twin girls to this person. At the time the father was prepared to acknowledge his paternity but, as often happens with de facto relationships, the man and woman separated.

Recently she reverted to her maiden name by deed poll. She included her children's names specifically on the document so that they would be able to use her maiden name. She has been advised by the Registrar-General's office in Brisbane that she cannot change the children's names on the birth certificate to her maiden name. The rights of mothers are involved here and, when we amended the Act only a year or so ago, I thought we had overcome the problem. Apparently not, because I have had correspondence from the department which shows clearly that the woman has no right to change the surname of her children.

The differences in the certificates will be an embarrassment to the children at a later date. I ask that the Minister consider this question. I will officially make representations to him in writing and give him a detailed outline of the case. I think that the law should be changed to overcome such problems when they arise.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (3 p.m.): I support this legislation, particularly the amendments to the Coroners Act. At least some of them have been made at my request as a result of representations I made to the Minister following the death of a New Farm man—Mr. John Hayes—who was taken by a shark earlier this year in Moreton Bay.

The incident was a tragic one. Honourable members will recall that the party went out in Moreton Bay at night. Mr. John Hayes was one of those aboard the small craft. It was in experienced hands, yet it was run down by the "Shun Oh", a Japanese freighter of 25,000 tons that was carrying a shipment of cars. The fishermen in the small boat were thrown into the water. They remained there for approximately 33 hours in an ordeal which I am sure no-one in this Chamber could adequately describe. It was not until after all that time that the third man in the party, who later recovered from the incident, was able to give a first-hand account of how the other two, one of whom was Mr. Hayes, disappeared under the water in the early hours of Sunday 13 March of this year.

I am sure we all feel great sorrow over this incident and it has demonstrated, not for the first time, the inadequacy of our legislation as it affects people. In this instance, it adversely affected the surviving wife and her small children. Mrs. Hayes, the widow of Mr. John Hayes, is a friend of mine and a friend of my family's, and has been for a number of years. She is a schoolteacher and one of those great figures who always seem to be able to find time to do something for the community despite the responsibility of raising a family. Mrs. Hayes teaches English to migrants at the New Farm State School.

She was left in a shocking predicament following her husband's almost instant disappearance and she had to face the world with her young family. She is a very courageous woman and she will make the best of it for them in the future. There has, however, been an impediment to her collecting normal superannuation benefits, although I understand that it was not a particularly good scheme to which her husband contributed, and also the proceeds from insurance policies. Until there is a declaration of her husband's death, or at least a declaration for presumption of death, she is unable to produce a death certificate, as is required by both the insurance company and the superannuation fund to which her husband contributed. For many months now she has had to get by as best she could. Fortunately she has, by her own efforts, another income.

This case prompted me to make representations to the Minister and they have resulted in the introduction today of amendments to the Coroners Act to allow an inquest to be held in such circumstances. The present impediment apparently arises from a recent High Court decision concerning territorial waters and the area in respect of which the State can legislate under the Coroners Act for the holding of inquiries of this nature.

I think it is a great shame that legalistic disputes between the Commonwealth and the State can cause hardship to people who are not normally involved in events of such a traumatic nature. I am sure that lawyers are very interested in High Court findings and legal situations which arise in this way; but, as interesting as they might be, that is not much comfort to a widow and her family. However, Mrs. Hayes will now, if she has not already done so by another less satisfactory avenue which was available to her, be able to secure a declaration of death from the coroner, who hitherto had been unable to hold an inquest into her husband's death.

Members should note that some time ago a death arose from a collision between the Government sea-going dredge "Sir Thomas Hiley" and the Government launch "Boyne" 6 km north of Bishop Island in Moreton Bay. One of the officers employed by the Department of Harbours and Marine was killed in that incident. So I think we should have laws and procedures which make it clear just where people stand when incidents of this nature occur. Moreton Bay is a marvellous waterway, but it is a place which is fraught with all the dangers of the open sea. Yet, as I said, a lot of people consider it to be almost a domestic waterway. This might be all right in practical terms, but in legal terms it has become very complicated.

At least in the case of Mr. Hayes' death there was direct evidence of his disappearance in the water so there can be no dispute that although his body has never been found he did in fact lose his life on that occasion. All that is needed now is removal of the legal impediment so that a coroner can quite properly find so in legal terms. I thank the Minister for introducing this legislation. I appreciate his initiative, and I am sure that the relatives of John Hayes and, indeed, the many friends of the family in New Farm will appreciate his action in amending the Act.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (3.7 p.m.): It is rather interesting that this Bill has had to be introduced mainly because of a dispute between the Commonwealth and the State. It always strikes me as extraordinary that a nation as big and as advanced as ours cannot settle its disputes amicably without having to legislate against each other. Unfortunately, the State, being the weaker of the two, must always look to its safety and the safety of its residents.

This Bill interests me because it contains not only provisions covering those who have disappeared in our coastal waters but also a medical provision relating to conditions that exist in certain hospitals but that should exist in all hospitals. There has been great argument recently as to when a patient actually recovers from an anaesthetic. Some people say recovery actually occurs when the patient can speak, hold a rational conversation, knows who he is or can recognise somebody else, but one can take the blood pressure of that same person and find that it is below normal, that his pulse is irregular, and that he is not perfusing his tissues, which indicates that he has not recovered from the influence of the anaesthetic and/or the surgical procedure which he underwent.

This brings me to the point that all hospitals, big or small, should have a recovery room. A patient should not be taken back to the ward and dumped in a bed and left; he should be taken to a room which contains monitoring machines such as electrocardiograms and blood-pressure machines where he can be supervised by trained nurses. There should also be available machines which can provide gas and perform electrolyte analysis of a patient's respiratory and blood systems.

I think that the provision of a 24-hour period is a very wise move and a great advance. It will ensure that when a person dies it will not be possible to say, "Oh, this person died from anaesthetic." Other factors may have killed that person, and they will be manifest in a 24-hour period. The system could be implemented in all our hospitals if we ensure that people are monitored in a recovery ward.

The other aspect of the Bill that intrigues me is that, in effect, it reaffirms a practice that I considered had been in use for many years in Queensland. The Minister gave an example in his introductory speech of a medical practitioner issuing a certificate in the case of an elderly person who fell over and broke a limb and then contracted pneumonia. I understood that that had been the general practice for many years in Queensland. If a medical officer is at all in doubt, he can ring the coroner and discuss the case with him. He can then issue a certificate as long as he writes on it, "Issued with the consent of the coroner."

I have issued many such certificates in hospital practice, and it has always been an arrangement made with the coroner. However, a certificate should not be issued unless that is written on it so that it is recorded and the coroner is fully aware of what has gone on.

Another excellent provision in the Bill—and probably it will be missed by many people reading the amendments—is the proposal to amend the Act by including any person who has, in the opinion of the coroner, sufficient interest in the circumstances of the death. I hope that this will include nurses, residents or anyone in the operating theatre or in the recovery room, because things go on in hospitals which are blatantly culpable, and that is often overlooked. I consider that the proposed amendment will allow people to voice their opinions, which can then be correctly assessed. It will not necessarily be libellous, and it will allow the people I mentioned a chance of stating to the coroner that everything was not well. In the light of the present trend in which the colleges and the medical profession are beginning to look at the evaluation of medical practice and people are subject to peer assessment, I consider that this is a very valuable aspect of the Bill.

Mr. Lowes: Don't you think those names should be included in the Bill itself?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: The Minister has left it fairly broad. He said in his speech—

> "This Bill proposes to amend the provision by including any person who has, in the opinion of the coroner, a sufficient interest in the circumstances of the death."

I gather that takes into account the residents, nurses and attendants in the various hospital rooms, as well as any relative. In the preceding paragraph of his speech, the Minister referred to "husband or wife, father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter, or guardian of the deceased person concerned".

Mr. Lowes: It sounds to me more like a friend of the family than a medical practitioner.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Yes. That could quite easily be emphasised in the Bill, as the honourable member for Brisbane suggests.

I think that the proposed Bill is an excellent one, and I commend it to the Committee.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.14 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contribution. The honourable member for Rockhampton has indicated that he would like to see the printed Bill and that, of course, will be arranged as soon as possible.

I note that he is in agreement with the principles that I have enunciated and that are contained in the Bill. I noted also his remarks as to a matter that he had mentioned previously relative to the registration of births, deaths and marriages. He said that he would be making representations to me on that matter, and I shall be pleased to consider his representations.

It is true that the honourable member for Merthyr had a very personal interest in this proposal. Although during previous periods of the State's history the Coroner's Act would have applied to incidents such as the tragic accident in Moreton Bay, because of the advent of what appears to be competition with the States, initiated during the Whitlam era to try to reef from them what had been considered to be the authorities of the States in the past, we found ourselves in a legal dilemma. It was because of the Seas and Submerged Land Act and subsequent litigation over that legislation that a void was left in handling matters that were obviously the province of the State administration.

When looking at the aims and ambitions of the Whitlam Government one often wonders whether it was in fact competition with the States rather than the normal co-operation that one would have expected between Commonwealth and State Governments under a federal system. It was quite obvious that the Whitlam Government tried to centralise everything in its own palm, and tried to divorce from the States any authority they traditionally held. Because of that a lot of problem areas have been left in State administration, and a lot of problem areas have been left in Commonwealth administration.

The Commonwealth Government was never harnessed to administer those facets which are involved in many aspects of off-shore administration pertaining to the States. It is only now realising that from a legal point of view it may have had a victory, but from a practical point of view it has been a dead loss. We are still trying to clean up the mess created by that rather senseless move by the Commonwealth.

I thank the honourable member for Merthyr for his contribution as a member of my ministerial committee. I have explained the situation in relation to the Seas and Submerged Land Act, and the result of the appeal. The honourable member has been pressing for this legislation to be brought forward quickly so that the problems created by the Whitlam Government can be solved and innocent people not made to suffer because of that action.

The honourable member for Townsville reflected on the problem caused by the Commonwealth's intrusion into what has traditionally been the prerogative of the State Governments. I say "traditionally" because it has applied since the beginning of the federal system in Australia. I agree with the honourable member that one wonders why the Commonwealth Government of the day could not have devoted itself to more constructive matters in the national interest rather than interesting itself in matters that were running very smoothly on a State basis, and accepted by all States as being the prerogative of the State Governments. Perhaps we would not have been in the present economic situation had the Whitlam Government applied itself more to being a reasonable Commonwealth Government than to trying to downgrade the States and force them under its control and introduce a socialist republic in this country. We are suffering from that Government's maladministration.

I thank the honourable member for Townsville for his medical infusion in the debate. I am sure we were all very interested in what he had to say. He speaks from a vast amount of experience, and I thank him for his contribution. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Row, Hinchinbrook, in the chair)

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.21 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1975 in certain particulars and for another purpose."

Under section 14 of the Auctioneers and Agents Act a corporation is not allowed to carry on the business of an auctioneer, a real estate agent, a commercial agent or a motor dealer unless it is registered in this State and has taken out a corporation licence on its own behalf.

When the Auctioneers and Agents Act was passed in 1971, companies were either Queensland or foreign companies and, in each case, it was appropriate to speak of their being registered in Queensland. However, with the passing of the Companies Act Amendment Act 1974, there came into being a further category of company—that is, the recognised company. A recognised company is a corporation incorporated under a declared law of a participating State or under a corresponding previous law of that State. Thus a company incorporated in New South Wales, for instance, is a recognised company under the Queensland Companies Act by virtue of its incorporation in New South Wales and not by virtue of registration in Queensland. This being so, it would appear that no recognised company can comply with the requirement of section 14 of the Auctioneers and Agents Act that it be registered in Queensland. This Bill proposes merely to correct this anomaly. I commend it to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.23 p.m.): When the Companies Act Amendment Bill was brought before this Assembly in 1974, concern was expressed at the fact that, instead of national uniformity, there was uniformity at one stage among only three States and, after the Labor Party lost office in Western Australia, four States. But that is history now, and we know that a company that is incorporated in one State gains the benefit of having recognition in all States. As the Minister said, there is an anomaly here, and as this Bill will overcome that anomaly the Opposition supports it.

The discussion of legislation at the introductory stage gives members an opportunity to raise other matters. As the Auctioneers and Agents Act refers to motor dealers, I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister and honourable members generally some of the problems that have been drawn to my attention in recent months. Members have only a limited opportunity in the Matters of Public Interest Debate to raise matters such as this, so it is good to have the freedom of a wide-ranging debate at the introductory stage.

The matter I wish to raise pertains to backyard dealers in the second-hand motor car industry. A real problem arises here. Maybe there are reasons for it. Perhaps the introduction of roadworthiness certificates has forced up the prices of second-hand vehicles, with the result that people with limited funds are prepared to take a risk and buy a car from a backyard dealer. I realise that a fine line can be drawn between a car repair hobbyist and the fellow who is out to make a quick quid by repeatedly repairing cars in his backyard.

We have a problem. I suggest that local government controls are not sufficient. They certainly cannot overcome the difficulties I have met in my activities associated with consumer organisations in Queensland. It is all very well to say that the caveat emptor rule should prevail—that is, let the buyer beware—and that if he buys a vehicle from a backyard dealer he is heading for problems. But surely we should not adopt that attitude. We have seen fit to place special provisions in the Act to cover the sale of motor vehicles, and specifically, the sale of second-hand motor vehicles.

I ask the Minister to use whatever powers he has, in co-operation with the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs, to clamp down on backyard dealers. I admit that they are hard to find and that it is very difficult to prove that they are dealing. In two instances—one in Yeppoon and another in Rockhampton—I would not have been game to say, "You are a dealer." One man had sold only three cars, and he was known to like Fords. He bought old Fords and fixed them up. But he was using his interest to make a lot of money and he was getting around the Act. A person selling an unregistered vehicle does not have to supply a roadworthy certificate; the onus is on the purchaser to try to get one.

I ask the Minister to look into this question to see if we can change the Auctioneers and Agents Act to provide that persons who sell vehicles shall be registered.

Greater control must be exercised over the used-car market. Unfortunately the certificate of roadworthiness has not solved the problems caused by unroadworthy cars on our roads. As I said, it has only pushed up the price of cars. I imagine that by talking to the Minister in charge of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Campbell), Miss Jan Taylor from the Consumer Affairs Bureau, Mr. Powell from the Bundaberg Consumers Association, Max Hooper, who is associated with the Townsville body, Ray Jones, who is linked with the Cairns group, or Bill Prest from the Gladstone group—it is interesting to note that a number of members of Parliament are linked with consumerism—we would find that time and again the bulk of complaints relate to unroadworthy vehicles or to people who are not fair dinkum in making representations about a car. There must be some control over these people.

While I accept that the roadworthy aspect is not the responsibility of this Minister, it is mentioned in section 58 of the legislation we are dealing with, so the Minister is involved. The trouble can be traced to more than just the roadworthiness of a vehicle. It relates to the general representations and advertisements about vehicles. Honourable members may recall that section 59 of the Act refers to bogus advertisements. This is a very difficult matter to pursue. When a vehicle is sold as a 1977 model and four months later it is found that it was manufactured in 1976 (having stood on the showroom floor for 13 months), the dealer can say, "It is still a 1977 vehicle because it was registered this year." But when the purchaser tries to sell it in three years' time there is no way in the world that a second-hand dealer will accept it as a '77 model. He will look at the plate which shows the date of manufacture and say, "It is a 1976 model." The prospective seller thus loses $300 or $400.

One way around this problem is for the powers of inspection relative to used motor vehicles in car lots to be more rigidly enforced. Inspectors should be going round constantly checking advertisements and representations about vehicles. When a young person pays $3,000 for a second-hand vehicle or $6,000 to $7,000 for a new vehicle, it is a tremendous investment, yet he can be up for $300 or $400 because the transmission or something else goes wrong. There must be greater control. Because the Minister has shown interest in cleaning up these problems, he is the man to talk to. I ask him to co-operate with the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs in an attempt to clamp down on these practices, to ensure that more inspections of used vehicles are carried out and that the pseudo car dealers, who in fact are only backyard dealers, are also clamped down on.

One other matter I wish to raise relates to the restriction on agents purchasing property. Recently in my area, an employee of a real estate agent had a house listed for which he found a buyer. Within a few days, however, he told the unfortunate vendor that the sale had fallen through. But he was able to find another purchaser. Admittedly, the price was $2,000 less but the money was available so it would be a cash transaction. He was very sorry about the other sale but that is the way things go; the finance was not there.

I found out, because the whole thing fell apart on the employee of the agent, that the original purchaser did have the money. In fact he had lodged it with a solicitor. I pursued the matter further. I investigated to find out who was the new purchaser and found out that the new purchaser was in fact the agent's employee using a different name. The matter was handed to the police and I thought something could be done on the basis of fraud. Unfortunately the case was lost.

I hoped that the matter could have been pursued under this Act because of the provisions contained in sections 62 to 65. But it was not successful. It may have been the way the matter was handled. It may have been that the case prepared by the police had not been fully detailed. I do not know the full ramifications.

I suggest that there is a need for the Minister to reconsider the general sections of this Act to ensure that real restrictions apply to agents purchasing property. It is not good enough simply to say that if the vendor knows that it is that person who is buying it, it is all right. I do not believe that agents should be purchasing property at all. This may be pretty hard on them but a man who is in the business of selling land and houses should restrict himself to his career or occupation of agent. He should not be an entrepreneur in making money himself by buying and selling houses.

I have raised these two matters in the hope that the Minister will take note of them and, in due course, make further amendments to the Act.

Mr. LAMOND (Wynnum) (3.32 p.m.): Whenever amendments to the Auctioneers and Agents Act are introduced, we discuss the sections covering car dealings and this has become an area of concern. I agree with the remarks of the honourable member for Rockhampton. I know of a case in my area of a young woman who purchased a motor car with all sorts of promises being made by the dealer. He told her that it was a particular model. She found out later that it was two or 2½ years older than the prescribed model. She had no come-back.

We do have unscrupulous agents who, through devious means, purchase property listed with them for sale. However, I feel that provided the Act is policed, there is ample protection to control those unscrupulous agents.

Mr. Wright: That might be the problem; it needs to be policed.

Mr. LAMOND: There is already adequate provision that requires an auctioneer, agent or his employee (and if I remember correctly it includes his direct descendants) to give notice to the actual vendor before entering into a contract. That is all that the Act can really cover. But it must be policed because someone always suffers from any exploitation.

In every field of endeavour unscrupulous people will exploit. Fortunately, the majority of people involved in the real estate industry do not come within that category. The industry can be very thankful that the R.E.I.Q. set down a very firm code of ethics for dealing in real estate. When I say "dealing" I am not using the word in its true sense; I am referring to the actual operation of an agent carrying out his responsibility between vendor and purchaser.

I look forward to reading the Bill after it has been printed. One point that concerns me is whether the provision might allow unqualified people to enter the real estate industry without passing the prescribed examination. In the long history of real estate in this State, because of Government requirements and of the industry itself, many of the problem areas have been cleaned up.

Today, as a result of discussions between the industry and the Government, we have legislation removing back-room operators. Thirty years ago some real estate agents operated from back rooms in houses. They would be in business for a few months and then disappear. That type of operation has now gone as a result of requirements concerning premises, registration and education of real estate agents and I should hate to see anything happen that would allow that situation to return.

Mr. Wright: Are you suggesting that it it quite possible that people registered under limited provisions in, say, Victoria, now can act in Queensland?

Mr. LAMOND: I shall take that interjection. One thing that concerns me is that there could be an inflow of people who have not the prescribed qualifications on which the Government and the agents' institute are trying to insist. I believe that within the foreseeable future—three, four or five years—the real estate profession, trade or industry must have within it only those who have passed the prescribed examination and qualified in the prescribed areas.

There is no doubt that this is an area of concern to many people because in most cases the greatest expenditure undertaken by the ordinary person is the purchase of a home. People, both young and old, who wish to purchase a house enter the office of a real estate agent with faith that the agent has the qualifications and the expertise to handle the transaction. The Government and the industry have a responsibility to ensure that people who enter the offices of real estate agents are able to speak with people who have the necessary qualifications.

The sums of money placed in the trust accounts of real estate agents are large and, while those funds are protected under law, the Act does not provide that estate agents must have a knowledge of accountancy. A sound knowledge of accountancy is necessary for the efficient operation of a real estate agency. I believe that the Government, the R.E.I.Q. and the industry as a whole are looking to a time in the future when no-one will be able to operate as a real estate agent in Queensland unless he has passed the prescribed examinations and holds the required qualifications to handle properly the affairs of clients and the large sums of money to be held in trust. People consult agents with trust and faith and inefficiency because of lack of knowledge cannot be allowed in the industry.

I ask the Minister if he has considered that point. Under such a provision no-one entering Queensland will be able to obtain a licence until he has passed the prescribed examinations and obtained the qualifications that are so necessary within the industry.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) for **Hon. W. D. LICKISS** (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (3.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. In his remarks on the second reading the Minister will answer the various comments made during this debate.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

First Reading

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

VALUATION OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) (3.42 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

I would like to thank all honourable members who contributed to the debate which followed the introduction of this Bill for their constructive remarks and for their helpful suggestions. I found it encouraging that, although many of the speakers were critical of some aspects of the present system of land valuation and rating, none of them opposed any of the provisions of the Bill itself. Indeed, the honourable members for Murrumba, Ipswich West and Cooroora presented practical examples, based on their own experiences, of the need to implement the proposals that are contained in the Bill.

I am sure that those honourable members who contributed to the debate will forgive me if I do not refer to each of the individual points that they made but rather sum up the opinions and suggestions that they expressed. Many of the speakers referred to the inadequacy of the present system of funding local authorities, based as it is for the most part on rating the unimproved values of land. I agree with them that the present system is by no means perfect, and this is the very reason why my Cabinet colleague the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads and I are undertaking a review of the problems to which I referred in the introductory debate.

This Bill, of course, does not purport to be a solution to those basic problems. What it does do, as I have said previously, is introduce reforms which are in urgent need of implementation while a more searching review is being continued. Some worthwhile suggestions have been put forward in the debate, and I can assure honourable members that I will have them investigated in conjunction with our review.

The honourable member for Archerfield was mainly concerned with the steep increases in valuation which have occurred in some of the rapidly growing areas of the State, and he referred to people being rated off their properties. The honourable member for Brisbane, however, was able to correct this misapprehension with his most lucid explanation of the fallacy of equating valuation of land with rating. The valuations provide the proportions for the distribution of the rates burden; the actual quantum of those rates is the province of local authorities.

Ignorance of their rights of objection and appeal and fear of litigation were put forward by the honourable member for Archerfield as reasons why more land-owners do not appeal against the Valuer-General's valuations. Surely the first reason cannot be valid as all honourable members would know that the rights of objection and appeal are set out clearly on all notices of valuation and notices of decision on objection issued by the Valuer-General. From what the honourable members for Murrumba and Isis have said regarding their dealings with the Valuer-General's officers, members of the House would surely agree that land-owners need have no fear of an objection conference with the officers of the Valuer-General's Department. Such conferences are quite informal and objector's arguments are considered at length, with courtesy and attention. In the relatively few cases that do proceed to court, the procedure of the Land Court is such that a land-owner may conduct his own case if he wishes to avoid the cost of legal representation.

The increasing burden of rating being placed on pensioners and persons on fixed incomes whose properties are situated in areas of rapid development were referred to by several speakers, including the honourable members for Barron River, Bulimba, Isis, and Rockhampton. Many of these people have retired to a seaside resort which is then, as the honourable member for Brisbane says, "rediscovered" and rapid development occurs with the resulting demand for land and consequent high values. This problem is accentuated when the resort areas increase in market value while other land in the same local authority area remains relatively static in value. The rating burden thus shifts onto the resort areas. Despite the fact that local authorities are able to grant rate concessions to pensioners, the problem remains a real one and is one that is receiving our closest attention.

On the other hand, the increasing burden of local authority rates on primary producers was referred to by the honourable member for Murrumba and the honourable member for Cooroora. Although there are provisions in the present Act which are designed to ensure that where land is exclusively used for the purposes of the business of primary production the potential which that land may have for any other purposes will not be taken into account in the valuation, problems do occur in borderline cases or where the land is not exclusively so used. This is another aspect which we are looking into.

Most of the honourable members who contributed to the debate referred to the central problem which is confronting my Cabinet colleague and me—the funding of local authorities. A variety of alternative suggestions were put forward, ranging from direct funding from Canberra (presumably based on a form of personal income tax) to the imposition of a poll-tax by each local authority. I think a concensus of the suggestions made by many honourable members was for a system of rating based on land usage and income-earning capacity rather than a system based on unimproved values.

The honourable member for Rockhampton said, "It has been shown in every other Australian State and every other country that raising local authority revenue by simply basing a tax on the value of land is not the answer." Here he is quite wrong. Every State in Australia uses such a system, so does New Zealand, so does England——

Mr. Wright: We know they use it, but we are saying that it is not the answer.

Mr. GREENWOOD: Well, I might be constrained to agree with the honourable member if he modifies it in that way.

Mr. Wright: Well, I do.

Mr. GREENWOOD: Every State in Australia uses such a system, so does New Zealand, so does England and, despite all its flair for innovation, so do many parts of the United States.

This is not to say that the unimproved-value basis for taxing is universally used; far from it. Queensland is the only State which still uses the unimproved-value system to the extent that the Valuer-General is required to value the land as if the improvements on that land or appertaining thereto had never been made. In other words, he is required notionally to remove those improvements, whether visible or invisible (except for one exception where the Crown, local authority or harbour board made those invisible improvements), to arrive at the value of the land in its unimproved state.

Other States of Australia and also New Zealand, despite trials of other valuation systems, have returned to a system popularly known as "site value". "Site value" is an important refinement of "unimproved value" as we know it. The honourable member for Bulimba and the honourable member for Rockhampton referred to the artificiality of the term "unimproved value" presently contained in the Valuation of Land Act.

The concept of site value removes much of this artificiality, as it requires the valuing authority, when making a valuation, to exclude only the value of visible improvements, without the necessity for it to determine the value of invisible improvements. The value of invisible improvements has long been one of the major problems of our present system. Many invisible improvements, such as filling, draining and timber treatment, have been carried out so long ago that the original state of the land is quite impossible to envisage. For example, how could anyone looking at the site of the Brisbane City Hall envisage that it was originally a creek bed? For that matter how could anyone assess how deep that creek bed was or how wide it was, or how much fill was needed to fill it in? Who now looking at the Darling Downs would be able to declare with any accuracy what land was originally open country and what was timbered?

The introduction of the site value concept would eliminate the need to ascertain what the land originally looked like. It would require the valuer only to remove the value of visible improvements, the extent and condition of which are more easily discernible. Perhaps the term "site value" has connotations of applying only to urban lands, and a more appropriate term may be "land value" as adopted in Tasmania and New Zealand, or perhaps "rating value", or perhaps just "basic value".

In the course of our review, my Cabinet colleague and I are looking closely at the "site value" concept. There are, of course, problems associated with this method of valuation as a basis for taxation, but significantly fewer problems than with the unimproved value method, and we at least have the experience of other States and of New Zealand to assist us.

Honourable members may be concerned that if invisible improvements such as filling, draining and timber treatment become an element of rateable value, land-owners will be discouraged from carrying out further development of this nature. We are aware of this problem and are looking closely at the ways other States have attempted to handle this matter. One way that has been adopted is to exclude from the rateable value the added value of such invisible improvements for a period of up to 15 years, or to the date of sale of the property if this should first occur.

There are, of course, other alternatives which we could adopt as a method of rating lands, but each system has some disadvantages. I shall refer briefly to two of them—the improved capital value method, which is largely adopted in America, and the assessed annual value method in use in England. The improved capital value method of taxation is one, as the term implies, based on the value of land as it is developed, including the value of the buildings and the value of the fixed plant. It is sometimes said that this method tends to penalise the owners of highly improved properties. Some of its critics describe it as a taxation on development. It is also said that it tends to allow undeveloped or slightly improved land to gain a relative advantage.

Its critics allege that it contributes to speculation in undeveloped land by encouraging land to be held without development for lengthy periods. Certainly it allows the undeveloped land to be held without the heavy rate burden that falls on it under our present system. Under our present system where rates are shared equally by lands with equal unimproved values, a vacant block in the city will attract as much in rates as the block next door with a 30-storey office block on it. The great advantage of the improved capital value system lies in its application to commercial land. In such cases the relative land values, and consequently their shares of the rate burden, closely approximate to the relative income-producing capacities of those lands.

The disadvantage, of course, is with respect to residential lands, in which case the improved value system imposes a disincentive to people improving their homes. I think honourable members would agree that there are few better ways of spending money or few ways of spending money that are more conducive to a family's happiness than the expenditure of money on improvements and extensions to the family home. So that is a very serious criticism of this particular system, and it is a criticism that would make all of us think many times before contemplating its introduction.

The other method that I will refer to briefly is the assessed annual value method. This is based on the rental value of improved properties. It is a system that works quite well in England, where there is abundant rental evidence available in both urban and rural areas. Such rental evidence is not so readily available in Australia. Where this method has been tried in some southern States, statutes have tended to define assessed annual value, not in terms of actual rental revenue but in terms of an arbitrary percentage—often 5 per cent—of the improved capital value. In practice in Australia, therefore, this system of assessed annual value has tended to become only a refinement of the improved value system. In Queensland at present the consensus seems to be in favour of a change to the site value method.

In an address to the Fifth Pan-Pacific Congress of Real Estate Valuers and Appraisers in 1969, the late Mr. Justice Hardie of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, who had for many years been senior judge of the New South Wales Land and Valuation Court, commented in the following terms—

"The imposition of taxes on land values must remain an essential feature of public finance on the local scene. It is easy to implement and impossible to evade. Further, it has the advantage in a local and limited area of being entirely free from jurisdictional problems of the sort that beset forms of revenue-raising that attach to transactions rather than property which cannot be moved from place to place. Rating on unimproved value"—

as a New South Welshman he was speaking to what we would refer to as site value—

"provides the land-owner with an opportunity of comparing the value placed upon his land with that placed upon the land of his neighbours. This assists in ensuring uniformity and integrity in the valuation system."

I have outlined some of the problems which are facing us in making our review. I found most helpful the suggestions made by those honourable members who spoke in the introductory debate. I would like to invite all members of the House who feel that they have something to contribute towards our present investigations to make submissions to us, preferably in writing.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (3.59 p.m.): Having heard the Minister, I suggest this is a case of much ado about nothing. There is nothing of any great consequence in the Bill, and the Opposition has no objection to it. It is a step in the right direction. It is, of course, long overdue and a very belated amendment. It is quite obvious that the Minister has inherited from his predecessor what one might term a tin of worms. During the present Tory Government's tenure of office—that is, over some 20 years—it has always treated the valuation section as a poor relation or the Cinderella of Government departments. Until recently very little was done for it.

It is apparent that there are many anomalies in the Valuation of Land Act that need attention. I am sure the Minister would agree that there is room for improvement in the Act. The anomalies under the present system in the urban areas are probably no greater than those that might occur under a different system. They would merely be different problems.

I think the Minister will agree with me that real dissatisfaction occurs in the rural sector. It is attributable to a number of reasons. Obviously many things can happen to rural valuations in three years. For example, when valuers first entered an area where the beef industry was booming they determined their values accordingly. By the time the values were proclaimed, beef values had declined seriously and some properties, which were running at a considerable loss and were impossible to sell, carried excessively high valuations for the next eight years.

On the whole it would be fair to say that valuation in Queensland, as it concerns rural lands, is completely out of hand. It is hard to justify its continuance. This Bill certainly will not alleviate the present problems to any great extent. The effects of the Bill will be like a drop in the ocean. It will not help rural land-owners to any extent. However, it provides for the implementation of, or alteration in, zoning under, or amendment of, a town plan. This is a step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough. It is still unfair. As many honourable members would know, the system is still based on the unimproved value of land and not on land use. That system was introduced in the 1890s when it was not important to take land use into consideration. The Minister virtually agreed with this when he referred to the siting of the Town Hall and the depth of the creek flowing through the area on which the Town Hall is sited.

When we look at the difficulties that were caused in Brisbane in the 1960s and the 1970s, we see that home owners—many of them pensioners and low-income earners—face financial ruin if they choose to keep their modest homes in redeveloping areas where high-rise buildings are going up all around them. Valuations under the present inadequate Act soar because of the high-rise projects and consequently these people cannot afford their rate bills. This legislation shows no consideration for the home owners in this predicament.

Never in the 20-year history of this Government has it bothered to investigate the problems of inner-city development. I ask the Minister to take this matter into consideration. It has been grossly overlooked in the past 20 years. He should keep it in mind when considering further amendments to this still antiquated Act.

In conclusion, I repeat my opening remarks that the Opposition has no objection to the introduction of the measure.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (4.4 p.m.): I have to disagree entirely with the remarks made by the honourable member for Archerfield. He said that the Bill is much ado about nothing. On the contrary, the Minister has shown by his speech that at this stage he is giving serious consideration to the whole matter of valuation of land and, by his review, he proved that he has a full and comprehensive grasp of the problems relating to the valuation of land.

I was interested to hear the honourable member for Archerfield suggest that the Queensland department should continue to use unimproved values rather than a system of taxing land according to usage. It seems to me that he was proposing that land need not be used, but may be left, according to the wish of the owner, without being used to its fullest extent. I should think he would agree with the proposition I adhere to, namely, that land being a finite quantity should be put to its ultimate possible usage and be taxed on that basis.

I believe the Minister has shown that he has a thorough understanding of the matter and is prepared to consider, as he obviously is doing now, a possible change in the system which Queensland adopts and has used for some years in assessing the value of land for the purpose of local authority taxes. The Minister has referred to the decisions of a judge in New South Wales, Mr. Justice Hardie. There, too, I believe that Queensland can derive some benefit from seeing what happened in a State such as New South Wales where capital value, the improved value, has been adopted as the means of assessing the value of property and consequently the taxation on that land.

I am concerned about the adoption of that method of assessing land on improved value because it would surely mean, related to urban and inner-city land, that a valuation of the land would include a valuation of all the improvements. I wonder whether we in Queensland have sufficient valuers to be able to assess the value of the improvements on all properties. If we were going to move in one step from the present system of valuation based on unimproved value to valuation based on the improved value of land, it would seem to me that the volume of work involved would be more than all the licensed valuers in Queensland put together could possibly cope with. It would seem to me that we would have a great machinery problem, even if that system were the most acceptable, and I have very serious reservations about its being the most acceptable.

The honourable member for Archerfield referred to the failure to cope with the value of inner-city development. This might come back to the fact that the town plan, to which the Minister referred, with the effect that it will have on values of land, makes no provision whatever for the development of the inner-city area. It is a gross omission from the plan. The Minister and his department can derive no benefit if the value of the inner-city area were to be dependent upon the development that had been made. The Bill is not much ado about nothing; it is a very progressive step and the Minister is to be commended on it.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (4.8 p.m.): I, too, welcome the comments of the Minister because I believe that he has given honourable members a clear explanation of his attitude. It is also an indication of his willingness to consider change, to consider the alternatives, and this is very important. All honourable members are aware of the problems in local authority finance and valuation of land generally. I was very pleased to hear the Minister say that he is prepared to accept submissions from individual members. I hope that includes Opposition members. I am sure that they will be only too pleased to place in writing the attitudes that they have on this very important question.

An important aspect, which was raised by the previous speaker, is the factors we consider when trying to assess the value of land for rating purposes. Local authority taxing systems are analagous to any other taxing system. With income tax, the tax is based on the benefits gained, so that if a person makes a lot of money, he pays heavy taxation; and if he does not make a lot of money, the tax he pays is extremely limited. Surely that principle should be incorporated in local authority taxing. Regardless of the valuation assessed by some expert in the field of land valuation, the level of tax should be based on the benefit gained from the land.

