

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 1977

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

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations of his report for the year 1976-77.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Department of Forestry, for the year 1976-77.

Trustees of the Queensland Art Gallery, for the year 1976-77.

Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies, for the year 1976-77.

Registrar of Friendly Societies, for the year 1976-77.

Net Surplus Profits of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland), for the year 1976-77.

State Government Insurance Office (Queensland), for the year 1976-77.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the House-builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Act 1977.

Orders in Council under—

Electricity Act 1976.

Industrial Development Act 1963-1976.

State Counter-Disaster Organization Act 1975.

Medical Act 1939-1976.

Regulations under—

Builders' Registration Act 1971-1973.

House-builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Act 1977.

Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1976.

Report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations for the year 1976-77.

Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account of the Queensland Trustees Limited for the year 1976-77, together with the Report of the auditors thereon.

Accounts of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) for the year 1976-77.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.5 a.m.): I should like to advise the House that the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr. Sullivan) advised me last night by telephone that he confidently expects that a new International Sugar Agreement will be finalised in Geneva tomorrow. The new agreement will have full economic provisions based on quotas, prices and stock-holding responsibilities and obligations.

The agreement will be open to accession by all sugar exporter and importer countries and, provided the numbers of exporters and importers who accede to the agreement by December this year are sufficient to warrant its effective operation, the agreement will come into effect from 1 January 1978 for five years.

The main heads of agreement with respect to Australia are:—

(i) Australia's basic export tonnage—2 350 000 metric tonne raw value (the total basic export tonnages allotted being 15.905 million M.T.R.V.).

(ii) Basic export tonnages will be subject to a quota cut of up to 15 per cent and, unless the International Sugar Council decides to the contrary, for the first two years to an additional cut of 2½ per cent.

(iii) A special provision has been negotiated whereby Australia has the option of accepting the additional cut of 2½ per cent or restricting its quota cut to 15 per cent and forgoing immediate shortfalls and quota increases until other exporters' additional cuts have been restored.

(iv) Exporters will be required to hold reserve stocks equivalent to about 15 per cent of their B.E.T.s (with some concessions to smaller developing exporter countries), such stocks to be accumulated at the minimum rate of 40 per cent, 40 per cent and 20 per cent in the first, second and third years respectively.

(v) The cost of storing reserve stocks will be very substantially assisted by finance by a Stock Financing Fund under the control of the council, the income of the fund to be derived by a levy on sugar traded in the free market, except, of course, that traded between non-members of the agreement.

(vi) Agreement has been reached that the central price range will be 11-21 U.S.c per lb. and that—

(a) Quotas will be suspended when the price reaches 15 U.S.c.;

(b) Quotas will be reintroduced when the price falls to 14 U.S.c.;

(c) Reserve stocks will be released in three equal portions when the price reaches 19, 20 and 21 U.S.c respectively.

Mr. Sullivan has advised me that a number of minor issues remain to be resolved but it is expected that, now that decisions on major elements have been taken, these will be finalised readily.

Mr. Sullivan has reported that it was clearly the opinion of the conference that, in the face of the mounting sugar surplus in the world, an almost disastrous price situation would prevail on the free market for at least the next two years. In this regard, the disciplines and obligations of an agreement would involve, on the part of all sugar-exporting countries, significant sacrifices in the early years.

The inclusion of the United States in the negotiations, the positive indication from the E.E.C. that it proposed to join the agreement and accept equivalent responsibilities to other exporters, and the establishment of a Stock Financing Fund were all significant advances on the 1968 agreement and counter-balanced in great measure the substantial restraints accepted by exporters for the first year or two of the new agreement.

Mr. Sullivan also reported that the conference had again been extended to allow the minor issues to be finalised and legal and drafting committees to complete their work. The final plenary session is expected to be held in Geneva on Friday.

In making this statement this morning, I want placed on record my Government's appreciation of what the Australian delegation achieved for our sugar industry. I would like to pay a particular tribute to the leader of the delegation, the Right Honourable J. D. Anthony, Deputy Prime Minister. Mr. Sullivan told me that Mr. Anthony did outstanding work and played a very important role indeed.

Mr. Aikens: What steps will be taken to stop Tom Burns claiming full credit for it?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As he was not there, I do not think he can claim any credit for it.

I also pay tribute to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries (Hon. V. B. Sullivan), who was the leader of the Queensland contingent in the delegation, and to Mr. Lloyd Harris, the chairman of the Sugar Board. These men and their officers did excellent work, and I pay tribute to them. It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I am able to announce this agreement to the House and to the sugar industry.

SKIN CANCER

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health) (11.12 a.m.): Later this month my department will be launching its official Health Week Programme, which will be a State-wide awareness campaign concerning the problems of solar skin damage. With the summer months approaching, and this being the last

day of Parliament, we feel it is appropriate that a major campaign to prevent the development of skin cancer is essential in our tropical State. As Minister for Health, I am seeking the support of all honourable members during this campaign, for they will be shortly moving about in their electorates, and I believe that they can play a very important role in getting this vital health message to the whole community. Mr. Speaker, I have made arrangements for a personal information kit to be available to all members. Samples will be distributed to honourable members this morning.

For the information of all honourable members I will draw their attention to some of the most serious skin cancer problems that we face in Queensland. Already, one in every three Queenslanders—and I emphasise that—is destined to get skin cancer in his or her lifetime.

Unfortunately, there is growing evidence that skin cancer is appearing on Queenslanders at an earlier age. While in the past, skin cancer was detected in people between 30 and 70 years, now it is being found in people in their twenties.

Children as young as seven years also have been treated for it. While the number is very small, their skin cancer nevertheless has been caused by over-exposure to the sun.

Yet most skin cancer can be prevented, if we know something about it. One has only to take a stroll along our beautiful beaches to see the number of babes being exposed to the sun. Proud parents, while seeking a suntan for their children, unknowingly are laying the foundation for their skin cancer. This is horrifying and must be strongly discouraged, because babes sunburn excessively and dehydrate quickly. As responsible parents, it is our duty not to unnecessarily expose our children to the sun.

The sun-and-skin programme being conducted by my department is designed to help Queenslanders in the simple measures to avoid or to minimise the dangers of exposure to the sun.

We believe we have made a positive start by getting schoolchildren involved in our sun-and-skin programme. Some 19,000 entry forms in a hat design and poster competition have been distributed throughout schools in the State. The children have designed hats which they feel can give best protection from the sun. We hope that the children will be encouraged to wear hats in the sun for their own benefit. In the poster competition they have depicted what they see as a safe way of living in the sun. We don't have to be afraid of the sun. We must respect it and not abuse it if we are not to get skin cancer, or not to age and wrinkle prematurely.

It is my hope that we will be able to make every Queenslanders aware of the risks from excessive sunshine and the effects on the skin, particularly skin cancer, which appears to be occurring on younger people. One way of avoiding skin cancer is to make sure we cover with hats and clothing the areas of our body most likely to be exposed to the sun, and, where this is not possible, to use protective sunscreens. The sun in Queensland is very strong and contains a large proportion of ultraviolet radiation—so much so that 13 minutes exposure during the peak period between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. is sufficient to cause mild sunburn on an untanned skin. I urge people to minimise their attempts to achieve a tan during the peak period.

All parents have a responsibility to start educating children at an early age about the problems associated with the sun in our climate. They should be encouraged to wear hats and avoid exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., especially at places such as the beach. Sunscreen lotions and creams are not something just for the fairer sex. I am sure no man would want an aged and wrinkled face on a young body.

Finally, I expect all our schools to take an active part in the sun-and-skin programme, because teachers can encourage children to wear hats, often more successfully than parents. The types of skin most at risk are those with reduced pigment, redheads, blondes, blue-eyed persons, fair-skinned persons and those with unevenly distributed pigment such as freckles.

The Division of Health Education has pamphlets on the "Sun and Your Skin" and "Skin Cancer" and I commend them to honourable members.

PETITION

ABOLITION OF PRESENT ELECTORAL ZONING SYSTEM

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) presented a petition from 7,433 citizens of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will abolish the present electoral zoning system, to ensure that gerrymandering of electorates by politicians of any political party is abolished once and for all by legislating such that all electoral redistributions are conducted under the authority of a Supreme Court judge.

Petition read and received.

PRIVILEGE

ATTEMPTED SERVICE OF WRIT WITHIN CONFINES OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (11.16 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I have to report a gross breach of privilege affecting me. A firm of solicitors known as Pattison & Barry, 63-65 Turbot Street, Brisbane, attempted to

have a bailiff acting on their behalf serve on me in this House this morning a writ claiming damages. I point out that to date I have refused to accept that writ in the confines of the House, for fear of what might happen to the poor unfortunate bailiff who is acting on their behalf. I understand that the bailiff could have been promptly arrested had he persisted with the intention of Messrs. Pattison & Barry to have that writ served here. I do not think any member of this Parliament should have bailiffs pursuing him in this House. At the same time, I am quite prepared to meet the bailiff outside at a time convenient to both of us.

The writ arises out of a speech I made in this House on 4 August 1977, wherein I drew the attention of honourable members, the media and the public at large to the activities of one Douglas John Bishopp and his partner, Julian Barry (who I believe is a member of this firm of solicitors that has attempted to have a bailiff severely embarrassed, if not arrested, here this morning), and their dealings in the funeral and undertaking business. I would like to state right here and now that I will continue to rise on matters of public interest under the protection of this House, and I will continue to protect the people of Toowoomba and, indeed, South-east Queensland whenever Mr. Douglas John Bishopp and his associates make any such attempts by means bordering on the very brink of the law.

I outlined in a speech on a matter of public interest some time ago his dealings in Tweed Heads and in the Capricorn Insurance Company, which was destined to collapse, as well as his dealings in Toowoomba, where people have been quoted one price for a funeral and a cemetery plot only to find on receipt of the bill that as mourners they have been cruelly deceived.

I will continue to fight in this House for the people of Queensland and for their rights. This Parliament is the highest court of appeal in matters of consumer affairs, and I have carried out my duty to alert the people to his practices. When they are informed through the media, as they have been in this case, they can then judge for themselves. They can be warned of the practice and then judge for themselves how they should behave.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to raise such matters and I will not be intimidated by this firm of solicitors. Furthermore, I will do my best to protect public servants who are carrying out what they believe to be their duty from the risk of being imprisoned just to suit the whim of this solicitor and his agents.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to advise the House that this morning I received information that a certain person, professing

to be a bailiff acting on behalf of a firm of solicitors, endeavoured to serve a writ on the honourable member who has just resumed his seat. I should like to advise everybody that no firm of solicitors, bailiff or anybody else may serve a writ or any other document on any member of Parliament or use this building as a clearing-house for any legal work.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: We have had one prior instance of somebody associated with a firm of solicitors endeavouring to serve a writ or summons on the Premier in this House. I warn everybody that this House is supreme and that it will conduct its own business without interference from the legal profession or other outside force.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETIES CONTINGENCY FUND AND COMMITTEE

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

(1) Who are the members of the Contingency Fund Committee established in April 1976 under the Building Societies Act?

(2) Will he declare which members represent the Association of Permanent Building Societies and the permanent societies not affiliated with the association and which are ministerial appointees?

(3) What are the qualifications in each case?

(4) Has the Contingency Fund Committee reported regularly to him and, if so, has it reported on the Queensland Permanent Building Society collapse?

(5) Will he table copies of the reports for the information of members, investors and members of the public?

(6) What is the estimated deficiency in Queensland Permanent funds?

(7) Under what section of the Act does the appointment of a liquidator provide for the creation of a new society under different management, as has been suggested in some newspapers?

(8) When will people who have all of their funds tied up in Queensland Permanent obtain their first payment?

(9) Will it be possible for depositors who are also borrowers to have their repayments debited against their account?

(10) How many investors have been paid funds for emergency reasons?

Answers:—

(1 to 3)—

The Registrar of Building Societies as chairman.

The Under Treasurer or his nominee; John Thomas Delaney—nominated by the Minister.

Leonard Henry Ludgate—selected from panels of names furnished by non-affiliated societies.

Ronald William Ramsey—selected from a panel of four names furnished by the association.

One vacancy currently exists in the last-mentioned category.

Trevor Steel has been appointed to act as a deputy for Mr. Ramsey who is temporarily absent overseas.

Committee membership includes possession of professional qualifications and experience in law, accounting, valuation and management at a senior executive level, particularly in the building and terminating housing society industry including management as directors of societies and as State and Federal presidents of related associations.

(4) The deliberations, resolutions and advices of the committee on the principal matters dealt with by it and the administration of the Contingency Fund are communicated to me on a regular basis.

(5) No.

(6) As already disclosed by statements made in Parliament, the estimated total deficiency of the Queensland Permanent Building Society is \$3,833,192, comprising operating losses and the imbalance between the society's general ledger and computer subsidiary ledgers as disclosed in its report to members under date 29 July 1977.

(7) The provisions relating to the appointment of a liquidator as contained in section 37AA of the Act do not provide for the creation of a new society, but obviously other provisions in the legislation could be utilised to achieve this result if desired.

(8 and 9) These are primarily matters for decision by the liquidator.

(10) This has not been possible to date.

2. BUILDING SOCIETY PURCHASE OF RIX BUILDING

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

(1) With reference to the take-over by the Queensland Permanent Building Society of two building societies on the Gold Coast, was it a condition of the take-over of one of the societies that the Queensland Permanent Building Society acquire what is commonly known as the Rix Building?

(2) What was the purchase price of the Rix Building and was the price paid far and above its commercial value at the time?

(3) Was it a condition of the acquisition of the Gold Coast Society that the purchase of the Rix Building was a necessity for the entire commercial transaction to go through?

(4) Did Alderman Norm Rix, the National Party candidate for Southport, have any connection with the Rix Building, and did he have any connection with either of the building societies taken over by the Queensland Permanent Building Society?

Answers:—

(1) Under the provisions of the Building Societies Act, all property of a society voluntarily transferring its engagements to another society vests as provided by the Act in that other society and this would have applied to the Rix Building.

(2) This information is not shown in documents lodged in the Office of the Registrar of Building Societies. However, I am advised that the contract to purchase the Rix Building was entered into by Gold Coast Permanent Building Society in April 1974 and settled by that society on 1 July 1974.

The transfer of engagements of this society to Queensland Permanent was approved at a meeting of the latter society late in July 1974 with effect from 1 July 1974. In the published 1974-75 accounts the directors of Queensland Permanent notified its members of a write-off against the society's assets revaluation reserve of \$225,000 in respect of this building.