Mr. Lowes: That system would benefit the inefficient.

Mr. WRIGHT: I will take that interjection. I accept the deterrent to the improvement of land by home owners. But surely there is a deterrent the other way. As the Minister has pointed out, if a person improves his land in such a way that he is able to sell it for a high price and another person owns the two blocks next door, the owner of the two blocks will suffer later because the valuation of his land will increase and so will his taxes on the land. That brings me back to the general principle of taxation that if a person makes money, he pays tax on it. It is surely a question of combined usage and capacity to pay.

Mr. Lowes: How about the rural producer who overstocks his land and makes a big profit but ruins the land by overstocking?

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member is returning to the question of land usage. I am not sure that he wants to interfere in the way in which people run commercial enterprises. If he does interfere in this way, he might find that he has a few people breathing down his neck. However, I recognise the problem mentioned by the honourable member. I know that in the Rosedale and Berajondo areas near Bundaberg people overstocked properties and did not worry too much about land usage. They just did not care very much about the land. In fact, especially on forest leases and similar land, the reverse was the case. This land was not improved at all because the land-owners knew that when the review came they would have to pay more. On the one hand, there is a deterrent and, on the other, a lack of incentive. I return to the point that the taxing system has to be based on two factors. One is the benefit gained, which naturally is tied up with capacity to pay, and the other is land usage.

I have looked at the cost of running the Department of the Valuer-General and I noticed that in 1976-77 it was approximately $4,000,000. I am sure that there are many local authorities that could do with that amount of money. I am wondering if the time is coming when it would be better to do away completely with the present system under which State Government representatives revalue land every three, four or five years, at tremendous cost and inconvenience to the State. Under this system there is also a great loss of time; we all know of the appeals and delays that take place, all of which mean money.

We could do away with all of that if we removed the valuation system. At the introductory stage I started to explain the importance of what the Minister might even call a site value. He has spoken about site assessments. I believe that every person who has a residential block and uses it for private purposes ought to pay some type of tax or give some type of revenue to the local authority for the services from which he benefits.

If a person is engaged in private enterprise, he benefits in a greater way from those services. He will have more motor vehicles using the roads. I shall not go into all of the ramifications of this matter, but a person in private enterprise benefits in many ways from local authority services. Therefore there have to be degrees of contribution. I make the point that if there were a residential A tax set by the local authority, a residential B tax set by the local authority and commercial A, B and C taxes set by the local authority, the principle of usage and capacity to pay would be guaranteed.

Residential A private, for instance, could be the ordinary household. Regardless of the value of that land, and regardless of the amount for which block X or block Y might have been sold, it is a residential site and there should be a base rate applying to it. However, if it is a commercial residential area, be it flats or strata-title units, for example, naturally there has to be a higher rate. This would give local authorities a real say in the raising of revenue. We all know that at the moment they calculate their rate in terms of Xc to the dollar based on valuations set by the Department of the Valuer-General.

I think local authorities would appreciate the opportunity to say, "Yes, that is a residential block. All residential A blocks will attract the base rate because we accept the proposition that all residential A blocks, those on which private homes are established, benefit in the same manner. Residential B blocks benefit in another way, so they should pay higher rates." We could then give cognisance to the points made by the honourable member for Brisbane and others, including the honourable member for Archerfield when he talks about people in pastoral areas.

In the matter of commercial rates, there could be an ordinary private industry or private firm rate that would apply to any type of store in town. A commercial B rate could apply to pastoral land. The commercial C rate could apply to areas of heavy industrial development. The benefits they gain from local authorities are greater and the costs that local authorities incur for them are higher. As it is obvious that the Minister is prepared to consider alternatives, I suggest to the Minister that he look seriously at this suggestion. Whilst it might mean that he would no longer be Minister for Survey and Valuation, I can see many benefits in doing totally away with the Survey and Valuation Department in Queensland.

But I come back to the other point, that the services provided by local authorities depend entirely on the amount of money available, and regardless of what system we come up with relating to the taxing system on land, theatres, accommodation and hotels, we are not going to meet all the financial needs of any local authority. So it therefore means we must look at a national pool, and this is a question that the Minister is no doubt considering as well. I am very pleased that he has looked at this question very carefully and I say again that I am very pleased he is prepared to accept submissions from Opposition members.

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (4.16 p.m.): The Minister spent considerable time in his speech comparing the unimproved valuation of land to site valuations. I think that this House could well spend many hours comparing the two, but I want to first remark on the suggestion of the honourable member for Rockhampton of having a special rate for residential A and residential B.

Looking at it broadly, I think the honourable member for Rockhampton has made a sensible suggestion, but when we consider that there are homes in residential A zones which are flooded every time there is a heavy downpour and that there are other homes high above flood levels which consequently do not suffer any flooding problems, I do not think we can seriously consider the suggestion that there be a base rate for residential A properties. But I am very much in favour of looking at valuation as a whole and trying to overcome the problems we face at the moment because, although we have been speaking about this subject for 11 years that I can recall, we have still not come up with an answer.

The last time this subject was before us the Leader of the Opposition called for an inquiry into the valuation of land, and I supported him because I really believe we must have an inquiry to find out on what basis land should be valued. We are representatives of the people and we realise the problems they are facing, but we are not valuers, and frankly I would much prefer to see an inquiry at which members of Parliament and valuers could get together and pool their ideas and perhaps come up with a sensible alternative.

Mr. Wright: It could be the subject for a select committee.

Mr. MILLER: As the honourable member says, it could well be a subject for a select committee.

I think the Minister is aware of the problems because he spent a considerable amount of time discussing the pros and cons of unimproved values and site valuations. Quite frankly, unimproved values cause problems. In my own electorate I know people who have converted a home into three flats—and I hasten to say that these are not high-standard flats—and these people are now faced with the same rateable value as a property opposite which contains perhaps 21 high-rise units, because both properties are situated in a residential B area. Therefore the unimproved-value system is lacking in this respect.

If we look at site valuation, we also face a problem because we are now going to come up with an improved valuation after a person has improved the site he originally purchased. I think the Minister referred to the city hall and the fact that originally a creek flowed underneath it. How deep was that creek? We can look at areas all over Brisbane and pose exactly the same question, so there are problems with both site valuation and unimproved valuation. I do not believe that a person should be charged a fee because he has spent a few dollars to improve his own property. I would be totally opposed to that. At the same time, I am totally opposed to a council's imposing on a person who owns an old home that has been converted into three flats the same valuation as it imposes on a high-rise block of units.

So, we come back to the situation that we have faced here for 11 years—the need to find an answer that will be acceptable to everybody in the community. It could well be that the Brisbane City Council will have to find a new method of getting funds, because if we isolate the requirements of the council and the amount of money it requires to run the city of Brisbane, there is nothing wrong with using unimproved valuation. I would be completely in favour of using unimproved valuation if we could isolate from it the desire of local government to impose its taxes on that figure. I do not care whether it is residential A or residential B land; I believe that the value of that land is the fair value set by the valuers of the Valuer-General's Department. There is nothing wrong with that value; in fact, if anything it is lower than the actual figure that the land would bring if it were sold on the open market. The problem arises the moment local government becomes involved and begins using the valuation of land to suit its own needs.

Mr. Akers: The State says to do that.

Mr. MILLER: Well, should we continue to do it? That is the question I am raising in the House today. Is unimproved value wrong? Should we have site valuation, or should we allow unimproved valuation to continue and change the law compelling local government to use unimproved value as a means of raising its revenue to carry out the works that it needs to carry out? I am in favour of the latter. I am in favour of local government, whether it be the Brisbane City Council, the Pine Rivers Shire Council, or some other council in Queensland, looking at the need for a new system of raising funds, because at the moment we have valuers in Queensland not knowing whether they are coming or going. Surely valuers who have learnt to value land appreciate the value of a property. We are now saying to them, "Don't set a value that you believe the property is worth, but set a value that you believe is necessary to compromise with the local government that is going to set a rate value on that property."

Surely the stage has been reached when we must call for an open inquiry into the valuation of land. Land usage could be considered. However, I am completely in favour of unimproved valuation if we can find a new system for local government to obtain finance to carry out the works necessary in a shire or a town. It may be necessary for councils to find a new method of distributing costs over the whole community instead of over only the people who own land. If that happened, perhaps unimproved value would be acceptable both to the people who own land and to local government.

Mr. HALES (Ipswich West) (4.24 p.m.): I wish to make only a few brief comments. I listened carefully to the remarks of the honourable member for Rockhampton, in particular. Strangely enough, in common with the honourable member for Ithaca, I am largely in agreement with what the honourable member for Rockhampton said. In my opinion, it is close to the truth and close to what I think should be happening with local government rating. Nobody should be penalised for buying a dearer block of land and building a dearer home on it than another person in another circumstance who is receiving the same services from the council. I particularly want to live where I live. I built a house where I wanted to live. My brother-in-law built where he wanted to live. We are both getting the same services from the council but I am paying twice as much in rates. That is iniquitous. Irrespective of how wealthy I am or how wealthy my brother-in-law is, if we get the same services from the council we should be paying the same amount in rates.

We have heard a lot of thoughts expressed about site valuation, unimproved valuation and investigations into valuations. What is basically needed is an all-up investigation into the funding of local councils. That is a very vexed subject, but we are dealing with valuations at the moment. I am not going to argue one way or another about site valuation or unimproved valuation. If we have to have one of them I would probably plump for site valuation. Probably that would be a little fairer.

Over the week-end I inspected land in North Ipswich. I expect that the minimum rate would be charged on that land at the moment. That land would have a debit value to the present owners. It is covered with a huge amount of spoil from coal-mines in the area—up to about 100 ft high in some places. Why people are paying rates on that land is beyond my comprehension. If I owned the property I would let the council resume it for arrears of rates. That land should not be rated at all. It is absolutely worthless. No-one is getting any services from the council for the rates paid on it. It would be impossible to sell the land. No-one would buy it, therefore it must be worthless.

I see another problem about the minimum rate. Some valuation must be placed on certain properties along creek banks and the like which would be below the 20-year-flood level. The Ipswich City Council rightly adopted the 20-year-flood level but the owners of certain properties below that flood level are paying rates on that land. Once again those properties must be worthless. Nobody would buy them. Their only value would be for grazing horses. Here again I see an anomaly in the whole situation.

However, I again commend the Minister for Survey and Valuation and the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads for their attitude. Somehow or other we have to get some different style of funding for local government. The present rating system is iniquitous. As I said before, I truly believe that if two owners receive the same service from the council they should be paying the same amount in rates to the council. If they have sewerage, water, garbage collection and the same type of road outside their property, surely the council should be charging them only for those amenities.

Once again I thank the Minister for introducing these amending provisions. They will be beneficial to the people of the Ipswich and West Moreton areas that were flooded in 1974. They will also be of some benefit to people who want to amalgamate their blocks.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) (4.31 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. It is obvious that any system of valuation has some basic requirements. It is very important that any system operates in a way that is fair as between individual land-owners. In Queensland we have every reason to be grateful for the very high standard demonstrated by the Valuer-General and his department.

The Valuer-General's Department is a department of highly skilled professional men who have a reputation throughout the State for fairness and consideration in their dealings with the community. They represent to a very high degree that service which is the aim of our Public Service. The system under which they work is one that has liberal provision for objection conferences—objection conferences which are cheap, quick and inexpensive and at which most of the problems that a land-owner has are ironed out to the land-owner's satisfaction. It is a system of which this State has every reason to be proud. At the end of the road, if people still feel that there is some measure of injustice left in the valuation, they have the right of appeal to the Land Court. The actual administration of the Act is carried out in a way for which we have every reason to feel grateful.

The framework of law that has to be administered by the valuers is, of course, another thing altogether. Fortunately it is based on certain objective tests; it is based on the market value. Because it is based on objective tests it is possible for everybody to see the process of reasoning by which the valuer or the court ultimately arrives at a valuation. This, too, is important in a system if it is to command widespread support. There must be objective rather than subjective criteria governing the ultimate decision.

Having said all that, I now come to the fundamental problems posed by several speakers and very clearly by my friend and colleague the honourable member for Ipswich West. Fortunately there is something in this Bill that will assist his constituents. Those who own land in Ipswich that was flooded will receive a very real benefit when the Valuer-General is able to revalue the land and bring its value down to a realistic level.

The main proposition that was put forward by the honourable member can be divided into two parts. The first is that the same services should be paid for at approximately the same price. When talking about residential allotments this is a commonsense approach which most of us would like to see introduced. The second, of course, relates to investments and commercial properties. I think all of us believe that the rate burden should be shared as closely as possible in proportion to the income-generating capacity of properties. These two ideals are very far from realisation. Earlier in the debate some comments were made about using a base-rate concept in the different zones. This is an approach that has to be thought through. It is an approach that may yet prove to have a great deal of merit. I must say that I have thought about it a great deal. My current feeling is that zones, as they stand, encompass such a wide range of uses that simply putting a base rate on a particular zone will not solve the problem.

The honourable member for Ithaca highlighted the difficulty when he referred to people with a block of four flats in a residential B zone and other people owning land with a multi-storey block of flats. As he pointed out, it seems to be wrong that people owning land with an old house on it converted into four flats should pay as much in rates as someone next door with a 30-storey block of home units. This difficulty is caused by insufficient differentiation between zones. It is the same zone and the valuer values in accordance with the highest and best use. Maybe this phrase holds the key to some of our problems. The approach of our valuers, in accordance with the law as it stands, is to take a block of land and value it in accordance with the highest and best use. That entails a certain fictional element creeping into the exercise. Instead of looking at a block of land in, say, residential B, with four flats on it and saying, "Well, I value this as a block of land that would support four flats," the valuer tends to value it in accordance with the optimum number of flats that the block will support. Although the actual income being generated to the owner of the land is limited to four flats, the land may very well be valued, and ultimately rated, on the assumption that the highest and best use is to be applied, which means that there should be 20 or 30 home units built on it.

That is one of the conceptual problems that we may have to look at carefully if we are to have residential properties sharing the rate burden in accordance with the way they share the benefits of council services—that is, equally—and investment properties sharing the rate burden in the same way as they produce income (in other words, in accordance with actual use rather than the accident of zoning or the notion of an imaginary highest and best use).

I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion (Mr. Greenwood) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

MEAT INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (4.41 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill calls for amendments of the Meat Industry Act 1965–1973 in a number of important particulars.

As I indicated during the introductory stage, the basic purpose of the Bill is to create a new Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority with substantial powers to improve the marketing of meat and livestock in this State. This, I believe, the Bill will achieve. However I would stress that the beef industry is a very complex one.

No one State can operate on its own and there will be a need for co-operation between all States and the Comonwealth. At the very least we need close co-operation between the three eastern States—Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria—and the Commonwealth before we can achieve any worthwhile stabilisation of the beef industry. Queensland has taken the lead in this matter and I hope other States will soon follow suit. There are certain things we can do on our own, but because of constitutional problems, it is essential that the whole country works together.

Western Australia tried to implement a minimum price scheme for slaughter cattle for its domestic market and it ran into difficulties. I applaud its initiative, but as we all know, the scheme didn't work. If it were possible anywhere in Australia for a State to operate its own minimum price scheme, Western Australia would be the place because of its comparative isolation from other markets.

Mr. Casey: Tasmania would be even better.

Mr. TOMKINS: It could be but, as Western Australia is completely isolated, it is virtually a State on its own. I think there is a bit of trade between Tasmania and the mainland.

The Nullarbor provides a good barrier, but not good enough. No such physical barrier exists for the eastern States. Across-border trade is the normal thing and so it should be. However it presents problems for any State trying to operate independently. The honourable member for Carnarvon, during the introductory stage, made this point quite clearly.

In Queensland we have always recognised this problem and I pay tribute to my colleague's Beef Industry Committee for recognising this. They sought to overcome the problem by developing a stabilisation scheme which would be fair to all States. It is still the best scheme put on paper so far. It faces certain practical problems, but I do not think that these are insuperable.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his remarks during the introductory stage, referred to the New South Wales Premier's proposals. So far we have seen nothing spelled out in detail. The only detailed proposals we have seen for New South Wales appear to be based largely on the Queensland Beef Industry Committee proposals, but to be operated on a State basis.

For the reasons I have already mentioned I do not think a minimum price scheme can work on a single-State basis. If New South Wales and Victoria enact legislation similar to that put forward in this Bill, and the Commonwealth supports us on the export side, then I am confident we shall achieve something. It is very pleasing to know that the other two eastern States are thinking along similar lines. I earnestly hope they follow Queensland's lead.

Now I should like to make specific reference to the Bill, which all members have had time to study. The Bill calls for the amendment of the Meat Industry Act 1965–1973 in a number of important particulars. Specifically, it is the intention of the Government to amend 12 sections of the principal Act as well as the Fifth Schedule to the Act. Quite a few of the amendments are of a purely machinery nature.

Specifically, clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14 of the Bill refer primarily to the change in name of the present Queensland Meat Industry Authority to the Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority. It was decided to amend the existing Act rather than introduce totally new legislation, because the new authority will still carry out the functions of the present meat industry authority as well as its additional marketing functions.

Clause 7 refers also to the membership and term of appointment of members to the new authority.

Clause 10 deals with procedures to be followed in the absence of the chairman and/or deputy chairman at meetings and contains amended provisions relating to a quorum for meetings.

Clause 11 refers to necessary additional marketing powers of the new authority.

Clause 12 provides for the establishment of a Meat Prices Stabilisation Fund.

Clause 15 provides for additional information-collecting powers of the new authority.

Clause 16 deals with the setting of terms and conditions of sale for slaughter stock sold through saleyards.

Clauses 17 and 18 are procedural.

With specific reference to clause 7 of the Bill, which will amend section 12 of the principal Act, it is proposed to alter the membership of the new authority. As I indicated during the introduction of the Bill, the membership of the new authority will consist of a chairman and nine other members appointed by the Governor in Council on the nomination of the Minister.

Members will be selected by the Minister from panels of names submitted by representative industry organisations including the United Graziers' Association, the Cattlemen's Union, pig and broiler growers' organisations, public and private abattoirs, operators at public abattoirs and the Meat and Allied Trades Federation. I would emphasise that the organisations nominating persons for membership are themselves representative with their leaders elected by their constituent members.

Five members of the authority will represent livestock producers; two members will represent meat processers and distributors, while one member will be a person expert in commodity marketing. The chairman will be independent and will be appointed on a full-time basis. My department will be represented by the Director-General or his nominee. The term of membership will be for the normal period of three years.

Clause 11 of the Bill represents a significant amendment to section 19 of the principal Act. It is our intention to provide the new authority with such additional powers as are constitutionally allowable in order to improve marketing arrangements for livestock and meat. Specifically, it is proposed that the Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority will have the power to co-operate with and act as agent for other appropriate entities, including the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation, traders, abattoirs and producers, in appropriate circumstances.

An important responsibility of the new authority will be to facilitate the speedy introduction and operation of an effective and objective system of carcass classification and to facilitate also the opportunity of livestock producers to sell on a direct consignment and weight and classification basis.

Of major importance to all beef producers is the introduction of effective minimum pricing or stabilisation arrangements on an Australia-wide basis as a matter of urgency. It is the intention of the Government that the new authority will have all necessary powers to introduce and operate such schemes once the necessary agreement can be reached with other State Governments and the Commonwealth Government.

Consistent with this intention, clause 12 of the Bill provides for the amendment of section 21 of the principal Act to enable the establishment of a Meat Prices Stabilisation Fund to accommodate any moneys that may be involved in the operation of an effective stabilisation scheme involving minimum pricing arrangements.

Finally, I would reiterate that the proposals contained in the Bill will provide the new authority with all the powers necessary to enable it to improve meat-marketing in this State and to act very rapidly once a minimum pricing and stabilisation scheme is agreed upon.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (4.49 p.m.): The beef industry has always been one of Queensland's most important industries. Historically, it is the industry that opened up this State. It is not very often that specific legislation dealing with the problems of the beef industry is brought down. I think that this is perhaps time for us to reflect on the fact that the beef industry provides a livelihood for a very great number of people over the length and breadth of this State. But, unfortunately, the beef industry in Queensland has passed the prosperous times and today it is not providing a livelihood for a considerable number of people.

This Government has in fact presided over the decline of the Queensland beef industry and its present situation is the worst in Australia. It becomes obvious to anybody travelling throughout the State, particularly west of the range, that there has been a considerable decline in the rural population, in rural enterprises and communities and the economic well-being of all country people.

This decline in the beef industry, which this Government has supervised, has affected not only cattlemen but stockmen, station workers, handymen, fence and yard builders, windmill repairers, shopkeepers in country townships, machinery firms, agents who deal in cattle, transport workers, water drillers, and a host of other people who have lived for many years in small country towns. The loss of income in these communities has caused a general depression throughout the beef areas of Queensland. It has meant a much lower standard of living for people in those areas, particularly those who live on properties.

I do not believe that this Bill will do anything to combat the real problems of the beef industry. These problems are tied in with this State's history and its unique position in the export field because virtually 70 per cent of our output is export-oriented. Only a quarter of our production is needed to meet the home consumption market and consequently we have to look outside Queensland to find out what will happen in the future to three-quarters of our beef production. I mentioned that our problems are tied in with our history. When mining development brought people and railways to many areas of Queensland big companies moved into the beef industry and took over from those pioneers who blazed the trail and settled land throughout the State.

We found that these big companies invested not only in cattle properties but also in processing plants and shipping. Most of them have been tied up with banks and insurers throughout their careers. These groups were and are the manipulators of the beef industry. They are the ones who have been manipulating the industry to suit their own purposes and to ensure profits, and over a period of 90 or 100 years the other cattlemen of Queensland have had to go along with the dictates of these large groups.

They are the ones who have rigged prices within the industry. They are the ones, through their processing works, who have brought about industrial disputes within the industry when it suited them, because of certain things that were happening in the buying section of the industry at a certain time. They are the ones who have manipulated the markets of the beef industry, sometimes for the good of everybody within the industry, I must admit, but mostly for the good only of themselves. They have even been able to get Governments to manipulate things on their behalf within the industry and this Government stands condemned in that respect. One has only to tour the beef areas of Queensland to find one racket that has been going on for years and that is in the obtaining of cattle wagons to take cattle to the slaughter-houses on the east coast.

The buyers go into the paddocks and offer the cattleman a certain price for his cattle. If he is not prepared to accept that figure, they indicate to him that he will not be allocated cattle wagons. Sure enough, if he contacts his local railway station, he cannot get bookings for cattle trucks or bookings at meatworks to have his cattle killed. This occurs because the cattle-killing programme is tied up by the buyers of the major meatworks, who are indeed these major monopoly manipulators within the industry.

Mr. Jones: Sometimes six months in advance.

Mr. CASEY: As the honourable member for Cairns said, they have cattle wagons tied up six months in advance. If a cattleman is prepared to accept the figure they offer him for his cattle, the wagons mysteriously appear. They are, of course, taken from an allocation that has been made previously for one of the large holdings of the very same company that is involved in the processing sphere.

The State Government has allowed itself to be manipulated by these large groups that have been the wheeler-dealers within the beef industry for so many years. I have given the House only one example of the way in which the State Government has allowed itself to be used by them, but the economy of the beef and wool industries in the State of Queensland has always been controlled by them. They try to say that everything is tied in with a supply and demand situation; they neglect to say that they insist that the cattlemen supply when it suits them. They create the artificial demand or lack of demand, as the case may be.

Unfortunately, after 20 years of National Party Government in this State, the power of this establishment has now reached its peak in the beef industry, and that is why the industry has been unable to work its way out of the slump. Price slumps within the industry have occurred in the past, but always in days gone by Governments have endeavoured to assist the industry out of such situations.

There was a big buildup in cattle numbers in Queensland when the change from wool to cattle occurred after the wool crisis in the late 1960s. Of course, that buildup in cattle numbers meant that in many instances the economy of the beef industry was moving in a direction that was not liked by some of the manipulators, and we have seen what has occurred. These groups have been able to manipulate the trade in beef right from the paddock through to the consumer's table.

If you wish to see some examples of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, look at what happened in November last year and the effect on the beef industry of the major devaluation of the Australian dollar by the Federal Government. It was claimed for months before that this was the answer to the problems of the beef industry, that it would bring about a major increase in prices for cattle and enable the industry to get up off its knees. A graph indicating cattle sale prices in the three eastern States, and in the other Australian States, too, for that matter, shows that since that time there has been no major change in cattle prices as a result of devaluation. Consequently, action that the beef industry was told would be its saviour has assisted to push it further down into the mud.

Over the last few years, in particular, the only bright spot that has appeared on the horizon in the cattle industry in Queensland is the advent of the Cattlemen's Union. Support for the Cattlemen's Union has spread like a bushfire over Queensland and into the other States because the small cattleman realises that unless he binds together with other cattlemen he has no chance of surviving in the big league now being controlled by the manipulators.

Coincidentally with the move to form the Cattlemen's Union as a militant group in the beef industry, we saw the Minister for Primary Industries suddenly set up the Queensland Government's beef advisory committee, or whatever it was called—I am not quite sure. To give credit where credit is due, I should say that over the last two years that committee has done a tremendous public relations job on behalf of the Government with the cattlemen of Queensland. However, that is all it has done—a tremendous public relations job to try to keep the cattle industry from rocking the boat, to prevent the cattlemen who are completely dissatisfied with the National Party Government in Queensland that they supported in 1974 and the Federal Government that they supported in 1975 from jumping off the boat.

After two years, all we have seen the Queensland committee come up with is this hollow legislation. I classify it clearly as hollow legislation. It is as hollow as a great big creek bluegum. It looks nice and bushy on top and on the outside, but there is not a stick of millable timber in it.

Mr. Katter: Would you like to name any group of cattlemen in Queensland who are dissatisfied with the Queensland Government?

Mr. Tenni: You wouldn't have a clue about what you are talking about.

Mr. CASEY: I know that the electorates of the honourable members for Flinders and Barron River are two of the electorates at which the cattlemen are pointing a finger. Every time either of them goes into his electorate they say, "What have you done for us? What have you done on our behalf? What is going on now? What has been happening?" We can talk about the Federal sphere, too. Virtually all of the cattle areas in Queensland are represented by National Party Federal members. What have they done to push Fraser along in this respect? What have they done to get Sinclair off his tail and make him really do something for the beef-export industry?

The cattlemen know what their parliamentary representatives have done. When they go to the polls in November or whenever the State election is going to be held, they will know what they have done. The cattlemen in the Flinders electorate, the cattlemen in the Barron River electorate and the cattlemen in so many other State electorates are going to vote the present members for those electorates straight out of office. They fully realise that they are men who have contributed to this hollow piece of legislation now before the House. It is purely a magnificient piece of legal jargon. It is merely window-dressing which does nothing about the real problems in the beef industry today. We won't be seeing those honourable members too much longer.

Virtually nothing specific is included in the Bill. I agree with the Minister's comment in his second-reading speech when he said that it was mainly machinery. That is quite correct. It is machinery to set up machinery. The further machinery is going to come by way of regulations. Those regulations, which I presume are intended to try to do something specific, will not be forthcoming before the State election. That is adequate proof of what I am saying. They will not become lawful before the State election, even if they are introduced in some way by the Government. It is hollow legislation. Nothing can be really achieved by the Bill until such time as the regulations are proclaimed.

Rather than tackle the real problems of the beef industry, the Government has introduced this hollow legislation. It should be amending the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. That is where it should start. The first thing required to help the beef industry in Queensland is a statutory organisation of cattlemen. Provisions of the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act cover statutory marketing organisations and statutory groups in every major industry with the exception of the beef industry and the wool industry. The sugar industry is covered by it, as are dairymen, grain growers and so many others, but there are no provisions covering beef or cattle producers, and there are no provisions covering wool growers.

The first and primary need of the cattlemen of Queensland is a statutory organisation so that they can all get together and vote as cattlemen in favour of things in support of their industry. Of course, that would require further back-up legislation to give them industry control rather than further Government control as in this piece of legislation. Once there is a statutory organisation, control of the industry is placed in the hands of the industry, and that is essential to the beef industry in Queensland.

There is nothing whatsoever in the Bill to correct the present plight of Queensland's beef producers. Many of them need immediate financial relief in the form of carry-on assistance. It is not much use to them that in six months, nine months or 12 months the provisions of the Bill will be implemented. They want some immediate relief from their present financial burden.

It is all very well to talk of an objective classification scheme and of a stabilisation scheme. I support both of those principles very strongly; and I supported them back in 1969 when I first came into this Parliament. The Labor Party has supported them since an even earlier date.

Mr. Hartwig: You were not even a member of the Labor Party then. You are a johnny-come-lately.

Mr. CASEY: The Brahman bull from Callide is here again.

Mr. Hartwig: You're not worth two bob.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order!

Mr. Hartwig: Thirteen cents in the dollar —that's all you pay.

Mr. CASEY: The Cattlemen's Union in the Callide electorate has put more salt on his tail than on any other member in the House. That is why he squawks so loudly.

Mr. Hartwig: Thirteen cents in the dollar isn't much, is it?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Callide will restrain himself.

Mr. CASEY: The honourable member for Callide comes into the House from time to time and likes to kick up a row over things he knows nothing about.

Mr. Hartwig: I'll tell you what; I'll back my experience against yours.

Mr. CASEY: I heard a little bit about the honourable member's experience in the cattle industry in months gone by. The cattlemen in Callide are very concerned at the fact that the honourable member has done nothing to relieve them of their financial burden.

Mr. Hartwig: You are shedding crocodile tears.

Mr. CASEY: We have heard talk of objective classification and of a stabilisation scheme, both of which have a great deal of merit. However, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, a National Party Minister, Mr. Sinclair, stated quite bluntly that there could not be an objective classification scheme before 1980. I haven't heard anything from the Minister in charge of this Bill or from his fellow National Party members. I have raised this matter in the House and have put forward to the Minister for Primary Industries certain suggestions in connection with such a scheme.

Mr. Hartwig: One question: Why did the Western Australian grain farmers throw tomatoes——

Mr. CASEY: The honourable member will have an opportunity to make a speech.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CASEY: I have put certain questions to the Minister for Primary Industries concerning this matter with a view to bringing forward a classification scheme prior to 1980, but the Minister completely backed away from the issue. Therefore, he must go along with Mr. Sinclair.

One thing is certain; we must have an objective classification scheme before we can have a proper stabilisation scheme. This, too, is something that I have been saying in this House for a long time, and an issue that National Party members have tried to avoid by side-stepping around it. They hold out their public relations bait through their beef committee or whatever it is.

What will happen to the cattlemen while we are waiting for 1980 to come along? The last chance the cattlemen in Queensland have of doing something about their plight is the forthcoming State election. If they do not show their disapproval of what this Government has not done for them over the past 20 years, they will have to put up with their plight for another three years.

Mr. Hartwig: Tell them what Whitlam did.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will have to warn the honourable member for Callide about the provisions of Standing Order No. 123A. He is listed to speak later in this debate, and I would find it sad to have to ask him to leave the Chamber.

Mr. CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But it is quite all right; I still have 70 minutes left and I can keep it up. I'll bet the honourable member cannot last the distance.

As I was saying, the forthcoming State election will be the last chance that the cattlemen of Queensland will have of standing up as a group and saying, "We will cop this no longer." This is their last chance to say, "We seek an alternative Government in Queensland to give us better leadership to overcome our problems in the beef industry. We seek an alternative Government because of the record of Labor Governments in the past, because of what they have been able to do for some of our other industries, including the sugar industry." Even the honourable member for Callide would not deny that the best-established industry in Queensland is the sugar industry. Even the member for Barron River knows that the best-organised primary industry in his electorate is the sugar industry. When I was in his area recently the people said to me, "We do not think he is a ratbag, but he'll do us until one comes along."

If the cattlemen of Queensland do not show positively through the ballot-box what they think of what has happened in the past three years under this Government they will surely have to put up with the same Government for a further three years. Cattlemen throughout Queensland will not be bought off by this empty Bill. We should be establishing a proper meat board in Queensland. That can be done, under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act in a much better way than under the amendments we are debating.

The Government is doing very much the same as was required to be done for the dairy industry, but why the difference? Why does it put the dairy industry in a different category from the beef industry? Why isn't it prepared to say to the beef producers of Queensland, "We will acquire all of your meat," just as it has said to the dairy farmers, "We will acquire all your milk."? Why isn't it prepared to say, "We will arrange the killing and distribution of all your beef." in exactly the way——

Mr. Katter: Because of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Mr. CASEY: I ask the honourable member for Flinders: Why isn't it treating the beef industry in exactly the same way as it treated the milk industry?

Mr. Katter: You don't know what you're talking about. Anyone who knows anything about the beef industry will be very embarrassed.

Mr. CASEY: I hear the very rowdy, very junior Government back-bencher insinuating that legislation passed by this Parliament two weeks ago is completely wrong, and unlawful under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. Who doesn't know what he's talking about? The honourable member voted for the legislation in this Parliament. He sat on the Government side and cast his vote in favour of the milk legislation; but now he says it is wrong. Why didn't he vote against it?

Mr. Katter: I will explain it.

Mr. CASEY: It was because he does not know and he does not understand what he is talking about. That is why the cattlemen of Flinders are saying, "We want a change. We will certainly stand up at the next State election and be counted."

Why can't we introduce legislation under which producers will definitely be paid for their beef in exactly the same way as we passed legislation two weeks ago under which the dairy farmers, dairy processers and milk vendors were told, "This is how you will be paid for your milk."? Why the difference? While the Government was prepared to stand up for the dairy farmers and tell them what it intended to do, it is not prepared to stand up to the big people manipulating the beef industry. That is why it has not introduced legislation similar to that introduced two weeks ago for the milk industry. That is why the cattlemen of Queensland will not be bought off by this hollow legislation, this major piece of window-dressing prepared for the forthcoming State election. That is what it is. It is merely window-dressing for the State election. Why must the beef industry be treated differently from the dairy and sugar industries? It is but a third food production industry. If it is good enough to have stabilising legislation (which has done a power of good for the sugar industry), if it was good enough for us to accept the legislation introduced two weeks ago (which the Minister told us would do so much for the milk industry), why should we not introduce similar legislation on this occasion? That is the big question and it can be answered only by saying, "It is because of the manipulation within the industry."

It is rather strange that the Minister, in introducing the Bill, went to such great lengths to emphasise that the new Queensland authority will not become a trader in its own right. I ask exactly the same question: why? Why is it that under the auspices of this Government we have the Queensland

Sugar Board as a trader in its own right? The Australian Wool Corporation has become a trader in its own right.

Mr. Hartwig: It is not a milk Bill.

Mr. CASEY: Not one honourable member, including the honourable member for Callide, would deny that the Australian Wool Corporation has been of great support and assistance to the wool industry and has stabilised that industry. Many other bodies in Queensland have been set up under an Act of this Parliament—the Queensland Wheat Board, the Sorghum Board, the Navy Bean Board, and the Millet Board. Who would deny that those organisations, which have been established under the auspices of this Parliament, have done a great deal for their particular industries? Not one of us would deny it. They have done this because, under the legislation, they are traders in their own right. Why shouldn't the new Queensland meat authority be on exactly the same basis so that it can trade in a similar way?

Another new principle contained in the Bill is the distribution of market intelligence throughout the industry. It is very noble and worth while. Neither in his introductory speech nor in his second-reading speech did the Minister tell us exactly how this will be done. A system of market intelligence on beef prices cannot operate or be properly implemented without the back-up support of overseas trade offices. Surely this is one of our real problems.