(3) See answer to (1).

(4) Connection by Alderman Rix with this building is not indicated in documents lodged in the registrar's office. That person is not recorded as having been a director or secretary of either Gold Coast or Sunstate Permanent Building Society.

3. MIRANI SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

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

(1) For the current financial year, did the Mirani Shire Council bring down a budget which contained two minimum rates, one for town areas and a lower one for rural areas?

(2) If so, does this conform with the requirements of the Local Government Act?

(3) If the council's action does not conform with the requirements of the Act, what effect would this have on the budget brought down?

(4) In view of other legislation introduced into the House in recent times by the Minister to correct unlawful rating and budget actions by other local authorities, what action does he propose

to ensure that certain ratepayers in the Mirani Shire are not disadvantaged as compared with other ratepayers?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) I am having inquiries made into the matters raised and will inform the Leader of the Opposition of the outcome in due course.

4. MR. J. McDONALD, TOWNSVILLE CITY SOLICITOR

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

(1) Has he perused the photostat copies that I tabled in the House of two letters written to the Townsville City Council by John McDonald, Townsville's City Solicitor, and dated 12 and 26 September, wherein he requested in the letter dated 12 September that a direction to him by the Works and Building Committee of the council be withdrawn for six reasons given by him, among which were (a) that he is solicitor for the council and not a private investigator or a journalist and (b) that the council failed to do the thing that it is trying to blame someone else for doing?

(2) If he has perused the copies, and as Mr. McDonald stated in his letter of 12 September that, despite his strong advice that there was no basis for legal proceedings against a certain ratepayer, he was instructed to proceed against the ratepayer, and as he also indicated that the council had established a spy system along the lines of the Russian KGB, using binoculars, cameras and similar equipment to try to trap the ratepayer, does he contemplate taking any action to protect the reputation of Queensland local authorities against the slurs and insinuations that must assuredly arise if dishonest, illegal and unethical incidents such as those mentioned in Mr. McDonald's letters are allowed to continue?

Answers:—

(1) I have perused the documents tabled, which appear to be memoranda from the City Solicitor, Townsville City Council to the Town Clerk of Townsville on two quite separate matters, one relating to a broken seal on a water meter and the other the alleged construction of a corner of a house over a private drainage easement. One of the documents indicates that the council directed the service of a show-cause notice why legal proceedings should not be commenced, and further indicates that the City Solicitor put on record certain allegations made to him by the party served with such show-cause notice. The other document would seem to relate to a private matter between two property owners in which the council is not directly involved.

(2) I appreciate the action of the honourable member in bringing the matter to my attention. I am considering the matter to see whether any further action should be taken thereon.

5. NOISE NUISANCE FROM HEAVY TRANSPORT AT NIGHT, BRISBANE

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

(1) Is he aware of the inconvenience caused to the near-city suburban residents of Brisbane by heavy transport traffic late at night and early in the morning using quiet inner-city streets?

(2) Will he consider having heavy transport traffic diverted from heavily populated areas of the city from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I appreciate that there would be a measure of inconvenience caused to some residents from traffic moving through their area at night and early morning. Quite a deal of this traffic may be inseparable from the servicing of the city and suburbs. I note the honourable member's suggestion for a curfew during the hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Conversely, it has also been advanced that the use of streets by heavy vehicles should be restricted during business hours in the interest of traffic movement. This problem occurs not only in Brisbane but elsewhere in Australia and overseas. Whilst I sympathise with the persons affected, I am doubtful whether it would be feasible to implement a general ban as suggested.

6. SUSPECT DWELLING-HOUSE, ISAAC STREET, SPRING HILL

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

(1) Is the Queensland Police Department aware of the existence of a dwelling house in Isaac Street, Spring Hill, allegedly being used for immoral and unlawful purposes?

(2) Will he give an assurance to the residents of Spring Hill that, if this situation exists, his department will do all in its power to close this establishment?

(3) Will he have a marked police patrol car patrol past the residence in order to force the operators out of business and out of the area and to indicate to the operators of such establishments that they will not be tolerated in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. There have been a number of prosecutions of persons, including the proprietor of the premises in question, for using those premises for the purposes of prostitution.

(3) The honourable member may be assured that the Queensland Police Department will take all necessary action within its power to eliminate as far as possible the use of premises for the purposes of prostitution. However, it is not considered that any action in merely having marked patrol cars drive past premises known to be operating for the purpose of prostitution will have any marked effect in forcing the cessation of the use of those premises for the purposes of prostitution.

7. REALIGNMENT OF BRUCE HIGHWAY AT MT. LARCOM

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

(1) Further to his answer to my question on 9 September 1976 that arrangements had been made for the Main Roads Department to ascertain from the Railway Department its proposed plans for land required for the realignment of the Bruce Highway on the eastern side of the township of Mt. Larcom, has the Railway Department made a decision in relation to making land available to the Main Roads Department?

(2) Has any decision been made by the Main Roads Department regarding the exact relocation of the Bruce Highway?

(3) If so, will the road bypass Mt. Larcom or will it continue through the township as requested by the Chamber of Commerce?

(4) When will funds be made available for the construction of this section of the Bruce Highway?

Answers:—

(1) The Railway Department does not favour taking a busy main road through railway facilities at Mt. Larcom because of the effect the resultant division would have on those facilities.

(2) No.

(3) See answer to (2).

(4) Not within the next five years, as far as can be seen at the present.

8. BEACH PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ON GOLD COAST

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

(1) Did the senior engineer of the Beach Protection Authority claim recently that money was being misspent on stopgap rock

wall replacement which was estimated to cost \$31,000,000 with approximately \$400,000 maintenance costs per year?

(2) Does his Government support rock wall construction or the preservation and rebuilding of sand dunes as a method of erosion control?

(3) What help does the State and the Commonwealth Government give to local councils for the expensive beach replenishment programmes they must conduct from time to time?

(4) What subsidy is paid by his Government?

(5) Has any estimate been made of the cost of restoring beaches in the main trouble spots at the Gold Coast?

(6) What are these estimates and for what areas?

Answers:—

(1) The senior engineer, Beach Protection Branch of the Department of Harbours and Marine, gave evidence earlier this year at an inquiry of a Commonwealth select committee on tourism to the effect that the current cost of restoring the beaches of Queensland is estimated at \$43,000,000. He advised the committee that funds provided by the Commonwealth to repair sea walls damaged by storms could be spent more effectively on beach restoration works.

(2) The Beach Protection Authority supports the preservation and restoration of coastal sand dunes in preference to the construction of sea walls.

(3) The State Government provides the services of the Beach Protection Authority on investigation and design of works for beach restoration and subsidises these works. The Federal Government does not provide assistance for work of this nature.

(4) 20 per cent.

(5) Yes.

(6) The current estimated cost of the works required to complete beach restoration at the Gold Coast is \$17,700,000. The areas covered by this estimate include all beaches between Kirra and the northern end of the Spit, Southport.

9. TENNYSON MINERALS N.L.

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

(1) Has he read recent Press reports that his business associate and prominent National Party member, Mr. C. W. Siller, chairman of Oilmin N.L. (formerly Exoil), recently requested two directors of Tennyson Minerals N.L. to resign so that the board of that company could be reconstituted to comprise only nominees of Oilmin and its ally Industrial Equity Ltd., which is a company engaged in corporate-raiding?

(2) Is he aware that, following the refusal of the Tennyson directors to facilitate the transfer of complete control to Oilmin and its corporate-raiding allies, Mr. Siller used the Oilmin votes to prevent the re-election of the chairman of Tennyson, Mr. Austin Donnelly, who was supported by 92 per cent of the individual shareholders who gave proxies for the meeting?

(3) Is he aware that, as Mr. Siller was unable at the Tennyson meeting to give any valid reason for preventing the re-election of Mr. Donnelly, who is well known for his efforts in this and other companies on behalf of minority shareholders, the Tennyson shareholders are now seriously concerned, particularly as Oilmin is suffering a severe shortage of cash because of losses of about \$1,000,000 in property ventures in Sydney and recent purchases of shares in other companies?

(4) As Tennyson Minerals recently reported encouraging results from its Bloomfield River tin project and as Queensland can ill afford to lose what has been a genuine, honestly managed exploration company, what action will the Government take to protect the interests of the minority shareholders and of the State, under either existing legislation or appropriate amendments that may be needed by them to act before the damage has been done?

(5) As he, through his family company, is apparently a substantial shareholder in Oilmin, will he use his best efforts in that capacity to persuade Mr. Siller and the board of Oilmin N.L. to change their attitude by recognising that the vast majority of individual shareholders want Tennyson to continue in mineral exploration, which was the object for which they subscribed their capital?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of the recent Press reports concerning Tennyson Minerals N.L. I have been advised by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs that, following representations by the chairman of Tennyson Minerals N.L., an inspector from his office carried out an investigation into these matters. As a result of the investigation, the chairman of Tennyson Minerals N.L. was advised that there was no evidence of any company having influence over the shares in Tennyson Minerals N.L. which were held by, or on behalf of, Oilmin N.L.

(2 to 5) I am informed that at the annual general meeting of Tennyson Minerals N.L. held on 30 September 1977, of which I understand proper notice had been given to shareholders, the chairman, Mr. Austin Donnelly, was voted out of office and replaced by Mr. W. Siller, Mr. A. Danmead and Mr. I. Millard were returned to the board.

If any shareholder of Tennyson Minerals N.L. feels that the affairs of the company are being conducted in a manner oppressive to one or more of the shareholders, he may apply to the Supreme Court for an order to remedy the oppression.

Any complaint in regard to the operation of a company may also be reported to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

10. REZONING OF LAND IN CABOOLTURE SHIRE FOR S.G.I.O. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Has he received any objections from residents of the Caboolture Shire regarding the recent rezoning of land in the shire from rural to residential for the State Government Insurance Office's development in the shire?

Answer:—

I am informed that, during the period in which the proposed rezoning referred to by the honourable member was open for inspection, one objection, signed by two residents of the Shire of Caboolture, was lodged thereto.

The application by the Caboolture Shire Council for the approval of the Governor in Council to the proposed rezoning was made to the Department of Local Government on 3 October 1977. The application, the objection and the council's representations thereon are presently receiving consideration by the department.

11. HOUSING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES, WOODFORD/REDCLIFFE/BRIBIE ISLAND AREAS

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

From 1 January 1974 to the present date, how many houses have been erected by the Housing Commission in Deception Bay, Bribie Island, Caboolture, Burpengary, Woodford and Redcliffe?

Answer:—

From 1 January 1974 to 30 September 1977—

| | Houses | | Pensioner Units | |
|------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | Completed | Under Construction | Completed | Under Construction |
| Deception Bay | 79 | 108 | .. | .. |
| Bribie Island .. | 2 | 2 | 12 | .. |
| Caboolture .. | 19 | 7 | .. | .. |
| Burpengary .. | 7 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Woodford .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. |
| Redcliffe .. | 159 | 44 | 28 | .. |

In addition, the commission provided mortgage finance for several hundred houses bought or built by private owners in these areas, but detailed geographical statistics are not readily available.

12. HYPNOTISM PRACTISED BY MR. K. W. WRIGHT

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

(1) Are hypnotists or hypnotherapists required to be registered in Queensland?

(2) If so, has any application for registration been lodged by Mr. Keith Webb Wright of Rockhampton?

(3) If not, have any complaints been lodged concerning the hypnotic practices of Mr. Wright?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Hypnotists are not registered in Queensland at present but will be required to do so when the recently introduced Psychologists Act is proclaimed in the near future.

If Mr. Keith Webb Wright wishes to practise hypnotherapy after that date, no doubt he will be required to apply to the board for registration.

13. ORGANISATION, ANANDA MARGA

Dr. Lockwood, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Are he and his department aware of an organisation known as Ananda Marga and that it hopes to commence activities in Toowoomba on 5 October at 7.30 p.m. at the Q.C.W.A. Hall in Margaret Street?

(2) Has the Indian High Commissioner warned that this organisation was founded in India in 1950 by a man named Sarkar allegedly to promote yoga and meditation, but that in fact it selected persons from among its members to be trained as terrorists?

(3) Has the Indian High Commissioner also warned that members who rejected this pseudo-religious terrorist training were murdered and that Sarkar, alias Ananda Murthi, alias Baja Iji, has been imprisoned for life in India for mass murder after a proper trial?

(4) Has the Indian High Commissioner alleged that the Proutist Movement, the political wing of Ananda Marga, is continuing its campaign of threat and terror in Australia?

(5) Will he warn and protect unsuspecting young people of the subversive activities of the extremists of Ananda

Marga, and especially against becoming involved in pseudo-religious terrorist training?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2 to 4) Information available to me indicates that this organisation was founded in India in 1955 by one Prabat Ranjan Sarkar, also known within the organisation as Anand Murti or Baba. Newspaper reports of Ananda Marga atrocities indicate that the greater portion of them are directed against former adherents in a bid to enforce strict discipline within its own organisation. Whilst little is known of the precise nature of its activities within Australia, although purporting to practise meditation and yoga, there is little doubt that some of its members are prepared to become involved in acts of violence and terrorism particularly if they believe it would bring about the release of the founder of their organisation who is serving a prison term in India for the murder of a number of dissidents within his organisation.

The Proutist Movement is understood to be a wing of Ananda Marga.

(5) Yes. I would strongly urge all members of the public for their own protection to be particularly careful in aligning themselves with Ananda Marga or any other organisation practising extreme theories which inevitably lead to violence.

14. BEENLEIGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

(1) Further to his visit earlier this year to the Beenleigh Primary School, is he aware that this school now has in attendance 502 girls and 566 boys, with more to come by the end of 1977 and in 1978?

(2) In view of this, what plans are in progress to upgrade existing accommodation and supply new accommodation?

(3) Do the plans include a new administration block and staff accommodation, together with the necessary toilet facilities, to bring this school up to an acceptable standard?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Early approval is anticipated for construction of a new block of four teaching spaces to provide the additional class-room accommodation needed for the commencement of the new school year.

As the honourable member no doubt appreciates, the new school being provided at Eagleby South, because of his strong representations, will relieve the enrolment position at Beenleigh State School.

It is also anticipated that tenders will soon be invited for an additional amenities block to include additional toilet accommodation for the Beenleigh State School.

15. BALD HILLS ROAD LEVEL CROSSING

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

With reference to the action of the Railway Department some years ago in closing the Bald Hills Road railway crossing at Bald Hills, thus effectively severing the two parts of the township and preventing older people and women with strollers or prams from crossing the line to gain access to shops and the post office, will he take action to have boom gates installed at the crossing as soon as possible?

Answer:—

Because of the limited use to which it was being put and the existence of a road overbridge 16 chains away, the level crossing in question was closed in 1956 and the gates removed.

The restricted finance available to the Railway Department for expenditure on boom gates is channelled on a priority basis according to the degree of hazard to level crossings carrying heavy vehicular traffic. Because of this and the element of risk introduced by virtue of the length of time a pedestrian would necessarily be required to wait after the activation of the device and the passage of a train, it is not the policy to provide boom gates at pedestrian crossings.

In all the circumstances the reopening of the level crossing at Bald Hills is not favoured.

16. RAILWAY IMPROVEMENTS, PINE RIVERS ELECTORATE

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

(1) Have the studies into the need and requirement of new railway stations between Strathpine and Lawnton and between Petrie and Dakabin been completed?

(2) If so, what action has been taken, or is proposed to be taken, for the provision of these long-awaited facilities?

(3) In the design of a new station at Lawnton, will consideration be given to providing pedestrian access across the railway line in such a form that its use can be independent of the function of the

station, in order to encourage pedestrians to refrain from using the dangerous unofficial crossing?

Answers:—

(1) Preliminary studies of the needs and requirements for new railway stations between Strathpine and Lawnton and between Petrie and Dakabin have been carried out and the draft reports are currently under consideration.

(2) At this stage, it is not possible to give an indication of what action may be recommended at these locations. Information will be made available when the final reports have been received.

(3) The Metropolitan Transit Authority and Queensland Railways are not currently planning station improvements at Lawnton, but the honourable member's suggestion concerning pedestrian access across the track will be examined.

17. FISH-STOCKING OF WATER STORAGE AREAS

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

As many Queensland streams are being dammed for water storage for many various purposes, thus reducing the habitat of game fish, will he cause investigations to be made into the introduction of species of fish such as Nile perch, which are capable of living and breeding in ponded water?

Answer:—

For some years my Queensland Fisheries Service has recognised the need to establish a suitable fish in the dams and other ponded water-storage areas as a game, sporting and table fish. It has explored various native species; however, none has met requirements. Tests were made to collect barramundi fingerlings, but they proved to be impracticable and uneconomic.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is currently experimenting with species of Nile perch to meet a similar need, and progress is being closely observed.

Research to date has not come up with any suitable native species and indicates that some foreign stock of the Nile perch type should be the basis of further experimentation under closely controlled and quarantined conditions to ensure that the environment and our native species are not endangered.

The honourable member is assured that continuous and exhaustive studies are proceeding to achieve the desirable objective of providing a suitable fish able to breed in ponded areas.

18. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

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

(1) Has there been any cut-back in allocations for in-service training for the 1977-78 financial year?

(2) How many teachers undertook in-service training in 1976-77 and how many are estimated to take in-service training in 1977-78?

(3) What guarantees can he offer that teachers from isolated areas may attend in-service courses?

(4) How many teachers have been unable to attend in-service courses because there are insufficient teachers to replace them at their schools?

Answers:—

(1) The allocation from State funds for in-service education in the 1977-78 financial year has been increased. Funds available from the Schools Commission, however, have been reduced by about 15 per cent.

(2) It is impossible to estimate accurately the large number of teachers who participated in in-service activities during 1976-77, because these have been organised by a variety of agencies including the Department of Education, subject and professional associations, teachers centres, tertiary institutions, community groups and individual schools.

The programmes organised by these groups range in length from several hours to 16 weeks and are conducted in school time, during vacations, and in the teachers' own time.

As an example, I have available information on a number of long-term courses which were organised by this department. The numbers of teachers who attended these courses are listed below—

| | Teachers |
|--|----------|
| Primary— | |
| In-depth curriculum studies programme (3 to 5 weeks duration) | 630 |
| Music resource teachers' course (6 weeks duration) | 68 |
| Whole-term release programme (12 weeks duration) | 55 |
| In-depth reading course (3 weeks duration) | 153 |
| Teacher-librarian course (1 semester duration) | 58 |
| Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education course (2 semesters duration) | 10 |
| Total | 974 |

Secondary—

| | |
|---|----|
| Professional development programme (3 to 16 weeks duration) | 40 |
| Resource teachers' course (1 semester duration) | 5 |
| Teacher-librarian course (1 semester duration) | 30 |
| Total | 75 |

Special—

| | |
|---|-------|
| Remedial teachers' course (1 semester duration) | 26 |
| Resource teachers' course (1 semester duration) | 28 |
| Intellectually handicapped programme (1 semester duration) | 26 |
| Physically handicapped programme (1 semester duration) | 30 |
| Special education course at the James Cook University (1 semester duration) | 16 |
| Special education course at the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (1 semester duration) | 18 |
| Teacher-librarian course (1 semester duration) | 3 |
| Total | 147 |
| Grand total | 1,196 |

It is anticipated that a similar range of courses will be offered in the next year and that the number of teachers will be approximately the same.

(3) Teachers from throughout the State have equal opportunities to attend in-service courses. Special allowances are provided for teachers who must live away from their centres. Residential courses are arranged for teachers from remote schools.

(4) Supply teachers, or relief teachers, are usually available for short-term replacements. However, in longer-term programmes, there have been some problems in providing replacement teachers.

19. LIMESTONE-MINING, MT. ETNA CAVES

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

(1) Is he aware of the proposed Supreme Court action A. L. Brown and the Queensland Conservation Council v. Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. and Anor. concerning the mining of the Mt. Etna Caves on Recreation Reserve 444, Parish of Fitzroy, for which his fiat was sought in a letter dated 9 December 1975?

(2) Will he explain the 18-month delay before making known his decision not to lend his name to the proceedings on 24 June?

(3) Is he aware that only six days prior to the notification of his decision not to lend his name on 18 June, Recreation Reserve R444, which was the crux of the proposed action, was rescinded?

(4) Will he assure the Parliament that the 18-month delay in considering this request for his fiat was not influenced by his knowledge that Recreation Reserve R444 was to be rescinded, and that no impropriety has occurred involving the passing on of information accompanying the above confidential request for his fiat to any department, organisation or individual outside his department?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of an application along the lines suggested.

(2 to 4) I particularly draw the honourable member's attention to the dates I am about to mention. While the first communication was a letter dated 9 December 1975, in accordance with normal practice, the solicitors for the applicants were required on 19 December 1975 to supply a copy of counsel's opinion—a fundamental document in this type of application. This document was not received until 10 August 1976. After the receipt of this document, further verbal discussions took place between an officer of the Solicitor-General's Office and solicitors for the applicants seeking further information and a letter outlining the information sought was forwarded to the solicitors for the applicants on 30 September 1976. No reply was received to this request until 10 February 1977, when the solicitors for the applicants wrote advising that they had only just received the required information from their counsel.

The only advice received between September 1976 and 10 February 1977 was a letter from the solicitors for the applicants dated 11 October 1976, stating that the information would be supplied as soon as possible and thanking me for my prompt reply to their earlier correspondence and expressing gratification on behalf of themselves and their clients on the personal interest taken by me in the matter.

It will be seen that much of the delay was caused by the inability of the solicitors to receive adequate information from their clients. Having regard to the inadequacy of the information supplied by or on behalf of the applicants, consider that there was a consequent need for researches by my officers into the factual as well as the legal position. I reject completely any suggestion that any delay was with the object of frustrating the desires of the applicants.

In determining whether to grant a fiat, the sole consideration is by no means the actual legal position. I have to consider many factors. In the circumstances, leases had been granted in good faith in the belief, at any rate, that they were in accordance with the law; mining operations had taken and were taking place pursuant to these leases; and employment was given by such operations.

In accordance with their application, the sole basis for consideration of a fiat was a matter which could be, and in fact was, remedied by easy administrative action. The initiative in respect of such action did not proceed from me or on my advice. In fact, prior to such initiative, I had been advised that it was not a proper case for the grant of a fiat and, acting on such advice, I could have then refused the application. However, I had the matter deferred for further consideration before making a final decision. In the meantime the administrative action was taken rendering unnecessary further favourable consideration of the application by me.

It will be seen from the information supplied that the great bulk of the alleged delay was due to the applicants' failing to provide appropriate information.

20. QUEENSLAND PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY MEMBERS

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

(1) With regard to the Queensland Permanent Building Society merger with the Sunshine and Gold Coast Societies in June 1974, were the financial accounts to 30 June 1974 of the latter societies audited and, if so, by whom?

(2) Did either or both the societies have any operating loss or shortfall at the date of take-over?

(3) If so, was this information advised to members of Q.P.B.S., the Registrar of Building Societies or the Minister concerned and, if not, what was the reason?

(4) Were any directors of Sunshine and Gold Coast Societies also directors of the Broadbeach or East Brisbane Permanent Building Societies and, if so, who were they?

(5) When was the \$2,600,000 discrepancy in Q.P.B.S. first located and when were members of Q.P.B.S. first advised of this discrepancy?

(6) Were a large number of loans granted to settle the purchase of homes erected by Tudor Constructions and by Rodlan or its subsidiaries and, if so, who were the directors of the Tudor Constructions and of Rodlan Syndications?

(7) At the merger date of Sunshine and Gold Coast Building Societies, what was the value shown in the balance sheet of the Rix Building at Southport?

Answers:—

(1 to 3) The engagements of Gold Coast and Sunshine Permanent Building Societies were transferred in full to Queensland Permanent Building Society with effect from 1 July 1974, and as a consequence they ceased to operate as separate entities.

I am led to believe that accounts for 1973-74 of both of these societies were audited by the firms of Whelan and Parker and of Hungerford, Spooner and Kirkhope, respectively. I am also led to believe that those accounts indicated deficiencies of approximately \$172,000 and \$303,000, respectively.

Because these two societies were experiencing financial difficulties in 1974, the transfer of engagements to Queensland Permanent was effected. This occurred before annual general meetings could be held and consequently the audited accounts could not be presented to meetings of the societies nor were they required by the legislation at that time to be lodged with the registrar in these circumstances.

(4) Yes, but not necessarily at the same time in every case.

The following were directors of Sunstate (formerly Southport) Permanent Building Society and East Brisbane (formerly Broadbeach) Permanent Building Society and now known as Great Australian Permanent Building Society, which is under the control of an administrator appointed by the Government:—

C. Coghlan,
A. D. Rodgie,
G. D. Cannon,
P. R. Watkins,
J. A. Elliott,
H. McDonald.

(5) The records held in the office of the Registrar of Building Societies do not reveal the precise time the \$2,600,000 imbalance was first located. However, in the auditor's report under date 14 April 1976, on the society's 1974-75 published accounts to members, it was stated that the reconciliation of the subsidiary ledger for borrowing members with the balance shown on these accounts had not been completed at the date of his report. No amount of possible imbalance was stated. Preliminary investigations into the undisclosed imbalance were commenced in January 1976, by the registrar's staff as a result of monitoring action it had been undertaking in respect of societies generally. A full disclosure of the extent of the imbalance, namely, \$2,600,000, was made to members by the society in its published accounts for the 1975-76 financial year.

(6) Records held in the registrar's office do not reveal particulars of loans granted in respect of the companies named. There is no record of registration of a company

under the name of Tudor Constructions. However, registrations exist under the names of Tudor Investments Company Pty. Ltd. (now in liquidation) and Tudor Properties Pty. Ltd. Particulars of directorship are—

TUDOR INVESTMENTS COMPANY PTY. LTD.

| — | Appointed | Resigned |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Alan David Rodgie .. | 11-6-68 | .. |
| Joel Leslie Rodgie .. | 11-6-68 | 28-6-68 |
| Desmond Paul O'Shea .. | 28-6-68 | 23-10-72 |
| Eileen Emily O'Shea .. | 28-6-68 | 23-10-72 |
| Joel Leslie Rodgie .. | 23-10-72 | 31-12-73 |
| Clifford Coghlan .. | 31-12-73 | .. |

TUDOR PROPERTIES PTY. LTD.

(Since January 1970)

| — | Appointed | Resigned |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Alan David Rodgie .. | 15-1-70 | .. |
| Clifford Coghlan .. | 15-1-70 | 11-10-71 |
| Barbara Joan Coghlan .. | 11-10-71 | .. |

The directors of Rodlan Syndications Pty. Ltd., which is also in liquidation, are—

RODLAN SYNDICATIONS PTY. LTD.

Barbara Joan Coghlan
Clifton Coghlan

(7) As stated previously, the balance sheets of these societies were not lodged or required to be lodged in the registrar's office under legislation in view of the transfer of their engagements effective from 1 July 1974.

The honourable member will realise that I have not answered that nearly as fully as I was asked.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LACK OF QUORUMS, POLLUTION CONTROL COUNCILS

Mr. BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, I refer to my previous questions on the need for amending the Clean Air Act because of the abolition of the position of Director of Environmental Control. Is he aware of reports by shire officials that they are unable to assist companies to carry out pollution control improvements because neither the Water Quality Council nor the Air Pollution Council have been able to obtain quorums at their recent meetings? I refer him to a statement in the "Tablelands Advertiser" that the shire health surveyor, Mr. Bill Kennedy from Mareeba, made that report in relation to a bacon factory in that area. I ask: Why is it that, because of lack of quorums, the most important pollution control councils that we have are not holding meetings, and what has he done about it?

Mr. HINZE: Frankly, I do not believe half of the statements that come into the hands of the Leader of the Opposition. The information available to me from my own director has never been along the lines just suggested, and I would believe my director rather than the Leader of the Opposition.

MIRANI SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

Mr. BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, I refer to his answer to me today about the Mirani Shire Council's rating, which is illegal under the terms of the Local Government Act, and I ask: Has he received representations from the Mirani Shire Council on this matter and will he explain why he has not introduced legislation on that, as he has done for the Albert Shire Council and the Miriam Vale Shire Council?

Mr. HINZE: I have had no representations by the Mirani Shire Council. If they had been made to me and if illegal undertakings had been conducted by that council, of course I would have introduced the necessary legislation. Obviously, time does not permit of my doing that now.

Mr. Burns: When you do it next year, we'll catch you.

Mr. HINZE: Is the Leader of the Opposition threatening me? He will be over there after the election, for sure, and he might have only five or six colleagues with him—but that's about all.