Approximately 75 per cent of our beef is exported. It is all very well to know Cannon Hill prices for specialist beef or the prices at the saleyards at Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Biloela or Rockhampton; but those sale prices are determined by purchasing prices in Japan, the United States, Canada and eastern European countries. If we do not have overseas trade offices established by this Government to constantly obtain this market intelligence and feed it back to us in Queensland, we will have absolutely no chance of getting accurate market intelligence throughout Queensland.

It is no good to a cattleman to know the prices in Japan a month ago or in Los Angeles three weeks ago. If he has bullocks ready to be turned off today and sent to an east-coast meatworks, it will take an extra three weeks to get them there, so that by the time they get there the market intelligence that he received would be six weeks or two months out of date. He could run into a disastrous price and the system would not help him at all.

Any market intelligence must be spot on and right up to date. Unfortunately how this can be done has not been explained to us. Members of the Opposition do not disagree with the principle of it. It is something we have favoured strongly. In 1969 the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put forward as a major proposal on behalf of the Labor Party in Queensland that we would establish overseas trade offices for this very reason. This information should be returned so that it can be disseminated to people in the industry throughout Queensland. It is all very well saying the things that are said here and no doubt they will sound good to people at the Cattlemen's Union conference in Toowoomba next week and at the monthly meeting of the U.G.A. in Brisbane. They will also sound good in some other areas throughout the State. But they are in reality only another branch of a big hollow tree; there is no guts in them. We want to know how these provisions will operate.

It is all very well to come into the House and say these things; but all they amount to is words. That is what cattlemen throughout Queensland are saying today. They are in effect saying, "All we hear from parliamentarians are words. We want action, not words." But there is no real action in the Bill.

Because of Queensland's 75 per cent export factor, overseas prices must have first priority in any marketing intelligence. Over two years ago—perhaps nearly three—the honourable member for Cairns and I were overseas with a parliamentary delegation. The honourable member for Balonne was also there. He will recall that we made an inspection of a meat-processing plant in Japan. Before we left Queensland we were told by representatives of the Australian Meat Board that while buying by the Japanese had been in a downturn, it had bottomed and was about to increase again. Yet in discussion with the managing director and foreman of that plant in Japan we were told straight out that the Japanese were not going to buy any more Australian beef for 12 months. And that is exactly what happened.

On returning to Australia and reading the statistics of Japanese purchases of Australian beef, we found that what we had been told was correct. The Japanese stopped buying for 12 months. Even when we returned, the meat board was still giving out that things in the Japanese trade were on the way up again. They were so inaccurate that it was not funny. I do not know where they obtained their marketing intelligence. I do not know whether it was coming through Australian trade offices or from agents in the area. All I know is that at processing level in that meat plant we were able to obtain information quite freely on what was going on in the beef industry in Japan. Surely this proves the absolute necessity to have trade offices overseas to look after the interests of the beef industry as part of a system of marketing intelligence.

I make another point while talking of marketing intelligence and the information that is coming forward on what will happen in the future. The other day in directing a question to the Premier I reminded him of the statement that he made in London in July 1976 that there would be a rapidly expanding trade for Queensland in Iran, especially for meat and sugar. I asked him in my question what had actually happened. The Premier acted as he usually does when asked a question without notice by the Opposition. If a Government member asks him a question and provides him with a copy of it beforehand, he has a prepared answer. Otherwise, he steps around the question and maybe blames Gough Whitlam or somebody else.

I have taken the trouble to obtain information on exports of food and live animals to Iran. In the year 1975-76, at the end of which the Premier visited Iran, Queensland's sales of food and live animals to Iran amounted to $350,000. In the period in which there was to be rapidly expanding trade with Iran, what was the extent of Queensland's trade in food and live animal products? In 1976-77, it was absolutely nil. If that is the Premier's idea of rapidly expanding trade, it is no wonder that the beef industry is having its problems. It is no wonder that this great State is in its present condition.

I have noted that one of the other principles in the Bill is a change in the sponsorship of public and private abattoirs, but I would be very interested to know why there is nothing in the Bill which would give any additional support to co-operative killing facilities. The Minister might be able to explain that it is already covered by some other provision, but here again I think we do need an opportunity for cattlemen to participate in this section of the industry. It was not until farmers were able to buy and control some of their own sugar mills in Queensland that they started to achieve a breakthrough and get a better deal with fair and reasonable prices for their cane. At the same time they were backed by good Labor legislation which assisted them in this respect, but just as co-operatives were formed in the sugar industry, so, to, could they be formed to operate killing works.

Mr. Jones: Isn't this the proposal for Richmond?

Mr. CASEY: We find that the Richmond Shire Council and many people who are involved in the cattle industry in the area are very keen to see a public killing works established. A study is being undertaken into the feasibility of establishing a co-operative killing works in the vicinity. A public killing works is one which is owned by the local authority or some statutory body the Government can set up. The important proviso, of course, is that it is able to obtain an export licence. But here again, when we start talking about export licences for public killing works, things become very complicated.

I saw an example of this when the Mackay District Abattoir was first formed. Pressure was placed on the abattoir by certain interests in the grazing industry. Certain graziers felt at the time that it should become an export abattoir so there would be more competitiveness amongst cattle buyers. Sure enough, as soon as the move came to convert the abattoir to a service works from which a licensed export operator could operate, what happened? Borthwicks and Vesteys, who had the meatworks north and south of Mackay at Bowen and Rockhampton, moved in. The manipulators arrived! They manipulated the prices throughout the area so that when it suited them they would suddenly flood the stockyards at the Mackay abattoir with cattle so that the management was forced to put on an enormous number of people quickly to cope with the influx. Then in a couple of weeks these men who had been put on were walking around looking at one another because they had no cattle to kill. This happened because Borthwicks and Vesteys were not sending cattle to the abattoir.

Mr. Katter: Can I ask you a question?

Mr. CASEY: Their manipulations caused a severe financial crisis in the Mackay abattoir, and as a consequence it was forced to close. It lost its export licence. It was closed by this Government. Sir Gordon Chalk, the Treasurer at the time, could not afford to lend it any more money. I accepted that decision because of the way it was operating. So what happened? The abattoir was put up for sale. Who bought it? Borthwicks, one of the manipulators! If members want to see a classic example of the way in which these people have manipulated the beef industry over the years, they should look at the story of the Mackay Abattoir Board.

The honourable member for Flinders is silent. He wanted to ask me a question, but I have silenced him. If we are going to allow co-operative abattoirs to operate, then we must also introduce a system of quota kills. I do not know if the Minister favours this sort of system. I know a lot of people within the cattle industry do not.

Mr. Tomkins: There would have to be quotas.

Mr. CASEY: I thank the Minister. It is true that we would need to have quota kills. Such a quota would have to operate on the same basis as cane assignments to individual cane farmers. The same provision applied in the Milk Supply Bill, which we dealt with a couple of weeks ago, where part of the milk entitlement of certain processors goes back to the producer. Once we established a quota kill, we would have to go back to the cattleman and give a quota of turn-off from particular properties to a particular processing works. In some respects that may sound idealistic, but I support it as a long-term concept for the beef industry and as one of the ways of overcoming the problem.

If we are to have publicly owned abattoirs or if we are to have co-operative abattoirs, initially they will have to have the support and sponsorship of the Government, because, as I mentioned before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the manipulators go right up to the lending institutions and they are not particularly keen to lend to competitors in industries in which they are involved. Unfortunately, there is a possibility of another major processor coming into Queensland, this time a Brazilian, Mr. Maia.

Mr. Jones: This is the one at Julia Creek.

Mr. CASEY: Yes, this is the meatworks that is contemplated at Julia Creek. In fact, Mr. Maia's proposal is still being considered by the State Government. But the big danger that I see in Mr. Maia's proposal is that it will introduce another manipulator. Mr. Maia has not first conducted a feasibility study of the establishment of a meat-processing works in North-western Queensland. He has moved in and bought up a major slice of the properties in the area. By becoming a big property owner he can, in turn, become a big producer of beef in the area. He is going to be no different from the companies that are tied in with Borthwicks and with Vesteys. He will be another manipulator.

If the cattlemen in the area are not satisfied with the price that he offers, he will be able to keep his works going by putting his own cattle through. After all, it is a free society in Queensland and we cannot object to a processer putting his own cattle or the cattle of a subsidiary company through his own meatworks. But if we are to have a close, hard look at the real problems of the beef industry from that point of view, we should consider insisting that at any particular time a processer can kill only a certain percentage of his own cattle, thus giving everybody in the industry a fair go and access to killing facilities when cattle are in very good condition.

Mr. Katter: A sensible observation. I couldn't agree with you more.

Mr. CASEY: The honourable member for Flinders is coming onto my side now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He might find that he was wrong on section 92 of the Constitution, too.

Quite often we hear it said in this Chamber—and even today some honourable members have endeavoured to say it by interjection—that the Government is doing something, but the Opposition is doing nothing. I suppose it is a good ploy for the Government to use in some circumstances. However, I point out that, as Opposition spokesman for Primary Industries, there is one thing that I have endeavoured to do recently in the beef industry. Unfortunately, many people are deliberately attempting to divide Queenslanders and Australians, and we have even seen such an attempt in legislation introduced into this Parliament. A week or so ago in Townsville, I convened a meeting that brought together groups of cattlemen, unionists involved in the beef industry, and consumers of beef. Till then the cattlemen had been told that their biggest problem was the unions; the unions had been told that the cattlemen were all wealthy millionaires; the consumers had been told that they were being ripped off by everybody—unionists, cattlemen, processers; the whole box and dice.

People were standing off and deliberately being angry and difficult with each other in the meat crisis. In such circumstances it is best for the groups involved to sit round a table and talk and find out what is common ground. At that meeting, unionists, cattlemen and consumers were all agreeably surprised to find how much common ground they had in regard to the problems of the beef industry.

Mrs. Kippin: That is different from the report that I heard.

Mr. CASEY: I think that is what we should be doing and what should be taking place. The honourable member for Mourilyan can place her own interpretation on it. She was not there. She wouldn't know what was going on. What is more, she has made no effort in her own area to try to bring about a togetherness in the community. Instead she has been deliberately trying to create hatreds within the community. That is no good for Queensland, and certainly it is not helping the beef industry one little bit.

I did something objective by trying to get an opinion about what was happening. It did help to bring these groups together. One of the results of that will be a much better understanding on what can be achieved. At a meeting such as that it was surprising to cattlemen to hear trade union leaders stating quite openly that they felt that the cattleman was entitled to a minimum price for his beef. That is a first requisite.

Mr. Camm: The first thing Whitlam said when he came into power was that he was going to reduce the price of meat.

Mr. CASEY: I am not talking about what Whitlam said or what Whitlam did. I am speaking about the State of Queensland. It is an unfortunate trait of the Minister for Mines and Energy that any time something goes wrong or something runs contrary to the way he believes it should, he wants to blame Whitlam or somebody else or talk about something that has occurred in the past.

Mr. Camm: I will blame you. With your record, fancy you setting yourself up as an expert in business!

Mr. CASEY: If he wants to talk about records, the Minister for Mines and Energy had better be very careful.

Mr. Camm: First you are an expert on the dairy industry and now you are an expert on the beef industry.

Mr. CASEY: The Minister had never swung a pick or shovel in his life before he became Minister for Mines and Energy. I am not knocking the fact that he studied the mining industry and made himself knowledgeable in that industry. Isn't it the task of every parliamentarian to become knowledgeable in the industries that this Parliament has to look at and care for? Fancy the Minister trying to talk like that!

Another aspect we have to look at is the establishment of year-round killing facilities in the industry. A lot of blame has been placed on the unions.

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. CASEY: The honourable member for Flinders is trying to talk again.

Despite the so-called industrial unrest we have had this year, which is supposedly one of the big problems in the industry, we have the highest kill in Australia's history this year. Surely the unions could not have held things up too much. The consumer has no control whatever over price. The housewife in the butcher shop or supermarket has no control over the price.

Mr. Katter: Don't you think there is a problem with unions in the meat industry? You have skipped over that in one sentence. It is a major problem in the beef industry today.

Mr. CASEY: The honourable member for Flinders is off again.

Union wages and conditions are determined by a court of law set up under an Act of this Parliament. The producer in the industry gets offered a figure or a meatworks auction price for his goods. We all know the price-rigging that goes on at saleyard auctions. The only one who has any flexibility in the cost of his operations is the processer. Processers say that they are controlled by exports. One would believe that in the current economic climate things should be very tough for processers, but almost without exception in the last 12 months processers throughout Australia, the major ones being overseas-owned, have had record profits.

While the Prime Minister has been running around saying to the beef producers and others his oft-repeated words, "Life wasn't meant to be easy", the chairman of Borthwicks was in London at the most recent annual meeting of that organisation, saying, "Our involvement in Australia and New Zealand flourishes. The business is exciting and challenging because it is clearly a growth industry." Many cattlemen in the industry today would like to see their business flourishing; many cattlemen would like to be able to say that their industry is a growth industry. But they are not able to make such statements.

On the retail side of the industry—in many instances there is what I would term overpackaging of products that are sold to the housewife. The major supermarket chains package meat so that a choice piece of steak, for example, is on the top and little off-cuts are packed underneath. The housewife, of course, is called upon to pay for this overpackaging; so she is paying more for her meat at the supermarket than she would pay at her corner butcher shop.

Furthermore, as the Leader of the Opposition commented at the introductory stage, because in some families both the husband and wife work during the day, they do not have time to cook roasts and other large and cheaper cuts for their evening meals. The result is that roasts, slabs of corned beef and the bigger cuts are not selling. Recently in Rockhampton the use of microwave ovens in butcher shops was introduced. They are used for the pre-cooking of roasts for sale to the customer. This is not new; microwave ovens have been used for such purposes for a number of years in America.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The Chair has been very tolerant with the honourable member. He is now moving away from the Bill.

Mr. CASEY: With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill refers to the licensing of butcher shops, which is one of the functions of the proposed new authority. Furthermore, it refers to the sale of meat products in the community. It is important that we do whatever we can to promote the sale of beef in Queensland.

If the industry finds it difficult to sell roasts, perhaps it might find a solution in the use of microwave ovens in butcher shops. Their use would induce the housewife to put the roast back onto the family table instead of calling at Kentucky Fried Chicken or some other similar establishment on the way home from work. I suggest that microwave ovens have a great future in the beef industry and I should like to see their use sponsored by it.

Those are the thoughts that come to mind in relation to the Bill. My main regret is that, although the Bill is couched in flowery language that gives the impression that it will cure all of the beef industry's problems, it is in fact only a piece of hollow legislation. It will be seen as such by the cattlemen of Queensland and I know that they will vote against this Government, which has done nothing for them, at the forthcoming State election.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (5.44 p.m.): I was particularly interested in the comments of the Opposition spokesman about the meeting that he called in Townsville. He was quite proud of the fact that he held that meeting. In fact, I am pleased that he did hold it and used his influence. However, I found his shot at the honourable member for Mourilyan to be quite an ironical one. He is, after all, one and a half years behind her and behind the honourable member for Callide and myself. We moved a year and a half ago to help the beef industry.

Mr. Wright: You didn't do much.

Mr. KATTER: I have been waiting for such an interjection. The honourable member for Rockhampton has given a glaring example of his hypocrisy, as has the honourable member for Mackay. Let me tell the House when the trouble in the beef industry first started. It started when the new Labor Government revalued the Australian dollar. That effectively increased by nearly 25 per cent the price of Australian beef on world markets as against beef produced in other parts of the world. That was blow No. 1 struck against the Australian beef industry. Blow 2 was the entry of England to the European Common Market. What did the then Labor Government do about what followed? It came up with a big fat nothing! Blow 3 was struck—and this is an exercise in arch hypocrisy—when our third major importer, Japan, decided that someone had to get the chopper because it had a balance-of-trade problem. What country and what industry did it select? It selected the Australian beef industry. What man in Australia had the guts and courage to stand up to that? This is a terrible reflection on the industry leaders at that time. He was attacked not only by the Federal Government at that time but also by the Queenslander Leader of the Opposition and the industry leaders. The man to whom I refer is Mr. Bjelke-Petersen. He stood up against the full public attack carried out by vested interests that then stood to lose about $300,000,000.

What did the Leader of the Opposition and other A.L.P. members do? They did nothing. What happened after the threat to cut off the coal exports? It should be remembered that this happened in the middle of an election campaign, when we thought one seat we might win in Queensland was that of Belyando, which we had almost won at the previous election. We took the risk of losing that seat so that we might help the beef producers of the State. We were attacked by every other Government in Australia. I should not say "we", because the Premier stood alone in this gambit.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. KATTER: What did the two members who have interjected do? They attacked the Government and the Premier. I only hope that the beef producers of Queensland and Australia remember what happened. If they do not, God help them and God help this State!

As a result of the Japanese beef/coal connection, the Japanese market opened up, with a 20 per cent increase in beef imports, and a resultant rise from 9c to 24c in the price of beef. That is the second example of arch hypocrisy.

Later an inspection levy of 1.6c was imposed. It was really a tax to force down the price of beef. Everybody in Australia knew that at the time. Something can be said for it, because a similar scheme is inherent in our stabilisation proposals. We do not criticise that. But when the price of beef plummeted to 9c a lb. for first grade ox throughout Australia, the Federal Government allowed that tax to remain intact. It equalled one-third of our beef export income.

The A.L.P. cannot boast about what it did for the beef producers—and I am far from finished. What help did the A.L.P. give in the way of cash handouts? It gave $10,000,000 at 11 per cent, while the Queensland Government provided $20,000,000 at about 7 per cent. The New Zealand Government, which was a Labor Government, provided $70,000,000 at 1 per cent. That is the fourth point.

The story is not finished yet. Next in line was the abolition of the depreciation allowance, which did not have much effect at the time, because beef producers were broke and were not paying tax. However, if the price should come back, it will be a crippling imposition that will virtually make it impossible for the producers to make a profit in good times. The rural postal services were cut straight across the board, while rural aeroplane services were cut out completely. The beef roads scheme, which provided employment for many broken beef producers—a big number of them were working on the beef roads—was cut out completely.

The so-called Opposition spokesman on this matter spoke about putting a base price into the market. Let me outline what the Labor Governments throughout Australia have done. I shall start with Senator Wriedt when he was Minister for Primary Industry. In Rockhampton he addressed the Cattlemen's Union people, and they know what Wriedt's attitude was. He told them cold-bloodedly that any artificial raising of the price of that product would lead to a fall-off in consumption which could not be tolerated. So much for Mr. Wriedt.

Let me finalise my remarks on what the A.L.P. did for the beef industry by referring to Mr. Heffernan, who is a very active and a very outspoken critic not only of the present Federal Government but also of the present Victorian Government and of any other Government that does the wrong thing. He produced statistics that can be obtained from the Parliamentary Library. He said that the Labor Government cost the primary industries of Australia and the primary producers of Australia some $360,000,000 per year—at a time when beef producers had an income for that year of minus $3,400. So much for what the Labor Party has done for the beef producer. For the sake of the Labor Party members in this House all I can hope is that the beef producers have very short memories. Judging by my experience of them, though, they are no fools.

Let me reflect quickly upon what this Government has done. These were what I regard as band-aids; they were virtually useless. But they cost a great deal of money, and it is money and effort that had hurt us. Firstly, there was the abolition of death duties. This was a very good thing for cattlemen because, although the price of beef has fallen, the price of cattle properties has not. If they die, their families would be virtually devastated because there is no income with which to pay the death duties. That scheme cost the Government $28,000,000 a year. We introduced the tickicide subsidy at a cost of about $3,000,000 a year. We abolished the fire brigade levy in some areas. No figure is available for the cost to the Government, but it cut in half the fire insurance premiums paid by the outback people, particularly beef producers. The rail freight increase of 40 per cent was not passed on to the cattlemen, and still has not been at this point of time. It would add some $10 to the price of a beast, which is the present profit margin—or the direct profit margin.

Mr. Hartwig: In its last 10 years Labor increased rail freights eight times.

Mr. KATTER: The honourable member says that in the last 10 years of Labor Government the rail freights were increased 800 per cent. In our last eight years in office they have increased 40 per cent.

I shall now get to the nitty-gritty, the real basis of the Bill. It is a great reflection upon the House and upon the quality and calibre of Opposition members—and I am disappointed with them—that the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries does not understand the ramifications of section 92 of the Constitution. He asks us to introduce legislation for beef similar to our milk legislation. We have it at this very moment.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Flinders is placing a completely erroneous interpretation on the comments I made earlier on this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What is the point of order?

Mr. CASEY: My point of order is that he is placing a completely erroneous interpretation on my remarks. I find it objectionable and ask that he withdraw it.

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

Mr. KATTER: I can understand the honourable member for Mackay trying to cut me down on this issue. It must be terribly embarrassing for him. He wants to be the Minister for Primary Industries in this State yet he says, "Let us introduce a similar measure for beef as our milk legislation, because that will achieve a minimum price in Queensland." We have it now. Processed beef cannot be sold in Brisbane unless it has been processed at the abattoirs here. All we have to do is put a price on it at the abattoirs. That is what he is asking us to do—the same as has been done with milk.

There is absolutely nothing to stop milk from being taken across the border now. If he had listened to the broadcast of Federal Parliament when the milk issue was being debated he would have heard one of the Federal Ministers saying that he would take a milk truck to Sydney and sell milk in Sydney himself if necessary. Although he was not the Minister for Primary Industry, he understood section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. Unfortunately the honourable member for Mackay does not understand that there is nothing to prevent New South Wales beef coming to Queensland and being sold in Queen Street, even if we put a minimum price on it. If we increase the price to 28c there will not be 1 lb of Queensland beef sold in Brisbane; it will all be from the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales. That is why I say that the honourable member for Mackay does not understand section 92. No doubt he understands it now that I have explained it and he can go home and impress the people there. I apologise to all other honourable members, as I know they understand section 92.

I should now like to reflect briefly on the history that has led up to what is now taking place in this House. The Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries described this as hollow legislation. There is nothing hollow about it. Section 137 (1) of the Act prescribes the penalties for selling beef below the price set by the meat marketing authority. If that authority set the price tomorrow at 30c for first-grade ox, anyone selling below that price could, under section 137 (1), be fined £200 or sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment. And that is supposed to be "hollow" legislation! If he thinks that is hollow legislation, I should hate to see him imposing penalties.

This legislation certainly has teeth, which is the very thing for which requests have been made over and over again by those in the beef industry since the dreadful depression that started in 1974. We went some sort of a minimum price scheme backed by the authority of a Government, and that is what the Bill provides. Opposition members should have appreciated that we cannot set prices until the other States set theirs. This follows from section 92. If the New South Wales Government proceeds with a scheme in New South Wales and the Victorian Government proceeds with a scheme in their State and they raise the price by 1c, we can do the same. If we propose to raise the price 1c and they are prepared to go with us, we can move. The legislation will be there and Queensland will have given a lead to the rest of Australia. We have not shilly-shallied. We have said that once prices are set, any person will be fined the equivalent of £200 or gaoled for 12 months every time he sells a beast in contravention of this Act.

I reflect briefly on the way in which this historical point in the beef industry has been reached in Queensland. No longer does a beef producer have to sell on the open market. It started with a number of, shall I say, stir meetings. Some people may laugh about this, but no-one laughed when the honourable member for Callide held a meeting attended by 700 to 800 people in Rockhampton. There were similar meetings held throughout the whole State because many people knew that the situation was bad and something had to be done about it. At that time two meetings were held every week and there was a little cadre of people who made sure that someone went to each of those meetings to preach the gospel. The gospel was, and still is, to put a base in the beef market for not only Queensland but the rest of Australia as well.

I cannot speak for other areas, but I know that the meeting at Mt. Isa voted 120 to 20 in favour of putting a base price into the beef market. At Hughenden the voting was 200 to 16 in favour of a base price. At Julia Creek the voting was 80 to nil in favour of the proposition. Here then was the start of a grass roots movement for some sort of a base price—a floor price or minimum price—scheme for beef. That was the start. Once we got a full head of steam up, once we set the country alight, it was then a matter of giving the movement direction. This was the second stage of the upheavals in the beef industry.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. KATTER: Before dinner I was reviewing the history of the upheavals in the beef industry. I said that we had had stir meetings up and down the State and had tried to implant in the minds of people that what we should be doing was introducing a minimum price scheme for beef. Then we attempted to give some direction to that locomotive with a full head of steam up, and for that purpose we held a meeting at Julia Creek in my electorate. We invited some 80 industry leaders from all over North-west Queensland. The result was a resounding and unanimous vote of support. I repeat that at that meeting was just about every industry leader in North-west Queensland, from Longreach to the Gulf and from Charters Towers back to the Territory border.

There was a unanimous vote for the introduction of a minimum price scheme in Queensland, and a gentleman named Doug Logan and I flew to Brisbane to see the Premier personally. Unfortunately, he had gone to Western Australia, so we rang the honourable member for Mourilyan, Mrs. Kippin, because it had been announced that the Premier would be visiting her electorate in the next week. She took the matter up with the Premier and he offered to form the State beef cattle committee. I think that we all owe Mrs. Kippin a debt of gratitude for her representations that led to the formation of the State beef cattle committee.

The result of the formation of that committee was really a deadlock because a number of people on the committee did not believe that a minimum price scheme would work whereas a lot of us were determined to make it work. That deadlock lasted for a considerable period and then, unfortunately, and I say that with a great deal of conviction, there was a split in the industry organisation.

At that stage a number of the leaders of the U.G.A. believed that a minimum price scheme could not come into being, and a number of people who later formed the Cattlemen's Union thought it could. I viewed the division with great regret and tried to fight it in my area. I felt that two industry organisations could only result in disaster and time would be spent fighting each other rather than trying to achieve a minimum price scheme. I felt very strongly that such a scheme could be achieved within the existing framework. However, the formation of the union broke the deadlock in the State beef cattle committee and a firm commitment was obtained from that committee for a minimum price scheme. A working party was set up. I pay great tribute here to work of the honourable member for Kurilpa, Mr. Sam Doumany, who was the chairman of that working party, to Mr. Graham McCamley, who was a member, and also to the quick intelligence of the very gifted Mr. Des Lapidge, who did a great amount of the work in drawing up what was later to become the Queensland beef stabilisation scheme.

The working party travelled through almost every State in Australia and had discussions with almost every Government and with every Government department trying to draw up a scheme that would be suitable, acceptable and workable in all States. When that working party returned to Queensland, they drafted the final proposals, which were looked at in great detail by the

State beef cattle committee and accepted. They were then taken back to the Agricultural Council.

That is the point which seems to have escaped entirely the understanding of the people on the Opposition benches. If I do not understand something I try to keep quiet about it rather than speaking up and displaying my ignorance. But tonight I am afraid just the opposite has happened when Opposition members have spoken because the more they have said the more they have proved their lack of understanding of the issue. The Agricultural Council is a meeting of all primary industries Ministers throughout Australia, and if any State wants to introduce any sort of a marketing scheme it has to gain approval from that body. It is the only way in which the various States of the Commonwealth can come together and anything can be done.

However, for almost two years the Queensland Government has gone backwards and forwards to the Agricultural Council. Outside of the Agricultural Council, individual members of this House have tried to lobby in other States. There has been lobbying by our own Minister for Primary Industries. Intensive work has been done by the Premier himself, to the point of agreeing to travel to Melbourne, which under the circumstances at the time was a big concession, and I praise also the Premier of New South Wales, who agreed to travel to Melbourne for that particular meeting. But in spite of agreement in principle by the Premiers, in spite of agreement in principle by the Agricultural Council, beef producers in the State of Queensland are still being paid only 24c a lb., and the time has arrived when Queensland has to act unilaterally to at least give leadership to the other States, and that is what is occurring with this Bill.

We have tried to get the whole of Australia to move as one. I do not think that anyone looking at the history of what the Queensland Government has done in the last two years would question that for a moment. We have done everything humanly possible to get the rest of Australia to step as one with us. We have not yet succeeded in achieving that. Therefore, what we are working on now is the domino theory. If we start it in Queensland, we hope there will be tremendous pressure brought to bear in New South Wales and it will pass some type of minimum price legislation and, similarly, the other two eastern States having agreed, that there will then be tremendous pressure upon the Victorian Government.

It is interesting to note that the three eastern States have about 30,000,000 of the 33,000,000 head of cattle in Australia. So it is really a game to be played by the three eastern States, and the other States are not really of much significance if the three eastern States take a decision. That is the history of how we have arrived at the position that we are in tonight. For the first time in Australia, a Government has taken the bit in its teeth and brought down the legislation that is now before the House.

Let me reflect for one moment upon the type of pressures that made us do the sort of things that we have done in the last three years and take the risks that we have taken. Many men who are prominent in the industry in this State, many men who are very prominent in politics in this State and many little fledgings risked their future because of what was occurring in the beef industry. These men courageously took the risks they did take because they appreciated the situation that existed in the inland parts of Australia, and particularly in the inland parts of Queensland, which has as many full-time beef producers as the rest of Australia put together.

Some two or three months ago a very large number of cows and calves were offered for sale and the price for them near a station called "Lyndhurst", 100-odd miles north of Charters Towers, was $7 for each cow with calf. Those people who are at all familiar with the industry know that a cow weighs about 400 lb. A person who buys beef across the counter in a butcher shop will pay about 30c to 40c a lb. So you can work out for yourself, Mr. Speaker, the sort of profit margin and the sort of pass-back mechanism that is operating in the State of Queensland.

Let me put a second fact before the House. I received a deputation from the Australian Railways Union in my area on the falling apart of fettlers' accommodation along the Great Northern Railway, and the complaint was that there was no-one living in that accommodation. I said, "What can I do about it?" They said, "The difficulty arises because the gangs working along the line are made up of station owners who live at the station homesteads and commute to work every morning, to go fettling to keep their stations together." That is unfortunately true. I have here a list of names of 20 people I consider to be reasonably good friends of mine who are working as fettlers along that railway line. They are trying to save their stations and what has been in their families for two, three or four generations. I will not embarrass them by reading out their names.

Let me relate what happened when I visited a fifth generation grazier. Up to very recently his family were considered to be reasonably wealthy people in the area. The old parents have retired and the young people have had to try to buy into the station. When I went to walk into the living-room I could see the owner of the property trying to head me off. I did walk into the living-room and sat down on the sofa. When I did I realised there was merely a linen covering over the sofa. In fact, the sofa had long since given up the ghost and was just a heap of springs with no proper covering. The owner was most embarrassed. I saw colour come to his cheeks. He said, "I am sorry, we no longer having a living-room. We have to sit in the kitchen." We walked into the kitchen and sat on the four chairs in there.

One of the most depressing sights for anyone travelling in North-west Queensland at the moment is the absentee landlord holdings. At one time the line of absentee landlord holdings started at Mt. Isa. All points west and north of Mt. Isa were then held by absentee landlords. That line has come back to Cloncurry. It has passed through Cloncurry and has reached Julia Creek and is headed south to McKinlay. Now we have the situation where virtually everything north of McKinlay and west of McKinlay is held by absentee landlords. Some people would question that there is anything wrong with absentee landlordism. The managers for absentee landlords don't own the property; they don't love the property. They stop work at 5 p.m., and they have done their job for the day. Let me not be construed as being critical of many of these managers. Justifiably many of them could be described as the salt of the earth. If the situation were different, every one of those managers would be in possession of his own station. When they retired they would have something to leave to their children. They would have something to work for, not only for this generation but for generations to come. But that situation no longer exists in North-west Queensland. North-west Queensland is populated by a group of people on their knees, who are working for absentee landlords who live in southern cities.

A word that constantly crops up on the Opposition benches is "multinational" or "foreigners". That is wrong. The latent racism in their viewpoint we will ignore. It was inherent in the speech of the honourable member for Mackay. Apparently there is something inherently wrong with a person who comes from Brazil.

Mr. Casey: You are romancing again. For how long was the area you are talking about represented by the National Party or the Labor Party?

Mr. KATTER: I am asked how long this area belonged to the Labor Party or the National Party. The area I am talking about belonged exclusively to the Labor Party for the last 60 or 70 years—since federation. What I was talking about was the area from Mt. Isa north. Then I moved to Cloncurry. The line has still not got into the area represented by——

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KATTER: Once again the honourable member for Mackay has put his foot in it. He is talking about areas he knows nothing about. I will put it back to him. He asked who represented the area. The area is encompassed by what was once the seat of Burke, which is now Mt. Isa. It was held by the Labor Party from federation. I will continue.

Mr. Wright: Will you answer another question. How long has your old man——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Wright: Can't I ask him a question, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member can ask a question if he asks it in a dignified manner.

Mr. KATTER: I want to take these questions because not once during Mr. Casey's speech was I allowed a question. I can understand why. He knew he was on shaky ground and was not game to reply to my interjections. I was asked by way of interjection how long that area was represented by my father, who is the Federal member for Kennedy. Once again the honourable member has shown his ignorance. The Kennedy electorate does not encompass that area; it stops at Mt. Isa. So once again the Opposition member is wrong.

Mr. Wright: Start again—"Once upon a time . . ."

Mr. KATTER: I shall have to explain to the honourable member that people, not cattle, live in Mt. Isa; the cattle are to be found to the north and west of Mt. Isa. Can the honourable member understand that? That is the area held by the absentee landlords. So once again Opposition members have opened their mouth and put their foot in it. They have shown their ignorance of what goes on in the inland areas. It is to be hoped that they stay in the provincial cities where they belong.

As to the average income of beef producers in this area—I could talk of the time when I conducted an insurance agency and knew four young families of wonderful, kind and generous people living on stations along the road north from Richmond; I could talk of my recent drive along that road and of finding that of these four families only one remained, battling; two had left the area completely and, with no money, no trade training and no job to go to have to try to start again at the "tender" age of 40 years; and the other had their property up for sale.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that he is making an introductory stage speech. The House is debating the second reading of the Bill. The honourable member will come back to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. KATTER: What I am trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is relate my remarks to a minimum price in the beef industry and to do that I wish to refer to some simple statistics, which show that the average Australian income is nearly $10,000 a year; the average farm income is $15,000 a year; the average beef-producer's income over the past three years has been respectively minus $3,400, minus $4,300 and minus $6,700.

I have spoken of the beef producers. They are the last to fall; they are the bishops and knights. The pawns have already gone. Recently I completed a survey of unemployment in my area. It revealed that an estimated 772 jobs that previously existed on station properties in the area no longer exist. In other words, 772 men who spent their entire lives as stockmen in the bush have suddenly been thrown out of work. They have no job, no training, no skills that are required. Whereas previously they always had open to them a house on a station, they now do not have even that. They are forced to go into the towns, with no job, no money and nowhere to live. Many of them are trying to keep large families. I say again that in one small area of Queensland encompassed by the Flinders electorate, 772 men are out of work.

If that number is multiplied by the number of other inland electorates in the State it gives a figure of approximately 4,000. In other words, throughout the inland areas, 4,000 stockmen are out of work. On top of that, 37 station agents in the Flinders electorate have lost their jobs. That figure, too, can be multiplied by a fairly large factor. The unemployment problem in Queensland could be relieved by reviving the beef industry, which has the potential for re-employing approximately 4,000 people.

Mr. Wright: Why don't you speak up?

Mr. KATTER: The member for Rockhampton continually makes facetious interjections. I would have thought that he would have sincere convictions about the beef industry, but all he does is make facetious comments. The disastrous record of his Federal colleagues and the address delivered by his leader in this State must cause him tremendous embarrassment, so no wonder he makes facetious comments.