SEAFOOD FROM BRISBANE RIVER

Mr. BURNS: I ask a further question, this time of the Minister for Health. As he is a responsible Minister, I hope I might get an answer this time. Is he aware of the reports by the Queensland Conservation Council in "The Courier-Mail" of Thursday, 29 September, that people who eat seafoods from the Brisbane River risk food poisoning and serious illness? I am sure that, as a responsible Minister, he has checked this matter out. Can he tell us if that is so and, if it is not, what is the true position about the seafood in our river?

Dr. EDWARDS: I can assure the honourable member that all Ministers are very responsible and have proved their responsibility for a long period. It is obvious that, at the election on 12 November, the people will show that they recognise our responsibility.

The Queensland Conservation Council makes many statements. All of them are brought to my attention if they are of a public nature. They are checked continually by my department. We do market surveys continually throughout the State. No doubt this particular survey will be brought

to my attention when I call for it on returning to my office. I assure the honourable member that, as usual, we will keep him informed of our activities.

I remind him that, for the first time in years, pelicans are back on the Brisbane River. This indicates that they are quite happy to drink the water and eat the fish in it. The matter will be brought to my attention and I assure the honourable member that all necessary steps will be taken to look into it.

BELMONT SLAVE-LABOUR CAMP

Mr. POWELL: I ask the Minister for Police: In view of the publicity given to the inhuman activities in the so-called Belmont case, and the great importance of it, can he advise the House in these last hours of the Parliament of any further developments?

Mr. NEWBERY: Three men will be charged today. They are expected to appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court this afternoon. The names of those charged and the details of the charge will be made public at the court hearing.

MARYBOROUGH CREMATORIUM

Dr. LOCKWOOD: I ask the Minister for Health: Will he investigate, as a matter of urgency, the exclusion of Mr. Ross, the undertaker of Maryborough, from the Maryborough crematorium, especially the dispute involving Ross and his client for refusing to pay approximately \$40 for an unnecessary crematorium form? Will he investigate Douglas John Bishopp's interest and activity in the Maryborough crematorium, the charges at the Maryborough crematorium, which are grossly in excess of the charges in Brisbane, and the secrecy surrounding the operations of this crematorium? Further, will he completely renegotiate all the agreements concerning the licence and the management of this crematorium?

Dr. EDWARDS: I am unaware of the particular problem to which the honourable member refers. I can assure him that I will have this matter fully investigated under the powers granted to me by the Cemetery Act and the Cremation Act. I remind him that the Cremation Act contains provisions under which this matter can be brought to my notice and can be investigated. The Cremation Act has provisions which allow certain charges to be made. I believe that there is no legal power by which people who operate a crematorium can claim fees in excess of the charges laid down. I will have the matter fully investigated. If there is any breach of the law, I assure the honourable member that my department will take action to make certain it is brought before the courts.

ALLEGED TOUTING BY A.L.P. ELECTION
SCRUTINEERS

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: In view of serious allegations that, when a representative of the returning officer was going from house to house arranging to record electoral visitor votes, persons allegedly acting as scrutineers for A.L.P. candidates at the last election engaged in blatant political touting on behalf of the A.L.P. candidate, will he inform the House whether this is an offence, and, if so, what action should be taken to bring these alleged A.L.P. scrutineers before the court? One A.L.P. scrutineer urged electors to vote for the A.L.P. candidate because he had six kids. The elector replied, "I'll vote for a man who is good at his job, not just good on the double bed."

Mr. LICKISS: All I am prepared to say is that the provisions of the Elections Act will be strictly adhered to and policed.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House proceeded with Government business.

SUPPLY

THIRD ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF
RESOLUTIONS

The Resolutions reported from Committee of Supply on 4 October were presented and, on motion of Mr. Knox, received.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

The Resolutions being taken as read—

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

"That the Resolutions be now agreed to."

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

OPENING OF COMMITTEE

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

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

"(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1977-1978, a further sum not exceeding \$988,881,387 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1977-1978, a further sum not exceeding \$1,280,678,838 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1977-1978, a further sum not exceeding \$168,969,023 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1976-1977, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$118,915,479.64 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1976-1977, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$135,493,916.63 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1976-1977, a supplementary sum not exceeding \$28,181,542.02 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1978-1979, a sum not exceeding \$300,000,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1978-1979, a sum not exceeding \$260,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1978-1979, a sum not exceeding \$33,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the loan Fund Account."

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

FIRST READING

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (12.9 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill represents the second and final Appropriation Bill for the current financial year. It seeks parliamentary approval to cover expenditure included in the Budget

Estimates for this year, unforeseen expenditure incurred during 1976-77 and expenditure for the first two months of the financial year 1978-79 to maintain Government activities until further supply can be granted in that year.

An amount of \$3,921,529,248 is provided for 1977-78 to cover anticipated expenditures from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, Trust and Special Funds and the Loan Fund and represents the total of Parts III, IV, and V of the Schedule to this Bill. This amount represents the appropriation for the full 1977-78 financial year, apart from \$157,305,508 appropriated under special Acts and shown in Parts I and II of the Schedule to the Bill. It also incorporates amounts appropriated in the Appropriation Act 1976-77 (No. 2) and the further amounts appropriated in the Appropriation Act 1977-78 (No. 1), which was assented to on 12 August, to enable us to carry on until the passing of this Bill. Unforeseen expenditure for 1976-77 totalling \$282,590,938.29 is also incorporated in the Bill. This amount had Executive authority but now requires parliamentary approval. Full details of this amount are set out in Parts VI, VII and VIII of the Schedule to this Bill.

The Bill also provides for an amount of \$593,000,000 to provide Supply for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund for the first two months of the financial year 1978-79. Adequate provision has been allowed for to cover cost escalations in the interim period.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.11 p.m.): In speaking to the final Appropriation Bill in the Forty-first Parliament, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that no illustration could be more appropriate, no single object could so aptly illustrate the performance of the State Government, no symbol could express in such stark reality the time-picture of the work of the Government's contribution to the State, than the photograph on page 3 of the Financial Statement depicting the new river fountain. Like that fountain, the Government acts in a flamboyant and sometimes spectacular manner; it is full of colourful, but meaningless, performance; it continually reaches for the sky but never attains it; it works only part-time and, stripped of its colourful accoutrements, with its striking resemblance to a sunken dunny in the river, it continually performs with its head just above water; and, finally, the State really cannot afford it.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I do not wish to hear any more references such as that from the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Very well, Mr. Speaker; I bow to your ruling. However, it could not have been better chosen as an

illustration for the Treasurer's Financial Statement, for, like that fountain, stripped of its colourful verbosity, the Budget, when seen in its true perspective and in the light of day, is no more than a political facade. It dresses up the real facts and endeavours to portray them as something attractive.

The Treasurer may smile, but I hope that by the end of my speech the smile will be on the other side of his face.

This deceitful document only thinly covers the lack of performance by the Government, and it also attempts to dress up the lacklustre performance of the most colourless Treasurer this State has had the misfortune to have. Not even the colourful turn of phrase on the first page of this decrepit document can camouflage what is no more than a dreary annual recital.

Mr. Knox: The Budget debate has finished. Weren't you here for it?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable gentleman gagged me in the Budget debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that, in accordance with May's "Parliamentary Practice", he must not read his speech. He may refer to notes, by all means.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this occasion the Financial Statement has been garnished with political parsley to mislead, and to endeavour to fool, the voting public awaiting the announcement of the date on which the State election is to be held.

What was the Treasurer trying to prove, Mr. Speaker? Who was he attempting to deceive when he stated—

"Let me say at this point that I am convinced the nation is now moving steadily but surely towards full economic recovery."

What a meaningless, empty, juvenile statement to be included as part of the Financial Statement!

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I draw your attention to the fact that the honourable member for Archerfield is reading his speech word for word like a Trades Hall parrot.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Treasurer may be able to get away with that type of gobbledegook when he addresses the Liberal ladies sewing guild, but to try to peddle such bilge among thinking people is just not on.

Of course the nation will recover eventually. It will recover in spite of the Frasers and the Petersens; there is even hope that it will recover in spite of the Financial Statements of the Treasurer. I suggest that the Treasurer try to sell his corny line of

claptrap to the 48,000 unemployed. He would be much better occupied in doing that. To have 48,000 unemployed in this State is a public scandal, and it is one of the rocks on which the Government will perish at the State election to be held on 12 November.

Mr. Frawley: You won't be here.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will be here when the election is over.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I inform the honourable member for Murrumba that he will not be here for the remainder of the day if he does not behave himself. That applies to all other honourable members, too.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He should try to sell his story to the large number of school-leavers who are presently trying to obtain jobs or apprenticeships at the end of the school year. Perhaps he may care to direct his remarks to the people who are paying inflated rates of interest on housing loans or to the thousands of low-income earners trying to obtain accommodation through the Housing Commission. That number is presently in the vicinity of 10,000.

Perhaps the Treasurer may care to hand down his classic literary gem when, in presenting his Financial Statement, he said—

“We have passed the crossroads, although there are problems of inflation, high interest rates, depression in the beef industry and of course unemployment. I believe we are heading in the right direction.”

What sort of intelligence does he think the people of Queensland possess? He should come clean. He should tell them that, like a lot of other people, he fell for the Fraser line that he, Mr. Fraser, had the answers to inflation and unemployment. But the Canberra money-managers are groping around in all directions looking for the switch to “turn on the lights.” I am afraid that for the unemployed and the children who will be leaving school at the end of this year there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

At this stage I want to make passing reference to the utterances over the years of the Premier and the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads on the subject of Queensland's secession from the rest of Australia. Of course, this proposition will never be accepted by the people of Queensland, and most certainly not by the young people.

It is true that Queensland is a very wealthy State, but it is equally true that our valuable assets are owned and controlled by large overseas multinationals. The Queensland Government is not master of its own house, and that fact is becoming more obvious each year.

The closure of Gunpowder is a case in point. Large overseas companies come into the State, set up their business here, make huge profits, and when it suits them, like the Arabs, they fold their tents and leave.

Mr. Doumany: Give us an example.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have just given an example.

Mr. Doumany: Which one?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Gunpowder.

Mr. Bourke: You're crackers.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I don't mind taking interjections from the more responsible members, but I am certainly not going to take them from one of the most junior lightweights in the House. If Government members want to interject, let the heavyweights do it.

The problems of the sugar and beef industries also stress the need for Australia to act as a nation. The Australian Government is having a hard time with the Japanese, and I would suggest that if the Queensland Government had been acting alone the Japanese would long since have sent our officials packing.

Another argument against secession is that the Premier and his Ministers would have to stand on their own feet and would not be able to indulge in Canberra-bashing to excuse their lamentable lack of performance as the Government of this State.

Mr. Jones: As to Ministers standing on their feet—is it that the newspaper report that the Treasurer was riding on the Premier's coat-tails is not true, but that he is already in his pocket?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is quite so.

I would like to refer now to the cut-back in special purpose grants to the State. This is to be deplored. I referred last Wednesday to cut-backs in Federal sewerage allocations and to the serious plight of residents of north Woodridge. These cut-backs are a disgrace at a time when so many people are unemployed and when the building industry is in such a sorry state that people cannot obtain finance for homes.

Obsession with inflation is obscuring the fact that the high unemployment level creates special problems. I am sure it is little comfort to the unemployed to know how hard the Premier is fighting to keep the Spanish seamen employed by Utah in their jobs. Earlier this session I referred to that matter, too. For the present any Australian can give up any thought of having a career at sea. The Premier is protecting Utah's profits at all costs, even if it means denying Australians their jobs.

The Premier and the Treasurer have boasted that their financial management is so expert that there is no need to raise taxes and

charges. They know as well as I do that their remarks, as revealed in the Financial Statement, are only a ploy in the State election campaign. Charges will rise next year—and the Treasurer has never denied that they will. By way of interjection on the Treasurer when he was presenting his Financial Statement, I asked him if charges would rise next year.

Mr. Frawley: You were asleep.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Treasurer's dreary monotone would send anyone to sleep. Nevertheless, when I made that interjection, the Treasurer refused to answer. I now ask the Treasurer through you, Mr. Speaker: Will charges increase next year, if by some grave misfortune the present coalition is returned as the Government?

Mr. Knox: The statement I made in April was that there would be no increases in charges and taxes in 1977. I am not in a position to tell the honourable member what the future will be, and neither is the honourable member. We all hope, of course, that charges will not have to be increased—that costs will be contained.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not accept the Treasurer's answer. He is just drawing a red herring across the trail.

Mr. Knox: No, I know you don't.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I still say—and I warn the people of Queensland about this—that additional charges will be imposed on them next year if, unfortunately, this Government is re-elected. But, of course, it won't be.

Mr. Knox: Would you like me to pick 1985 or some other year like that?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: No, 1978.

The S.G.I.O. has certainly not been exempted from the Treasurer's tax collection. Last year, in his Budget speech, the Treasurer admitted that receipts from the S.G.I.O. in lieu of income tax would increase from more than \$4,000,000 in 1976-77 to \$10,750,000 in 1977-78.

Mr. Houston: That is an increase for next year.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Of course it is, but the Treasurer just denied that charges were going up. In response to the interjection from the honourable member for Bulimba I point out that that will be an increase of 168 per cent. It is a scandalous increase.

I note that the Treasurer is very silent now. He is not making any interjections or smart alec remarks. Although the S.G.I.O. is exempt from income tax, it is virtually taxed by the State Government on its profits from life insurance and general insurance, which cover vital areas such as

fire, marine, comprehensive and third-party motor vehicle insurance. Obviously Queenslanders will be hit to leg in these areas if the present coalition Government stays in power after the State election.

It was most amazing that, after I mentioned publicly that I intended to raise the matter of the Queensland Permanent Building Society in my Budget speech, and had named the day on which I intended to speak, the Treasurer cut off the debate early, before I could speak. That was done deliberately to keep me out of the Budget debate.

Mr. Houston: You had a lot to say.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I did have a lot to say but I was denied the opportunity of saying it because of the Treasurer's action.

Mr. Knox: That is absolute rubbish because any one of your people could have stood aside to let you in.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is not true.

Mr. Knox: It is not true? They wouldn't stand aside to let you speak?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The arrangements were that I was to speak on Tuesday, but when the Treasurer found that I was to speak on Tuesday he gagged the debate deliberately—and he knows he did.

Mr. Knox: That is not true.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: At that juncture my leader and other honourable members on this side of the Chamber drew attention to the shortcomings in both the Budget and the Treasurer's administration, including his penchant for deception. I have just pointed out the deception he indulged in.

Mr. Knox: What was that?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I just drew attention to the increases in S.G.I.O. charges.

Mr. Knox: What was that "pension for deception"?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: "Pendant" for deception.

Mr. Knox: What does it mean? You wouldn't know.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I don't know, and I don't think the Treasurer would know either, because he did not get past third grade.

The Treasurer's deception is disclosed by his unrevealed plan to make huge profits from the S.G.I.O. by raising insurance premiums next year. That is, of course, if the electors give him another opportunity to sit on the Government benches—which, of course, they won't. I said yesterday when the Treasurer introduced the amendment to

the pay-roll tax legislation, that that was the last pay-roll tax amendment he would be introducing.

It is unprecedented for the Government to cut off the Budget debate before the Opposition's Treasury spokesman has had an opportunity to reply. I do not intend to deliver my reply to the Budget during the debate on this Bill. However, before the election, the attention of Queenslanders must be drawn to one particular area of deception. As all honourable members know this Government is committed to the principles of Fraser federalism, and that includes the levying of discriminatory State taxes. The Treasurer omitted conveniently any reference to his uncomfortable arrangements with Canberra. However, I am not so coy. I will tell the people of Queensland what is in store for them.

The Federal Treasurer (Mr. Lynch), of Gold Coast penthouse fame, in Budget Paper 7 this year revealed the deal that the Premier and the Treasurer have committed Queenslanders to. I now quote the Federal Treasurer, because I think these matters should be on public record. He said—

"Commencing in 1976-77 the financial assistance grants were replaced by personal income tax sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States."

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Absolutely. I am reading from this document. I said that I was quoting. That is recorded in "Hansard".

Mr. Byrne: Is that right?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member knows that it is.

Before I was so rudely interrupted, Mr. Speaker, I was quoting from Mr. Lynch, who said—

"The tax sharing arrangements with the States represent a central element in the Government's federalism policy, that policy being based largely on a statement on the matter issued by the coalition parties in September 1975.

"Some of the other main elements in the policy are:

1. Sharing by local government in the proceeds of personal income tax.
2. A more selective use of specific purpose payments to the States.
3. The establishment of an advisory council for inter-Government relations.
4. A review of the functions of the different levels of government and the elimination of unnecessary overlapping, waste and interference.

"The way in which a share of Commonwealth Personal Income Tax Revenue is provided as assistance for Local Government is explained in chapter five."

He goes on to say—

"The income tax sharing arrangements with the States are being introduced in two stages. Under stage one, which commenced in 1976-77 the Commonwealth continues to be the sole Government imposing taxes on income but the States receive a specified proportion of the net personal income tax collections made under Commonwealth legislation."

Mr. Knox: Is this your valedictory speech?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It's not my valedictory speech. I'll be back.

Mr. Lynch continued—

"Under stage two, for which enabling legislation was introduced into Parliament in the autumn 1977 session, the stage one arrangements will continue but in addition, each State will have the right at its discretion to increase or reduce the personal income tax levied on residents of the State."

It is significant that the Treasurer did not refer to this matter in his Budget address. Conveniently, he omitted to tell the people that they would be the subject of State-imposed taxes. Clearly, had he chosen Mr. Lynch's other option and intended to reduce taxes, he would have been yelling it from the roof-tops with the election so close. But he made no mention of it whatsoever. No, Mr. Hewitt, the Treasurer is not going to cut taxes. I make that quite clear. He intends to impose a new State tax in accordance with his agreement with Mr. Lynch—if, as I said, by some unfortunate chance this Government is re-elected.

Who should Queenslanders believe—the Federal Treasurer, by his admission, or the Queensland Treasurer, by his omission? The reason the Treasurer has been able to postpone the bad news for Queenslanders is quite a simple one. In his Budget speech, the Treasurer revealed that because of a previous Federal miscalculation, in terms of the census estimates, Queensland has in the past received a shortfall in its entitlements from the personal income tax pool. This pool is divided up according to population. The matter, however, was rectified after the recent census and Queensland has since received a tax pool bonanza this year which is 18.2 per cent in excess of the amount included in last year's revenue. The total State Budget, however, increased by only 12.2 per cent.

By a sleight of hand the Treasurer has managed to give the impression that Queensland is not a party to the Federal agreement which Mr. Lynch clearly outlines as being one which Queensland is in up to the eyeballs. Mr. Lynch, in his Budget, made

specific mention of a statement issued by the coalition parties in September 1975—a statement the Queensland Premier and the current Treasurer helped publicise around the State. I will quote some extracts to enable Queenslanders to know fully the intentions of the coalition parties—

“Commonwealth and State taxes will be separately identified on one assessment so that the taxpayer can see the amount being levied by each form of government.

“The new system is intended to ensure that the States will have substantially the financial capacity to meet their responsibilities. In exercising their revenue raising powers the States will be expected to accept responsibility to work in parallel with and not in negation of the overall economic management policies of the Commonwealth.”

The coalition parties' statement, to which the Queensland Government is a party, goes on to explain what it calls the “transition to flexibility”, which is an explanation of stage one and stage two of the federalism proposals—the two stages mentioned by Mr. Lynch. Clearly, the Federal Treasurer's Budget speech shows that the Commonwealth has no knowledge of any intention by Queensland not to abide by this arrangement. I will be interested to hear the Treasurer, in his reply, deny what I am saying.

Sleight of hand and deception aside, a new Bjelke-Petersen/Knox Government would take Queenslanders back into the era of double taxation.

Even in discussing an Appropriation Bill, reference must be made to the Government's practice of deceit. Its administration of massage parlours and prostitution is a good example. In fact, the Minister for Police, in this House, explained to the vice world—and the whole of the vice world in Queensland—how they could indulge in prostitution rackets under a loophole in the law.

Mr. Frawley: What rubbish.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If the honourable member would only wait till I am finished he would know that it is not rubbish. It is fact.

Under the Vagrants and Gaming Act, according to the Minister for Police, it is not illegal for women to indulge in sex for money under certain circumstances—in other words prostitution. The girls who did not know were being told clearly by the Minister how they could beat the Queensland law by merely working alone, working in visiting services or by coming to private arrangements after they had taken money for a massage.

As the House has heard on a number of occasions, in lot of these massage parlours the word “massage” is only a joke; it is nothing but an oily rub. If the person

is lucky, it might even be a rub with Johnson's baby powder. I am told by a good authority that Queensland is the best market for Johnson & Johnson's baby powder.

This is the type of action that the Government condones. This is the type of racket accentuated by misdirection of funds and by turning a blind eye to the ways and means available to any responsible State Government that wishes to stamp out this brand of vice. It can be stamped out.

I notice the Minister for Police in the Chamber. In answer to a question from me approximately a fortnight ago, he said in this House that he had instructed his officers some months previously to prepare amendments to the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act to control massage parlour activities in Queensland.

Mr. Frawley: How would you stop it? Would you stop all Labor members from going to them?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I would stop all—oh, no, Mr. Speaker; it is the last day of the Parliament and I will not be drawn into a cross-chat with the honourable member for Murrumba.

As I was saying, the Minister said that it would be quite a simple matter to introduce an amendment to the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act to provide that all persons employed in massage parlours must be registered masseurs or masseuses. That provision, together with regular visits by the Licensing Branch of the Queensland Police Force, would certainly stamp out these vice activities in Queensland.

Mr. Frawley: You would make them join the Miscellaneous Workers' Union.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Some of them are already on the campaign committee of honourable member for Murrumba.

Mr. Gygar: What is the A.L.P.'s policy?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is opposed to prostitution. We do not believe in any woman being forced to sell her body for sordid and degrading sex.

It is a type of undesirable underworld activity which, under the Queensland Government's inept administration, has allowed a prominent massage parlour owner to disappear without trace after she borrowed \$6,000.

The Minister for Police is ever ready to attack me in this House; but he never refutes any allegations that I make. He tries to hide his own ineptitude by saying that I am not prepared to co-operate with the police.

For the edification of honourable members I shall point out where the Minister for Police is completely wrong. I would have thought that he would tell the House that in the matter of the disappearance of Simone Vogel, where there is a possibility that a life

is at stake, I have made every endeavour to assist the police. In view of earlier information that I have provided in this House I would have expected him to tell honourable members that, on the day of her disappearance, armed with \$6,000, Simone Vogel set out for a hotel car-park to keep an appointment with the notorious Roland Short. This gentleman's attributes I have previously described to the House.

Mr. NEWBERY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member said that he had some information on the disappearance of the lady and had got it from a certain gentleman. We are still asking him for that gentleman's name.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am glad that the Minister for Police made that remark because I intend to point out that I have been to the Acting Commissioner of Police and supplied him with this information. The Minister will finish up with egg over his face again.

Mr. NEWBERY: I rise to a point of order. The Acting Commissioner of Police admits that he received Mr. Hooper but he is still waiting for the name of the man who gave the information. The honourable member still has not given it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is not correct. Let me outline the facts to the House, and I will point out how the Minister for Police is not telling the complete truth.

The Minister for Police owes the public of Queensland some explanations. Where is Roland Short now? When was he last seen? Where are his associates, including Ron the Maori, whom I have mentioned in this House on previous occasions, and who is quite well known to the members of the Licensing Branch of the Queensland Police Force? Who is running his call-girl and massage parlour operations? Who is collecting the money?

Mr. Newbery: How do you know he is missing?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will divulge the information now. The information that I personally passed on to Mr. MacDonald, the Acting Commissioner of Police, raises some urgent and pertinent questions which the Minister has a duty to explain. On the day I rang Mr. MacDonald, he thanked me for the information. He made a subsequent phone call to me at the House. He said the information I had given him was spot on except when I said that Simone Vogel on the day of her disappearance borrowed \$3,000 from the girl in charge of the Executive massage parlour at Stones Corner and then obtained another \$3,000 from the girl at the Kontiki. Further information I had was that she was to have met this Roland Short in the car

park at the Breakfast Creek Hotel. I passed this information on to Mr. MacDonald and he thanked me for it.

I also pointed out to Mr. MacDonald that this informant had telephoned me and I said, "You will appreciate that I cannot divulge his name without his permission." Mr. MacDonald agreed. I rang the gentleman who gave me the information and he said he did not want to be brought into the matter publicly. That answers the Minister.

Mr. NEWBERY: I rise again to a point of order. We are not asking for this gentleman to be named publicly; we are only asking for his name. We cannot act until we get it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The police have the other information.

It is sad to have to report that the underworld have moved into a State in which, if we are to believe the Premier, angels fear to tread. Perhaps the Minister for Police is afraid to attempt to clean up the criminal elements in this State. When his predecessor tried to do this, the Premier moved in and took the portfolio from him. Let Government members deny that.

Mr. NEWBERY: Again I rise to a point of order. Since Mr. Lewis was appointed commissioner and I took over the Police portfolio, we have exceeded 51 per cent in the clean-up rate for the first time in history.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If members have any information of value to the police, it should be made available to them without any fear or equivocation whatever. Here is one of the problems that I see in this House. Members make all sorts of allegations but they are not prepared to back them up. I do not think that any police force, any Government or any other body can operate effectively if people make insinuations and then are not prepared to back them up. Parliament does not have to become a tame cat—I would be the last one to want that—but I do abhor the situations that arise from time to time in this House when members make allegations but are not prepared to substantiate them. I firmly believe that one of our problems is that members use this place as a clearing-house to air dirty linen but are not prepared to substantiate their allegations.

I think it behoves every member to see that any information obtained is made available to the authorities in order to bring wrongdoers, whoever they may be—even members of Parliament—to heel.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I agree entirely with your remarks, Mr. Speaker, but I think you must also appreciate that if I divulge this person's name without his permission there could be serious retaliation by some of the criminal element that is controlling

the vice parlours of this State. Through you, I ask the Minister if the police checked the story that I gave to Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. Newbery: They checked the story as far as they could without the information they asked for. They have rung you twice for it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is not correct.

All the key portfolios in the Cabinet are held by men who are subservient to the Premier. The Treasurer bends to the Premier's will, even to agreeing to his party's amalgamating with the National Party. I make it quite clear that in my opinion the Premier is nowadays the de facto Police Minister. The Minister for Works and Housing jumps and twists at the Treasurer's call, which, of course, puts him indirectly under the puppet strings of the Premier. The Minister for Mines and Energy will not get out of step with the Premier. In fact, no member of Cabinet is brave enough to get offside with the Premier. Here is one of the problems of the Minister for Police. If he carried out his function effectively, it would be very easy to control the massage parlours in Queensland.

Finally I should like to deal with unemployment. It is an unfortunate fact of life that young people are the worst affected by unemployment. They are only 12 per cent of the work-force yet they represent 37 per cent of the unemployed. This is a scandalous situation that is developing in Queensland. Many who left school this year have been unable to obtain employment and they will find it twice as hard to get a job next year. I have never heard the Treasurer or any other Cabinet Minister rise in this House and complain about the plight of the unemployed teenagers in this State. Is it any wonder that young school-leavers suffer from low morale when for every vacancy there are 23 applicants. This is terrible competition for young people, many of whom are seeking their first job. Yet when they are unable to get a job and the Fraser Government eventually allows them to receive unemployment benefits they are labelled by this Government and their supporters as dole bludgers. I have heard numerous Ministers refer to these poor, unfortunate people as dole bludgers and such utterances are certainly to their discredit and eternal shame. There is no provision in this Appropriation Bill for the relief of unemployment among the young. This is further proof of this Tory Government's indifference to the unemployed. They would like to go back to the days of the workhouse. A lot of these young people do not have a trade, and their opportunities for getting one are greatly reduced. The saying that idle hands do the devil's work is very applicable today. I know that many senior police officers and social workers are very concerned about the high incidence of unemployment because they realise that a lot of these young people could

drift into mischief if they do not obtain work. The unemployment situation in Queensland today is a very sorry one indeed.

This Government's Ministers are such great negotiators that they let the multinationals rip us off in no uncertain manner. The Premier's favourite firm, Utah, is the classic example of this. I think I have mentioned it before in this House, but last financial year Utah sent \$137,000,000 in profits back to the U.S.A. To earn this profit they employed fewer than 3,000 Australians. Contrast this with Australia's biggest company, B.H.P. I have never gone on record as being an ardent supporter of B.H.P. but it employs 60,000 Australians while making a profit of \$60,000,000. At least B.H.P. puts its money where its mouth is. To its credit, it is interested in employing Australians. That example proves just who is backing Australia—and it is certainly not Utah. As I have said previously, the Premier and his Government are going to look after Utah's profits. They want to see the Spanish seamen stay on Utah's ships. No Australians need apply. Utah gives us a few measly million dollars in royalties and freights for the right to plunder our mineral resources.