Why does this situation in the industry persist? In 1860, the first settler in the Charters Towers area was a man named Ernest Henry; the founder of the town of Hughenden was named Ernest Henry, and the founder of the town of Cloncurry and the mining field that later spawned Mt. Isa was also Ernest Henry. What happened to him? He was wiped out in the cattle crash of 1860. From 12 stations he was left with absolutely nothing but the horse he rode and what he could carry in his saddlebags.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. KATTER: To relate my comments to the Bill I point out that the crash in the beef industry is of a cyclic nature. In 1890, a man named Selheim—this is also the name of a small township outside Charters Towers—who was an Austrian baron and one of the first pioneers of North Queensland, and Alexandra Kennedy, one of the founders of Qantas and the first chairman of the Cloncurry Shire, were wiped out in the cattle price crash. Some honourable members may recall that prices crashed again in 1920, and stayed down. It was not until 1940 that they returned to the price enjoyed before the 1920 crash.

I do not like harking back constantly to statements made by former speakers but they exemplify a number of gross inaccuracies and misconceptions common in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia. One concerned an alleged explosion in cattle numbers. People who make such statements simply have not done their homework. There was never an explosion in cattle numbers in Queensland. Since 1964 cattle numbers have increased steadily by approximately 2,000,000 head a year. Some years the increase has been as low as 500,000 whilst sometimes it has risen as high as 3,000,000. There was never any great explosion in cattle numbers. That allegation was a total fallacy—a myth.

In 1974-75 Australia had 30,000,000 head of cattle; in 1976-77 it had about 33,000,000 head. For three years cattle numbers increased by 1,000,000 head a year. In 1974-75, by definition, we had a terrible problem of under-supply because the price was sky-rocketing. Since then cattle numbers have increased by 10 per cent while our exports plus home consumption—"disappearance" as it is called in the trade—have increased by 50 per cent. With an increase of 10 per cent in supply, consumption has increased by 50 per cent. What in hell's name has happened to the price? Instead of rising because demand has overshot supply, it has gone down from 35c to 25c a lb. Obviously the price of beef is not marching to the tune of the supply-and-demand drummer. Myth one, perpetrated by members of the Opposition is exploded in their faces by statistics.

The collapse of the Australian beef market was caused, I repeat, by England's joining the Common Market. The 80 000 tonnes of beef exports to England every year were suddenly cut off. That is point one. Point two is that Japanese exports, also about 80 000 tonnes a year, were cut off.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CORY (Warwick) (7.39 p.m.): Unfortunately both on Thursday afternoon and this afternoon this Bill has been debated in the context of a pre-election gimmick rather than a genuine factor related to the hardships in the beef industry.

I wish to refer to a few of the comments that have been made, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday and the honourable member for Mackay today. Theirs was a very naive and ignorant approach to these problems. Actually they became a political gimmick for election purposes which, if anything, would tend to split the industry rather than encourage it to become united. It is one of the greatest problems and it is a tragedy that people can use their position in this House to help themselves politically but create a disaster in this industry. If we cannot unite an industry we will never get the best results. It behoves everybody inside and outside the House to do everything possible to unite this industry. The statements which are inflaming some of the problems, the division and the bitterness in the industry at present are uncalled for and are something that we would like to think we will not hear again.

The honourable member for Mackay spoke about what has been done in the sugar, dairy and grain industries. He mentioned particularly the dairy industry and the Milk Supply Bill which was recently passed by the House. What he did not mention was that the structure and the marketing set-up of the commodity for liquid milk which is consumed locally is totally different from what we are arguing about today. If we had to deal only with the local beef market, the answer would be very clear and there would be no problems.

Let me go right back to the basics. Each of the three industries referred to by the honourable member for Mackay went to the Government and asked the Government to put into operation various rules and legislation to make its marketing and delivery schemes possible. Each industry asked for it and formulated it.

The beef industry is totally different. The very first thing we should be doing is strive to unite the industry so that the industry itself can decide exactly what it wants. There is certainly no room for comparison between this and other industries when we know the history of how these particular schemes were developed. The job would be much easier if we could adopt the same approach in a scheme for the beef industry.

I wish also to refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Mackay about manipulators in the industry. There may or may not have been individual profits made in the processing side of the industry. It was stated in the Press the other day that 65 per cent of the capacity of Queensland's killing works was lost through industrial strikes in the past 12 months. Nobody would accept the challenge to operate and manage any concern which was subject to a 65 per cent loss of throughput over any given period. That loss of production would explain the problems that the industry has with the throughput, volume or tonnage that could be handled and could supply various markets. It is nearly an impossible task. Although there may be faults on the processers' side, they have very real problems in coping with the industrial situation and in facing the risk of negotiating markets for the commodity.

What I particularly want to say to the honourable member for Mackay is something that goes back quite a number of years to when the public abattoir was operating in Mackay. It was losing in excess of $1,000,000 a year. The then member for Mackay, who is the present member for Mackay, did absolutely nothing to assist the continuing operation of that concern. It was left to other members in the area and the present Minister for Mines and Energy to fight hard in Cabinet and other places to keep that works going until somebody would buy it. If this had not been done at that level, the works would have been liquidated and lost to Mackay. We have to be realistic and understand just who were the ones who helped when the heat was on. The performance of the honourable member for Mackay on that occasion certainly was not to his credit, but perhaps he does not think that the operations of the meatworks in his area are of any great importance.

Mr. Casey: Which year are you referring to?

Mr. CORY: I do not know the year but it was prior to the purchase of the works by Borthwicks when it had lost $1,000,000 or more a year over a period of time.

Mr. Casey: I was not a member of this House then, but as Deputy Mayor of Mackay I convened a public meeting in Mackay to give full awareness of the problem to all sections of the community. I led the fight as Deputy Mayor of Mackay. I was not then a member of the House.

Mr. CORY: I do not remember the exact year, but the position was that assistance at governmental level kept that abattoir in operation, at the expense of the public purse, until a private operator was prepared to purchase it and make it a going concern, which it is today.

It was said from the Opposition benches that the Queensland Government had done nothing in this matter. Other speakers have asked why more has perhaps not been done about it and why more has not been achieved. Twelve months ago the stabilisation plan was promoted by the State Government and sent to the Agricultural Council. Many said that nothing had been done up to this time; that the beef industry committee had not achieved anything and was not likely to achieve anything.

I think we have to be fair in this matter. If the beef industry committee was to be a responsible body, it had to make sure that whatever it promoted was likely to be a going concern. It would not have been very responsible for that committee to promote a scheme that it knew would not be a goer. We have to be honest and acknowledge that there are many schemes that could be put up that clearly are not goers. It was the responsibility of members of the beef industry committee to consider possibilities and probabilities and only bring forward a scheme that they honestly thought had a chance of success. A proposition of any other sort would have fooled no-one and it would certainly have been tragic if false encouragement had been given to the industry under a scheme that the committee knew would not be a goer.

Any scheme that the Leader of the Opposition or other Opposition members have put forward has involved acquisition of the commodity. I say quite clearly that the industry as a whole would not accept acquisition. Let us be quite honest about that. The only ones to decide finally whether they want acquisition are those in the industry, not the Government. Anyone who thinks that the Government could inflict such a basis on the industry is fooling himself. The industry will not wear decisions of that nature if it is not given an opportunity to participate in making the decisions. Up till now the industry would not have accepted total acquisition.

Comment has been made about the New South Wales Premier's statement that he was interested in stabilisation and a minimum price for beef. At this stage I just want to support the Minister's remarks that the New South Wales Government at this stage does not even have any machinery for setting up such a scheme. It has not come up with any ideas that have not previously been kicked around by the Queensland Government or the Queensland beef industry.

Mr. Wright: That's all you've done; you've kicked them around.

Mr. CORY: We have not kicked it around. We submitted a plan 12 months ago, and at that stage we could do no more than that. We are now in the process of setting up the machinery so as to be ready, willing and able to put it into operation. But the New South Wales Government, which received all the publicity about a plan like this, has not even taken the time or considered it important enough to go ahead and develop any machinery with which to implement such a plan. All it has done is issue statements saying that it is interested in doing this. In anything it has said, it is in effect copying what the Queensland Government has already submitted.

As far as the Bill is concerned, I think we have to agree that the principle of amalgamating, if we can put it that way, the functions of the industry into one meat authority is a good one. The Bill is actually establishing a Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority which will take over the present responsibilities and duties of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, which I think is a very good idea. I think it is the only sensible and practical way that we can provide an overall authority for the industry without duplication and added expense. When we are trying to do something for an industry that is on its knees and certainly has no money, we have to make sure that what we do is right and that we are doing it in the most economical way, because if we do not achieve both of those aims we are only fooling ourselves and letting the industry down.

As the Minister has said, the composition of the authority is something we have agreed on at committee level, but there has been criticism from various quarters regarding the number of industry representatives and the number of processer representatives. Let me just say that when we look at the capital component of these two different sections of the industry, honourable members will realise the wisdom of providing the ratio we have, because it is reported that there is $5,600 million invested on the production side of the industry as against something in excess of $300,000,000 on the processing side. The cost of ownership, the cost of investment and the volume of investment have to be recognised when we decide on the number of producer and processer representatives. Admittedly we have not come up with figures for the total investment in the industry, but those we have found justify a larger number of producer representatives on an industry marketing board such as this.

The processing section of the industry is to have two representatives, and the Government will have to consider carefully where those two will come from. In fact, there are about four sections of the processing section from which they could come, and it is to be hoped that, rather than take into account the particular section from which they come, the Government will consider who has the greatest ability and who can be of the greatest assistance. In doing that, it must endeavour to be fair.

It appears to me that the public abattoir section should not really have one of the processer representatives nominated by the Minister. I say that mainly because the chairman of the authority that is to be set up will be ex-officio a member of each and every board in the State, and I do not think that any other section of the industry would have better liaison with the authority than the public abattoirs would have, because they have the immediate, direct and personal association of the chairman with all the boards within the State. Therefore, I suggest that, when the time comes for the Government to make these decisions, it should look carefully at those sections that are already represented by virtue of who is on the authority and who is not.

Obviously the private abattoirs and exporters deserve at least one of these two representatives, because they are the ones who have a very real investment; they are the ones who have the greatest access to much marketing expertise. It is, of course, for the Government to decide, but I should like to think that it will consider very carefully what is fair for all the processing sections and not overload the authority with experienced people from one section and leave other sections completely out in the cold.

The problems of the producing side of the industry are the real reason for the introduction of this Bill. We all know that the industry is on its knees, so much so that it is almost prepared to put its faith in any scheme that the industry itself and the Government are prepared to bring forward. That is a dangerous attitude; so there is a greater responsibility than ever on the Government to ensure that any scheme it puts forward is fair dinkum and will work.

It has been said that objective classification will be the basis on which any marketing scheme will function. That is true. It must be accepted, of course, that objective classification is not completely one-way traffic. There are costs; there are problems. The industry must be made aware of this, probably from one angle more than any other. Although costs are high, or reasonably high, it is hoped that the advantages of classification will outweigh these costs. We will not know that, of course, until the scheme is actually in operation, but we hope that that will be the case.

The other point is: are all producers in the State completely clear as to what classification will mean when applied to their own cattle? That brings it right home. Do we all know exactly what type of classification the cattle we produce will be in? Will they be in the classification in which we consider they ought to be? Only the industry can consider this objectively. We as a Government can provide only the machinery. It is the industry that has to make its decision about whether that machinery is good or bad. It is not all one-way traffic. There are problems. Perhaps not all of us are producing cattle that are going to be classified as well as some of us might think they will.

It is critical that some scheme be put into operation. We have had a useful two years of discussion. Without such discussion it would not have been possible to come up with the constructive approach embodied in this Bill. We must have something working before anyone can be completely sure. There is no guarantee. All we can do, making our best judgment of the market, is gauge what further help can be obtained for the producer. That is the only problem area. Everyone else is doing fairly well in the industry. Only when money goes back into the pocket of the producer can we say that we have achieved anything.

If we get this off the ground, in co-operation with the other States—and the first challenge is to get a minimum price for the producer—stabilisation can come at a later date. There has to be a fairly large price increase before that is necessary. Even if we can get all these things going successfully, not all sections of the producing industry will be sharing in the benefits. I am referring particularly to the breeding section. It will be the last section of the industry to gain an advantage. It will never gain an advantage if the number of store cattle on the market for the fatteners to buy is sufficient so that the fatteners do not have to pay more for them. No matter how high the fat cattle price is, the fatteners will not pay more money until such time as supply and demand makes them. They will buy them as cheaply as they can. That is an aspect that has to be looked at. In any schemes that the Federal Government and others might have to back up, we have to look at the person who has no immediate chance of gaining any advantage.

Mr. Wright: I agree with you, but the honourable member for Flinders said that there was no over-supply situation.

Mr. CORY: The seller of store cattle can only get the price that the buyer is prepared to pay. The buyer is prepared to pay only what the other fellow makes him pay. The store cattle seller will be the last person to benefit. No fat cattle price scheme will make the fattener pay a greater price. He will pay it only if they are in short supply and competition forces him to do so.

We have a crisis in the industry. We are trying to do something about the marketing of the end commodity. After all, the breeders are the grass roots of the industry. We have to look for a more urgent type of assistance for them. In any scheme adopted a considerable time will elapse before any benefits start to feed back. I believe that a lot could be done and should be done quickly. "Urgency" is the key word in the beef industry today. We have to explore every avenue that will give a quick cash flow. The industry is not looking for handouts or for big subsidies; it is looking for a cash flow that will allow it to hang on.

The industry has to be kept going because there is no more profitable man running cattle than the cattleman. It would be stupid to take any action that would induce him to leave the industry. Sooner or later the industry will be needed badly and the most valuable person to the success of the industry is the man already experienced in it. Whatever we do, we have to keep him in the industry. He needs a sufficient cash flow to be able to cope with his short-term financial commitments and to be able to ride out the difficult period.

We have heard a discussion about a moratorium on the debts of cattlemen. I can see some merit in such a suggestion. The cattleman needs time. We would not be debating this Bill if we did not have confidence in the long-term viability of the industry, but that will not help in the immediate future and it certainly will not assist the breeder. We must give him the opportunity to hang on and to cope with the present difficult time. A moratorium on his debts will allow him to do that. The annual interest and redemption payments are the killer. The man who does not owe any money can, of course, hang on; but there are not many in that category. Anything that can be done to reduce general costs, interest rates and freight charges should be done.

We do not know what the Federal Government has in mind regarding financial assistance to cattlemen, but recent Press reports have kicked around the possibility of a subsidy for spaying. Anything that will allow the cattleman to pay his debts would be of some advantage.

Mr. Gunn: How long should the moratorium be for?

Mr. CORY: In the first instance, for 12 months, but it would need to be reviewed. No shorter period should be considered. Perhaps after nine months the situation of the industry could be looked at.

Mr. Gunn: Until the industry is right again?

Mr. CORY: That is so.

Mr. Casey: Do you think that a major spaying programme would be in the long-term interests of the industry?

Mr. CORY: Not the long-term interest, no. I thank the honourable member for his interjection. I do not believe that a major spaying programme is the answer. If we are not careful, it could be overdone. In a few years' time we will be looking for production, so we do not want to embark on over-spaying. However, anything that allows the cattleman to make use of some money and pay his debts is of great advantage. I will put it this way: a very large number of female cattle in Queensland are being spayed at present. That is being done because the individual landholders believe it to be a good thing. But while they are doing that, they are finding it hard to survive. If they could be given financial assistance to do what they feel is prudent in the light of their own experience, it would be a great advantage.

Some person in a corner could probably make great use of financial assistance towards the cost of spaying; but I certainly would not encourage over-spaying. As I say, within a short period we will be looking to the female cattle to keep the industry going. Such financial assistance could be very useful to certain sections of the industry at the present time.

Anything that can help the liquidity of a producer is important. If he can remain in business and pay his debts, he should be able to hang on. We certainly want people in the industry to hang on because they will be very valuable in the future.

I am worried by a provision in the Bill relating to the establishment of saleyards inside and outside abattoir areas. The authority will have power to define terms and conditions of sale. That is quite reasonable and there can be no argument about it. Terms and conditions of sale will vary widely among saleyards throughout the State. However, I question the provision which says that the conditions under which any person shall be allowed to provide, conduct, operate or maintain saleyards for the sale of stock within or outside any public abattoir area shall be set by an authority. No authority should have the power to tell the operators of any saleyard, whether privately, publicly or municipally operated, how the saleyard should be maintained.

Certainly an authority should have power to determine terms and conditions of sale and general operative procedures, but the people operating saleyards are not fools. Probably they are in business as public bodies, but they are not irresponsible. No-one will retain broken-down structures or anything that will cause bruising. Their common sense would make sure of that. But to provide in a Bill that an authority can determine that it wants a yard cemented or certain structures to be built is over-stretching the powers of the authority. The bodies involved in the stock industry are responsible and will not do anything to jeopardise sensible, proper operations of the saleyards. They will have to meet challenges from other selling methods, and probably more so when we get classification.

It is a little harsh that we should write into this measure that the authority will have power to dictate to a saleyard board, established on an autonomous basis, how it will run its saleyard. When the authority is set up, I should like this phraseology to be looked into and modified. Let the experts run the saleyards. The meat authority is not an expert on running saleyards. It is expert on the overall producing and marketing side, but these people are experts in their fields. They are not fools. Surely they should be given credit for having enough common sense to know what is fair and what is not. Buyers will tell them quickly if their yards are causing bruising problems. As we know, buyers refuse to go to certain saleyards because of the bruising caused there to cattle.

I do not think it is right that any bureaucratic authority should be able to dictate to people who are doing a good job for their industry in their own areas. It would be like having Big Brother looking over their shoulder and in effect dictating to them, and this might cause great expenditure. Let us think. If a saleyard board incurred greater expenditure, which it well could, who would pay for it? Again it would be the industry that we are trying to help. While we are trying to help an industry, we do not want to write in anything that will put a greater cost on that industry, or be likely to do so. I believe that in this type of proposal we want to be very practical so that we will assist the industry. In this context, we must not be completely academic.

Having said those words, I agree with the general concept of setting up this authority. I agree with the general structure of authority personnel. It seems to fill most requirements. While confining the authority to a reasonable number, it provides representation from all sections of the industry. This is what the industry wants. It wants everybody to be represented in his correct perspective. The major consideration in the whole structure was that the producing industry did have basic control of the authority. It is something that producers have always wanted and is something they have every right to ask for. This Bill goes a long way towards giving them such a major say in the overall direction and administration of the authority. It must surely be accepted.

We have a responsibility to set up whatever machinery we think is prudent to assist the industry. While what is done here will not of itself achieve anything, with the co-operation of the other States and the Commonwealth, it certainly will. The big thing is that our scheme will be here and ready to go so that we can play our part the moment the other States, the Commonwealth and the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation are in a position to use it.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (8.17 p.m.): I approach this matter on what I think is a very sound and sensible basic principle. Anyone who knows anything about the history of this world knows that when nations lost their people from the country—lost the farmers, the graziers and the others who went out from the cities to grow the crops to feed those in the cities—that was the end of those nations. It was the end of the nation when those people were chased off the land for one reason or another. So if this Bill will do anything at all to keep the graziers on the land, to keep them

producing beef and to keep them adding to the national wealth of this country, I am in favour of it.

We have heard quite a lot of rhetoric and quite a lot of platitudinous ponderosity on this measure, and quite a lot of plain political propaganda and I do not think it has given any impetus at all to the provisions of the Bill or strengthened the Bill in any particular way.

The honourable member for Mackay is the shadow Minister for Primary Industries in the present A.L.P. Opposition. In many respects he is an excellent fellow but, like some other members of the Labor Party, he would not know which end of a cow the milk came from. He might know something about the sugar industry. In his time he was a very good footballer and I appreciate his opinions on football. But when he begins to travel the country like a wandering Jew, together with the local member, such as the honourable member for Cairns, and expatriates on the cattle and meat industry, I begin to wonder just where the politics of this country is going. Yet we had the honourable member for Mackay this afternoon and tonight talking about something that I do not think he knows anything about.

I do not know very much about the cattle industry, although as a railway engineman I transported scores of thousands of cattle from Outback cattle-yards to meatworks. I am not quite sure if the butcher gives me rump steak when I order it or, if he is an A.L.P. butcher, he hacks me off a piece of shin beef and passes it off as rump steak. There is an old and true saying that one man's meat is another man's poison, and so it is with industry. Things that will assist and maintain one industry will cripple and absolutely devastate another. The honourable member for Mackay, the A.L.P. spokesman on Primary Industries, said that the Labor Party put the sugar industry on its feet back in 1916 by the passage of the Sugar Acquisition Act. Other Governments since have followed with various regulations and today the sugar industry is thriving and prosperous.

The state of the sugar industry is indeed a credit to millers, farmers, workers, Government employees and all others associated with it. But let us look at the very basis on which the sugar industry is established. Let us end all the platitudinous ponderosity, all the lamplighting and grandstanding indulged in by the honourable member for Mackay and some others. Let us consider what would happen to the grazing industry if it were established on exactly the same lines as the sugar industry.

In the first place, cattle could be grazed only on assigned land and only a determined number of cattle could be grazed, not the number that the land could carry or the number that the grazier wanted to run. The controlling board would determine the number of cattle to be run. In addition, only certain breeds of cattle could be run on assigned land. A grazier may say, "I think another breed of cattle might do better on my land than the breed that has been allotted to me by the controlling board." But he would not be able to run them; he could run only a certain number of certain breeds on the land assigned for the running of those cattle.

Then, when the cattle were ready for slaughter, they could be slaughtered only at the meatworks to which the cattle were assigned. For instance, if they were reared in the area in which the honourable members for Mackay and Cairns have been blowing their trumpets and thumping drums on behalf of the Labor Party and there was a better market for the cattle at Queerah, a grazier could not sell his cattle to Queerah if they were assigned to Ross River, Swifts, Borthwicks or any other meatworks in the North. He could sell them only to the meatworks to which his cattle had been assigned.

Then, when the cattle were slaughtered, the carcasses would not belong to the grazier. He would not be able to dispose of them as he wished. The carcasses would become the absolute property of the Queensland Government, just as sugar when produced from the cane becomes the absolute property of the Queensland Government. I know there are members in this House who do not know that about the sugar industry.

After seizure or acquisition by the Queensland Government under the acquisition Act, the carcasses would be sold by the board set up by the Government. Let it not be forgotten that the graziers would have nothing to do with the establishment of that board, nor would they have representation on it any more than sugar millers and growers have any say in the constitution of the Sugar Board. The carcasses would be sold by the Government-established board either inside or outside Australia and, when they were sold, the board would distribute the money between the meatworks and the graziers.

No grazing property could be sold except to an approved person and at a price approved by a board. This would be a different board from the board that acquired the carcasses but a government board nevertheless. What grazier would agree to those particular provisions? What grazier would agree to those regulations and inhibitions with regard to the running of his property, the grazing of his stock and the growing of his beef? All that is needed in order to make it legislatively sound is the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government. Then no grazing property could be sold except to an approved buyer and at a price approved by the board. What grazier would agree to that? All those things I have enumerated are the very sound basis of the prosperity of the sugar industry, but what is good for the sugar industry certainly would not be good for the grazing industry, yet the honourable member for Mackay put all those points forward here today on the basis that if it is good for the sugar industry—and the Labor Party are, shall we say, the fairy godfathers of the sugar industry—it should by the same set of circumstances make them the fairy godfathers of the grazing industry. Nothing could be more foolish and nothing could be further from the mark.

In addition to that we had the honourable member for Mackay up in Townsville quite recently. I saw him on television. I always like to see him on television because he is a fine, big, upstanding, good-looking man. I know very well all he does is in the interests of the A.L.P. Now and again by sheer accident—not by design—he might do something for the ordinary people of Queensland, but his design is always to do all he possibly can for the A.L.P. I am cynical enough to realise that that is the way political parties run; they are not interested in anybody else except the aggrandisement of their own party.

The honourable member for Mackay had a gathering at, I think, Lowths Hotel in Townsville of meat men, cattlemen and various others. I saw him on television with Mr. Fred Tritton, a very prominent grazier from the Richmond area. He is a man who has done a lot on his own property to increase its carrying capacity and also to increase the value and the calibre of his stock. Believe it or not, the honourable member for Mackay was interviewed as part of a trio, and what a trio. They were the honourable member for Mackay, Fred Tritton, the chairman of the Wyangarie Shire—I think it is now probably the Richmond Shire—and, believe it or not, old Sweatrag Wilson, my A.L.P. opponent for the seat of Townsville South. Sweatrag is the president of the Townsville Branch of the Queensland Trades and Labor Council, and among the things old Sweatrag put forward over television was that, in accordance with the Labor Party policy, there should be worker participation in industry. That is the official policy of the A.L.P., and I think it should be sounded loudly and clearly to the grazing fraternity that if the Labor Party is able to put its policy with regard to the regeneration or resuscitation of the grazing industry onto the statute-book, then the meatworks will be owned and controlled, even if not in actual cash, by the A.M.I.E.U. and the other trade unions whose members work at the meatworks. Government members should go out and tell the graziers what the Labor Party has in store for them.

When all is said and done there is no limit to credulity, and credulity is not a crime. Anyone can be credulous. Some people, of course, are unwittingly credulous and some are wittingly credulous, and many members of the Labor Party must know that many of their claims are completely haywire and round the bend, yet they are putting them forward as a sensible solution to the problems of the grazing industry. If the public knew anything about political propaganda between now and polling day—which I can give members the tip will be 28 November, if that is a Saturday; if it is not I will have another guess——

Mr. Jones: The 26th.

Mr. AIKENS: Well, we will make it the 26th. Between now and that day Government members should go out and tell the graziers what the A.L.P. has in store for them if, by some strange set of circumstances, the Labor Party happens to be returned to power at the next State election.

Mr. Gunn: Is Sweatrag having another go at you?

Mr. AIKENS: Oh, yes. This is his third go. When all is said and done, he is entitled to do it. It is a free country. He can run if he wishes to, and when all is said and done the forfeiture of his deposit will be received by the Treasurer of this State just as avidly and just as happily as the forfeiture of some other nong's deposit.

This is not a subject that will admit of much levity and flippancy; it is a very serious subject. We are dealing with the bedrock of our society, the primary producer. We are dealing with the man who goes out into the back country, works hard and produces something. Consequently, because of various things that have happened overseas, because Great Britain has gone into the common market, because other people are producing meat that is subsidised by Governments overseas, the Queensland and the Australian cattlemen are having a pretty raw deal, and it is up to us to bend all our endeavours to see whether we can straighten the problem out for them and get them on the right road again. As I keep telling the House, without prosperous primary industries this country will fall and we will all fall with it.

We must realise that we must protect the other people who have a say in it—not so much the meatworkers, the Trades and Labor Council, the big Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union and all the others who want to climb on the bandwagon, but the consumers. We must see that the housewife, the battler and the worker are not fleeced unduly. We must see that the price received by the grazier is commensurate with the price that the consumers can pay, commensurate with the price of meat that they want to buy, and commensurate with the price of meat that they are entitled to eat; so a delicate balance must be kept there.

That is all I have to say on this matter. As most honourable members representing grazing areas do not know the first thing about the establishment of the sugar industry and the very sound bedrock on which it is based, I thought I would tell the House how the sugar industry is run and why it is so successful. It is 95.5 per cent socialised, and if it has been socialised, it has been successful because it has been socialised not in the interests of the Communists or of the Left-wingers, but in the interests of those who produce the sugar, those who mill the sugar and those who sell the sugar. Of course, there is a vast difference between that form of socialism and the socialism that is subscribed to by the A.L.P., a socialism that is run purely and simply in the interests of the Communists and the Left-wingers and all those who are behind it—the Elliott V. Elliotts and people of that type, who run the socialistic enterprises for their own particular benefaction.

Let us have a serious look at this particular Bill. If it will put the beef industry on its feet, if it will even help to put the beef industry on its feet, then we should be right behind it. But in the name of all that is decent and honest, let us stop all this vocal claptrap about "the Labor Party will do this, and the Labor Party will do that". The Labor Party, if it has its way, will drive the grazier into the ground and into the bog. Remember, Mr. Speaker, that I was a member of the A.L.P. for many years. I made my political debut as an A.L.P. man. Do not forget that it is not so very long ago when, particularly in the back country, the A.L.P. candidates for the various electorates and trade union officers associated with the A.L.P. used to stand up on the public platform, rattle a box of matches and say, "There's your weapon against the greasy graziers. Set the red bull loose in the paddocks." By setting the red bull loose in the paddocks, they meant burn the graziers' grass. I have heard them; I have been on the platform when they have said it; I have been in the audiences when they have said it. Now, of course, they find that it is not quite diplomatic to say those things out in the open. They do not believe in crippling a grazier by setting fire to his grass or cutting his fences. They believe in crippling the grazier by getting every cent they can from him, driving him from the land by, shall we say, financial and economic stress, and then saying, "It wasn't our fault. Blame it on the banks and the multinational corporations", and all the other claptrap that they talk.

So if we are genuine, dinki-di Queenslanders, if we believe in this State, if we want this State to endure, if we want it to prosper, if we want everybody in this State, from the humblest to the highest, to have a share in the prosperity of the State, let us do all we can to keep the graziers on the land and keep them reasonably prosperous.

Mrs. KIPPIN (Mourilyan) (8.35 p.m.): I am particularly pleased to be able to support the Minister tonight. I have been a member of the Queensland Government beef industry committee for the past two years since its inception. It is indeed pleasing to see that we have finally managed to bring something before the House.

There has been a lot of talk tonight about the achievements and non-achievements of this committee. The beef industry has serious problems, and probably one of the most serious is getting the producers to agree. The last two years have not been wasted, because we have spent them liaising with various facets of the industry, particularly the two producer organisations. Finally we have reached the stage where they can agree on particular points; thus we have a Bill before the House. I stress that the Bill has the approval of both organisations of beef producers in this State.

I commend the Minister and his departmental officers. They have shown infinite patience over the last two years, and have done a tremendous amount of work, at very short notice at times, to get suggestions before the Australian Agricultural Council. Our submissions to the Australian Agricultural Council remain as the only viable beef schemes put forward up to date. It was rather surprising to me to find that although the industry has been in such a dire situation for the last three years, this Queensland Government committee was just about the only committee in the whole of Australia considering the problems of the beef industry in any depth. Following a committee recommendation, Western Australia introduced a minimum price scheme, but unfortunately that scheme eventually failed, just as any scheme instituted in any State must fail unless it has the approval and co-operation of all other States in the Commonwealth. At one stage the Premier of New South Wales announced that he was going to form a beef industry committee. It was to be the salvation of the industry. However, the next day he announced that he was really looking for cheaper meat for the consumer. That really confused the producer. I am sure that the hopes of every beef producer in New South Wales crumbled when he heard that. Just at the moment meat is at a most reasonable price to the consumer, particularly considering its food value.

At this point I should like to look at some of the solutions suggested. There is absolutely no simple solution. We have taken two years to look at the various suggested solutions. A consumer tax under the name of a beef assistance levy was the first proposal put forward by the committee. However, the industry itself could not accept this. The industry is very careful about the reaction of the consumer to an increased price. It is very aware of the delicate balance between consumption and the price of beef. The industry itself originally refused to go along with this proposal.

This legislation does give a lead. Our committee has had a proposal for a stabilisation scheme before the Australian Agricultural Council for some considerable time. We hope that this legislation will indicate to the other States just what we have in mind and that they will see fit to follow our lead. There has been a lot of talk amongst beef producers about the beef stabilisation scheme. Most of them have finally accepted this idea, but the problem of implementation needs an immense amount of work. The beef inquiry committee simply does not have the time to put into the work that is necessary to come up with details. The authority that will be formed under this Bill is the right type of body and it will have on it personnel with the necessary expertise to enable them to work out the practical details of implementation of some sort of stabilisation scheme.

The denigration by the member for Mackay of the State Government beef inquiry committee was, of course, predictable. If there is one thing that the Labor Party in Queensland desperately needs it is a split within the beef industry and a rift between the beef industry and its traditional representatives. If the Labor Party had its way and had implemented its policy of one vote one value, country people would not have had any representation at all in Parliament. That, of course, would suit the Labor Party.

We know that over the last three years cattlemen have been most frustrated because no-one has been able to come up with an answer to their problems. This was to be expected. However, through the beef committee and through the liaison that has been criticised by the member for Mackay, the beef producers in Queensland know what the Government has been trying to do. They know that we have no intention whatever of forcing upon the industry anything that it does not want. They know that we all hope that eventually we will arrive at a common ground on what is the best thing to be done in the interests of the industry.

It is interesting that up to date no-one, not even the beef producers themselves, has been able to come up with proposals that are satisfactory to the whole of the industry. The Labor Party has tried to woo country voters, particularly over the last month or so on the eve of a State election. This is a change; country people do not normally see Labor Party members around the ridges. The only time they do see them is at election-time. Country people, particularly country women, have very vivid memories of how we fared under the Federal Labor Government. How many primary producers are there among the ranks of honourable members opposite? Not one. In contrast, there are many primary producers among the ranks of the National Party members, so it would be ridiculous to claim that our party, with its roots in the country areas, is not concerned for the primary producers.

Country people remember that it was Mr. Whitlam's rapid revaluation that put the beef industry in a most unfavourable position on the Japanese market. The revaluation was of such magnitude that Japan was able to import American beef much more cheaply than Australian beef. This did nothing, of course, to help our oversupply that existed at that time.

Although the criticism levelled by the honourable member for Mackay was rather verbose, it put forward no constructive, concrete proposals. In fact when the beef industry inquiry committee called on anyone interested to make submissions to it on the problems confronting the beef industry, the Labor Party's rural committee did not have even one single thought to offer. A lot of the submissions put forward by the Labor Party have been thought of only in the last month or so in the realisation that it had to get out into the country if it were to have any hope whatever of winning back the country seats. But the Labor Party will face tremendous problems in trying to convince country women that it is concerned for them.

Back in 1975, when it first looked as though the beef industry would get into trouble, the Queensland delegation to the International Women's Conference in Canberra approached Mrs. Margaret Whitlam for assistance. We were deluded into thinking that as a woman she might understand the problems of those women who do not have the convenience of living in the cities. We did not receive a hint of understanding from her. Her attitude was based on straight Labor philosophy that if the beef producers could not remain viable and had to go out of production, the only thing left for them was to move to the towns and Australia could import its beef. Women, particularly, have borne the brunt of this recession. They are rather bitter about the reception we received at that interview in Canberra. Women also bore the brunt of the former Labor Government's moves against country people. They felt most acutely the cuts in various spheres such as the country air services and mail services and the loss of the fuel price equalisation.

I support the Minister's proposal concerning the composition of the authority. There has been consternation in some sections of the industry, which feel that the processers are probably not as well represented as they could be. However, we gave the composition of this board a lot of thought. Considering what has happened in the industry over the years, it is imperative that the board be producer-controlled. The five representatives of producers will be chosen from a panel of names submitted to the Minister by the various producer organisations. The organisations understand the job that the board will have to perform and they have said that they definitely want the majority of members to be answerable to producers. They are quite willing to have people with various expertise on the board as producer representatives.

While five people will represent livestock producers, that does not necessarily mean that they will all be producers. It is important, however, that they be answerable to the producing section of the industry. The other representatives will provide ample opportunity for the processers and other sections of the industry to state their views. Even the distributors can be represented on the board. They play an important part in the industry.

The producers are the last to get a cut of the cake. If they make a reasonable profit, other sections will do likewise. A disheartening feature of the industry is that some producers are fighting for survival while some processers are recording rather respectable profits, to say the least, and process employees are winning their regular wage increases.

Mr. Simpson interjected.

Mrs. KIPPIN: They are indeed large increases. For instance, in 1973, a beef slaughterman was on about $134 a week. In 1977 he is on $221. That represents quite a considerable increase in the light of the overall state of the industry. The average earnings of meat industry employees reflect the same picture.