On numerous occasions I have heard members, particularly some of the more vociferous members of the Country Party—or the National Party as it is now known—talk about the beef industry. Sure, the beef industry is in a serious plight—I do not deny that—but let us be realistic about it. At the moment the Japanese are playing this Government for suckers. If my memory serves me correctly, beef producers receive about 50c per kilo, yet the Japanese sell the meat for \$20 per kilo. The Japanese need our raw materials and we need to sell them our beef and other primary products. The beef industry in Queensland is certainly in the doldrums, but this Government has done little more than talk. We hear nothing but hot air from members of the National Party and, curiously, the honourable member for Kurilpa. Strangely enough, he fancies himself as an expert on rural matters, but after listening to some of his speeches here I think he knows as much about rural industry as the honourable member for Mansfield does, and that is nil.

Mr. Neal: How much would you say you know about it?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If the honourable member will just listen I will tell him what I know about it. The beef industry is sinking into despair. Even if the price of beef were doubled, 7,000 beef producers throughout Australia, many of whom are in Queensland, would still have a minus income. For the benefit of honourable members, that information came from the report of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics for this year.

Mr. Doumany: Have you got friends there, too?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Yes; I have friends everywhere. I am a very popular member of Parliament. According to the Cattlemen's Union, 60 per cent of cattlemen would be better off on the dole. I just ask honourable members opposite: would they be classified as dole bludgers, or would they just be poor unfortunates?

The trouble is that over the years the National Party has neglected its traditional role. Originally it was formed allegedly to protect the rights of the man on the land, but over the years its members have abrogated their responsibility to the man on the land. They are too interested in moving to the metropolitan area to try to win seats from their coalition partners, the Liberals.

We have heard a lot of talk about inflation. We have heard the Treasurer, the Premier and some of the more articulate members of the Government referring to inflation in Australia. Nothing has been done about it. The Treasurer makes great play of the fact that his Federal counterparts have had great success in reducing inflation. To my mind, that is just a load of codswallop. The Reserve Bank shows inflation at 11 to 12 per cent, and I suppose we must give the Reserve Bank some credit for knowing what the situation is. It certainly knows more about the rate of inflation in Queensland than the Treasurer or other members of the Government parties do.

As the Treasurer well knows, the Fraser Government's Budget and his own Budget were documents of economic despair. With the economic cost of Medibank, higher unemployment and dreadful business conditions—I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the latest figures for retail sales have not got shop-keepers dancing in the streets—inflation is not likely to decrease. One does not have to be a Nostradamus to predict that the inflation rate in Queensland will certainly not drop in the near future. The Consumer Price Index has increased by 13.4 per cent, while average weekly earnings have increased by a little over 10 per cent, so the average income earner has lost about \$5 a week.

As the Treasurer knows, the real cause of inflation is the present Federal Government's economic policies, and I make it quite clear that the Queensland Government is a silent accomplice. After all, the Treasurer helped to put the Federal Government into office, so he can hardly admit that he made a mistake. Of course, according to some Cabinet Ministers, the Queensland Government never makes a mistake.

Medibank increased inflation by 3 per cent, and the devaluation introduced by Treasurer Lynch is certainly helping to fuel inflation. In addition, the 11c a gallon increase in petrol prices will add about 2 per cent to the cost of living. I do not hear honourable members on the Government side denying that. They will recall where the idea came

from because the National Country Party Leader (Mr. Anthony) is on record from the 1974 Federal election as advocating petrol at \$1 a gallon.

In his Budget speech, the Treasurer made great play of the special capital allocation of \$50,000,000 and the increase in employment and business activity that it brought about. But that is just a drop in the ocean in reducing unemployment. As I said earlier, there are 48,000 unemployed in Queensland, and that money may provide 2,000 to 2,500 jobs. What about the other 46,000 unemployed?

Mr. Houston: That was money from Consolidated Revenue that he did not use.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true. As a matter of fact, it is another sleight of hand trick by the Treasurer. He should have been a conjurer; he would have had a very successful career on the stage.

Last year the Government provided an additional \$69,000,000. In August 1976 unemployment was 37,500; in August this year it was 48,000. It is just a cosmetic exercise for the election. With unemployment expected to rise to 7 per cent next year, in real terms this allocation is a reduction of \$26,000,000. Last year's allocation of \$69,000,000 should have been \$76,000,000 this year to hold the same level in real terms. The provision of \$50,000,000 is a reduction of \$26,000,000 in real terms, and I do not hear the Treasurer making any interjections to deny that. Real expenditure at the same level would have provided another 1,000 jobs.

I repeat that the whole thing is a gimmick for the election—no more, and no less. As the unemployed are finding out, life is definitely not meant to be easy under the Bjelke-Petersen Government.

Until last week, Mr. Speaker, I had considered the Treasurer to be a reasoning and reasonable man. Then he made his extraordinary decision to weigh in on the collapse of the Queensland Permanent Building Society with a vitriolic and personal attack on me in this House—an attack, I have noted, that he has not cared to repeat outside the privilege of the Chamber.

Only a few days previously, when I made a public comment about the Treasurer's poor financial administration in relation to the Budget, a member of his entourage told a journalist, "We don't reply to Hooper." A few days earlier the comment was, "We don't reply to Burns." All that has suddenly changed within the last week. Following the announcement of the date of the State election, the Treasurer has decided to talk to everybody.

I mentioned that I had regarded the Treasurer as a reasonable man—colourless, perhaps, a puppet of the Premier, perhaps,

but nevertheless reasonable, usually responsible, and at times, when the Premier has not muscled in—

Mr. Greenwood: No-one could say that you are colourless.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I say to the Minister for maps that if he wants to lead with his chin, I will hit it. I suggest that he just sit there and keep quiet, because he is extremely vulnerable. Whatever I have done, whatever my indiscretions have been in the past, I have never been guilty of having my hand in the public till. I have never been guilty of that.

I had regarded the Treasurer as a reasonable and responsible person—that is, when the Premier has not muscled in. He has even made a few worthwhile moves in the administration of his portfolio. However, when he made his callous attack on me and then, to prevent my replying in my defence, cowardly applied the gag, in my estimation he sank to a very low level.

This is the last day of this Parliament, and I speak more in sorrow than in anger. If in the face of clear evidence of the Government's mismanagement the financial administrator of this State sinks to the level of the political underworld, what can we expect in the future?

Obviously the Treasurer and the Government have much to fear from an inquiry. Certainly the Minister for Works and Housing fears one. Faster than anything else, an inquiry will torpedo him onto the back bench—which is his rightful place.

I take this opportunity to remind the Treasurer and the Government of "The Courier-Mail" editorial, which read in part—

"The Government's own part in this sorry mess is as much open to question as any aspect. An independent investigative body—clearly seen to be independent—needs to be appointed by the Government. And it must not be a 'stacked' committee.

"The Government, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Knox) and their supporting chorus will convince no-one with their claims that Labor's Mr. Kevin Hooper caused this fiasco by warning of it. An added factor, perhaps. An explanation, no."

Mr. Frawley: Do you know that a lot of the money that was withdrawn from Queensland Permanent went into Metropolitan Permanent?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am glad the honourable member for Murrumba made that interjection. He is quite correct; a lot of the money did go into the Metropolitan Permanent. When I first raised the matter in the House, the honourable member for Murrumba approached me saying, "I have money in Queensland Permanent. Should I get it out?" I told him to get it out. Two days later he

came and thanked me for the information and told me that I had saved him a lot of money.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. That is quite untrue. I had no money in Queensland Permanent. I ask that that statement be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Archerfield to withdraw his comment.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I withdraw it.

Journalists, such as the financial editor of the "Telegraph", an award-winning writer in "The National Times" and Mr. Hugh Lunn of "The Australian", a Walkley award winner, as well as a whole host of other reputable journalists and correspondents, have passed similar judgments. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

The Treasurer, having made his personal attack on me, denied to me my basic democratic right of reply. He has told interviewers how proud he is of his record as the occupant of the Justice portfolio. His actions last week in this House made a mockery of justice.

In an attempt to justify his disregarding honour by usurping the rules of the House, he later said that I should have used my time in the Matters of Public Interest debate to reply. Outside the House the Treasurer has even gone as far as calling for a code of ethics. I and my colleagues in the Opposition would welcome it. But would it be a code of ethics that would prevent the despicable examples of Ministers and Government members indulging in shameful personal attacks only to draw attention from their own inadequacies? But we are not likely to see such a code of ethics; it would be outside the policy guide-lines that this Government finds acceptable.

I note that the Treasurer's performance as leader of the Liberal Party is so bad that the director of the Liberal Party executive, which the Treasurer has consistently ignored, is seeking to enter Parliament and take his place. He should have made his move during the preselections for the Nundah electorate. Let me make it quite clear that he has no chance of beating my good friend and colleague the member for Bulimba.

Mr. Knox: He will not have to; the member for Bulimba will beat himself.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Bulimba will be returned at the forthcoming election with a record majority.

As the Opposition's spokesman on Treasury matters, I take a great deal of interest in the level of interest rates. They are, of course, a measure of the level of inflation currently afflicting the economy of this country. Nobody, except perhaps the State

Government, which likes to look after its political friends, would argue against that. I am sure that the 9,000 families who are currently buying their homes through the now defunct Queensland Permanent Building Society would agree with it. They are currently paying interest rates of from 12½ to 15 per cent on their mortgages, and those interest rates are among the highest charged in Australia today.

I am on record both in "Hansard" and in the media as having criticised the high interest rates charged by the Queensland Permanent Building Society. It is making the poor old borrower pay through the nose to make up for the mismanagement and incompetence of its former directors. Nobody on the Government side could deny that. That is the whole problem. I am only sorry that the Minister for Works and Housing is not in the House. He has been less than open—certainly not frank—in his dealings concerning the Queensland Permanent Building Society. To say the least, he has been evasive in answering the numerous questions that have been asked about it in the House. Later on I shall be outlining in detail these incidents.

The borrowers from other building societies and banks pay interest ranging between 10 and 12 per cent, but the Queensland Permanent Building Society was charging up to 15 per cent. Why should there be one rule for the Queensland Permanent Building Society and another for other finance houses? The 9,000 borrowers from this society that is now in liquidation are entitled to an answer—an answer that the Minister for Works and Housing and the Treasurer know, but refuse to supply in order to protect their political friends at Queensland Permanent. I refer to the former chairman (Mr. Lloyd Olsen) and the former managing director (Mr. Lloyd Price). The Minister for Works and Housing must really have owed these two gentlemen some political favours, as he has been protecting them. He must have owed them something, otherwise he would not have stood by and watched the 9,000 borrowers use their wages and savings to pay their mortgages while the Queensland Permanent continued on its tragic way of mismanagement and deceit. The end result was liquidation.

I have been accused of conducting a campaign against building societies. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will continue to campaign—and I want to make this clear to honourable members—

Mr. Greenwood: You are on familiar ground now; you are a long way from the truth. That is what you are used to.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: In answer to the Minister for Survey and Valuation, I repeat that I have certainly never been caught with my hand in the public purse.

Mr. Greenwood: The only money I have ever had from the public purse was for prosecuting people like you.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Had this happened in any other Parliament operating under the Westminster system, the Minister for maps would have been drummed out of the House.

Mr. Greenwood: And you would have been in gaol.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Minister would have been drummed out of the House. It was a scandalous situation at that time. The Minister should be ashamed of himself.

Mr. Greenwood: And you would have been in gaol; you will be in gaol, yet.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Minister is a disgrace to Cabinet. He should be kicked out of Cabinet. I am told that after the next election, when the Government is in Opposition, the Minister for Survey and Valuation will not even be a shadow spokesman. He will be relegated to the farthest back bench in the House, where he belongs.

As I was saying, I will certainly continue to campaign against white-collar incompetence and misleading of the public. The Queensland Permanent Building Society was guilty of both. Yet the people responsible were allowed to sit around the board table and make decisions. The Minister and the Treasurer should hang their heads in shame.

I repeat that the building society movement does a very important job in providing finance for housing. As a result, it plays an equally important role in the economy of Queensland. It has my full support. I commend it as a sound avenue of investment and as an essential ingredient in the housing industry in this State. Many thousands of young people have moved into their first homes with the help of the building society movement—a move that, because of restrictions in the banking sector imposed by the Tory Government in Canberra, they would not otherwise have been able to make.

As an Opposition member of this Parliament, I regard it as my role to bring to the attention of the Government and, indeed, to the people of Queensland, matters such as those relating to the Queensland Permanent Building Society. It is incredible that it has taken almost three years for the Government to act on this sorry, sordid affair. What seems to be overlooked completely at times is that all these institutions, be they building societies or whatever, are dealing with public money. The money is not there for disposal by the directors as their personal largesse.

My earlier speeches on the Great Australian Permanent Building Society and the Finance and Commerce Co-operative Society Limited, are full of examples of loans for everything but homes. I have related to the House how the three crooked directors of

these societies, namely, Desmond Paul O'Shea, Neville Keith Meredith and Clarence Edward Coulson, used moneys from these societies to build nursing homes. It was a scandal. I made it quite clear then that had there been any justice the three gentlemen mentioned would have been on an embezzlement charge. But again nothing was done thanks to a cover-up by this State Government of political friends. We had the spectacle of directors of family companies with \$2, \$4 or \$12 paid-up capital, lending themselves sums as high as \$400,000. I detailed what happened and tabled documents in the House about that. For the life of me, I cannot see how a company with a paid-up capital of \$2 is a good risk for a loan of \$400,000.

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

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Before lunch I was speaking about the depredations of some directors of building societies in Queensland. This has gone on in a couple of the societies over a number of years. I have mentioned the Great Australian Permanent, United Savings and City Savings and pointed out how some of the directors in those societies were directors of other companies with a capital of \$2, \$4 or \$8, yet they obtained loans from the three societies I have mentioned of up to \$400,000 to build nursing homes and other types of business.

Let me say quite clearly that most financial institutions manage their affairs properly, look after their customers' interests and present accurate accounts. However, this was not the case with the Queensland Permanent Building Society, and the Minister must accept a lot of the blame for that. Last Wednesday week numerous speakers on the Government side, including the honourable members for Toowong, Maryborough and Belmont, rose in the debate on matters of public interest. I might add, too, that they spoke after the list had been changed. As the acting Opposition Whip on that day, I was given a list of speakers. After I had spoken, the Government then brought in its three bucket men—the honourable member for Toowong, who is well known for his bucket-tipping activities in this House; the honourable member for Belmont, who does not affect me very much at all as he is only a lightweight; and the honourable member for Maryborough, whom I was not surprised to see enter the debate, because he has had a history of association with permanent building societies. He was formerly a director of the Master Builders' Permanent Building Society, which merged and finally became the Family Permanent Building Society and subsequently went to the wall in 1976—no doubt, because of the bad managerial qualities shown by the honourable member for Maryborough when he was a director.

I have also related to the House on previous occasions how he was widely regarded in the accountancy world as being

what is termed a lead-pencil accountant. I will let honourable members put their own interpretation on that.

Mr. ALISON: I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks highly insulting on a professional level and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! The honourable gentleman will withdraw.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I accept that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I accept, and I withdraw it.

Mr. Chinchin interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I heard that interjection of the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt. Had he been in the Chamber last Wednesday, he would have changed his mind when he heard some of the professionals on the Government side.

Mr. Chinchin: I heard what you have just said. It astounded me. You're a shocker.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The best thing that has happened to the Queensland Parliament is that the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt is leaving. The Parliament will certainly not be any poorer for his passing.

As I was saying, the Minister for Works and Housing must accept most of the blame for the collapse of the Queensland Permanent; but to a certain extent his predecessor (Mr. Hodges) was not exactly blameless either. Certainly the present Minister inherited many problems from Mr. Hodges. Mr. Hodges administered the Building Societies Act when the Queensland Permanent jumped in and took over the two ailing Gold Coast societies—the Sun State and the Gold Coast Societies.

I have related to the House on previous occasions that the reason for that was Queensland Permanent's insatiable greed and its desire to become the largest permanent building society in the State. The directors raced in and merged with these two societies without proper financial arrangements being made. In answer to a question this morning from my colleague the honourable member for Rockhampton, the Minister detailed transactions that took place between these two societies at the time of the merger. The merger certainly left a lot to be desired.

Mr. Alison: You called them a bunch of crooks.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: And I make no apology for it.

Mr. Alison: You've been saying that for 18 months.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am very pleased to accept that interjection. If there was any justice at all, there would be an inquiry into the depredations of the directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society. Later on in my speech I will be detailing the reasons why I think there should be an inquiry.

Of course, some of the Ministers at that time owed political favours to people on the Gold Coast. Some of them became hopelessly entangled in portfolios about which they knew very little. The honourable the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services is in the House. In previous speeches I have paid him a tribute for the way in which he handled the Police portfolio. However, I do not think he handled the Works and Housing side—particularly the section relating to building societies—nearly as capably as he did the Police Department. Of course, when that Minister crossed the Premier, he was removed from the portfolio. In my opinion, the same thing will happen to his successor (Mr. Lee).

I want to digress for a moment and mention some of the problems on the Gold Coast concerning those two building societies. The dogs are really barking on the Gold Coast about the scandal in the sale of the Rix Building in June 1974. I suggest that honourable members read the issues of the "Gold Coast Bulletin" from 30 September to the last day or so. The Burleigh Heads Chamber of Commerce has called for a royal commission into the collapse of the Queensland Permanent Building Society. The chamber has listed the problems that have arisen in that area not only for business but also for pensioners in particular.

I think we should take into consideration the plight of the pensioners who, in many instances, were conned into paying their pensions into Q.P.B.S. I think I can say, in all modesty, that some 18 months ago I was responsible for the introduction of legislation to outlaw deceptive advertising by Q.P.B.S. I do not think that the Government has gone far enough. I think that the Department of Social Security has been remiss in allowing pensions to be paid into this building society, which has not balanced its books for the past three years. I think that to a certain extent the Department of Social Security is guilty of serious sins of omission. I think that the Department of Social Security should have known better. When the Labor Government had control of the Department of Social Security, this would not have been allowed to happen.

The same situation seems to be common on the Gold Coast. Of course, the members representing the area—all Government members, I might add—are maintaining their usual deafening silence. They hope that the situation will go away before election-day. I can assure them that it will not. I intend to raise the matter as often as possible

during the forthcoming election campaign. I notice that the Liberal candidate for Southport has hopped onto the bandwagon. He has stated publicly—and it is in the "Gold Coast Bulletin" of 30 September—that Southport businessmen have told him that property acquisitions by the collapsed building societies were thought to be unsound.

I have a copy of that newspaper report which appears under the caption, "People must have speedy access to their savings". It points out that the Liberal candidate for South Coast, Mr. Peter White, has called for an inquiry. The situation has really reached a serious stage when a Liberal candidate is calling for an inquiry. As we all know, the Liberal Party is very susceptible and sympathetic to the needs of big business. I do not intend to bore the House by reading them all, but I have with me a number of Press cuttings. The headlines read, "Call for a Royal Commission inquiry into Coast takeover", "Assurance by government is demanded", and "Chamber wants society inquiry".

Whilst I am on my feet I shall deal with one such property acquisition—the celebrated Rix Building that I have just mentioned. On numerous occasions, both in speeches and in questions, I have raised this matter in this House. All I have been greeted with is evasion and deceit by the Minister involved.

The building was sold for \$1,200,000 to the Sunstate and Gold Coast Permanent Building Societies in July 1974 by Alderman Norm Rix. It is widely rumoured on the Gold Coast that Mr. Vern Alewood received \$80,000 in commission on the sale of the building. If any members representing the Gold Coast are in the Chamber, they will agree with me that that is true and that even the dogs are barking it on the Gold Coast. The sale of this building was a public disgrace and a scandal. Some time after the building was sold, in reply to questions I asked in the House, the Minister was very evasive.

The 1974-75 balance sheet of the Queensland Permanent Building Society finally made mention of it in a very offhanded way. The auditors qualified their report by saying that there were some problems in relation to the sale of the building. The following year the building was completely written off. A \$1,200,000 asset was completely written off. If any honourable members doubt what I am saying, all they have to do is peruse last year's balance sheet of the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

The sales of other buildings on the Gold Coast left a lot to be desired. I shall deal with them later. The directors of Q.P.B.S. were guilty of incompetence in their takeover of the Sunstate and Gold Coast Building Societies. Surely some of the directors of the latter two societies also need to be investigated.

Everybody one speaks to on the Gold Coast knows of the antics of Mr. Vern Alewood, the gentleman I just mentioned as receiving \$70,000 to \$80,000 commission on the sale of the Rix Building, and Messrs. Rodgie and Coghlan. There's a nice trio for you! In answer to a question asked this morning by my colleague the honourable member for Rockhampton, the Minister detailed to the House that the last two men mentioned were members of the society that has since collapsed and two other financial institutions that have gone into liquidation.

One of these gentlemen—I think Rodgie—lives on the Isle of Capri, and a complaint was lodged on the the Gold Coast that some person allegedly fired a shotgun into his house. These two gentlemen are certainly not held in very high esteem on the coast. The previous Minister for Works and Housing (Honourable A. M. Hodges) was a guest of Mr. Alewood on occasions, and he will certainly get the drift of my meaning.

If it is to be accepted that the troubles of the Queensland Permanent Building Society started with its Gold Coast and Sunstate mergers, it seems logical that when the liquidator gets the money flowing again to investors he will turn his attention to the mergers.

I return now to the Queensland Permanent Building Society and the sale of the Rix Building. I have with me a photostat copy of a document from the Valuer-General's Department concerning that building, and I am prepared to table it. The title is in the name of Norman Colin Rix. It is lot 1, registration plan 114260. It concerns a building in the Southport shopping centre. In 1967 the unimproved value of the building was \$42,500. It was purchased by Alderman Norman Rix, who incidentally is now the National Party candidate for the seat of Southport, in 1967 for \$50,000. You will not believe this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but what I am saying is true. It was sold in June 1974 for \$900,000. That was not a bad profit. I am prepared to table this document.

I heard a whisper that there was a very underhand deal done, and I only hope that the Taxation Department reads "Hansard" and takes cognisance of what I have said in this speech. I am quite sure that if an investigation is made it will be found that there was no tax paid on it.

Mr. Alison: You pay tax on graft and corruption.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If that is the case, the honourable member for Maryborough would pay the highest taxes in Queensland.

I table this document.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

To return to the Queensland Permanent Building Society—until recently Queensland Permanent was being propped up by the Commercial Bank of Australia. We now know that the society's liquidity was virtually non-existent. Just after I had spoken in the Address-in-Reply debate and exposed some of the deprivations and financial problems of Queensland Permanent, one of the items in the news on Channel 2 showed a solicitor named George Mylonas allegedly making a deposit of \$8,000 with the Queensland Permanent Building Society. That was the greatest instance of collusion that I have even seen. For example, if this Mr. Mylonas was depositing \$8,000 he would not be doing it in cash. Members on the Government side who classify themselves as capable businessmen would not, I am sure, take \$8,000 in cash to make a deposit; they would pay it by cheque.

Mr. Mylonas also said that he was a Labor Party voter but would not vote Labor again. Again, that is a lot of hogwash. The rumour sweeping around town was that two of the directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society made approaches to some Cabinet Ministers to make deposits with the Queensland Permanent Building Society as an indication of their faith in it. Some Ministers are not known for their intelligence but they were not going to fall for that old three-card trick.

In my opinion, this George Mylonas is nothing but a confidence man. Last week the Press carried a photograph of Mr. Mylonas with the caption, "The man with the red face." When the liquidator presents his report, I should like to see the details of that alleged deposit of \$8,000. I am willing to hazard a guess that while the \$8,000 was allegedly passed to the teller it never appeared in the books.

Mr. Gygar: You realise he is a branch member of the A.L.P.?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: No, he's not. He is a member of the Stafford branch of the Liberal Party.

Despite a year's search by an international management expert, no trace can be found of the bulk of the missing \$2,600,000 allegedly lost in the computer operation. What an incredible mess this now defunct society has got itself into! When I made speeches and asked questions in this House Government members, and the Minister for Works and Housing in particular, sprang to the defence of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, but I notice that in the last week the Minister has been silent. In response to some searching questions asked by me about the Contingency Fund he has been very careful not to mention how much money is in this fund. He has also been very careful to point out to the House that the societies are not backed by the State Government. So it is going to be

very interesting to see if some of these poor old depositors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society do in fact get their money back. I have serious doubts about it. If they do get it back, we all know that they certainly will not get any interest.

When the inquiry is held, if the liquidator finds any instance of embezzlement or corruption any director or person responsible should immediately be charged by the police. Some of the best and most highly paid accountants in the country could not locate these funds after months of trying. A provision exists in the Building Societies Act under which the Government could have stepped in and cleared up the whole mess, which is what the Government should have done. I have said publicly before that the blame for the whole rotten mess that the Queensland Permanent Building Society got itself into lies fairly and squarely at the feet of this Government, in particular the Minister for Works and Housing. It is all due to his mismanagement. He has no grasp whatsoever of his portfolio. When I asked him questions all I got were smart alec remarks. He would even be insulting in his replies. This was probably to cover up for his lack of ability.

Mr. Knox: It is not possible to insult you.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is a little bit hard to insult the Treasurer. I know he has a very thick skin. I see him sitting across there with a nice owlish look on his face. I did urge the Government to act on that occasion but, as I say, all I got for my pains were half-smart answers and personal abuse from the Minister involved.

For the record, I am going to detail in chronological order questions I have asked of the Minister for Works and Housing and answers I have received in the last 18 months. On 7 September 1976 I asked this question of the Minister for Works and Housing—

“(1) Has his attention been drawn to the qualification of the auditor’s report of the Queensland Permanent Building Society for the year ended 30 June 1976 and, if so, what action has been taken?”

(2) If not, will he assure the House that an investigation will be instituted?”

His answer was—

“(1) The audit of accounts of Queensland Permanent Building Society for the year ended 30 June 1976 has not, as yet, been completed and the appointed auditors will not be required to furnish to the Registrar of Building Societies their report and the accounts of the society audited by them until the expiration of seven days after furnishing that society with their report.

“(2) Any qualified audit report of any registered society will be thoroughly examined and investigated by inspectors from the office of the Registrar of Building Societies.”

Of course, this was never done. All that the Minister for Works and Housing did was to come up with the euphemistic phrase that the affairs of the Queensland Permanent Building Society were being monitored by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, which virtually meant that nothing was being done. On 12 October 1976 I asked the Minister for Works and Housing the following question—

“(1) When will the Queensland Permanent Building Society produce its annual report for the last financial year?”

“(2) Will the report be produced within the time specified by the Building Societies Act?”

“(3) Will the recent amendments to the Act mean that the society will not have to mail this report to all of its members?”

“(4) Does he realise that many country and city building societies have already produced their annual reports for the last financial year and that they have mailed them at considerable cost to their members?”

“(5) Is this penalising the sound, efficient and well-managed societies which produced their annual reports soon after 30 June?”

“(6) Will he ensure that the accounts of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, which were qualified last year, are advertised in a manner to inform members fully as to the performance of the society last financial year?”

The Minister’s reply was—

“(1 and 2) The accounts, statements and reports required under the Building Societies Act 1886-1976 will not be available to members, depositors and creditors of the society before the normal time of publication of mid-October 1976. The Act prescribes that the annual general meeting at which the accounts are to be laid must be held within four months after the close of the financial year (in this case 30 June 1976) or within such extended time as the Registrar of Building Societies permits.

“Because the society has not completed reconciliations of subsidiary accounts and consequently the external auditor has not completed his audit of accounts, the society has lodged an application for an extension of time. After examination and inquiry by the registrar’s inspectors, an extension of time in which to hold the annual general meeting to 23 November 1976 has been granted on certain conditions, including the following:—

“(a) Notice of annual general meeting is given not later than 30 October 1976;

“(b) Accounts, statements and reports referred to in section 34AB of the Act are made available at the registered office and at each branch office of the society not later than 9 November 1976.

"(3) It is the prerogative of this society and all other societies which have not as yet given notice of meeting to elect to avail themselves of the provisions of the Act relating to advertising of such notice in lieu of notice given by post.