In addition, producers bear the cost of strikes in the processing industries. I do not have to elaborate on the problems North Queensland meatworks have been facing, particularly during this killing season. With a gross oversupply of beef, the number of killing hours lost this season is criminal. The assessed cost to Central Queenland cattlemen through industrial problems is between $20 and $30 a head for each beast sold. When we consider ourselves lucky to get $100 a bullock at this stage, that is an unbearable loss through industrial activity. Such pressures as this are particularly difficult to overcome. Beef producers have not sufficient latitude or margin of profit to accept such losses.

I support the Bill and hope that before very long the other States will realise that it is imperative that we all reach agreement on some sort of stabilisation for the beef industry. This scheme will offer a viable living to producers and will contain benefits for consumers when prices eventually reach a reasonable level again. In the interests of both consumers and producers, the introduction of such legislation in all States and the Commonwealth is long overdue.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (8.51 p.m.): Opposition members have been going off the deep end trying to condemn the Government. It is fairly significant to look at the record of the Governments in the nation. The Government in New South Wales, which is of the same political persuasion as honourable members opposite, has done much grandstanding about what it is going to do.

Mr. Doumany: It doesn't know where to start.

Mr. ELLIOTT: That is right. It is running around looking for copies of our Bill to try to work out what it ought to do.

Mr. Wright: You are not going to co-operate? You are not interested in co-operating?

Mr. ELLIOTT: My word we will co-operate. There are no two ways about whether we are prepared to co-operate. It is interesting to see these people trying to grandstand all the time while they are not prepared to do anything. Everybody had to wait for Queensland to come forward with its legislation. It is the old story. Who else has put legislation through, other than Tasmania, which is in an isolated situation?

Mr. Doumany: They are trying to swim across Bass Strait.

Mr. ELLIOTT: That is so.

As I said, the Opposition members as usual are trying to mislead people on the contents of the Bill. It is very significant that this Government has come to grips with the problem. I hope that no-one thinks that it is a cut-and-dried and fairly straightforward proposal. There are as many people who see tremendous problems as there are people who are quite convinced that marketing systems are the answer for this particular industry. We must look at the history of the downfall of the cattle industry, because it did not happen in five minutes.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you think that bad management had anything to do with it?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Bad management by the cattle industry definitely did not have anything to do with it. The efficiency in that industry would be right up with the best. There were a considerable number of reasons for the downfall. Regrettably, most of them were political. They were marketing problems as such, but were politically inspired. The one I would like to instance is that connected with Japan. The L.I.P.C. in Japan rakes off about $80,000,000.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What is the L.I.P.C.?

Mr. ELLIOTT: The Livestock Importers Producers Corporation. It is a Government body which is responsible for handling all imported meat. It is responsible for the resale of meat to all of the retailers and wholesalers within the Japanese framework. Regrettably, it is ripping off our cattlemen when it brings their beef into the country and sells it at anything up to 20 times the amount paid for it by the Government. That is just not good enough. We are spending our overseas reserves on Japanese products such as Toyota Land Cruisers—to instance an item on which cattlemen spend their money—and I believe that we should go to great lengths to let the Japanese consumers know that both they and Australian cattlemen are being ripped off and that the only ones who are doing well are the "meat mafia", as they are called, which is a combination of the L.I.P.C. and various other bodies who are taking the cream from the trade. We should be using the media in Japan to get across this message, if that is the only way in which it can be done.

Our cattlemen (my family is involved in this as much as anyone else) are being ripped off left, right and centre. Some people will try to argue against this proposition but it is my belief that there is a greater share for the primary producer in the market-place, both in Australia and overseas. In some instances the processers are getting a larger share than is reasonable at the present time.

I also believe that we should be looking very seriously at the performance of the Australian Labor Party. I make special reference to the position of the Opposition in this Parliament. Where was the Leader of the Opposition when the Premier was trying to use resources diplomacy by his suggestion of "no beef, no coal."? Let us consider some of the things said by Opposition members at that time. The Leader of the Opposition accused the Premier of grandstanding. I have with me Press cuttings containing various quotations from Labor members.

Mr. Casey: Why doesn't the Premier pull that stunt now in relation to our sugar contract with Japan?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Doesn't the honourable member read the newspapers? The Premier is taking a very strong stand in the sugar dispute. He is taking the Japanese on.

Opposition members should hang their heads in shame over the way they failed to back the Government in its efforts to assist the beef industry. They had a chance to stand up and be counted but they let the side down. They left the beef industry high and dry. It is not often that I say anything in favour of the honourable member for Rockhampton but at least he did have the guts to stand up and say something in a letter from the Labor Party in Central Queensland. But he was the only one; the rest let the side down. That is indicative of the behaviour one comes to expect from the A.L.P.

Mr. Doumany: It won't improve, you know.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I am afraid it will not. The honourable member for Mackay used to be an Independent and in that role he did a reasonable job; but he had to get back into the Labor fold because he could see that there were more jobs for the boys, more lurks, perks and possibilities back in the A.L.P. So he returned to the fold and now comes in here running round and bellowing like a wounded bull. He looks about the same size as one on T.V.

The Government has a reasonable record of things done for country people in Queensland. I shall certainly have no hesitation in referring during the election campaign to the Government's sound and solid record in the various reforms that we have tried to implement, and have implemented, throughout the State for the good of the country producers of Australia, and Queensland in particular. The most far-reaching of those reforms was the abolition of death duties, and I think anyone who does not agree with that is less than fair.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: It has a fair bit to do with the Bill, Mr. Speaker, as you would be aware. We have seen many, many instances where the sons of primary producers have worked on properties for absolutely no remuneration whatsoever and then the father has been killed in a car accident or a fall from a horse and his family has had to pay immense probate duties.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What has this got to do with the price of meat?

Mr. ELLIOTT: It has everything to do with it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: It has not, because this is the second-reading stage.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, it is just one more thing that this Government has done for people on the land. Honourable members opposite had the gall to stand up here tonight and try to show that this Government has done nothing for the beef producer.

Mr. Jones: We're concerned about all Queenslanders.

Mr. ELLIOTT: We legislate for all Queenslanders. The abolition of death duties did as much for the corner storekeeper or the person down the road as it did for the man on the land because inflation is pushing up the value of their properties as well, but that is really getting away from the Bill.

This legislation will give us the ability to work in with the Meat and Livestock Corporation. We will then be able to contract for the sale of beef through the corporation to try to cut out the middle man, if that is necessary in order to get a reasonable return for our producers.

We cannot get away from examples in other primary industries where marketing has been the key to improving growers' returns. Recently on behalf of the Government I attended a symposium at Dalby. The Leader of the Opposition also spoke. I thought it would be a good idea to cite the situation which faced the grain-growing industry some time ago. The grain growers were faced with what was possibly a less catastrophic situation, but at the time the grain merchants were trying to cut the throats of the producers. They were offering them from $17 to $22 a tonne for sorghum that was really worth somewhere in the vicinity of $29 or $30, and at the time they were able to get away with it. Then the grain growers said, "We will not accept those prices for our commodity." They got together and decided to market their own grain. They took the very best people in the industry who had the necessary marketing ability and sent them over to Japan, at the expense of the growers' organisation, where they marketed our crop. That is an ideal example of self-help.

No-one knows better than I that meat is a far more difficult commodity to handle. It is far more perishable and difficult to handle than grain, and I am not suggesting that what was done by the sorghum growers could be duplicated by the meat industry. But the principle is the same. I believe that many of the beef industry's problems revolve around marketing. Probably everyone here tonight is saying the same thing, but I reiterate that we must get out among the developing countries in Asia where the standard of living is rising quickly and try to sell more beef. It is our responsibility as an industry to get out there and promote beef to those people who only now have a chance to purchase it.

I was pleased to note that the honourable member for Belyando did something practical. He organised a talk to the board of Qantas and suggested that not only should they use more beef on international flights but also they should promote beef more. Anything that is helpful in promoting the sale of our beef must be supported by the Government. We have tended to sit back for too long—many primary industries are in this category—and say, "People will use our product. We don't really have to market it solidly."

In fairness to the Australian Meat Board, I must say that I think it has done a reasonable job in the field of promotion. It has many advertising programmes of a promotional type, and I was surprised to hear the honourable member for Mackay, I think it was, say at the introductory stage that no promotion was going on.

Mr. Casey: I did not say that.

Mr. ELLIOTT: It must have been the Leader of the Opposition, then. Did he speak at the introductory stage? Anyway, the member who was speaking said that the Australian Meat Board was not running advertisements. I immediately produced an advertisement that was run in "The Australian Women's Weekly", or a similar magazine.

Mr. Doumany: That is the right place for it.

Mr. ELLIOTT: The honourable member for Kurilpa is spot on, because women are the very people to whom we should be getting the picture across. The housewives of the nation are responsible for buying most of the nation's food. Therefore, it is essential that we get the message across to them.

I know that many other honourable members wish to speak in this debate, but there are a couple of other small points that I wish to make. One relates to the European Economic Community. Regrettably, the community subsidises many of its products to an artificial level, thus making it very difficult for many of our industries, particularly the beef and dairying industries, to get products into that market. But, once again getting back to resources diplomacy, I believe that we should use all the pressure that we are capable of using whenever possible. We should attempt to use resources diplomacy in the export of coal to Japan or for any other product that we are marketing, and I definitely support it.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.8 p.m.): I have listened intently to the various honourable members who have taken part in this debate and I am rather surprised that a number of them have used this opportunity to try to make out that the Queensland Government deserves all the credit. I think we must realise, Mr. Speaker, that the problems did not begin when Labor came to office and that they have not been resolved by this legislation.

While listening to the introductory debate, I was surprised to hear the honourable member for Carnarvon deliver his speech on the basis that the problems were all caused by the Whitlam Government.

Mr. Moore: Of course they were!

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member may say so, but the honourable member for Carnarvon was sitting with me in the Leichhardt Hotel at Rockhampton at the first annual conference of the Cattlemen's Union when a nationally respected economist clearly explained that the problems of the beef industry did not begin in 1972 and set out a very objective paper showing that the policies implemented by the McMahon Government were the beginning of the problems. Let the honourable member for Carnarvon deny that. In fact, I turned to him at that time, as I sat next to him, and I said, "Mr. McKechnie, I doubt that I will ever hear you attack the Labor Government for the problems of the beef industry."

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: Let me say that at that meeting, which the honourable member for Flinders also attended——

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders. I will not tolerate persistent interjections. I warn all honourable members on both sides of the House that I will deal with them under Standing Order 123A if they continue to interject.

Mr. WRIGHT: I was making the point that the honourable member for Flinders also attended that conference. He would be aware that it was attended by 1,000 members of the Cattlemen's Union, and that they booed, hissed, catcalled and yahooed the representatives of the Federal Government. It was Mr. Sinclair who received such a hard time from them.

Mr. Katter: They cheered Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, though.

Mr. Lester: They clapped the honourable member for Belyando, too.

Mr. WRIGHT: They clapped the honourable member for Belyando right out of the room.

Mr. LESTER: I rise to a point of order. He has not told the truth. I was given a good clap for my contribution. I ask him to withdraw the remark.

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

An Opposition Member: They appreciate a comic.

Mr. WRIGHT: They do appreciate a comic, and the honourable member for Belyando has proved to be one in the last 2½ years in Central Queensland.

Mr. LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I am not a comic. I am a hard-working member for my electorate. Take that back.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Belyando that I will deal with him under Standing Order 123A if he persists.

Mr. WRIGHT: Thank you for your protection, Mr. Speaker.

Irrespective of the claims being made now by Government members, I would like to read from a submission that was sent by the Cattlemen's Union to the Federal Government. This submission is right up to date —September 1977. It says—

> "The Cattlemen's Union of Australia, similar to the Federal Government, is committed to national economic recovery and the fight against inflation. Unlike the Government, however, the Cattlemen's Union is not prepared to pursue the fight to the last country Australian."

That quotation clearly sums up the attitude of most country people, especially in the beef-producing areas, to the Federal Government at this point. For all the cries and all the screams about how the Whitlam Government was supposed to create the problems here, it is clear that those involved in the industry well know that, while decisions were made that were not in the interests of cattle people or primary producers generally, this Federal Government has done nothing to alleviate the difficulties that have been perpetrated on, and are still with, the people on the land.

So it is rather surprising that the honourable member for Flinders should make out that it was the Labor Government's fault. How can he honestly believe what he tells this Chamber about the Whitlam Government's being responsible for the problems associated with the breakdown in marketing in the E.E.C.? How can he possibly say that the Whitlam Government caused the problems with the Canadian and the U.S. markets? The straw that really breaks the camel's back—when talking about the honourable member for Flinders, it is appropriate to talk about camels—is his attempt to make out that the Whitlam Government caused the problems in Japan. With the honourable member for Carnarvon, I talked to producers over there.

Mr. KATTER: I rise to a point of order. I never at any stage made out that the Whitlam Government was responsible for the situation in Japan. What I said was that the Whitlam Government did nothing about it, and tried to stop our Premier——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Rockhampton to accept the denial of the honourable member for Flinders.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept his explanation. His approach was one of blaming the Whitlam Government for everything. He attacked the Whitlam Government for the attitude Japan had adopted.

I was with the honourable member for Carnarvon in Japan, and I listened very attentively to him. I give the honourable member for Carnarvon a bit of credit.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. There is too much interference with the speaker. If honourable members wish to continue conversations, I ask them to leave the Chamber.

Mr. WRIGHT: I give the honourable member for Carnarvon some credit. While in Japan—and in fact everywhere he went on that parliamentary tour—he sought information about the beef industry. He endeavoured to represent his State. I say that without playing politics. He was one member on that delegation who really did his homework on the beef industry and the problems of those countries as they related to Queensland in particular and Australia generally. The point that came out in Japan was that the Japanese Government was prepared to go to any political length to protect its own beef producers. More so, it would go to any political length to heed the cries and pressure of the white-meat lobby. That was the point that came out, and it was clearly indicated in the notes taken by the honourable member for Carnarvon. The E.E.C. breakdown, the loss of Canadian and Japanese markets, and so on—all these events occurred at once, and they certainly were not caused by the Whitlam Government.

One point has to be made here: how is it that the representatives of the beef producers of this nation did not know what was going on? How is it that in 1972 and 1973 they were still telling the beef producers, "Produce all you like. There are no problems. Forget about any worries, because the sky-high prices that you are getting at the moment will remain. You will still get 45c a lb.; you'll get 49c a lb." The producers held back their cattle, and the slump came.

Tonight, as well as looking at a beef classification scheme and at a price stabilisation scheme, we should have a darned good look at marketing techniques and an objective look at the tactics that will be be adopted by our people who will be involved in the sale of our products overseas.

This is the point that has been made by the Cattlemen's Union in its submissions and its Press releases. No matter what we do about an objective classification system and a price schedule scheme, there are certain other areas that must be looked at. We all accept that the Australian cattle industry is in dire straits. This has been made clear tonight by all speakers and it was also made clear at the introductory stage by the Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that if the Federal Government really appreciates this situation it should immediately proclaim a state of emergency in the beef industry. But instead of doing that it has been mucking around —that is the only term that can be used. Might I add that the Labor Party, too, did the same thing. I admit it. I had one of Ken Wriedt's departmental specialists in Rockhampton when we met with the producers, the processers, the unions and the politicians. In fact, the member for Callide was with us.

Mr. Katter: But there's not much that the Federal Government can do.

Mr. WRIGHT: Oh, what? I am surprised at that comment. After all, the Federal Government does have the power of the purse. We have heard talk of spaying schemes and other schemes too, which, as the member of Warwick says, ensure a massive injection of finance—a cash flow—to the producers. I make the point that the only people who can do that are those at the Federal level. Or does the member for Flinders suggest that the State Government ought to do it? I believe it is a Federal responsibility.

Mr. Katter: Do you realise you are talking about a hand-out of $330,000,000 a year?

Mr. WRIGHT: No we are not. The Cattlemen's Union has estimated that the spaying scheme—which I know that the Federal member for Capricorn, Mr. Carige, was given credit for, but it was in fact a scheme put forward by a number of producers in the Cattlemen's Union—involving payment of $20 per head for up to 200 head per year per producer will cost approximately $20,000,000. Compared with the finance that is given to the motor-car industry and the tariff protection given to secondary industry, that is a mere pittance. But what it would do to the beef industry! It would give a cash flow to the producer at this point, and the flow-on benefits would be tremendous. The beef producers would be able to pay the local authority rates that they have not been able to pay for such a long time; finance would be injected into the small-town economy; employment would be created; and people in the primary-producing areas linked with the cattle industry would also be assisted.

Again I make the point that, no matter what the member for Flinders might say, it is the Federal Government that has the financial capability and capacity to do something about it.

We note that the new board will have power to look at all aspects of marketing and classification. I am pleased to note that the submission put forward by the Cattlemen's Union on a national objective carcass classification scheme has finally been accepted. Certain Government members have said that they have been on this advisory committee for two years. It is amazing how long people can procrastinate. I realise the procrastination occurs in bureaucracy, but I would not have thought that a parliamentary committee comprising people who are concerned for the industry would have taken two years to come up with something objective and practical.

Mr. Doumany: You're a know-all.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am not a know-all.

Mr. Doumany: Yes, you are.

Mr. WRIGHT: No, I'm not. I realise it is all very well for Governments such as the Queensland Government to rush around and suddenly take credit for a fight that has been pursued by a lot of producers for a long time. But it seems that tonight only the Queensland Government is being given the credit.

The only thing that will overcome the problems confronting the cattle industry is a broad national-based recovery programme, of which a national objective carcass classification scheme is an integral part. It does not just require legislation to be passed here tonight or attacks on the Wran Government because it has talked about it but has not yet taken legislative action. It will require a financial commitment by the Federal Government. It has been assessed that it will cost about $4,500,000.

Mr. Doumany: Come down to something specific.

Mr. WRIGHT: I understand the honourable member's interjection because I know his background. We know that as he yells, screams and opposes classification, he is falling in line with the ideas of the meatworks and exporters.

Mr. DOUMANY: I rise to a point of order. I find that comment offensive. I did not oppose classification. I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept the honourable member's explanation, Mr. Speaker, but on the opposition he was voicing when I was talking about classification I do not think I can be blamed for thinking that.

Mr. DOUMANY: I rise to another point of order. I find that remark very offensive because I did not talk to the honourable member for Rockhampton about this subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Rockhampton to accept the denial of the honourable member for Kurilpa.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept it, but I am sure all honourable members heard the honourable member interjecting. I do not want to upset him.

The point I was making is that it is the classification scheme supported by the producer that is opposed by the exporters and the meatworks or processers. No doubt the processers have benefited greatly from the deficiencies in the existing scheme. No doubt the honourable member for Callide, whom I accept as a good exponent of the cattle industry's——

Mr. Katter interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders has had his say.

An Opposition Member: Heave him out!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will follow him if he does not behave himself.

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member for Callide will back me up on this. When we met the primary producers, the A.M.I.E.U. and other politicians in the parliamentary offices in Rockhampton, the people who would not come to the table until the last minute were the exporters and processers. When they came they were not prepared to produce any figures or explain why at that stage the producer was getting 12c a lb. when the cost of processing was 5c to 6c, yet the shipside price was 29c.

And we all know about the return on hides and so on. They were the ones who would not come to the party or talk to us. It does not surprise me that the exporters and meatworks are against the schemes put forward by the beef producers. They see the great danger in the proposals put forward by the beef producers when they talk about having some co-operative meat-processing policy and are asking the Federal Government for funds to buy up regional meatworks for the establishment of such a co-operative.

We need not only an objective classification scheme, but also a minimum price schedule for different classifications. People who have considered this subject realise that this must follow the inauguration of an objective classification scheme. Price schedules must apply to each classification.

In the limited time that I have, I do not intend to elaborate fully on the benefits, but we all know that if the information was supplied weekly by the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation it would give vendors and buyers an accurate indication of price. Surely that is important. At the moment the producer is totally at the whim of the exporter and the meat processer.

I am surprised that Mr. Sinclair, who is supposed to be an advocate for primary industry, said publicly that we should not have any minimum price or classification schemes, because they will take so long to be effective. Honourable members—even Government members—will accept that such a scheme was introduced in Canada in 1929; in New Zealand, 1943; in Denmark, 1950; and in Ireland, 1973. While there are differences in the types of scheme and the implementation of them, there is proof that they have worked. If beef producers are to benefit, we must have an objective classification scheme on a minimum price basis.

I have spoken at length to beef producers but until last week I did not appreciate that if we have a price schedule for various classifications it will encourage producers to recognise the more profitable areas of production and tailor management accordingly. Many and varied advantages will flow if the Government is prepared to bring this about.

A point was made by the honourable member for Flinders, which I accept, that it cannot be brought about by one State. It has to be done on a national basis or at least on an eastern States basis. I also agree with the Minister that we could probably forget about Western Australia because, geographically, it is isolated.

The next point that should be made is the need to have producer control or direction on all meat-marketing boards at both State and Federal levels. I commend the Minister in this instance because five of the 10-man board will be producers. This is wise. I have spoken to some Government members and it seems that this suggestion was put forward by a number of fellows in the cattle industry. I think we accept that the producer surely ought to have—if not control—a major say in directing the policies of the boards when it comes to marketing.

Until now the producer has had limited say in marketing. In fact, he has been at the mercy of the exporter and the processer. There is one way around it. This has been one of the really radical policies of the Cattlemen's Union. It is that cattlemen co-operate and buy meatworks. That is surely one of the answers. That is what the big multinationals have done.

Mr. Alison interjected.

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member does not like the word "multinationals". We know the amount of money they put into his campaign.

Let us accept that one of the difficulties we face in Australia is that while 25 per cent of the meat-processing firms are registered on the Australian share market, 75 per cent are not. Some are Government-owned and some are co-operative, but a huge number are foreign private companies which have influence with the Government and control not only the meat-processing and the shipping lines, but also massive areas of land and therefore hundreds of thousands of cattle. So that virtually they have the industry by the neck.

I am hoping that in due course, with a Government that is interested in the cattle industry, there might be a full inquiry into who owns the beef industry at present. It is vital to have control of marketing. I think that this point was well made by the honourable member for Mackay. I accept that the point was made by Government members, including the honourable member for Warwick. There must be some control in marketing so that promotion of the product takes place. The promotion has to be on the domestic market as well as on the export market The home price is set by the export price. If this is so, we need experts in the field. I believe that the Minister intends to have one such expert on this board. Again this is being very objective.

Another aspect comes back to the immediate provision of money to the producers. I raised this point when I was referring to the comments of the honourable member for Flinders. We have to give money—hard cash—to the producer. I have listened carefully to the number of schemes put up and possibly the most practical is the $20 a head payment to spay a maximum number of cattle at $200 per producer. The honourable member for Warwick also made the valid point——

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: $15 a head.

Mr. WRIGHT: It might have been $15. I know that the Cattlemen's Union was looking at about $20. I accept the Minister's interjection. It may have been only $15. Regardless of the quantum, it would give an immediate supply of finance to the producer. I accept the point made by the honourable member for Warwick that we must be careful. If we do not have some controls here, all the female cattle could be spayed and a long-term disadvantage could result.

The idea has been put forward that some type of fee be paid to the primary producer to muster a maximum number of 1,000 breeders per producer to conduct tests for T.B., brucellosis and other diseases. The benefits would be immediate because the producers would have income which would not, I hope, be gobbled up by the rural lending institutions. This has often been the trouble with loans. The moment the producer gets a certain amount of money, it is gobbled up to cover his debts.

This idea would allow a much needed injection of finance into the rural area and there would be a flow-on benefit in the small areas. We have to take this very subjective approach and be concerned with the personality of the producer and the humanitarian problems he is facing. That comes back to financial difficulties.

I move on to the need to assist the primary producer in the off-farm costs that he faces today. We know that his profit margin is going down and down in the light of the market return he gets while his costs are going up and up. He is the one who is at the mercy of inflation. He has to absorb all those costs, yet he does not get a flow-on in the return for his products.

It has been suggested by the Cattlemen's Union, supported, I believe, by others in the industry, that there has to be a price freeze on cattle industry essentials. These are animal health essentials, vehicle and machinery parts, fuels and lubricants. This might be hard to implement because it is difficult to have a sectional price freeze. I accept that, but I am sure that if this matter were considered, especially if the Federal Government were involved, it could be done by means of a tax rebate. There could be a tax rebate equal to the increased costs of some products. I believe this could be done. It is a matter that should be looked at.

Speaking of finance raises the matter of the establishment of a national rural bank. This has been promised repeatedly but the promises, like so much of the Fraser Government's attitude to rural producers, has been empty. It was promised over two years ago, but nothing has been done about it. Surely we need a national lending agency that can assist in the reconstruction of existing loans to cattle producers, especially those with limited net incomes. What is needed is a lending institution that could make available long-term and low-interest loans.

Although I am being political I might make the point that we do not want loans of the type made available by the State Government when it set aside for this purpose $10,000,000 at 2½ per cent interest but made the money available only to those who could not borrow elsewhere. If a producer was able to borrow at 12½ per cent, he had to take that finance. I remember asking in a question 18 months or two years ago how much money had been borrowed in the first 12 months of that scheme. I recall that the amount was something like $700,000. Not even one-tenth of the total amount available had been borrowed, the reason being that graziers did not have access to it. Under any national rural bank concept the money would have to be made available to graziers who need it. If such money is to be made available, it must be under a scheme with a non-repayment factor for three or up to five years.

Beef producers are talking about a co-operative venture in meat-processing. There is no doubt that a national rural bank could lend moneys to various producers to get together in a co-operative to buy out a regional meat-processing enterprise. These are matters that have to be considered together with what the Minister has outlined.

Another aspect I raise pertains to marketing tactics. This is not new; it has been said before but it needs to be said again. There should be an all-out attack on existing markets and a continuing search for, and development of, new markets. I was pleased that the honourable member for Cunningham made the point that I am a supporter of resources diplomacy or, put another way, multi-product sales. I do not deny that I supported the Premier when he made that call. I did that irrespective of the attacks that might have been made on me. I think it is a wise approach to the matter. It is the normal approach in industry today. We know that it happens with all sorts of products.

If one industry is involved in selling a product to another, the barter system starts. What we are talking about is a multi-product system under which sales are made of one product provided the purchaser takes a certain quantity of another. This method has been successfully used by the Arabs in the sale of oil and the Americans have used it for special military advantages in giving aid. If they can use aid diplomacy, surely we in this State could help the nation, Queensland and primary producers by using resources diplomacy. In the Japanese market, why not use coal?

There is also a need for the better use of marketing intelligence. I made the point earlier that when the slump in the beef industry was pending, those who should have been in the know did not know. If they did know, they did not tell anybody. Producers were still building up herds and rushing into a slump that has become such a disaster that 10,000 specialist producers have been lost to the industry. Another 28,000 specialist producers are facing bankruptcy or may be forced to leave their properties. There has been an annual loss of $1,000 million in country areas.

We have had a flow-on loss in the towns by way of employment that has amounted now to billions of dollars and we have suffered social and humanitarian problems among the cattle-producing families and all those associated with that industry. In fact, I have been told by those producers— and some of them are relatives of mine, and I do not deny the fact that I have a personal interest in this issue—that they are worse off now than they were in the depression of the early 1930s, and the incomes they are earning are very often far less than what they would get if they had the right to go on the dole. So we have had a collapse in the cattle industry that has cost this State and this nation millions of dollars. We have 29 per cent of the beef producers with a projected cash income over the next 12 months of zero. We have 13,400 such producers earning between zero and $5,000. In other words, 56 per cent of our cattle producers are in a non-viable situation. When we consider the cost to the general economy, then action has to be taken, and consideration has to be given to using different techniques, even though it might be abhorrent to certain people when we start talking about resources diplomacy. There comes a time when we have to apply such techniques in order to break down the trade barriers set by other countries.

Moreover, marketing tactics should be used with fast food stores. This point was raised by the Leader of the Opposition at a show he opened. I remember the honourable member for Belyando picked it up rather quickly, or should I say slowly, because a month later he came out with it as though it were an original idea of his.

The honourable member for Mackay has talked about the selling techniques of businesses.

There is a firm in Rockhampton which now has these special microwave ovens and is selling a roast that is already cooked on the inside so all the housewife or the homemaker has to do is go home and virtually heat it up. These matters have to be considered. Probably we need to start looking at the other primary industries and start promoting on television a variety of cooking techniques. There is nothing more delicious than good beef.

Let me recall to this Chamber an incident which occurred when we were on an overseas trip with the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. It is a humorous one and I know the honourable member for Carnarvon will not mind my mentioning it. We were in a certain hotel in Japan and we were pretty sick of eating Japanese food, so the Minister for Local Government said, "Fellows, the rule is: whatever I eat, you eat." Honourable members would know what he ordered—steak, eggs and chips. We each had a huge steak, a couple of eggs and the biggest pile of chips one would ever see. There was not a sound except for the crunching of chips and the savouring of succulent steak. It was beautiful. I know that the honourable member for Carnarvon will remember that. There was hardly a sound as we gorged ourselves on the beautiful Kobe steaks, the chips and the eggs. So when it comes to food competition, steak certainly is a worthy competitor.

I stressed the need for resources diplomacy and, if that is abhorrent to people, I suggest that we might consider it as being a multiproduct promotion process overseas, that we get to these countries and say, "O.K., we are prepared to sell you the double; it will be coal and it will be meat." By doing this we can help the producer.

The point has already been made by the producers—in fact it was made by the Leader of the Opposition some time ago but he was ridiculed by Government members when he talked about it—that we should be using beef in various foreign aid programmes. What Government members did not know when they ridiculed the Leader of the Opposition was that this was already being done. At least, canned meat was being used in foreign aid programmes in Lebanon, Cyprus and Mozambique. If difficulties of storage arise, why not build the storage installation units in the first instance so that these countries can accept frozen beef supplies and then distribute them in the form of aid. Surely this ought to be considered.

Whilst we welcome the provisions that have been outlined by the Minister, we have to consider other points. One additional action area is the need to cut down the transport costs being faced by the beef industry. Very often it is not worth the producer's while to send his cattle to a sale. I have known of it costing more for people to send a "K" wagon of cattle to sale than they receive for the cattle. That is not an isolated instance. It happens, and we must also look at that.

We must look also at the freight charges, because recently I was given information that it is cheaper for people in the Miriam Vale area to send cattle all the way to Cannon Hill that it is to send them 150-odd miles to Gracemere, near Rockhampton, so something is wrong with the freight system. If we want to overcome it, let us have some type of rebate for both rail and road transport.

Another point that must be considered—and this comes back to the Federal Government—is the need to reintroduce a fuel equalisation scheme, not only for beef producers but also for all producers on the land. I accept that it was removed by a

Labor Government; but the point should be made over and over again that it has never been reintroduced by the Fraser Government and that no action has been taken by the State Governmnent.

Mr. Jones: Now they are going to jack it up by 11c.

Mr. WRIGHT: They are doing that. Not only are they not reintroducing an equalisation scheme, as the honourable member for Cairns has well pointed out; they are jacking up the price of petrol, which will have an inflationary effect on every primary producer's costs.

I made the point earlier about the grip that the multinationals, especially those involved in meat processing, have on the cattle industry. A full investigation into this aspect is needed because only limited information is available. Limited information is available as to the profits they make, yet we know the role that they play. They virtually control processing; they also have a huge role in production; they control and manipulate the cattle markets; they hold large pastoral areas; they control hundreds of thousands of cattle; and they operate their processing works in key areas. So if the ordinary independent cattle producer is to have any say in marketing, we must come to grips with the control that these multi-national companies have. We know the tactics that they have used. They keep the taxable profits down by keeping the cost of the cattle they buy from themselves at a high rate, and if in fact their processing profits are clear, they increase their shipping costs so that, again, their outlay is heavy and their taxable profits are less.

Mr. Katter: There is one works up North where the bloke owns the cattle privately and sells them to the meatworks at twice the cost.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept the honourable member's interjection because I know that sort of think is going on. That is one of the reasons why I believe that we need to investigate this aspect. It is an important one, and it is working against the ordinary producer.

The cattlemen of Australia are at war, and we know that they are out to survive. But I am pleased—and I think that all honourable members are pleased—that, although their prime objective is survival, they also have as an objective the reconstruction of their industry. Whilst we might get up in this Chamber and argue about whose side we should be on—whether we are going to back the U.G.A. or whether we are going to back the Cattlemen's Union; whether or not we are going to call for co-operation—the important fact is that, because of the militancy of these producers, things are being done. The Federal Government is beginning to listen and is now considering price stabilisation schemes and classification schemes. The Queensland Government has now introduced legislation, and I suggest that if it had not been for the Cattlemen's Union we would never have had legislation such as this coming before the Chamber. As long as we have cattlemen who are prepared to fight for what they believe in, we are going to have better legislation and we are going to have a better go for all people.

After all, not only the cattleman is affected. If he is in trouble, the people in small towns are in trouble, and the worker who works for the producer is in trouble, too. There is a flow-on effect to areas such as Rockhampton, which is the cattle city of Australia, and people there suffer because of the faults in the industry. Therefore, it is vitally important that we come to grips with the problem, that we restructure the marketing side of the industry and that we rethink the approach that Government takes.

Might I just make the point as an aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for all the balloon-blowing that we have heard tonight, the Government has not played its part in the industry. I might just make a point about butchers, because the Government has certainly caused some trouble there. I have a couple of friends and one relative in the industry, and I know the additional costs that they have had to bear because of the stringent health requirements of the Department of Primary Industries. I do not know how many butchers have been wiped out, but I will give some credit here to the honourable member for Callide. He has been one fellow on the Government side who has had the courage and guts to get up and say something about it. If the Government wants to start blowing balloons and flying flags, let it start thinking about the defects of its policies and the effects they have had on the industry.

I support what the Minister is trying to do here tonight. I do not believe that it is end-all. It certainly is not a panacea to the problems, but at least it is a start. I do hope that the other States will follow suit. The legislation will have no effect unless the other States co-operate and we have some uniformity, at least in the eastern States.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (9.46 p.m.): I have listened with interest to the debate on the setting up of the Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority. This legislation will give a lead in Australia. We are legislating to give power to this authority to do what most members have asked for this evening, that is, to implement a stabilisation scheme or a minimum floor price scheme.

It is rather intriguing to me that Opposition members have really got interested in looking into cattle industry problems. Let me give a few facts. I happen to be in the cattle industry and I do sell cattle. Whitlam came to power in December 1972.

Mr. Wright: Not again!

Mr. HARTWIG: Let me give a running commentary on what happened to the beef industry.

For the first three months in 1973 bullocks were selling for from $40 to $50 a 100 lb. In June 1974, prior to going overseas with a parliamentary delegation, I sold bullocks for $26 a 100 lb. in the paddock. My neighbour said, "What did you get, Lindsay?" I said, "$26 a 100." He said, "I would sooner shoot my cattle than sell them for that." That was a pretty dramatic drop by June 1974. When I returned about 30 days later cattle prices were $16 a 100 lb. Bullock meat was $16 a 100 lb. This was under a Labor Government. The following February I sold 56 bullocks for $12 a 100 lb. They were prime bullocks, too.

That was the beginning of 1975—two years ago. It has taken the A.L.P. two years to get on the bandwagon. Not one speech came from A.L.P. members about the problems in the beef industry during that time. I have a letter in my possession that I received in 1975 from a lady in Miriam Vale. After sending cattle to Rockhampton she had to send $5 to the agent to square the account. That happened over two years ago. We have heard that Mr. Whitlam is tramping through the country saying that a Labor Government would do something for the ailing beef industry. The price of meat today is not as bad as it was in the time of the Whitlam Government. As a matter of fact, in 1975 good quality cow meat was down to $5 and $6 a 100 lb. I know that because I am a producer, and that can be verified by checking on "Country Life" figures. Thank God, today prices are a little bit better.

What did Mr. Whitlam do to assist the rural industries when he held the strings in Canberra? Firstly, he advocated meatless days. Next he advocated a tremendous export levy on beef to try to retain it in this country and to make it cheaper for the consumer. He set about bringing the price of meat down.

We have heard talk about the crook prices in the beef industry today. I would remind the honourable member for Mackay, who probably was not interested in the beef industry in 1975, that meat was then being sold at prices 100 per cent lower than today's prices. So how can anyone blame the present Government for the situation that exists? During the latter part of 1975 Mr. Whitlam went to Perth, where the farmers threw tomatoes at him. Why did they do that? They were incensed at what he had done to them.

The Coombs report estimated certain reduced costs in rural industry. It estimated that the removal of the petrol price subsidy scheme would mean a saving of $27,000,000 to the Commonwealth—and the Federal Labor Government abolished it. Now the Labor Party is telling us what it will do for the beef industry. Who abolished the petrol price subsidy scheme at a cost to this nation of $27,000,000 a year?

Mr. Wright interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: These are facts, and the honourable member cannot get away from them.

Taking away free milk from schools saved the Commonwealth Government $13,500,000 a year; withdrawal of subsidies on air services in 1972-73 saved another $2,800,000; and removal of the zone allowance saved $18,500,000.

Mr. Wright: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. HARTWIG: I am coming to that.

The Queensland beef committee that was set up to try to alleviate the problem was established at a time when under Mr. Whitlam the beef industry was in such a serious plight that this Government took certain steps to try to rescue it. We have heard a good deal of rip-roaring about State Governments. I would point out that under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution a State Government cannot fix the price of beef in any State. The proposed committee of 10 members, of whom five will be producers and one will be an independent chairman, will be a functional committee and one that will implement the necessary policies and work with the Commonwealth to bring about some stabilised scheme between the States.

For two years at Australian Agricultural Council meetings we have not been able to reach agreement on a common marketing system that meets with the approval of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

As a cattleman I would estimate that only two months' reserve of feed is left unless rain falls in those places that have been burnt out. If rain does not fall over the whole State within two months, the State will lose anything up to 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 head of cattle. In addition, an equal number of cattle would not be marketable, so no return could be obtained for them. Lucerne hay is selling at $160 or more a tonne, or about $4.50 or $5 a bale. To survive, a beast has to eat at least half a bale a day. That means it would cost a minimum of $2 a day to save a beast. We all know that today, only a good beast sells for more than $100. Therefore, a beast has to be fed for only 50 days before it becomes a financial burden. Feeding is out of the question on the present price of cattle in Queensland, other than for pure-breds and stud stock. Honourable members can see what is starkly facing the producers if rain does not fall.

Following my trip to Asia in 1974, when I investigated the meat market, I requested that a trade mission be sent overseas. The Queensland Government duly sent a trade mission to the Middle East and Asia under the leadership of the Minister for Primary Industries in an attempt to rectify the meat problem. The Queensland Government is now providing legislation that is far and above any attempted by any other State or the Commonwealth.

The world per capita consumption figures for beef and veal are rather interesting. These are the figures for some of the major nations—

Nation	Kg per head
Argentina	92
New Zealand	94
Australia	95
U.S.A.	85
Canada	73
Uruguay	66
West Germany	67
Belgium	73

The Japanese per capita consumption of beef is 3 kg. If we could get every Japanese to eat an extra pound of meat a year we would have no shortage of market.

After my visit to Japan I do not know that we are doing the right thing to promote beef sales there. When I attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary convention in Adelaide in February this year a Minister representing the Malaysian Government made a speech in which he said that there were 7,000,000 Moslems in Malaysia and 60,000,000-odd million in Indonesia, who would eat meat if it was killed according to their requirements. Have we investigated that market?

Two-thirds of the people in the world are starving. We have a responsibility to go out and try to sell meat to them and kill it as they want it to be killed, that is, by branding it "Allah". If it is killed and blessed in that way I understand that they will eat it.

As a member of the Government beef committee I am fully aware that the development and implementation of a marketing system for beef is very complex. At present we have no classification or description of meat that can be enforced legally. Furthermore, the trade between States, I repeat, provides absolutely free access to either side of the border. For a beef-marketing system to be effective, we need a national beef classification scheme and the agreement and co-operation of other States and the Commonwealth.

I was glad to see the honourable member for Rockhampton acknowledge my efforts over the years to stop the importation of canned meat and meat products. I stand here this evening and give the sad news that last financial year this country imported the equivalent of 5,000 bullocks at a dressed weight of 500 lb. a bullock. This is a pretty serious matter. When Whitlam was in power and since, I have done everything to bring to the notice of the authorities the tremendous amount of beef products in the form of meat pies sent from Great Britain last year worth approximately $250,000 and it was probably our own meat being sent back to us——

Mr. Casey: Not from Britain any more.

Mr. HARTWIG: The honourable member should check on the latest statistics.

I have referred to the importation of canned meat from Italy, Brazil and Argentina. Doc Everingham and I had a debate one day in Biloela. I did him over. I won every round. I opened a tin of Argentinian meat in front of him and an audience of a couple of hundred people. It was very oily and greasy. We took it outside and offered it to the hungriest dog in Biloela and he knocked it back. Yet Doc Everingham's Government was allowing that canned meat into Australia.

It is probably over 12 months since the Queensland Government first proposed a beef stabilisation scheme. We took it to the Agricultural Council and it was turned down by New South Wales and Victoria. A national automatic beef classification scheme is presently under trial in commercial conditions in a number of States.

I should like to talk a little about classification. It could have a detrimental effect on some producers in this State. For argument's sake, the first thing that comes into classification is the age of the beast. I point out that because of our harsh climatic conditions in Queensland, we suffer by comparison with other States. They can market their cattle at a younger age and classification would tend to favour the younger beast because that is of the essence of good meat production. The other point is that 85 per cent of all frozen export beef is produced in Queensland. If we start classifying cattle by age, Queensland producers could be at a serious disadvantage compared with southern producers

Mr. Wright: Are you against it?

Mr. HARTWIG: No. I am just pointing out certain aspects of classification that we have to look at.

Mr. Wright: You're having two bob each way?

Mr. HARTWIG: No. I have been in the industry long enough to know how meat is graded today. Up till a few years ago it was branded. A customer could go into a butcher's shop and see choice yearling or roast branded with a blue stamp or a red stamp. That indicated something to the housewife. For some reason the D.P.I. has not seen fit to continue that scheme and I regret that it is not used today.

It also gives the buyer an added weapon. If he cannot buy top clasification beef, he will bid down prices on anything else. If a beast is not classified as top quality, it can suffer a pretty severe fate. It must be remembered that many Queensland producers do not have the crops and improved pastures found in other States.

Already it has been pointed out that the cost per annum will be in the vicinity of $5,000,000. Who will pay that amount? Will it be the Government? Will it be the abattoirs? We are all screaming for classification but who will bell the cat? Inspectors have to be trained for about six to nine months so that they can clasify beef that it has taken a grazier a lifetime to produce. After six months' training, these inspectors can tell us whether our product is good or bad.

The authority will have power over such matters as marketing methods, carcass classification, consumer identification of meat, and the administration of a pricing and stabilisation scheme for livestock and meat as may be approved. The authority will also co-operate with other States and the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.

The Queensland Government, by means of this legislation, is most anxious to see a better return for beef producers but it also realises the hopelessness of attempting to introduce any regular marketing scheme independently of the other States. I think the Commonwealth Government has to play a stronger role than it is playing now.

I want now to refer to the present Queensland Meat Industry Authority. There has been a lot of talk this evening from the A.L.P. about who was responsible for setting up this authority. Those who read the minutes of the beef cattle committee will see that a fellow named Hartwig moved that a marketing authority be set up. That statement will be confirmed by other members of that committee.

Mr. Wright: That was put up in those meetings we had in Rockhampton months before your authority was set up.

Mr. HARTWIG: If the honourable member for Rockhampton dreamt about it, I cannot help him.

It is interesting to note what the president of the Cattlemen's Union had to say about the decision of that committee and the decision by the Government to implement this legislation. I refer to an item in the Rockhampton "Morning Bulletin" of 3 September which reads—

"Beef decision will help pricing scheme.

"A decision by the Queensland Beef Committee this week proved a significant step towards a national minimum pricing scheme for beef, Cattlemen's Union president, Mr. G. McCamley, said yesterday.

"The Queensland Committee unanimously recommend the establishment of a new legislative body with the power to introduce minimum meat prices in Queensland . . .

"Mr. McCamley said the State Government realised the urgency of measures to relieve the tragic financial and social position of thousands of cattlemen.

"He forecast early implementation of the legislation which will establish a ten-man authority with the power to trade, if necessary, on behalf of producers . . .

"It was extremely gratifying to note State Government recognition of the inequities within the meat industry and the necessity to preserve a valuable rural export industry in the face of increasing protection for secondary industries, he said."

"Mr. McCamley said the State Government was to be congratulated for its decisive move."

The honourable member for Mackay was criticising us for implementing the idea, but there were more than Cattlemen's Union members on the beef committee. We will see what Mr. John Heussler of the U.G.A. cattle committee had to say in an article in the "Queensland Country Life" of 8 September 1977. He said—

"I must commend the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Sullivan, for his speedy action and the remainder of Cabinet for giving immediate approval."

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: Honourable members will see that we had a pretty well-knit committee that was represented by members from this House and the industry generally.

Mr. Doumany: You should have taken that interjection from Mr. Casey. He insulted the "Queensland Country Life".

Mr. HARTWIG: I want to make better use of my time.

One thing I would like to comment upon is the trouble we had with the Queensland Meat Industry Authority. I have probably had more rows with the Minister than anybody else over this and I did not want the same trouble with the new marketing authority. This is why I insisted that it should be producer-controlled. The specialists have had their say in the economics of the meat industry. The destiny of the beef industry should be left in the hands of the producer. In the past while we had only one beef producer on the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, the authority virtually caused the disintegration of our butchering industry.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: That is the one thing you and I agreed on.

Mr. HARTWIG: It is the one thing the Minister and I agreed on. Just the other day a man from Yaamba, which is 26 miles north of Rockhampton, wanted to spend upwards of $30,000 to build a class 3 slaughter house. There is no butcher's shop between Rockhampton and Sarina, which is a distance of about 200 miles. This man is prepared to build to D.P.I. standards and he has the money to back it up. He made application to the Queensland Meat Industry Authority, and although no reason was given they said, "We will not allow you to build it." I for one will not stand by and allow any authoirty to make decisions like that on behalf of this Government, even if it means I have to walk to Bourke to prove my point. If that man's capital is involved and he wants to give a service to people who are presently denied such a service, then I feel that we as a Government should overrule the Queensland Meat Industry Authority and I will move to see that that happens because they have yet to prove to me that an individual should not be allowed to set up his own business. And we advocate free enterprise! I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this monstrosity called the Queensland Meat Industry Authority says that one cannot even kill one's own meat in an abattoir area. Just imagine, one cannot kill one's own meat! I have heard that in Moscow people can even sell eggs in the street.

Mr. Wright: What can you do about this? You are in Government.

Mr. HARTWIG: This is the danger of bureacracy and bureacratic control. Mr. Parkinson came out and said, "If you go to a barbecue and you are suspicious of the meat that is being cooked, demand to see the docket showing that it was killed at a registered abattoir." He said that the Queensland Government advocated that. I make it quite clear to Mr. Parkinson and everybody that I, as a member of a responsible Government, would not allow that. He would get the toe of my boot if he came to my place and demanded to see the docket. He would get the docket all right!

Let me come back to Mr. Whitlam. Recently he made a very extensive tour of the North. He did not come to Callide, because he knew he would be wasting his time.

A Government Member: He went to Rockhampton, didn't he?

Mr. HARTWIG: Well, after the 1974 election the member for Rockhampton said that he was damned glad that Whitlam did not go to Rockhampton.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: He did not have him up in Rockhampton.

Mr. HARTWIG: No; in fact he said that wherever Mr. Whitlam went, the Government got a better vote, and I think that was true. He was pretty well spot on. Anyway, Mr. Whitlam took the risk this time and invaded Rockhampton, and while he was there he made statements that he would help an ailing beef industry. People are talking about voting another way——

Mr. Wright: And they will. They theatened Sinclair.

Mr. HARTWIG: Surely I do not have to go over it again. Bullocks were bringing $10 to $12 a 100 lb. at the beginning of 1975.

Mr. Wright: They know that Fraser has done nothing, either, so what are you talking about?

Mr. HARTWIG: I will take the point——

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! I ask the House to come to order while the honourable member takes a point.

Mr. HARTWIG: I believe that Canberra should be doing more to assist rural industry than it has done. Queensland has problems that are completely different from those in the southern States. Of course, I do not have to tell the House about our long lines of communication. Any Government that fails to reintroduce fuel subsidy and imposes on country people an additional tax of 10c or 11c a gallon on fuel must realise what a burden that places on them.

Mr. Casey: Fuel costs have gone up under Fraser.

Mr. HARTWIG: I will stand up in this Chamber and criticise if I think criticism is merited. I do not give any award to a Government that has increased the price of petrol without trying to introduce a fuel equalisation scheme.

We have heard a great deal about what Mr. Whitlam would do if he was returned to office. I only hope and pray that that never happens. Only people with a very short memory would vote for him after reading my speech.

Mr. Wright: And thousands will.

Mr. HARTWIG: Yes, and they will do so to their own advantage, because I am a beef producer and I am fully aware of the problems associated with the beef industry.

Let me make it abundantly clear that the problems of the beef industry were created by Governments, and I believe that they can only be remedied by Governments. I have repeatedly called—and I know that the honourable member for Mackay tried to get on the bandwagon, but what he said was old hat—for a royal commission into the beef industry. If we had started two years ago we would have had the report today. Western Australia has a better system than we have. It set up its own royal commission. There is nothing to stop this Government from appointing its own royal commission. That action in Western Australia bore fruit, because today cattlemen from that State are coming over here and buying cattle and taking them back to Western Australia. They see a ray of light in their industry. We are wallowing. We are blaming one another.

It is remarkable to me that with all the talk by the two Opposition members, who represent Central Queensland electorates, they have omitted to mention that because of industrial strikes this year there was a short-kill of 15,000 cattle in Central Queensland. We are 15,000 head behind. They are in the paddocks and cluttering up our markets. They are causing problems to the producer. We didn't hear Opposition members talk about the closure of T. A. Field and the disaster that was. We didn't hear them talking about the C.Q.M.E. going for a nine-day-a-fortnight kill, which would reduce the killing rate by 20 per cent. We didn't hear them talk about the $20 flat rate increase which affected 60 per cent of the C.Q.M.E. workers. Something like 200 or 300 men lost their jobs in Fields for a number of weeks or a month. It is a tragedy that anyone should lose his job. It is also a tragedy that cattlemen have cattle in their paddocks that they cannot kill because one fewer meatworks is operating.

Surely this must have been significant to the Opposition members but they never mentioned one word about that problem. If they are fair dinkum, they have to acknowledge all the problems. I have been outspoken enough to criticise my Government when I have thought it was wrong. Why didn't they come out and say, "You criticised the industrial trouble we have had, and this has caused great problems."? But there was not a word from them. They were prepared to see 300 men lose their jobs and meatworks close down, without a word being said by them. When Whitlam was in power they never offered one word of criticism or made any suggestion about how to help the primary producer. All we heard from the Housewives' Association at that time was talk about meatless days. We have not heard too much from the Housewives' Association about what they are going to do for their country sisters who are now facing slave-labour conditions. That is the sort of thing we should be talking about.

We should be talking about the cost of killing a beast. It has gone up to $53. There has been a lot of talk about the butchers reaping a fortune. Over the past four years the wholesaler's cost has risen from 4 per cent to 23 per cent, whereas the beef producer's has dropped from 58 to 38 per cent and the butcher's has gone from 36 to 38 per cent. So it is not the butcher who is getting the rip-off.

Mr. Wright: Who is?

Mr. HARTWIG: It is the costs that are being built into the industry. The honourable member for Rockhampton must know that the costs associated with killing works and other costs of production are ultimately reflected in the price for the product.

It is the producer who pays the increased costs of labour, administration and freight. The producer pays the lot. I have heard it said that the Queensland Government should assist with the freight. Despite the millions of dollars this and other Governments lose in transport costs, we have held our freight on cattle for the last two years. Have wages been held constant for two years? No. This Government has done a great deal to assist the cattlemen. I hope that the Federal Government will follow suit. I look forward in the near future to great leniency through the release of more money to assist the grazing industry.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (10.25 p.m.): I am not satisfied that the contents of the Bill spell out what will be implemented when it comes into force. In the joint-parties' room I asked the Minister for Primary Industries certain questions to which I have not received satisfactory replies. I hope that in his reply tonight the Minister in charge of the Bill will answer the various questions that I shall ask during my speech.

Perhaps this Bill could be described as the "Katter and Kippin salvation boat". Unfortunately, however, the boat is constructed of barbed wire and will not float. It will certainly keep the cattle in, but that is all it will do. It certainly will not solve the major problems besetting the beef industry caused by the huge surplus of cattle in Queensland. There are approximately twice the number that the home market can cope with and at present only an extremely small export market is available. Nothing in the Bill will reduce the cattle numbers, and I do not see how it could do everything that the cattlemen are seeking. Over the past few weeks I have not met one cattleman who believes the Bill will solve the problems that beset him. All cattlemen say that the Bill will not help them and that it will not achieve its objectives.

In 1973 there was a minimum price scheme, and this was rejected. At that time the Federal Labor Government revalued the Australian dollar, thereby making imports dirt cheap. They flooded into the country, bringing all the attendant problems of cheap imports. The textile industry was particularly hard hit, and many textile workers were put out of work. Revaluation also made our meat exports ridiculously expensive for those overseas countries that were purchasing Australian beef. It was squeezed out of their shopping lists.

Japan had been buying our beef and had bought large quantities from Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. Japan relied heavily for its balance of payments on its manufacture of plastics from crude oil and of other consumer goods from coal and minerals. When the OPEC nations raised the price of their crude oil, with the resultant tremendous leap in the export price to Japan, Japan had to take very drastic measures to balance its Budget. The importation of Australian beef suffered severely. So far nothing has happened to counter that. Although some sales have been made to Indonesia and the Philippines, our exports have not risen to the level of five or six years ago. No one person or no one political party in Australia can be blamed for that; it is a fact of life and we have to live with it.

At about the time when Australia was purchasing the F111s the United States of America also cut back its imports of Australian beef. In fact it was argued that we should pay for the F111s with our beef.

Contrary to the claim of the honourable member for Rockhampton the measures implemented by Canada in 1929 did not solve its problems. In fact, Canada is faced with exactly the same problems as those confronting us. Cattle that are held over in Canada for one or two years beyond their normal marketing age cannot be sold economically. People in Australia think they have troubles with droughts. Their troubles are nothing compared with those confronting the beef producers in Canada, who through very long and bitterly cold winters have to hand-feed their cattle on alfalfa, which, in the summer, is either piled into haystacks or packed into bales.

The local market could appreciate the improved marketing arrangements to be implemented under this Bill. I do not know if stock are to be classified on the hoof. I would like an exact explanation as to whether that is to be done under the Bill.

Mr. Katter: The carcasses will be.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: The carcasses will be and certainly the cuts of meat will be.

A cattleman does not sell a carcass. He sells beasts on the hoof. He does not see them slaughtered, then run beside the carcasses through the meatworks and say, "I will keep this one; I will sell that one." He is committed when the beasts are on the hoof. I should like to know what protection the producer will have and how it will be implemented.

Mr. Katter: He gets an efficiency payment back from the works after it is classified.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: That is all right if the beef is readily classified. We will experience serious problems.

One of the difficulties I would like explained is how the classification system will work and how anyone dissatisfied with it will be able to appeal against it. Certainly Australian consumers will appreciate the provision for classification of meat as they see it. A great deal of meat these days is bought in bulk, in sides or quarters. Many people who think they are buying cheap bulk meat are not getting the quality that they think they are getting. I am quite sure that a lot of bulk meat is not well handled by the consumer and that it suffers severely from a lack of grading. We might see some improvements for both the industry and the consumer.

Selling at present is by auction. This may be the least expensive method for the cattleman. Live-weight selling might give cattlemen a higher gain per beast for cattle well turned out, but live-weight selling involves extra expense. The plan we envisage, however, will lead to even higher selling costs. That may be all right when the beef is for the home market, but when it is for the export market it will only add to our problems. We are already in serious trouble with nations that we are trying to sell our beef to, knowing that for five years or more they have been unable to afford it. One added cost will cut back severely our overseas exports. This may be all very well for the home market, but I do not think it will solve the problems or function in the export market without the establishment of a beef pool which, because of the fact that section 92 governs interstate trade, will have to be managed or implemented by the Commonwealth. Perhaps this is one matter the Commonwealth could look into.

Direct consigning on a weight and classification basis needs full explanation. The cattlemen I have spoken to certainly have not understood how it will work. I do not understand it either. Perhaps those honourable members who attended every meeting of the parliamentary committee over the past 1½ to 2 years may have an inkling of how it will work, but it is certainly not spelt out in the Bill. At this stage we are not sure who will direct supplies of cattle to what meatworks, whether there will be a direction to any meatworks or how cattle will arrive there.

Quotas have been referred to. At one stage I think the Minister said there might have to be a type of quota system. That will create problems. I want to know how they will be administered or arbitrated on. Who will get the turn-off quotas when cattlemen have a chance of making very good sales at high prices? Will it be decided on pro rata sales in the last year or will it go to the men with the best cattle or the men in the most desperate financial straits? I would like an answer to that.

Who will get the quotas in dry seasons such as the one we are experiencing now, with drought running in the country and the Brisbane Valley being declared a drought-stricken area? When people want to unload cattle off their properties, how will the meat-works handle the increased throughput? Will bottlenecks exist at the meatworks or what will all those people do who wish to turn off cattle in what could be a sell or smell situation, which I am afraid is the only sound way to run a cattle property? I am sure that a lot of cattle people would like to know how we will overcome the huge turn-off in the next month if there has been no break in the dry conditions when the Bill becomes law.

Mention has been made today of control over country killing—the small butcher in the country who kills and sells his own meat. Somebody mentioned that 300 small country slaughterhouses might have gone out of business. A fear exists that this could be the end of a great many of our auction-selling yards and of those managing saleyards, such as Catons and Toowoomba, and the various stock and station agents such as A.M.L. & F., Winchcombes, Dalgety, Primaries, Australian Estates and Elders-G.M., who for decades have been conducting auctions, gathering the cattle in, advertising, getting buyers to auctions and making sure that there is a decent sale. The country towns look forward to this activity.

The Bill provides for a variation between those in a public abattoir area of jurisdiction and control and those not in one. I should like to know how that will function. It is one of the things we have not heard enough about. We will need an assurance that the many council saleyards throughout the State will be able to keep functioning. The councils have a great investment in these assets, and the Dalby council for one would hate to see its saleyards closed and a worthless asset rotting in the sun over the years.

Then we come to analyse who can win from this Bill. Perhaps the graziers could, if they could all get a slice of the domestic market, but that will not happen. Will there be a rationing between domestic and export marketing? I do not think we could really legislate for that. Certainly the stock and station agents need to have their position explained to them.

It could be argued that one of the problems would be that cattle might not in fact be sold under this scheme. One of the explanations we tried to obtain in the joint parties meeting was what will happen if cattle are in fact not purchased. Could there be a compulsion to purchase cattle that a meat-works did not wish to purchase? They might not be looking for that grade of cattle or there could be a dispute over the grading of cattle. Cattle could be sent home. One thing a cattleman cannot afford is to take his cattle home again from the saleyard or any other place of sale. Prices are so low that some have not made the cost of freight.

This has been a problem in the cattle industry for the past three or four years. A similar problem affects other primary-producing industries. Perhaps through regulation they have not found themselves in this problem since the depression. The cattle transport operators certainly would not win with their triple haul, if they were hauling cattle to a place and back to the property again or to a holding area and then in to saleyard again. They might get an increased mileage but it would probably have to be discounted or they would not get paid at all.

One of the major problems to arise could well be that there will not be enough persons qualified to carry out all the inspections necessary to classify beef. I think there possibly could be sufficient after the State has finished the brucellosis eradication campaign for which a great many men have been trained by the department. They do a very good job. If there are insufficient officers to implement the system of classification, there will have to be a crash programme to train enough inspectors to the standard at which they can adequately classify beef.

There will need to be some means of settling disputes over classification. Certainly I do not think there should be any going to court, as that procedure is far too lengthy. Over a period of time there might have to be a review of the way in which the classification scheme is implemented, to see if it is working to the benefit of producers generally or meatworks and canners generally.

One of the things that the State Government cannot afford is to have so much meat getting round the Act, as it were, that a black market in meat arises. We have seen black markets in all sorts of things. We have seen them with poultry and eggs and the Minister responsible for fisheries is well aware of the problem of black markets in the fishing industry. Those who buy fish on the black market are not protected by the Act in the quality of the product they buy. At present there is only a small black market in meat but, if the Act proved to be unworkable, the black market in meat could become extremely large overnight.

If the Bill works smoothly and its provisions are followed by other States, it could lead to some measure of salvation for the beef industry, provided, too, that the Commonwealth Government plays its part. I said earlier that the establishment of a beef pool might be part of the answer. Surplus beef could be pooled and, if there were a system of classification throughout the Commonwealth, it could be sold by classified carcass or cut wherever there is a demand for it. I am afraid this beef might not be sold at the price per kilo that the housewife now pays for it. This means that there would have to be an export subsidy on the meat.

The Federal Government could do this if it took possession of all beef and balanced its books on the export of this commodity against imports. This would mean that beef in Australia might be dearer than similar beef sold overseas, but the average Australian consumer would probably never be aware of that. It could also mean that Australians might be paying more for imports which, in turn, might stimulate other Australian industries.

To give cattlemen an extremely good return would necessitate selling beef on the home market for five or six, or even eight or nine, times the amounts that Australians are presently paying for it. This would be the situation if all the surplus beef on the hoof at present is to be sold overseas at prices that those countries are prepared to pay for it. Here is where the tremendous difference comes in. There is three times as much beef exported as is consumed at home and, if producers are to get a threefold increase in export prices through an equalisation scheme on beef alone, the housewife could be looking at tremendous rises in the price of beef. I do not think that she would wear those prices. There is a high consumption of meat in this country and I do not think there is any hope of increasing the consumption per capita. But if we implement a scheme of equalising the price of one commodity across the board for both local consumption and export, we will see tremendous increases in the price on the home market.

Mr. Katter: Do you realise a rise of 10c a lb. would lift a primary producer's income by 50 per cent and would put him in a viable position? Do you think a rise of 10c a lb. would make that much of a difference to the Australian housewife?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: It depends who pays for it. We have people running around asking this Government to take 10c off the price of a bottle of milk, and that would cost $50,000,000. If we put 10c on the price of a lb. of beef, where will it all end?

Mr. Katter: All we are saying is that the producer takes an extra 10c. That could be absorbed by the processers or passed on to the consumer.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: It all sounds very noble, but if we try to implement that on a pure auction system I assure the honourable member people will be taking their cattle home. They can decide whether they dig a ditch at the auction yard, shoot them and push them in or pay the freight home and then pay the freight back to the auction yard again. I asked before who is going to provide the money if the producers are paying treble freight. How far are they going to haul cattle at treble rates and break even? Not far! I am aware that the producers have problems, but unless they solve their problems and persuade people to buy more beef, they are going to be in real trouble. If they pay treble freight rates and double yardage fees, where does it get them? Nowhere! They always have to take into account buyer resistance. There is immense buyer resistance overseas and producers do not want it here at home.

Mr. Katter: Explanations exist for all those problems, with due respect.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: The explanations have been there since time began, I suppose, and the producers still have the problems, so the answer is not in the explanation. I think I and all other honourable members are looking for a lot of explanations as to just how this Bill we are debating here tonight will be implemented, particularly what sort of regulations will come into force and who will have the power to make decisions on the many points I have raised.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (10.48 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill and commend the Government for being the first State Government in Australia to really come to grips with this problem. We are now ready to co-operate with any other State which wants to join with us and do something about setting minimum prices and setting up a stabilisation scheme or whatever is worked out to be the plan that all States will agree to.

I would also like to thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for the compliment he paid me for the hard work I put into promoting primary industries while I was overseas with him. One thing he said that was very true was that the Japanese Government is prepared to protect the Japanese beef producer at any price. I repeat: at any price! I have heard some members of the Opposition and some industry leaders talking about putting advertisements promoting Australian beef in Japanese newspapers, and I would like to pass on to this Chamber the benefit of the knowledge that I gained in Japan. Much of the meat which we export to Japan is supplied to a production date and a delivery date. That is one reason why we sell so much more meat to Japan than New Zealand; our shipping is more regular and we can meet these target dates.

I repeat: the Japanese Government is prepared to protect the Japanese producer at any price, and if we go putting advertisements in Japanese newspapers it is a simple matter for the Japanese Government to lengthen the period between the production date and the delivery date and we will then find we will be competing with South America I do not think individual beef producers will thank any politicians or industry leader who brings that about. Of course, we should try to advise the Japanese consumer of the way he is being ripped off, but it should be done in a discreet manner. We should be educating individual Japanese to do this and not putting advertisements in Japanese newspapers.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also mentioned an economist who spoke at a conference of the Cattlemen's Union in Rockhampton last year and said that he had laid the blame for the beginning of the collapse of the beef industry on Mr. McMahon. What the honourable member did not say was that the reason given by the economist was the revaluation of the Australian dollar by the McMahon Government. He did not say how hard Doug Anthony, the Leader of the National Country Party, fought to prevent that revaluation. He did not say, either, that the economist laid most of the blame fairly and squarely on Mr. Whitlam's Government for the subsequent massive revaluations. He did not say that the economist was a free-enterprise economist and that, far from wanting to support anything that the Opposition might want to put up in this Chamber, he would be advising cattlemen to steer well clear of socialism. That puts what the honourable member for Rockhampton said in its correct perspective.

In listening to Labor spokesmen talking about the problems of primary industries, what disgusts me is that, although the honourable member for Rockhampton acknowledges that revaluation is one of the main problems, we never hear him or any other Labor member of Parliament try to encourage the Federal Government to devalue. Every time the Federal Government devalues, the Labor spokesmen condemn the National Country Party for urging devaluation. That puts that point in its correct prespective.

The other thing that should be said is that the Whitlam Government gave a pledge that it would give cheap meat to the cities. Revaluation was the way it went about giving that cheap meat to the cities.

I should like also to comment on something that the shadow Minister for Primary Industries said. The honourable member for Mackay spoke about the various statutory organisations in Queensland and included in them the Queensland Graingrowers Association. Some years ago the Graingrowers Association was in a little bit of difficulty, and it conducted a poll of its members on statutory membership and the members voted against it.

Mr. Casey: They are not a statutory organisation; their marketing boards are.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is partly correct. The honourable member has woken up. That was not what he said earlier. He did not know that at the time, and he has now woken up to the fact that he made a mistake. I simply point out to the House the lack of knowledge that the shadow Minister for Primary Industries demonstrated when he said that earlier. The Queensland Graingrowers Association is a very proud voluntary organisation. According to him, it is a statutory organisation. Its members will not appreciate the lack of knowledge of the alternative Minister for Primary Industries of this State. In view of his lack of knowledge, I think it can be fairly said that probably the best thing the A.L.P. ever did was fail to re-endorse him a few years ago and the silliest thing it ever did was to invite him to rejoin the party. I say to the House that dead wood is a case by another name.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (10.54 p.m.): In rising to support the Bill, I must confess that I do so with somewhat mixed feelings. I hasten to clarify that comment because I regret the necessity for having to make it.

Honourable members realise, of course, that it became necessary for the Government to introduce the legislation because of the adverse conditions existing in the industry. As Queenslanders are aware, there are an enormous number of complexities in the beef industry in this State, but perhaps I should enumerate some of them. We have to take into account that beef production is carried on over such a vast area and that the product is very varied. There are enormous transport problems. There are many different types of cattle, with temperaments that differ widely. What the Government is attempting to do is find a reasonable, economic outlet for every product produced.

We have to take into account also that our problem is not just a local one. More than any other State in the Commonwealth, Queensland is subject to export markets. Queensland has a varying degree of exports. In some instances it could be said to average in the vicinity of 75 per cent of the product, but, according to figures made available to me recently, in the peak of seasons we are exporting 80 per cent of the product. When talking about equalisation or stabilisation of prices, one has to remember that there are enormous difficulties.

I support the Bill. I am conscious of the problems, but the proposal is a challenge that the committee had to accept. As I listened to the shadow-sparring in this Chamber during the past six hours, it sounded more like a hollow echo to me. I have been a member of the beef industry committee chaired by the Minister for 2½ years, as have the honourable members for Callide, Flinders and Kurilpa. We have not been able to find the complete answers to an enormous number of difficulties. As members of this Assembly, we have not been charged with the full responsibility of finding the answers. We have been assisted by people in the industry, members of the Cattlemen's Union, members of the U.G.A. and representatives from various groups throughout the industry.

After 2½ years our thoughts have crystallised into a recommendation of this type of action. We know there are problems. I know that the Minister who introduced the Bill on behalf of the Minister for Primary Industries, who is overseas, would be concerned about the future. But we must start somewhere. We have to attempt to get this project off the launching pad. It is not something that can be done single-handed or by each State operating separately.

Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which is bandied about so often, is still with us, and we have to be conscious of it. Persons who make decisions on establishing floor prices or stabilised prices have to take into account the type of product produced in the other States and the volume going to export. If we attempted to determine a figure without local market outlets, it would have to be at least four times the volume of money that flows back to the producer. This committee, this Government and the Commonwealth of Australia have no control whatever over our export market outlets. We may be able to do something by way of promotion. This has been suggested by a member of speakers, but they have not told us what to do.

I get very tired of listening to people in this Chamber constantly being critical of the system. I have heard Gough Whitlam blamed tonight; I have heard this Government accused of the shortfalls in the marketing organisation. I have heard criticism and condemnation from every angle, but I have yet to hear some person come up with a formula and say, "Have a look at this." I mention that because if we are going to be constructive in our approach to a problem which is worrying so many people throughout Queensland and the Commonwealth this is something we have to try to do.

I am not going to rehash the comments made by previous speakers. We are all extremely conscious of the economic chaos throughout the industry. We know that these people have enormous problems, but finding the solution to their problems is the issue at the moment. I do not know what the solution is. It has been suggested that through this authority a solution might be found. It will have an enormous assignment. It has been suggested that it will consist of 10 members. I realise that there will be a tremendous amount of lobbying for places on the new authority. It has been determined by the Minister that on it there shall be five producers. I know that this policy has been criticised, but I am not in any way disturbed by that criticism.

As I see it, the industry is made up of the stock producers, the processers, the exporters and the consumers. With the exception of the producers, all are having a reasonable go and are enjoying a fairly happy economic return. Consequently I believe that this authority should be loaded with producers. After all, they are the ones who are adversely affected. It is up to them to come forward with some recommendation that may assist them in the long term.

There is, of course, a diversity of interests; but that is business. It would not be to the processers' advantage if the livestock producer were to receive an extremely high price. But when we talk about establishing prices and floor prices we must remember that the processer has to be given some consideration. There is no way that he will purchase stock on the hoof unless he has an economic outlet. If the price set is in excess of market requirements, he will refuse to buy livestock.

If this determination is not made wisely and cautiously, the whole system will crash. This is one of the reasons why it is absolutely essential that the authority have on it five producers. They will become masters of their own destiny, and if they determine prices that are in excess of market outlets they will be the ones who will suffer in the long term. To me it does not matter two hoots at what level prices are set. If the producer is not able to sell his product, he will not benefit from the prices that are set. We have to take this into account and consider it seriously.

The authority will also have on it a person with marketing expertise. The majority of primary producers or livestock producers are extremely highly qualified in the production of cattle, but their expertise ends with the transport of their livestock through the property gate. From there on the livestock are the property of the processer.

People have claimed that much of the difficulty was due to the fact that Britain has entered the E.E.C. That is a fact of life and we have to accept it. People have been critical of the Japanese for their attitude and have claimed that Japan should purchase greater quantities of Australian beef. We would like to see this happen. The Japanese Government, however, is running its country in the best interests of its people and to protect the interests of Japanese producers it has decided that it will not purchase Australian meat. This, too, is a fact of life that we have to accept.

Mr. Wright: You cannot blame Mr. Whitlam for that.

Mr. MULLER: I am not blaming him for that. In fact, I would not blame him for anything. He is so irresponsible that he would not have any worthwhile effect on anything that happened. I am not worried a scrap about Mr. Whitlam's participation. I can only say that there has never been any evidence to suggest that he has done anything in the best interests of the beef industry. Opposition members have spoken and, if he had accomplished anything, I would have expected them to tell us what he had done.

Mr. Wright: Are you aware of anything Mr. Fraser has done?

Mr. MULLER: Not up to the moment. To be quite frank, there is probably something that the present Federal Government can do, but no request has been submitted to it. In the past 2½ years, the Queensland beef industry committee has not been able to obtain agreement with any of the other States. In all fairness to the Federal Government, we must be practical. We must go forward with a submission and ask the Federal Government if it is prepared to help us by doing so-and-so.

As a primary producer it is my firm conviction that Governments are not responsible for escalations or declines in markets. I do not think they have ever had much to do with it. This has been an industry problem for a number of years. I know many people connected with the industry. They want to be masters of their own destiny, run their own affairs, and wish all Governments to heck out of the way, whether they be Labor, Liberal-National Country Party Governments or any other type of Government. That might be a reasonable approach if our products could be sold, but we are not in that happy situation at the moment.

Perhaps more could be done in the field of export marketing by preparing different types of products. Two to three weeks ago I listened to an interesting address delivered by a doctor from the C.S.I.R.O. who has been researching this subject for a number of years. He informed a group of people that the C.S.I.R.O. could now manufacture a powder with a long shelf life that did not require refrigeration, was highly nutritious, made exceptionally useful food for babies and invalids and, naturally, was suitable for consumption by other human beings. I believe that herein lies part of the secret.

As honourable members know we have difficulty in exporting beef. It has been suggested that we should refrigerate vast quantities of Australian beef. That submission was made to the beef industry committee about 2½ years ago. When we examined it we found insufficient refrigeration space in Australia to cope with more than 5 per cent of the volume produced. Furthermore, even if anyone decided to spend an enormous sum on establishing this refrigeration space, the meat would be stored for a long period and all world markets today are rejecting meat stored for more than six months. Therefore we ran into another dead end.

We must investigate all possibilities. If we had an opportunity to export meat by giving it away, refrigeration space is not available in the countries to which it could be exported. Furthermore, there is no distribution mechanism for a give-away product. That statement may not be believed, but where do we find people who are prepared to handle a commodity and distribute it free of cost to the starving millions of the world? Some years ago this was tried by the wheat industry. I have not the accurate figures before me, but I should say that many hundreds of thousands of tons were exported to India. There was an immediate uproar from the farmers in that region because a give-away product was competing with the article that they were producing. The only persons who were capable of handling the distribution were those engaged for profit in the industry. It became completely impossible to give a product away. There we have another deadlock.

It is often suggested that these products be distributed to the starving people of the world. The beef producer today is not in a position to make this distribution. He is fresh out of money now, to use the Australian term. It is unrealistic to suggest that he process, refrigerate and then deliver the article to a foreign country free of cost.

Possibly if this powder can be treated economically there may be a method of distribution. It is a light product because it is completely dehydrated. Naturally enough it would be a powder and could be distributed at minimal cost. No refrigeration would be required. I would like to see it become one of the assignments of the gentlemen with the marketing expertise within the industry and perhaps there is some merit in it.

Suggestions have been made that the processer is at fault. The processer today is in the game for profit. He has had a very satisfactory run during the past two years. There was a time when the market was buoyant and cattle prices were high and these people were not doing so well. They had to accept this. I am not opposed to the processer.

There must be a unity of thinking and a unity of action so that we have the best out of whatever the market-place can produce. I believe that the producer is a fair-minded person. He wants whatever he can get for his livestock but he is not prepared to demand this at the expense of everybody else. Every section of the industry is vital and must be given some consideration.

When I refer to this, I think again of the gentleman from the C.S.I.R.O. to whom I referred a few moments ago. He has been conducting another study recently. He is recommending and promoting that we examine the economics of hot boning. He tells me that this can be done quite satisfactorily by the use of an electric shock to relax the muscles in the beast. Those who have been to a slaughterhouse and have seen cattle slaughtered will have noticed considerable nerve movement in the beast for some two hours. By administering an electric shock muscles are caused to relax and the meat can be cut hot. It cannot be done quite as efficiently. There would be a little more waste in handling the product this way. But the product that we might suggest is waste now could then be treated and converted into this type of powder, with the fats removed as a result of the heating process.

Mr. Burns: Hot boning trials are going on now.

Mr. MULLER: Yes. They are doing this.

I would like to see the merits of some of these things examined. This is what we have to look at. We in this country have lived in a happy state of ignorance for a long time. We have produced products and exported them. We have expected the market-places of the world to take our products in varying and sometimes in unlimited quantities. We have to admit that this is no longer on and we need to look at some of these difficulties to see if we can overcome them. By using some of the new methods that are being projected at the moment maybe—I repeat "maybe"—this is part of the answer.

I am now going to make another confession to the House and it may come as a surprise to some members. I will accept whatever criticism members may care to direct at me and I will not back off from any challenge that may be made to me. I am one of the architects of the plan for the retailing of specialised cuts of meat in corner stores. If members are looking for someone to blame, I am one of those who were instrumental in selling that idea to the committee.

I also want to tell the House that there are a number of people who have been completely and falsely misled by comments that have been made following a letter that was written to all butchers and edited by representatives of the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation. They are under no illusion whatever as to what was intended. I personally delivered typed copies to these people and I was amazed when I saw the response to them.

Perhaps I should clarify the situation. The committee recommended that Cabinet give consideration to a certain proposal. I am going to outline the proposal and give details of the information that was relayed to the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation. The position was not as it was suggested by the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation when it contacted butchers. Great pains were taken in the preparation of this document and I crave the indulgence of the House whilst I read some extracts from it. I want to be quite certain that no further mistakes are made on this issue. We were recommending that there be "Increased Retail Outlets" and the comments following that heading read—

> "The Committee is aware of the rightful place of the legitimate butcher in the retailing of meat to the consumer and of the costs involved in maintaining high standards of hygiene, and presentation of chilled meats. It has no desire to threaten the livelihood of the retail butcher in any way. The Committee believes that the proposal outlined below does not pose a threat to retail butcher shop trade and will not reduce sales of chilled meat through registered shops.
>
> "It is proposed that a limited range of convenience meats, frozen and suitably packaged in small packs, be made available to the public through shops which normally trade after hours and week-ends. At the present time prescribed meats, including bacon, sausages, pork fillets and cooked meats, and poultry are available through such stores. In addition frozen fish products including a variety of imported fish, are readily available. The Committee consider that it is unrealistic that the public should have such ready access to particularly poultry and fish products and be denied the alternative of a range of beef and other red meats. The Committee is of the opinion that total sales of beef may be increased and the public be better served by increasing the range of meat products available through these outlets.
>
> "Under the present meat retailing arrangements, many consumers are disadvantaged. Butcher shops are closed in many centres for 115 days in each year. Working housewives, weekend picnickers and travellers, persons receiving unexpected guests at weekends and those residing in small towns without a butcher's shop are amongst those inconvenienced. Families travelling by caravan may be particularly inconvenienced by difficulties in obtaining meat supplies from butchers' shops."

There are a number of other things mentioned that possibly are not completely relevant but that was the proposal that was made at that time.

It has been suggested by a number of persons that the proposal would not increase the sale of meat. We do not know whether it would or not but I want to tell the House here and now that what was suggested is permitted in every other State. We have people in Ipswich and all over the State who are processing the product and retailing it in this way throughout the rest of Australia, but they are not permitted to sell it in Queensland. We feel that if butcher shops are closed for 115 days a year—this is not necessarily true of the city areas but in country areas butchers do not open on Saturday mornings—the consumer should be able to purchase meat at another outlet. It is not our intention to affect the trade of the butcher adversely. We believe that this product, which will be pre-packed, frozen and wrapped in such a way as not to deteriorate, must be of a very high standard. As a result of this the cost will be far in excess of the normal price of fresh meat. Consequently I feel that the average housewife would not take advantage of its availability unless she were caught short and did not have an adequate supply of meat in her refrigerator. I therefore make no apologies to anybody for having made this submission initially. I believe if it were fully understood people would not raise objections.

Prior to submitting this recommendation I went as far as talking to butchers in my own district. When they fully understood the situation they said, "Look, we are not opposed to this. We raise no objection whatever." Some four weeks later some of these same people approached me and wanted to know if the submission had been changed. I said, "No, why do you ask that?" They then produced a letter which was signed by a representative of the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation. I would not take the unfair advantage of naming the person on this occasion, but the letter indicated that the Government was recommending the sale of fresh meat in corner stores and that this would adversely affect butcher shops. In the same letter this person appealed to every butcher to contact his respective member of Parliament and launch a vicious campaign against this proposal. That is the whole story; that is what the game is all about. I sighted this letter, and I was amazed that this approach was made. However, the decision had been taken. The proposal went to Cabinet and Cabinet decided that at this time they would not take any action. But I want to make the point quite clear that in the initial stages the submissions which the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation relayed to the butchers were completely false. I also want to say that the person who wrote the letter knows damn well that it was false, and I believe that that should be placed on record.

However, when honourable members have a look at the difficulties that face the producers they will see that this authority has a tremendous assignment. We do not know how it is going to overcome the difficulties that exist, but we want to be the first State to set up the mechanism whereby these people can work in the interests of the industry at large. They have a mammoth assignment. I would not want to be one of them, but it is to be hoped that we can obtain the services of dedicated people and that they in their wisdom, with the support of people who have been active in the industry for a long time, will be able to come up with something that will help to overcome some of the difficulties that are being experienced by the lion-hearted people, and I say that quite sincerely, of the interior of our State and our nation who have suffered adversely for 2½ years through being obliged to produce a product for which they receive less than half the cost of production.

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (11.25 p.m.): It is not very often that we have the opportunity in this House to debate a Bill which affects an industry so large and so significant to the national economy as the beef industry. I believe that, despite the lateness of the hour, this is a Bill which merits full consideration. It is certainly not a piece of legislation which should be skated over. We are talking about an industry that has export potential of massive proportions in periods of prosperity, an industry that means a tremendous amount to the State of Queensland.

The Bill represents a pioneering effort by the Government of this State to tackle a serious situation. I must agree with the honourable member for Fassifern that there are some realities that cannot be ignored. Governments cannot wave a magic wand and solve industry problems that are as deeply rooted as the problems of the meat industry today.

Before dealing with that point, I might first rebut some of the wilder comments that have been made by members of the Opposition, in particular by the Leader of the Opposition, who spoke at the introductory stage of the Bill. I would label the Leader of the Opposition our fast-food man. He is one of the fastest speakers in the House, and he certainly believes that there are some very fast methods that would give immediate results. He believes, too, that the Government should have all the answers.

I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition would recognise—although he would never admit it—that enormous problems have been generated from his own side of politics. I am speaking here of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, and I shall quote from a publication entitled "Inside Australia's Top One Hundred Trade Unions," published by Ian Huntley Pty. Ltd., a statement by the Victorian Secretary of that union, Mr. Wal Curran, in chapter 71—

> "We've been involved in political strikes in this branch—I suppose because of the Marxist thought in the union. But politics is part of unions' province. I believe that unions should use their muscle industrially to pull governments into line and even down if necessary. The trade union movement isn't just any section of the community. It is the biggest single organised factor in the community. We say that the movement should be prepared to bring the government down if necessary, because the movement represents the numbers in the community. So if a government is not acting in accordance to what it was elected to do or if it hands over the foreign investment or foreign power part of our country without resort to the electorate, the unions have an obligation to bring it down. Parliament is not the absolute right in the country. It hasn't earned that right overseas or in Australia."

That is the type of philosophy behind that union, and that philosophy was expressed over a period.

If I might belabour this point a little further, I point out that if we look at union involvement in more than 20 disputes over the period January to October 1976, we see that this union, with some 45,000 members, was 10th in the list of Australian unions. With its 45,000 members, it managed almost 100 disputes Australia-wide. If we look at some of the other trade unions, we see that the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Union, with 85,000 members, managed only 33 disputes. That gives some measure of the militancy, the determination to be disruptive, of the A.M.I.E.U. and its abysmal productivity, which has led to the escalation of costs in the meat industry and to the erosion of returns to producers.

That is a subject to which we have not heard any member of the Opposition refer. They do not like talking about subjects such as that. When one looks at it, one can understand why—because of the affiliations which they have with these people, and probably a lot of their money for campaigning comes from these people.

This Bill has taken a long time to come to fruition. That has not been because the Government has been tardy or has refused to face up to realities. It has been because the Government has taken a responsible view. It has taken a responsible line of action and has refused to be hustled into rapid legislation or rapid measures with little thought just because some people have been over excited and there has been a lot of pressure from certain industry quarters. The Government has taken its time. It has worked on the problem logically, with care and forethought. Above all, the beef industry committee appointed by Cabinet two years ago has insisted on recognising market realities.

The plight of the beef industry is undoubted. It has been a tragic chapter in our agricultural history. Undoubtedly that plight has not been a product of Government action. Sure enough, here and there Government action of a careless nature may have exacerbated it slightly. The true cause of the plight of the beef industry is market realities. It is nothing more than the market slump.

We must look at what happened in May 1973 with the energy crisis and the enormous impact that had on the American and Japanese market situation. It weakened Japan's economy and weakened her capacity to import. There was enormous response downwards to those forces. In the United States there was an enormous price rise in grains, particularly coarse grains that are used for feed. More and more cattle were turned off grazing straight into the abattoirs, which could then be used for manufacturing beef, which was and still is the main type of beef that we send to the United States. This had an enormous impact on our market. We might be exporting what appear to be large quantities, but measured against the overall United States output and consumption they are very marginal, and it only takes a small nudge in the American market to affect us very greatly.

Mr. Wright: Your point is well made, but don't you agree that the national meat authority should have known what was going on and should have had some sort of ear to the ground?

Mr. DOUMANY: I would agree with the honourable member that market intelligence has not been tremendously good. Many of us would admit that. Market intelligence for beef has been fettered by the fairly chaotic situation of the product. There has been little product identification in the absence of an objective classification approach. Without that sort of identification it is very hard to have good market intelligence. There is no doubt that good market intelligence would have helped. Nevertheless the realities of the energy crisis and the enormous escalation in petroleum costs made this sort of outcome inevitable over that period.

Mr. Wright: What about the political lobbies in the countries you are talking about?

Mr. DOUMANY: That point must also be taken. We have a lot of sophisticated commentators who write in "The Australian Financial Review" and all sorts of journals about how terrible it is for any Government of any political complexion to be protectionist towards local industry. When one looks around the world one is amazed to see how little free trade there really is. In a country like Japan protection is the order of the day. She has undoubtedly locked us out. The United States has a very powerful and influential cattlemen's lobby that has not made our position in that market easy when they themselves have had to be stressed as well. Naturally that makes them fight even harder for their place in the market.

There is another factor that I believe exacerbated the market slump enormously. I refer to the very poor terms of trade that producers enjoy with the rest of the meat industry. It is an inherent characteristic of this industry that the multitude of individual producers are extremely weak when they are confronted by several enormously powerful exporting and processing concerns. That is a fact of life, but undoubtedly there has been an aggravation of the situation. We have seen it quite clearly over the past few years in terms of realisations that have been obtained by producers at the farm gate compared with what should have been passed back through the system from export realisations in the countries of destination. In fact only 18 months ago the Australian Meat Board, which was then current, intervened in a particular export transaction. It had seen this sort of practice going on.

One of the reasons for seeing some logic some 18 months ago in evolving a minimum price stabilisation scheme was that we could see that there was fat to be got at. Undoubtedly there was room for prices to be shifted upwards without denying the realities of the market-place. If it were not for that, it would have been difficult for the Minister for Primary Industries in August of last year to take the first concepts to the Australian Agricultural Council.

Our scheme for minimum price and stabilisation is more than a year old. It has taken all this time and we still have not got some of the other States to agree to work within their borders. The fact of life is that until they agree, until the Commonwealth can see that sort of agreement and until complementary legislation is forthcoming from all quarters, it is impossible to set up a workable scheme that will be commercial. And it is no good kidding ourselves; it has to be commercial.

I should like to run very quickly through some of the market realities that have to be taken into account by the new body that will be set up by the board if it is to achieve marketing reform. First of all, the question of elasticity of demand with respect to prices has to be strictly observed. With the current fairly low prices, the matter of price elasticity is not so important. When we compare the price of beef with the prices of the other major meats that can be substituted for beef we see that elasticity is not a particularly vital factor.

Undoubtedly the beef industry committee felt confident that a fairly significant upward movement could be achieved in prices without any major downward response in consumption. That will not prevail for very long, because after we take the initial step and move the price into the middle bracket, elasticity becomes a very pertinent consideration and substitution will undoubtedly come in. This has to be accepted.

One of the facts of life is that income or revenue in any business is not just a function of price but also a function of price multiplied by sales volume. If sales volume cannot be maintained, price increases can be illusory in their benefits. They can actually be a losing proposition. We have to impress on those who believe that lifting prices is a panacea that if we lift prices at the expense of sales volume, the equation can be very counter-productive and can be the worst thing that can happen. So the setting of minimum prices must be very finely tuned.

We also have a fact of life in the leadership of the export market in setting our price structure. That is another thing to be observed. Any set of minimum prices must be related directly to export market realisation. If it is not, once again we run the risk of deluding ourselves.

We must also recognise that the balance between domestic and export markets varies from one State to the next. That has led to great diversity of interest, with Queensland being a heavily oriented export State and Victoria being the converse, that is, a heavily oriented domestic-consumption State. That does not make for easy agreement on the mechanics of a scheme.

The next point is that we have sole producers in very large numbers. New South Wales has sole producers but, on the other hand, they tend to have much more flexibility in other areas. Victorians are fortunate in that they have a greater capacity to diversify their enterprises.

I have said that we have a lot of individuals against several enormously powerful corporations. The balance of power is very one-sided in terms of market knowledge, capacity to look ahead, and capacity to bargain, negotiate and influence market trends. Those matters must be taken into account. They are one of the major arguments for aggregating to a degree the interests of producers in a body such as this, with a fair representation of producers to vote for their interests.

The alignment of one set of interests against the other is very important. All the talk in the world from the meat-processing companies will not alter the fact that they are tremendously powerful. I do not say that they always make big profits. I recognise that they have their problems. However, when their business relations are measured up with those of producers, it is seen that they enjoy an advantage all along the line. Producers must aggregate their interests to some degree to countervail the power that confronts them.

On the practical or legal side, we have section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I will not labour that, but it is one major reason why we need a national scheme if we are to achieve minimum prices and stabilisation on a sound, ongoing, workable basis. We must also remember that the export power vests in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth must be involved and must accept and approve any mechanism of stabilisation or price-fixing.

We must have product identification. Classification will be a key to it. But it has to go further than that. We must ensure that the tagging or clear identification of products goes right down to the consumer level. If one thing has frustrated consumer after consumer—and the consumer does not have to live in a city to be frustrated; he can be a country producer buying meat from a local butcher—it is paying a certain price today for what is supposed to be prime rump steak, which is beautiful, and a week later paying perhaps a slightly higher price for what is also supposed to be prime rump steak, but which is found to be dreadful. This enormous fluctuation, like a sign curve in quality, is just not acceptable when an industry is competing against more and more standardised lines.

The poultry industry has standardised its produce, its packs and grading sizes. Consumers know that they will be able to eat the product. I do not say that many poultry products are really palatable. Since poultry has not been able to scratch in the barnyard, it has lost much of its taste. But it is predictable; the consumer knows what he will get.

We need market intelligence of a very high order. That requirement is not confined to the meat industry. It must be faced up to across the board in agriculture. Undoubtedly, the meat industry needs a tremendously effective market-intelligence system if schemes like this are to work.

One of the obvious factors that had to be recognised by the beef industry committee was that once a minimum price stabilisation scheme is set up, it has to be dynamic; it cannot be static. It has to be adjusted regularly, and if it is to be adjusted effectively there must be a constant input of knowledge on facts, figures and the market-place and we must anticipate the trends as far as possible. If we cannot do that, we might as well pack our bags because the whole thing will fold. If we make one bad judgment, everybody will be disillusioned.

Another thing that has to be faced up to is the difference in selling systems. In Queensland we are much better fitted to take on the sort of scheme that we have been pushing with the Agricultural Council over the past 12 months. A vast proportion of our cattle is being sold virtually at the point of slaughter. In fact, it is possible to apply a classification scheme there to identify the products clearly and to apply the minimum prices. In Victoria and South Australia the reverse situation applies. Most of the livestock is still being sold through the auction system. This makes the whole exercise exceedingly difficult. We have to look for ways around it. That does not mean that it cannot be changed. I would be the last to say that just because that is the situation we accept that there should not be any reform. That is a very negative point of view. Once producers can see the benefits of selling at the point of slaughter and having absolute knowledge of what is being sold, a lot of them will come round to it. There will also be a flow-back of pressure to the auction system because the market forces always work back if knowledge is being injected. That means also that knowledge has to be passed on all of the time to producers through this market-intelligence system.

Mr. Hartwig interjected.

Mr. DOUMANY: Quality of meat is terribly important. The honourable member for Callide put his finger on one of the critical factors in any scheme. Quality has to be accepted as something that has always to be measurable. If it cannot be measured, we are in trouble. I believe that there are now ways and means to do it. The objective classification system just needs a bit of a prod and a push. This Government is determined to give it a prod and a push. What we want is Commonwealth injection of a bit of money into it. It needs a real good shove right now.

To achieve market reform, bearing in mind the sort of points we have covered and the many other points—I will not go into them —we must have agreement between the States and the Commonwealth and an undertaking to pass complementary legislation. They have to push the classification procedures and recognise the quality implications. I believe we have to adopt a very realistic attitude to the concept of setting a minimum price and the concept of stabilisation.

One thing that is tremendously important is the quid pro quo that has to be achieved for the consumer. If the consumer is to be expected to bear the burden of a minimum price structure he must be given some measure of relief when the market burgeons again and takes off. It has to be a two-way street, but not for one moment are we suggesting that everything be creamed off the producer when things are very prosperous. In our own scheme taken to the Agricultural Council there is a limited mechanism for creaming off, which has a certain ceiling beyond which producers can enjoy the fruits of a very healthy market. But that applies to the export component of sales. That is the sort of aspect to the scheme that Queensland has been pushing. It will have the effect of a buffer on the overall price right through the market. It does it with a minimum of fuss and without having to apply any statutory type of system. It is an exceedingly flexible system, but it will definitely give consumers something in return for their support of the industry at a time such as this.

Mr. Wright: You are not saying that it should be open-ended the other way?

Mr. DOUMANY: I am not. But I am also not saying we should cream off everything. I do not think it is possible to have a fixed price structure; I think that is just as unrealistic as an open-ended price structure. There has to be some sort of proportioning of the excess over a certain level. When one considers the enormous hardships that have been suffered by beef producers and the debts that they have accumulated, it will be seen that it will take quite a substantial market recovery and large cash flows over a period of time to restore them to a viable economic situation. This will not happen if we cream off a very large fraction and fail to give them the benefit of a market recovery.

Our scheme did include a fairly balanced give-and-take mechanism. I think it is most important that that be recognised. There are some who believe that minimum prices are well and good but who say, in effect, "Let her rip when prices go up." That attitude will not work. It will not be acceptable and politically it would be suicidal.

There is another aspect for which the Commonwealth Government, through its corporation, must take responsibility. I refer to surveillance of the export market. I should like to see every export transaction studied very carefully. I hope that after this Bill is passed and after co-operation begins between the Commonwealth and the States as a result of the leadership of the Queensland Government, export transactions will be monitored and carefully analysed and, if they do not meet the guide-lines laid down, not approved. Allowing export transactions to take place on unfavourable terms and allowing them to flow back to producers at farm-gate prices that are well below what they should be is one of the really defective aspects of the current marketing system. This has to be tackled.

Mr. Wright: They could be establishing new markets. You have to take that into consideration.

Mr. DOUMANY: That is quite true. I accept that there are new markets that have to be developed and costs involved in doing that. There would also be grades of products to be considered. For instance, if there is a drought in one area and a great excess of low-quality cow beef, it will have to be given leeway to allow it to move through the pipeline. Certain markets may be prepared to take that beef and leniency would be exercised in such a case. But, in exercising that sort of discretion, it is vital that there be surveillance of export transactions.

What I hope to see in the activities of this new marketing authority is a recognition of the need to maintain the maximum quantum of free-market trading in this industry. There is a vitality in free-market trading. There is a vitality in allowing the major companies with enormous expertise to operate as far as possible along the lines on which they have been operating. That assumes the putting aside of practices that are undesirable.

With all the concern that we have today for the beef industry and our recognition of its plight, we have also to recognise that it has the capacity to respond to a recovery. It undoubtedly has a long-term future that is not bleak. The long-term future for this commodity world-wide is still enormously strong. There can be no doubt that it is the first pick of the meats for consumption outside those countries that have religious taboos against meat. To my mind, it is undoubtedly the premium meat and this country, particularly Queensland, with its low-cost grazing system on relative terms, has the capacity to take advantage of a market recovery. The last thing we want to do is fetter the industry or put it into a position in which it has not the necessary flexibility to respond to a market recovery.

One of the things that have constantly worried me in the activities of the beef industry committee is that too much pessimism might have led us into measures that might have crippled the industry's ability to respond to a market recovery. I refer to practices such as spaying and slaughtering vast numbers of female cattle. That can be a costly and very short-sighted exercise.

I believe that this Bill, if it is translated into a strong arrangement with the other States and the Commonwealth and if it is accompanied by high-grade marketing expertise and aggressive marketing, can do a great deal to bring about future stability for the meat industry, and in this State in particular for the beef industry. I whole-heartedly support the Bill and trust that it will bring the benefits we are all looking for so much.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (11.56 p.m.), in reply: I would like to thank all honourable members who have contributed to this debate. It is very pleasing to me that, despite a lot of controversial issues associated with the Bill, the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable members for Mackay and Rockhampton all supported the intent of the Bill. At least this shows that basically in this House we all agree on this Bill. We might have slightly different ideas on the implementation of some of the intricacies of handling a reserve price or a stabilised price—the honourable member for Kurilpa just pointed out how awkward it can be—nevertheless, I think everybody here recognises the Bill as a genuine attempt to do something for the beef cattle industry. It has been said before, but I think I should say it again to keep the record straight, that it is going to take some little time to appoint people to the body that is to be set up under this Bill. Nominations have to be called from producer groups, exporters and so on, in addition to the nominees of the Minister for Primary Industries, who will have the final say in selecting the members. All I am saying is that that will take some time.

The other point, which has been well recognised by members, is that the scheme is not workable unless we can get co-operation from the States of New South Wales and Victoria. I know that New South Wales has shown considerable interest in our scheme and no doubt Victoria will be doing the same, and I think that when ours is set up this will greatly facilitate the setting up of similar machinery in the other States. We set the pattern, which we in Queensland nearly always do.

Mr. Casey: As usual.

Mr. TOMKINS: I think the other States will join with us and try to work out something. Despite that interjection from the honourable member for Mackay, I think it is essential that the States have common legislation in this field because the whole concept envisages co-operation with the Meat and Livestock Corporation recently set up by the Federal Government. I believe it is going to take some little time before they come up with nominees for that corporation. There is a fairly complicated system of electing nominees to this corporation from all States. I am probably a little optimistic in putting it this way, but I would like to think that the whole organisation could be set up and running by 1 January next year; that is to say, that we have bodies set up in each State plus the Federal body. The real intention behind this procedure is to dovetail in with each other and I would like to think that it will work and that we can get on with the job.

I would like to thank the various members of our parliamentary committee who were with the Minister for Primary Industries on his trip overseas, and I include my colleagues the honourable members for Fassifern, Kurilpa, Warwick, Flinders and Mourilyan.

Mr. Jones: Don't forget poor old Lindsay.

Mr. TOMKINS: Of course. I apologise to the honourable member for Callide. It was a large committee and they did a tremendous amount of work. They had an extremely hard job to do and I think as members of Parliament we owe our colleagues a debt of gratitude.

I would also like to acknowledge the help that I myself have had from officers of the D.P.I. including Dr. Alexander, Mr. Des Lapidge, Mr. Herb Bonney, Mr. Bill Kitson, and the Minister's private secretary, Mr. Eric White. I very much appreciated their help. Because I was not on the committee that brought down the legislation, in many instances I had to be guided by them as to what went on behind the scenes, and I acknowledge the assistance that they gave me.

In various ways many people have assisted with the introduction of the Bill, which has had to run the gauntlet of not only the committee but also Cabinet and the joint Government parties. It is a Bill that I think could lead to better things for the beef cattle industry.

It is a very difficult job to try to get a reserve price plan for beef. The honourable member for Mackay attempted to make a comparison with sugar. However, as other honourable members have already pointed out, beef is a perishable commodity. It has to be slaughtered before any transaction can take place, which means that it must be dealt with as a refrigerated article. The sugar industry certainly is to be commended for the way it has handled its product, but I do not see any similarity between the handling of sugar and the handling of beef. The Federal Government's reserve price plan for wool also deals with a stable product that can be stored. There are very many grades of wool, but that scheme works. Each of the items of primary production to which I have referred requires a different method to get the answer that we are looking for.

There are one or two other points that I should like to make before dealing individually with the comments of honourable members. The honourable member for Mackay talked about the big manipulators. Fair enough. I know that big meat companies are frequently called big manipulators, possibly with some justification. But in our way of life in Australia up to the present, this is the system that we have lived with, and it is the system that we are trying to improve. At this stage I do not think it is very fitting or wise to pick on the meat companies, which, after all, buy our stock. If by evolution we can find another method, fair enough; but I am one of those who are prepared to say that the big meat companies will be around for a long time yet.

[Wednesday, 21 September 1977]

Mr. Casey: I did not say that we should get rid of them. I said that we should take away from them the right to control the industry.

Mr. TOMKINS: That is right. The idea of the legislation is to try to ensure to some extent that the producing side of the industry gets out of the dreadful trough it is in. The meat industry itself is making millions, while the producers, who have a far more valuable side of the industry, as the honourable member for Flinders pointed out, are the ones who are really copping it. Unless we do something now, there does not appear to be any easy way of getting them out of their difficulties. Bearing that in mind, I think we have to live with the big meat companies.

The honourable member mentioned also that Mr. Maia was coming to Queensland, and I forget exactly what he called him. Mr. Maia has come to this country and it seems that he will invest in meatworks. I have taken the view that people who come to this country and are prepared to study the possibility of establishing secondary industries in country areas need all the support that they can get if they do so. That is the attitude I take towards Mr. Maia. I think we should encourage him. I have met him, and I should like to think that he will do what he says he will do—that is, build a meat works at Julia Creek. The honourable member for Mackay says that Mr. Maia will be another manipulator. I suppose that is right, but when one manipulator works against another one, it does make a mark.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. TOMKINS: Mr. Maia is anxious to come here, although he will be a long way from home. I think he will make a considerable impact on the Queensland beef cattle industry if he gets going.

I have to agree with the honourable member for Mackay that Queensland's beef cattle industry is the hardest-hit of all the States. This is primarily because Queensland depends on export markets for outlets. As to devaluation—I agree that it is unfortunate that the benefits were not passed back to the beef producers, as he indicated. It just didn't work. I would like to find out from some economist why it didn't work. Previously it was almost a certainty that devaluation in Australia would be reflected in higher prices on the export market.

The honourable member has his facts wrong about a statutory organisation of beef producers. We don't need any new legislation. The legislation is already on the books. However, it is not the Government's intention to force such an organisation on beef producers. We think it is up to the producers' organisations themselves. If the majority of beef producers want an organisation, the machinery is already there through the Department of Primary Industries to provide the way to have a statutory body or a marketing organisation.

The only other major point made by the honourable member was that he supports acquisition for the beef industry. I would like to know whether he would force acquisition down the throats of beef producers. There is a big difference between acquisition and a floor price plan. With acquisition the producer has very little say in what goes on whereas the other way he has at least some say. All the advice I have from the industry is that beef producers don't want acquisition. I would reiterate that this Government considers the wishes of rural industries. It does not ram bureaucratic schemes down their throats.

As to marketing intelligence—I am pleased to hear that the honourable member supports the idea. The Bill is quite specific

in that the new authority will be expected to provide such a service. It is not intended that the service will be restricted to reporting local saleyards. One of the main functions will be to provide up-to-date information on overseas markets. This is one area where the new Queensland authority will work in close co-operation with the new Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.

Concerning co-operatives, I would remind the honourable member that the co-operatives function under the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act. If he refers to clause 11 of the Bill he will see that it makes ample provision for the authority to work in with such co-operatives.

Reference was made to quotas, and I assume this would mean quotas applied to turn-off from individual properties. I would like to know how this would work when there is a good season in one area and a drought in another.

Mr. Casey: In the sugar industry they have a low crop in one area and a better crop in another area.

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes, but with cattle they have to live on the season as it is. That is another one of the problems I see.

The honourable member for Flinders is one of the full-time members of the beef cattle committee. He drew attention to the problems the beef industry faces as a result of actions of the previous Federal Labor Government. I do not propose to comment further on that. What is important is the action that all Governments take in the immediate future. The honourable member drew attention to the problems we face in trying to implement any minimum price scheme in the absence of complementary action in other States. I have covered that.

The honourable member for Warwick, another member of the beef industry committee, drew attention to the very real problems which confront the Queensland beef industry committee. He and other speakers stressed the fact that any marketing scheme for beef must be practical and acceptable to other States. As a practical grazier he made the point that the beef industry does not favour acquisition. A few producers may, but I am quite convinced that the majority do not. I am very pleased that he supports the proposed membership of the authority. In my view it is well balanced. We will certainly be looking closely at the actual representation and the importance of the private abattoir export section will be kept well in mind.

I would agree with the honourable member that we should exercise caution with spaying. A lot would depend on the age of the animal spayed. We should not prejudice the ability to produce in the future. As to the proposed spaying subsidy—I have to agree with the honourable member for Rockhampton that it does inject some cash flow into the system, but I do not see much merit in the scheme. As we have faced five or six very good meat years, it is pretty obvious that there could be a drought just around the corner. I can envisage a situation in which, in order to achieve a cash flow, a producer will, in effect, over-spay. The scheme has not come out, but I am assuming that it will come out. If over-spaying is coupled with the effects of drought, in no time entirely the opposite situation will arise.

If the Federal Government is to inject a cash flow into grazing it can do so by a more satisfactory means, for example, by paying the local authority rates or by doing other things that will have the same effect. It should not simply ask producers to do something because there is money in it. I do not take to the scheme at all. I think the honourable member for Callide would agree with me that spaying could be a dangerous operation in Queensland or in any other of the dry areas of Australia.

We will be looking closely at the actual representation on the authority, and the importance of the private abattoir export section will be kept in mind. I appreciate the concern of the honourable member for Warwick in relation to clause 16, which relates to the conduct of saleyards. I can assure him that it is not intended that the authority will interfere in the day-to-day maintenance and operation of saleyards. The intention is that the authority will merely ensure that adequate procedures are adopted.

The honourable member for Townsville South made his usual forthright contribution. I am most appreciative of the way in which he spelt out the major differences between the organisation of the beef industry and that of the sugar industry. His assessment that beef producers will not accept the detailed controls that apply to the sugar industry was right on the mark. The simple fact is that the two industries are so different that no direct comparison can be made.

Mr. Casey: They didn't want to accept them in the sugar industry 60 years ago, but they would be glad to now.

Mr. TOMKINS: This will be much more awkward. I have been mixed up with producers all my life and have studied them. When things are tough, the producer will follow you anywhere; when things are good, he goes his own way.

The honourable member for Townsville South made the point that as a Government we must keep people on the land and that if we do not the country will deteriorate. I whole-heartedly agree with him.

The honourable member for Mourilyan, who is another member of the committee, outlined some of the problems confronting the beef industry committee. From my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries I know that she made a valuable contribution to the work of that committee. She is quite right in saying that there is no simple solution to the problem and that no pricing or stabilisation scheme will work without co-operation between all States and the Commonwealth. The Bill, however, will at least give the new authority powers to implement stabilisation and pricing schemes once agreement is reached with other States.

The honourable member also stressed the need to ensure that consumer interests are looked after. I could not agree more. The whole beef industry recognises this, and the Bill provides the mechanism through which consumers may be better informed on the class of beef they are buying. The usual problem at present is, however, with producer returns. They are far too low, and the correction of this problem is a most urgent task.

The honourable member for Cunningham outlined the need for a State authority to co-ordinate with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation in meat marketing. Clause 11 makes specific provision for this. I hope that this co-operation will lead to a better system of marketing beef in the near future.

The honourable member for Rockhampton said that what is needed is greater marketing effort and expertise. This is precisely what the Bill sets out to achieve. He suggests that the beef industry organisations deserve a lot of credit for the progress they are making. I fully agree with him. It has been the Government's policy to work with industry organisations in developing marketing proposals. The Queensland beef industry committee was set up for this very purpose and it has done an excellent job. I was surprised, but pleased, to hear that he supports the Bill. As a matter of fact, I often wonder why he is not shadow Minister for Primary Industries. In my view he has put up a very good show.

The honourable member for Callide drew attention to the efforts of the Queensland Government is sending trade missions overseas to increase our exports of beef. He is another member of the beef industry committee and I appreciate his strong support for the Bill. I should like to refer to the drought problem that he raised. It is unfortunately true that we are facing what could be one of the worst droughts or loss situations in our history. As he indicated, prices are so low that it is uneconomic to buy feed for drought-affected cattle. Further, there are only limited avenues for moving cattle from drought areas to move favoured districts. The situation is becoming very serious.

I cannot agree altogether with the honourable member's criticism of the present Meat Industry Authority. At one time I was a member of the authority and I thought it was a pretty good organisation. Certainly it has had to make some very unpopular decisions, most of which have been made under very difficult circumstances. The new authority will be quite different. Half of its members will be producers. I shall discuss with the Meat Industry Authority the slaughtering problem raised by the honourable member, and I shall advise him of the true position.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North asked whether the classification would apply to the live animal. The answer is no. At this stage it is intended to classify carcasses at slaughter. Later, we hope the classification will be extended to ensure that consumers may clearly identify what they are buying. I correct the impression that beef sales are down. That is not so. The quantity of beef and veal disposed of last year was at a very high level, much higher than in the previous year. The honourable member referred to quotas. I am at a loss to understand where his information came from. The Bill certainly makes no provision for quotas and I did not mention them. I do not believe that they would work. Perhaps the honourable member for Toowoomba North was influenced by the member for Mackay. As to his concern about saleyards—there is no intention to close them down. The intention is merely to ensure that proper conditions of sale are observed.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North posed many problems that we all know about, and about which he was quite sincere. The organisation to be set up under the Bill will be formed by representatives from various bodies, such as the U.G.A., the Cattlemen's Union, the Meat Exporters' Association and the Meat and Allied Trades' Federation. They will eventually be formed into an entirely new body, the Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority. This body should be the one to deal with many of the problems the honourable member raised. It is that body that we should leave them to. Its members should also have the benefit of talking to the new Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation which, as yet, has no members. I appreciate the concern of the honourable member about the matters he raised; but now that we are setting up this organisation on our own, and the new Federal one is being set up with entirely new members, I believe we should leave matters to them and see what they can come up with.

I thank the honourable member for Carnarvon for his outline of the beef marketing situation in Japan. This is a very delicate market, the promotion of which must be handled cautiously. The honourable member will agree with me that there should be one selling authority in Japan. It is quite wrong that many exporters should be competing against each other in a very difficult, sensitive market. The tendency is for exporters to try to undercut each other for the market. I believe that the new Federal organisation, in co-operation with the Queensland one, should face up to the problem and try to create the one marketing authority.

The honourable member for Fassifern drew attention to the great complexity of the beef industry in Australia and the difficulties it places in the way of introducing any stabilisation scheme. He is one of the members of the beef committee of the Minister for Primary Industries, and I know that he has worked extremely hard on it. He stressed the need for all States and the Commonwealth to act jointly if any scheme is to be effected. The Commonwealth has the prime responsibility for exports, and many of our problems lie in that area. I agree that a good deal of caution should be exercised in determining prices. If they are set too high, the market can be seriously affected. If set too low, producers can be disadvantaged. I say again that this is a very sensitive field. The honourable member for Kurilpa covered the same type of operation. I think that one of the real problems in our industry will occur when we get a little closer to fixing reserve prices.

The honourable member for Kurilpa drew attention to the problem of escalating costs in the meat-processing side of the industry and the serious effect on costs of continuing strikes. He also outlined the economic situation overseas which led to the collapse of the beef market. I agree that the marketing situation that has existed overseas has left much to be desired. The new Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation will do a great deal to improve this. As I indicated earlier, the new Queensland authority will have ample scope to work in with the Australian authority in this regard.

Finally, we should all take note of his warning that we cannot move too far away from market realities. That is a good note on which to end this summing-up. The crux of the matter is how closely the people working the new authority can work out these reserve prices. It is not as hard in places such as New Zealand as it is in Australia, because of our tremendous varieties of country and the numerous types of cattle, which are classified differently. A lot of people will be depending very heavily on the classification scheme which is in operation at the Brisbane abattoir now. A lot of us are hoping that it will provide the answer. Let us hope that it does. It must be remembered that it is not alive; that it is a machine. I am told that it does not recognise colour. I do not know how effective it will be in this field if it cannot recognise deep-coloured meat from the meat that is a bit lighter. However, that is for the future.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of s. 12; Establishment of the Authority—

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.23 a.m.): This is one of the most important provisions of the Bill. The only difference between the chairman under the Act and the chairman under the Bill is that the Act lays down specifically that he shall not hold an office of profit under the Crown. Is there any specific reason why that provision has been left out of the requirements in the Bill? The Minister has said that the chairman is to be an independent person. I hope that is what we will achieve. We recognise that he will need to have a very sound knowledge of the beef industry in addition to whatever other qualifications he may have.

Under the Bill the second nominee shall be the Director-General or his nominee. This is as it is under the Act.

The first major difference between the Act and the Bill is the increase in the number of producer representatives from one to five. This is most commendable. The honourable member for Rockhampton has already mentioned this from the Opposition's point of view. In this case five out of 10 members will be producer representatives and, provided the chairman is an independent person, the producers should at all times have a proper say within the industry. It comes back to the choice of the chairman and that is very important. We disagree with the method of choosing the five producer representatives. Here again we are perpetuating something that was in the Act and something that we objected to more recently in this place as the method of selection. It is virtually selection by the Minister.

At present, in the case of the producer members there is selection by the Minister from a panel of names submitted by various groups. I refer to bodies such as the U.G.A., the Cattlemen's Union, pig-meat producers and so on. The producers' representatives will in effect be the Minister's choice rather than the industry's choice.

In addition to beef producers there are producers of mutton, poultry, pork and bacon, all of whom want to have a say by way of submission on the panel. The Opposition would like to see representatives elected direct by producers. I must return again to the way in which in the sugar industry persons elected are automatically appointed to the organisation. Opposition members would much rather see the regulations prescribing a method of election from the various groups and organisations.

There is a big change in beef from paddock to consumer and there are many ways along the line in which it could be said that improvement is needed in this field. This, however, is the main one.

I therefore move the following amendment—

> "On page 3, lines 2 to 4, omit the words—
>
> > 'recommended by the Minister from a panel or from panels of names of prescribed persons nominated in the manner prescribed'
>
> and insert in lieu thereof the words—
>
> > 'who shall be elected by the producers in the various livestock groups in the manner prescribed'."

This would allow the Government to prescribe within the regulations a method of election from the various livestock groups.

There are other aspects of the clause that I wish to mention, but I shall save those comments till the amendment has been dealt with.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.29 a.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mackay. The Minister and other Government members made the point tonight that the new authority is to be representative of the various producer organisations involved in the industry. If we say that some type of board or authority is representative of certain groups, it is only right that those groups should have some say in who their representatives should be. I do not expect the Minister to do the wrong thing by these groups but, after all, they know the people they want there. They also want those people to be responsible to them, and I believe accountability in these areas is a pretty important thing.

The honourable member for Callide made the point that there have been certain representatives on boards in the past who have not been worth their salt. He did not put it in those words, but I believe that is what he meant. One of the reasons for a person's not carrying out his or her function is lack of accountability, and therefore I would like the Minister to accept the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mackay.

I have some other points to make on this clause, which I shall raise when the amendment has been disposed of.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (12.31 a.m.): I appreciate the point raised by the honourable member for Mackay. He is not worried about the chairman being nominated by the Minister, or the Director-General——

Mr. Casey: No, just the five producer members.

Mr. TOMKINS: It is largely a matter of opinion as to how these things should be done. The Bill states in clause 7 (3) (c)—

> "five shall be persons representative of livestock producers, recommended by the Minister from a panel or from panels of names of prescribed persons nominated in the manner prescribed;"

What this actually means is that the Minister shall be asking organisations such as the Cattlemen's Union, the U.G.A. and the other two organisations mentioned in the Bill for a panel of names. They are submitted to the Minister and he in turn ultimately submits them to Cabinet before they are approved. In actual fact I think it would be highly unlikely—I do not say that it would be impossible—that an unsuitable person would be nominated. I have to go back some years to when I was nominated for membership of the Queensland Meat Industry Authority. I was second on the list but I received the No. 1 spot, so I suppose I am talking against the way I got in, but I know that the chances of the wrong man being nominated are highly unlikely. Obviously the organisations will nominate their best men. They will probably even nominate them in order from one to five. I believe that, when a board is being set up which is closely allied with the Government, there is no way in the world that the Government will appoint the wrong man to that body. It will do the right thing.

The other point is that in his amendment the honourable member puts forward a proposition which has caused a lot of argument in the Federal sphere. His amendment reads in part, ". . . who shall be elected by the producers in the various livestock groups in the manner prescribed." We would then have to devise a method of election in order to get these people to the top of the list and I think this would be fairly unwieldy. Selection committees are used in the Federal sphere. It is true that, when people are elected in that way, it certainly shows that the organisation wanted them, but this matter was discussed by the beef industry committee and they followed it right through. Consequently I cannot really accept the honourable member's amendment.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (12.34 a.m.): We discussed the method of selection at length, and in view of the urgent need to have this legislation passed in this session it was agreed by the committee, with the Minister in full accord, that the organisations would submit names and that appointments would be made after consultation by the Minister with the various groups. It was anticipated that in future elections the producer consultative group would have a vote, but in this instance we are still waiting for the formation of such a group and so it would have been impossible to appoint members in any manner other than that proposed in the Bill. So there will be consultation among the Cattlemen's Union, the U.G.A. and other organisations and the Minister, and after that appointments will be made. The Minister for Primary Industries gave us that undertaking, and I think the Minister for Lands would agree.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.35 a.m.): The Minister has in fact indicated the real reason why the Opposition desires to have an election. As he said, when the crunch comes, it is an election by Cabinet rather than by the industry itself. We would like to see an election by the industry. It is not entirely different from the way in which members of the Meat and Livestock Corporation will be selected. The selection will come through from the industry itself. I realise, as I think every honourable member in the Chamber realises, that a very delicate situation exists in the beef industry today relative to membership of various bodies within the industry. If we had a statutory organisation for the beef industry, it would be quite simple, but we have not. People would not be hurt if the democratic method of having an election was used.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 7 (Mr. Casey's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 29

Akers	Lowes
Bird	McKechnie
Bourke	Miller
Elliott	Neal
Gibbs	Newbery
Gunn	Row
Gygar	Simpson
Hales	Small
Hartwig	Tomkins
Katter	Turner
Kyburz	Warner
Lane	Wharton
Lickiss	*Tellers:*
Lindsay	
Lockwood	Muller
	Doumany

NOES, 6

Burns	*Tellers:*
Jones	
Prest	Casey
Wright	Hooper, K. J.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (12.42 a.m.): I am concerned about the composition of the authority. One would presume that the persons on the authority would have the interests of the beef producers at heart. What I want to see is a representative of consumers on it. I am not necessarily pushing the housewives' barrow and saying that the price of meat ought to be kept low. What I am saying is that what we need is a consumers' representative to educate the public, not only on the use of more meat, if that is possible, but also on the manner in which the various cuts of meat can be cooked. One presumes that the composition of the authority will be predominantly male. After all, there is not a great deal of scope for choice of sex. The Executive Council will decide who is actually appointed. That also narrows the field to one sex. I appeal to the Minister to give further consideration to the appointment of a consumers' representative.

It was earlier mentioned by a few speakers that various marketing techniques had not been fully explored. The sale of meat in corner shops was referred to by a couple of speakers. Any consumers' representative worth his or her salt would say that if that is going to increase the price of meat, then it ought not to be done. Any persons who cannot buy meat in regular shopping hours obviously do not need it. They are not setting aside time to make their purchases. It is O.K. with frozen meat—meat that is properly and carefully packed and kept frozen—but what about a shopkeeper who is not so careful about his freezers? The meat defrosts and is refrozen, and is therefore completely unsafe to eat. If meat is going to increase in price—a few speakers mentioned 10c a pound—consumers would be quite happy about that as long as the increase goes to the producers. As a consumer and a housewife, I am concerned to see that if the price of meat rises—it is relatively cheap at the moment; no-one doubts that—any price rise goes to the producer and to the producer alone.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (12.45 a.m.): I regret that on this authority there will not be a trade union representative. This may sound a rather outrageous comment to make, but I do not consider it to be so.

If, for example, excessive demands were made by a trade union and a member of this authority as proposed to be constituted went to that union trying to convince it that its demands were excessive and would result in the closure of one or two works in the State, I dare say the meatworkers would not believe him. If, however, the workers have their own representative on the authority and he is privy to all of the discussions that lead up to any talks on such matters, they are likely to listen to him and take his advice.

The closure of any works in Queensland means the loss of 350 jobs. Looking at a couple of the works in Queensland, I sometimes wonder whether the workers care at all about their jobs. But then the vast majority of works in Queensland, particularly those in the smaller towns, are operating happily. It would be a matter of regret if those people did not have a say in the running of their industry, on which their livelihood depends entirely.

Mr. Doumany: They would not get a representative on the board.

Mr. KATTER: That is a sensible interjection and I thank the honourable member for it. If a trade union representative were appointed to the board he should be appointed by an electoral college of the president of the union at each of the works. The rank and file democratically elect a president at each works. What happens when they then elect a State executive is an entirely different matter; it is anything but a democratic election. I regret the fact that on the authority there is no A.M.I.E.U. representative or rank-and-file representative. I hope that in the future the Government will look closely at this matter.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.48 a.m.): I am very pleased that two Government members have supported the idea of having a consumer representative and a trade union representative on the authority. These matters were raised by Opposition members by way of interjection and second-reading speeches. It is vital that we have a committee that allows for dialogue between all segments of the industry. As the honourable member for Salisbury said, there should be a consumer representative to ensure that the consumers' side is considered.

I note that in clause 11 one of the aims will be to develop, introduce and supervise systems of consumer identification in respect of meat. I am not claiming that a consumer representative would have the necessary expertise to carry out that function; but the authority will not have it, either. It will have pools of expertise to draw on to ensure that these functions are carried out.

Consumers have a very important role to play here. After all, they are the ones who will pay for the product. If they are going to have to put up with a classification system at the point of sale surely they should have a say in the classification system.

Mr. Doumany: It is to their benefit really.

Mr. WRIGHT: I accept that. I think a Government member made the point that in days gone by meat had either blue or red marks on it. The consumer ought to have some say. As to who represents the consumer—this is a very difficult matter. As it will be difficult to have everybody on such a body, maybe the Minister could establish a consumer advisory committee with, say, five consumer representatives. In that way we would get a consensus on consumer desires.

Mr. Hartwig: That is in the Bill.

Mr. WRIGHT: I don't think it is.

Mr. Hartwig: If you look further down you will see that subcommittees may be formed.

Mr. WRIGHT: I see that but it does not mention consumers specifically. That makes it possible.

I like to think that this group of semi-experts could be available. They certainly should have some say.

The honourable member for Kurilpa emphasised that we do not want restrictions on any price stabilisation scheme that will prevent the industry from benefiting from improved markets. I agree with him, but we do not want an open-ended scheme so that when things are bad the consumer has to pay and when things are good the consumer still has to pay. When it comes to prices a consumer stabilisation scheme must benefit all in the long and short terms.

I make a further point about the unions. The honourable member for Flinders may have raised it because of his interest in the Cape River meatworks, but his point was valid. In 1975, when this issue was first raised, I fronted a special meeting of producers and graziers in Emerald. It was the toughest job I ever had to do. I went there representing the Federal Government and was up against 600 angry graziers. The vital point that was made was that a dialogue among the producers, meat processers, politicians and unions was desirable. That came about thanks to Graham McCamley, Ian Robinson, Ian Park, a number of members of Parliament and the unions in the area. We benefited from the dialogue that was established. Beef producers realised suddenly that the unionists were not demagogues with horns. They realised that they were ordinary people with interests which related to theirs in some way, that if the beef industry was in a bad position they were in a bad position. I agree completely with the idea of having union representation.

While it may be difficult to have a consumer representative, it would not be difficult to add one more person to the authority. As it is, it consists of 10 members, and there is nothing worse than an even number on a board. If the number were increased to 11, with an independent chairman, a union representative could be included—perhaps from the A.M.I.E.U.—and the chairman could still have a casting vote if necessary. I ask the Minister to consider this proposition. It he cannot include such a provision tonight, it ought to be the subject of an early amendment at a later stage.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (12.53 a.m.): We thrashed this proposition out thoroughly, but it was a matter of just where should we stop. When appointing members from organisations we could easily appoint an unlimited number. The line we took was that the person from the field of commodity marketing could come from anywhere. He could be associated with the promotion of poultry or be interested in any other form of marketing. He would be appointed because of his commodity-marketing experience

Mr. Wright: That man or woman would have expertise in marketing technique.

Mr. HARTWIG: What we are trying to establish is a price for the producer. That has No. 1 priority. If the price is set too high, naturally no-one will buy the meat. It was of the whole essence of the exercise to establish an organisation to try to increase the price paid to the producer.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (12.54 a.m.): Firstly, in reply to the honouorable member for Salisbury, I agree with her idea, but it would be quite impractical to embody it in the Bill at this stage. Under clause 19 some of those things can be done under the processes of the law. Quite frankly I have always felt that a committee would, if it was the wish of the members, get a consumers' body to advise it on certain matters or the committee can even approve a body.

The honourable member for Flinders raised union representation. Some of these are matters for the Minister for Primary Industries. I do not propose to usurp his powers in this field. I do generally agree with the idea that advisory bodies or smaller groups can be very handy to a body without the members of those bodies or groups actually being on the body.

Mr. Katter: It is the same problem with the unionists. There is probably a stronger case for that person in that area of representation.

Mr. TOMKINS: I do not object to that. In the field of the previous Australian Meat Board I have always personally been the supporter of a producers' meat board. I often think that if exporters who I know would wish to be on it had a proper authorised committee it could confer with the board at their instigation or by invitation of the board and that is probably better than having the fellows on the board. I have always taken that view. I have to be consistent and say the same about the consumers. I suggest that these are matters that should be taken up at a later date with the Minister for Primary Industries.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of s. 19; Functions, powers, etc., of the Authority—

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.58 a.m.): I suppose that clause 11 is the meat of the whole Bill, if I might use that term. This is the clause that establishes the new powers of the authority. It adds to the powers of the authority all of those things we have spoken of for a number of years now within the industry. It would not be unfair to say that it contains some of the Government's propaganda as well. We have the advisory committees, the market information service and the killing charges. I would be very interested to see the outcome of that one when the regulations are proclaimed. We know quite well that what is often referred to as the fifth quarter of the beast—the offal—has become a contentious matter in processing. It will be interesting to see what the Government does in relation to that function and power of the authority.

I want to refer to the carcass classification scheme, the controversy that is raging in Australia today about that scheme and the need to get on with the job of implementing it on every chain in every meatworks. Certainly we have trial chains under way now. At this stage I call upon the Government—in fact I challenge the Government—to make an allowance in the Budget to be presented on Thursday for the necessary funding to implement the carcass classification scheme. It is as simple as that to get it under way, while all the measurements are being taken of funding needed in order to enable this move to be made.

Mr. Katter: The Federal Government has already approved the money.

Mr. CASEY: I take the interjection. The Federal Government has committed itself to do it, but nothing is proposed in this year's Federal Budget to complete the installation of the scheme at the various chains in every meatworks throughout Australia.

We have heard a lot of talk from the Minister and particularly from the members of this so-called committee that the Minister had under way that Queensland was setting the example and was leading the way. I throw down the gauntlet to the Queensland Government to lead the way this Thursday in the Budget. It should show its Commonwealth colleagues what they should and should not be doing. It should provide the finance to implement the carcass classification scheme.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (1 a.m.): I should like to make some observations on paragraph (ix) of this clause. It really is the guts of the entire Bill. If paragraph (ix) is to be put into operation, a number of other things have to be done, and that is what the Bill amounts to. Basically what we are doing is bringing the beef industry into line with the rest of the Australian economy. Trade-unionists throughout Australia are covered by awards and employees cannot be paid less than the prescribed rates. Doctors do not charge below the common fee set by the A.M.A. Barristers do not charge less than the fees set by the Bar Association. All professional organisations set their fees and they are adhered to by all their members.

The same thing happens in the manufacturing industries. The makers of Holdens and Fords increase their prices virtually every month by a certain percentage. Even in the rural sector of the economy prices are set by the various marketing boards. The Tobacco Marketing Board, for instance, sets the price of tobacco. The prices of sugar, milk and eggs are set by the marketing boards for those commodities. People in all areas of the economy set the prices of their products.

Obviously if one is in the only sector working under a free marketing system, one will find oneself unable to keep up with inflation and falling further and further behind as the rest of the economy marches forward. This was the position in the wool and beef industries and in the production of some small crops. Unless the beef industry wakes up to itself, seizes control of the price of its product as best it can and moves like the rest of the economy, it must be the poor man in the economy and, as inflation goes on, it must become poorer and poorer.

Some members this evening have questioned the ability of the meat marketing authority to raise the price of beef. The big question is whether export markets can be held if the price is increased. Today I contacted the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and was told that basically we could increase the price of beef as long as the buyers had no-one else from which to buy it. I said, "What about Argentina, the biggest beef producer in the world?" I was told, "Argentinian beef cannot go to the American market." When we speak of our export markets basically we are speaking of the United States. Some three-fifths to three-quarters of Australia's export beef goes to the United States. By throwing in Canada and Japan we have the Australian export beef market.

The United States will not take beef from Argentina and it is really very difficult to find out who competes against Australia in the United States market. The only real competitor is New Zealand, and New Zealand producers are receiving, and always have received, considerably more than Australian producers because they have in operation at this very moment a minimum price scheme. In South Africa, Australia's other neighbour across the ocean to the west, there is also a minimum price scheme. Our competitors therefore have price schemes in operation and their beef prices are higher than ours.

The major reason Australian beef is on quotas in the United States, Canada and Japan is that those countries are terrified of a great flood of cheap Australian meat that would destroy their home markets. Australian beef is therefore being kept out of those countries not because it is expensive but because it is cheap. In actual fact the political pressure to keep Australian beef out of the United States will drop if the price is raised in Australia.

The argument against increasing the price was used by people who opposed the buying-in scheme for wool. They threw it up to Mr. Anthony and Mr. Lee-Steere again and again. But what happened in the case of wool? No sooner was that scheme introduced than the price sky-rocketed along with demand. I do not want to argue here why that happened. Suffice it to say that instead of there being a fall in demand when the price rose, the very opposite occurred.

This argument was also used against beef producers in 1975 when the price was 9c. We were told, "You do anything to raise that price and you will find you are unable to sell any beef." The price has now more than doubled to 24c and not only have markets not been lost but they have increased by 50 per cent since that time. If I could use a technical expression used by the economists, at the present price levels there are no effective elasticities of demand. What that means in simple English to the rest of us is that, if we raise the price, people are going to buy something else, but all alternative products are so much more expensive than beef that there is really nothing else they can buy until beef rises in price, probably up to a level of 15c a lb. In my opinion we can thus certainly raise it by 10c a lb. before any alternatives such as chicken, fish or pork start to become competitive with beef. That is the second reason why there is no substitution for beef at the moment.

Finally, it is rather obvious that if the world market for beef is 64c a lb. and we push our processers to ask for more than 64c, they might not be able to sell beef. I would like to quote to the Committee not my figures but figures given to me by two of the leading processers in Australia. They said they get a bone-in price on board ship in Australia of 50c a lb. By the time it is boned out, they lose a third so they are down to 33c a lb. They allege their processing cost was 12c a lb. and that it brought them down to a figure of 21c a lb. I said, "I can supply your last figure. You paid the average Australian producer last year a price of 17c a lb. and that leaves a profit margin of 4c a lb."

That is the result on their figures, not mine. But I would suggest that the processing cost is not 12c a lb. It is more like 7c a lb. and their figure for the export price I would also regard as highly contentious. But even if they are only getting 50c a lb. bone-in, that still leaves them with a profit margin of 9c a lb. Even if we leave the processer 1c or 2c a lb., which is a huge profit—it translates into a profit of about 20 per cent—we are still giving the beef producer of Australia an extra 8c a lb. That is not the result on my calculations, but on the calculations of the meat processers themselves. I do not want to embarrass these people. These figures were given to me during a very heated argument, but they are the figures they produced and I stress that to the Committee.

The last argument that has been thrown up against us again and again is one I have discussed with two other exporters who, I might add, are producers in the North. They quoted me a figure of 75c a lb. on the American market for bone-in meat as against 50c a lb. Even if we take off 10c a lb., which is the cost of transportation from here to the United States, we still come up with a figure of 60c a lb., which is 10c a lb. more than the other processers quoted me.

Their final argument is based on their profit and loss statements. They say they are making only half a cent or 1c. a lb. profit. I have to make the point very strongly to the Committee that, if the meatworks and the meat processing companies in this State and throughout Australia show a profit in excess of 8 per cent, we can rest assured that excess profit will be taken by the unions. There will also be tremendous pressure from the producers of Australia for the introduction of a minimum price scheme. That is why they will not show profits in excess of 8 per cent if they are sensible, intelligent businessmen. I suppose it is a fairly good attitude for them to adopt. From the point of view of making money they would be very foolish to show profits in excess of 8 per cent.

So where do they hide the profits? They employ two methods. I know two of the northern companies, which use one method. Regrettably, these people are also big cattle producers. Cattle on their stations are sold to the meatworks at an extremely inflated price, which means that the works run at a loss and the cattle stations run at a profit. One of these stations is run by a big company, and how could any big company run at a profit at the present moment? Yet this particular company producing cattle runs at a significant profit margin. One of its competitors, which is not a processer, made a loss of $500,000 last year in the Territory alone and yet this other company runs at a profit. It has a guaranteed sale for 30,000 head a year, which is about a third of the total processing by that particular meatworks. It is obvious that that company is selling its cattle at an inflated price and moving the profits from the meatworks back to the stations. The stations are making the profits; the meatworks are not.

The other classical method used is that the meatworks—call it meatworks XYZ—sells to a company—call it ABC—at no profit. The company ABC then sells to the American market at a huge profit. Company ABC, which is a non-incorporated company and does not have to show its books, takes the profit and the processing company shows no profit.

I put up those arguments to destroy the arguments that are constantly raised against increasing prices. Let me just reflect that every other sector of the Australian economy unilaterally raises its prices, and I do not see any of them going broke, starving or suffering as the beef producers of Australia are now suffering. Unless they get in tune with the remainder of the economy, there is no future for the beef industry or for the area that I represent.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (1.11 a.m.): I should like to ask the Minister a question. Clause 11, at the bottom of page 4, says in subparagraph (vi)—

> "direct owners of slaughter-houses and abattoirs when quoting killing charges to livestock producers to quote those charges in such manner and detail as are prescribed;".

Who will prescribe those?

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (1.12 a.m.): The explanation is that it is to prescribe the usage and detail required where killing charges are quoted by abattoirs and slaughter-house owners. The power is intended not to set prices or levels of killing charges but to specify a system where different killing charges can be compared.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (1.13 a.m.): I should like to comment on the statement made by the honourable member for Mackay, who said that he would throw down the gauntlet to the Queensland Government to show that it is sincere in this matter. I ask him to read the Bill in detail. First let me point out that it would be absolutely impossible for this State to set a minimum floor price. We could be made to look the biggest fools in the nation if we did that.

Mr. Casey: I did not say that you have to.

Mr. HARTWIG: You said that you would throw down the gauntlet.

Mr. Casey: I said, "You go ahead and provide the finance for the equipment needed on the chain to introduce your classification scheme."

Mr. HARTWIG: If you have classification, you have to have a floor price to go with it. You cannot have one without the other.

Mr. Casey: Classification gives you the system for consumer identification as well.

Mr. HARTWIG: We can get consumer identification. The clause says that the committee will—

> "co-operate with the Commonwealth Government, the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and meat industry authorities in other States and Territories for the purpose of introducing and operating a uniform system of statutory minimum prices for the various classifications of cattle and carcass beef and administering any minimum pricing or stabilization scheme for livestock and meat agreed to;".

Surely we cannot go any further than that. We thrashed this out at length.

Mr. Casey: Those are the words, but the money is the meat. Put up the money and you are putting your money where your mouth is. I think that the Minister knows what I am talking about.

Mr. Tomkins: Yes.

Mr. HARTWIG: I do not think that this Government would be found wanting. This gives autonomy to this meat marketing authority. It has the right to introduce classifications; it has the right to support a minimum price scheme. If the honourable member can get his mates in New South Wales to agree to it, I do not think that Queensland will be found wanting.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (1.15 a.m.): The honourable member for Mackay may or may not know that there is a pilot classification scheme in operation at Cannon Hill at the present time. It is financed jointly by the old Australian Meat Board, the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. It is very complicated. I believe they are carrying out these trials with cattle made available by our people. In the present situation, this is about as far as we can go in this field. The honourable member spoke about making funds available for this. Finance will come as the scheme develops. I do not think it is necessary to go that far right now. The honourable member can accept that the trial classification scheme is only a preliminary to the scheme we eventually adopt.

Mr. Casey: How long would you suggest?

Mr. TOMKINS: I couldn't answer that.

Mr. Casey: Mr. Sinclair said 1980.

Mr. TOMKINS: No. For the whole scheme? I am not in a position to answer that accurately. It is a tremendous scheme to introduce. I understand that it is to be brought in at killing works with export potential, like Cannon Hill, and probably some of the private ones, too. There is a suggestion that the Commonwealth would finance their construction, under its programme of help to industry.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (1.17 a.m.): I notice that under the clause the authority may "co-operate and contract with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and meat industry authorities in other States and Territories as well as abattoirs, traders, meat and livestock producers and other organizations with a view to improving marketing arrangements in respect of stock, meat and by-products". I certainly hope that this organisation is not going to become a trading authority like a middle man. I will be saying a few words at another time in the Parliament about the system of fish boards in Queensland. They have become middle men, with prices to the consumer and retail outlets sky-rocketing as a result of the role they are playing as trading authorities. Can we get an assurance from the Minister that the role of this organisation as a trader will be minimal and that it certainly will not become a middle man?

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (1.18 a.m.): The only way I can answer that is by saying that this body is prepared to act as an agent for the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation, which could include trading. I think that was clearly the intention. Trading in its own right is just not in the Bill.

Mr. Wright: It definitely can't?

Mr. TOMKINS: No.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—Amendment of s. 21; Funds of the Authority—

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (1.19 a.m.): This clause contains some of the most important provisions in the Bill when we consider the promises and commitments to the meat industry. It sets out the means (by way of legislation) by which a Meat Prices Stabilization Fund can be established. From our queries about a couple of other clauses, we are starting to find that there is about some aspects of the Bill this hollowness which I mentioned during the second-reading debate.

The setting up of a Meat Prices Stabilization Fund is commendable. Time and again when debating other Bills I have spoken about stabilisation funds. I am a strong supporter of them, but we have been given no information during the currency of the debate on how the proposed fund will actually work. No indication has been given as to how amounts paid over and above a certain figure will be paid into the fund. The clause merely sets out the system. Obviously it is all going to be contained in the regulations.

If we look back at the recent history of the industry, we see that 1973-74 would have been the year to establish a Meat Prices Stabilization Fund. At that time there were very high prices in the meat industry, as there were in the sugar industry. The sum of $50,000,000 was taken off the top of the sugar industry and put into something altogether different. It could have gone into the setting-up of a stabilisation fund in that industry for use in times of low prices.

In the beef industry, this would appear to be the time to do that. Producers have to recognise that if there is a return to very high prices the cream will be taken off the top and placed in a stabilisation fund. However, because of the low prices that presently prevail, any stabilisation fund that is created will need initial Government support.

So under the Bill there is the framework for setting up a meat stabilisation fund and again I challenge this Government, when it brings down its Budget on Thursday, to set aside money for a meat stabilisation fund.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 15, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—Amendment of Fifth Schedule—

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (1.21 a.m.): I refer to paragraph (i) "Establishment of saleyards etc.", which deals with the conditions under which any person shall be allowed to provide, conduct, operate or maintain saleyards for the sale of stock within any public abattoir area or district abattoir area. I am wondering why the authority would interest itself in the maintenance of saleyards. I consider that to be outside the scope of its authority. I would not like to see set up a body that will create added costs to the industry by upgrading saleyards. I should like the Minister to clarify this issue.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (1.23 a.m.): The honourable member for Callide should know more about this than I do, because he was on the committee. My understanding is that the authority will have to examine such things as bruising. Recently a move has been made to install live-weight selling facilities. Obviously it is no good doing that unless the meat exporters are on side. If they do not approve of those facilities, they will not buy the meat. Bruising is an important matter. I see no more in it than that. Matters such as this will be referred to the authority so that it can pass judgment of them. I cannot see anything mandatory in it. I think the idea is quite a good one.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 and 18, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

The House adjourned at 1.25 a.m. (Wednesday).