"(4) Yes. It is unfortunate that some societies have incurred considerable cost in mailing notices in accordance with the then existing provisions of the Act. In future these societies and their members will be able to take advantage of the recent amendments introduced by the Government.

"(5) No. There is no statutory obligation for a society to hold an annual general meeting before the expiration of four months after the close of its financial year, and every society is entitled to take advantage of the law existing at the relevant time. It is not the policy of this Government to force societies to incur expenditure of investors' funds unnecessarily but to reduce, wherever it is prudent, those cost factors which tend to keep interest rates at a high level.

"(6) My registrar will ensure that the provisions of the Act will be complied with."

I do not wish to cast aspersions on the Registrar of Building Societies, who is a very capable and dedicated public servant, but I think that the Minister is certainly guilty of neglect in relation to the control of the building society.

Again, on 2 December last year, I asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

"(1) With reference to the decision by the Queensland Permanent Building Society to increase interest rates to 13.5 per cent while the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society and most other reputable societies have not increased borrowing rates, is he aware that in 1974 Q.P.B.S. sent seven directors and their wives to Rio de Janeiro to attend the world conference of building societies?

"(2) Has the loan rate been increased to cover the costs of sending another seven directors to San Francisco, the venue of next year's world conference, at investors' expense?"

The Minister's answer was—

"(1) It is understood that six directors attended the world conference of building societies in Rio de Janeiro in 1974. However, Queensland Permanent Building Society did not pay their fares. For the honourable member's information, two of the directors, J. V. Hodgkinson and B. H. Knowles, read papers at the conference.

"(2) I have no knowledge of the intention of any of the directors to attend the world conference of building societies to be held in San Francisco in 1977."

If the Queensland Permanent Building Society did not pay their fares, I do not know who did.

On the same day I asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

"(1) Do two of the directors of Queensland Permanent Building Society have vested interests which conflict with their duties as directors of the second largest building society in Queensland?

"(2) Did two directors, namely, Mr. D. B. Postle and Mr. Lloyd Olsen, carry out valuation work for the society and, if so, what was the amount paid in valuation fees to the two directors for the year ended 30 June?"

The Minister's answer was—

"(1) I have no knowledge of any conflict of interest of any directors of Queensland Permanent Building Society. Section 22F (2) (d) (ii) of the Building Societies Act 1886-1976 permits a director to act as a valuer on behalf of the society.

"(2) The company, Olsen & Bell Pty. Ltd., of which Mr. L. F. Olsen is a director, and the firm A. V. Postle & Co., a proprietor of which is A. V. Postle & Co. (Brisbane) Pty. Ltd., of which Mr. D. B. A. Postle is a director, have carried out valuations on behalf of Queensland Permanent Building Society. The amount paid in valuation fees is not on record in the office of the Registrar of Building Societies."

It was common knowledge in the building society industry, and common knowledge among the staff of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, that each of these gentlemen received \$15,000 that year for valuation work carried out on behalf of that society. The Minister has never denied that when I have asked him about it in the House.

On 9 September 1976 I asked the Minister—

"Is he aware that borrowers from Queensland Permanent Building Society have discovered that the society no longer handles insurance, although it has not yet advised them of this fact? As this failure of this society to advise its borrowers could create hardship in the case of fire in a home no longer insured, will he ensure that the society takes the necessary steps to protect its borrowers?"

The Minister replied—

"I will investigate what the honourable member has said."

Of course, to my knowledge, no investigation has ever been conducted.

On 10 March this year, I asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

"(1) Who make up the board of directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society and what are their occupations?"

"(2) Are any of the directors in positions likely to be compromised because of conflicts of interest?"

"(3) Are any of the directors involved with any business which benefits from the operations of the Queensland Permanent Building Society?"

The Minister's answer was as follows—

"(1) The statement lodged by the Queensland Permanent Building Society with the Registrar of Building Societies, containing a list of directors, indicates the following:—

"Olsen, Francis Lloyd, Estate Agent; Postle, Donald Bradman Arthur, Estate Agent; Knowles, Brian Henry, Accountant; Hodgkinson, John Vincent, Accountant; Price, Lloyd Vivian, Building Society Executive; Frost, Joseph Robin Raglan, Building Society Executive.

"(2) As previously advised in answer to a question asked by the honourable member on 2 December 1976, I have no knowledge of any conflict of interest of any director of this Society. How many times has he to be told?"

"(3) Apart from Messrs. Olsen and Postle undertaking certain valuations on behalf of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, as also previously advised, I am not aware that the directors of this society are involved with any business which benefits from the society's operations."

In my opinion, the proof was to be found in the answer to the question that I asked on 2 December. There were certainly some problems.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this has already been gone through. I regard it as tedious repetition. I do not think the House wants to hear any more of that.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I just want to have those questions and answers read into "Hansard".

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! They are already included in "Hansard".

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but I want them in chronological order for posterity, so that people will know that, despite all the questions I asked the Minister and the Government, and despite all the speeches I made on this subject, the Government took no action at all to deal with the problems existing in the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

If the Minister had taken action there would not be the hardship that we are witnessing at the present time. The Government's crocodile tears are not fooling the borrowers and the shareholders. The media have attacked the Government on its mismanagement in this building societies affair.

Last Wednesday the Treasurer was forced to make his very pathetic attempt to protect his colleague the Minister for Works and Housing, who was about to incur the wrath of the public.

The Government's pathetic attempts to lay the blame elsewhere have not succeeded. Every financial writer and journal has exposed its bluff. I have received tremendous support from the shareholders and borrowers in Queensland Permanent, and they are awake to the true situation.

I realise that when a company or a firm goes into liquidation no money can be drawn from its funds. I would suggest to the Minister for Works and Housing, however, that he consider the plight of those people who, as a result of the liquidation of Queensland Permanent, are suffering serious financial hardship. I have no doubt that he has received letters and phone calls from people.

Mr. Ahern: Do you think you might have contributed to the situation?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I did not contribute to it at all. All I did was my duty as a responsible member of Parliament. I merely drew to the attention of the public and this reactionary Government the problems that existed in the society, problems that this Government did nothing to correct.

Mr. Porter: What was new over the past two years? You are telling me that things happened in the society which required your attention.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: What a ridiculous statement! As I have told the member for Toowong on previous occasions, he is so reactionary that he is regarded politically as a relic of the last century. I am told on good authority that he even opposed the advent of electricity in Queensland.

Mr. Porter: What happened in the last two years?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: A lot of things. Again the honourable member has shown that he does not know what he is talking about. New problems have developed in Queensland Permanent over the past two years. Only last week, for example, the Minister for Works and Housing and the Treasurer indicated that Queensland Permanent had a deficit of \$3,800,000. I was under the impression—I am sure most other people had the same impression—that the deficit was only \$2,300,000. During my Address in Reply speech I related the sleight of hand trick by the directors of the society by which they made out they had a trading profit for the year, whereas in fact they had a deficit.

Mr. Porter: Are you claiming that \$1,500,000 has been missing over the last two years?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is \$2,300,000.

Mr. Porter: And that happened over the last two years?

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

Mr. Porter: Really? You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I know what I am talking about. I did not even know that the other \$1,500,000 was missing; it had been covered up by the Minister.

Mr. Porter: Somebody should give you a bead frame.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The member for Toowong certainly could not count with one. He certainly does not know the numbers game—he is still languishing on the back bench.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister to relieve the plight of people who are in genuine hardship by asking the liquidator to release certain sums when hardship exists.

Mr. Lee: You know the responsibilities of the liquidator.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Yes, but possibly the Minister could use his good graces, in cases of hardship, and ask the liquidator to release some of the funds.

Mr. Lee: The liquidator is controlled by an Act.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I realise that, but there are genuine cases of hardship.

Mr. Hinze: Are you asking the Minister for Works and Housing to get you out of trouble?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will not answer that question; it is too silly.

In the past few days many stories have been floated about the possible resurrection of the Queensland Permanent Building Society under a restructured board. I believe that they are a lot of hogwash. I think the Minister and the Treasurer know that that is not on. The problems go far beyond the reconstruction of this society. The Minister may check me if I am wrong, but I suggest that before any shareholders are paid, the liquidator and his staff will have to be paid, and then the secured creditors such as the Commonwealth Bank, which is owed about \$8,000,000, plus the South British Insurance Company which is owed about \$1,800,000. Staff wages and entitlements will also have to be paid. In this case the shareholders will come a bad last. I notice the Minister is not denying what I have said. I am spot on.

I ask the Minister who is to take over the mortgages of the Queensland Permanent Building Society. This matter should be well considered today.

Mr. Hinze interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will not reply to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. He may do very well when opening an October Festival or something like that, and he may have had a fair knowledge about local government when he was chairman of the Albert Shire, as I have detailed in the House on other occasions, but whenever the Albert Shire is mentioned to him a raw nerve is touched.

Nobody has told the truth in this sorry, sordid affair.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Other than me, of course. I am the only one to do so, and to draw this matter to the attention of the House.

The Minister for Works and Housing and some Government back-benchers have been guilty of deception and covering up. If the Minister had acted when I first drew his attention to the problems we would not have the hardships we are witnessing at present. The borrowers and shareholders can see through what has happened. Something must be done about building societies operating in Queensland.

Mr. Hinze: What would you suggest?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Because of alleged pecuniary interest, and certainly a conflict of interest, I suggest that a further amendment should be made to the building societies legislation to preclude builders, land developers and real estate agents from sitting on boards of building societies. I think most honourable members would agree that some directors have used building societies as a milch cow for their own selfish, monetary gain.

Mr. Hinze: How will that help present depositors with the Queensland Permanent?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not know what will help them at the moment. The Government has got itself into such a mess, and the Minister is in such a tizzy, that he does not know where he is going. He has made conflicting statements. One was a classic. I think I should relate it before I resume my seat. In last Saturday's "Courier-Mail" the Minister alleged that the leaks and rumours which caused the run on the Queensland Permanent Building Society emanated in the schools.

Mr. Lee: And you organised them, too.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Oh, Lord, that was straight out of Grimms' "Fairy Tales". It was unbelievable.

As a matter of fact, the Minister for Works and Housing shows as much knowledge of his portfolio as his inept colleague the Minister for Police knows about police administration.

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (2.49 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, I endorse the comments made by you before lunch about the presentation of unsubstantiated allegations in this House. We have had a plethora of them from the honourable member for Archerfield, not only in the last hour and a half, but also in the past three years. Today's performance was probably one of his dullest. In fact, since lunch, when we have not graced him with any interjections, it has been as dull as ditch-water. In fact, I believe he deliberately repeats himself because he runs out of material of any substance so quickly, and repetition is the only way he can lengthen his speeches. I should point out, too, that one of the things most eagerly anticipated by the coalition at the coming election is the defeat of the honourable member for Archerfield, because we believe we have the candidates to do it.

Mr. Hinze: That will be a push-over.

Mr. DOUMANY: I believe that it is becoming a push-over. He's set himself up. That speech—that 1½ hours of dullness that we heard—could well be the honourable member's swan-song. Not only was it dull; it was a rambling and frivolous speech that did not come to grips with any of the issues involved in this legislation, which is a piece of financial legislation, not one that calls for the introduction of so many red herrings as we have seen today—malicious red herrings, frivolous red herrings and, in a lot of cases, completely ridiculous red herrings.

Mr. Young: He can't take the criticism. He's left the Chamber.

Mr. DOUMANY: Be that as it may.

With some of the issues that were raised by the honourable member for Archerfield—some of the real issues—it is performance that counts. In each of the past three years this Government has had a balanced Budget. The Budget for this coming year is balanced. On the performance of the Treasury over the past three years—and before that—there is no questioning that the results forecast in this Budget will be achieved. That performance is what we in this Government rest our laurels on—not on a lot of claims about emotional issues but on hard facts.

The hard facts are that Queensland has continued to prosper; its economy has continued to grow, and it has continued to be the most attractive place for Australians to live in. We are still getting a net inflow of Australians from other States. That is not an accident. It is because the market forces nationally favour Queensland, not only from a resource point of view but also from a Government-management point of view. We manage our affairs tidily. We have a State that is going ahead. If we look at the number of jobs that are filled and if we look at the size of the work-force in this State, we can see that it is growing each year.

Queensland's performance is a credit to the Government, particularly when we consider the addition to the potential work-force that takes place every day, as more and more people and their families move into this State.

Those are the facts we should be looking at. We should be looking at the tremendous achievement of the present Treasurer and his predecessor in reducing the burden of pay-roll tax on business, particularly small business, and the achievement in rationalising workers' compensation and reducing many of the anomalies that have plagued it in the past. The Treasurer has done much in the present Budget to tackle that issue, and I am certain that he has other plans in mind for continuing reforms in the area of workers' compensation.

We have had the innovation of housing loans that are tailored to meet the requirements of the in-between people—those who could not meet the means test of the Housing Commission but who, on the other hand, had neither the income nor the means to meet the normal market requirements to borrow money. Those people have been offered loans of \$18,000 at 7½ per cent. It is a very favourable loan with a very tolerant means test being applied—a family gross income of something over \$250 a week. That has been a tremendous innovation. I am not sure of the total amount that has been allocated to date, but over the last 12 months it is certainly around the \$30,000,000 mark, if not more. This is something in which we in Queensland have led the way.

Substantial provisions for education have been continued in Queensland. They are for both State education and non-Government schools. Only last week Archbishop Rush expressed his appreciation for this Government's constructive approach to the funding of non-Government schools. That appreciation is shared by all people associated with non-Government education in this State. We subscribe to the support of non-Government schools because we want to maintain freedom of choice, because we know that every dollar that goes into that quarter relieves potential stress on the State school system and because we know that the pressure of inflation and of improved standards—particularly physical standards—has taxed the capacity of many non-Government schools. If they do not receive support of this sort from Governments, ultimately more and more of their student population will have to transfer to the State system. That is something that the State system will not be able to bear.

Mr. McKechnie: It would be a good idea to give financial assistance to them all.

Mr. DOUMANY: Indeed. It is a very sensible principle.

We heard some very severe criticism of the Federal sector from the honourable member for Archerfield. He talked down

the economy. He has been talking down the economy and the prospects for Australia week after week.

Mr. Byrne interjected.

Mr. DOUMANY: As the honourable member for Belmont says, he did not really speak about the economy. I attempted to interpret his meaning and I concluded that he was criticising the Federal Treasury as well as the State Treasury. The cold, hard fact is that the inflation rate has come down. When the Whitlam Government lost office in late 1975, inflation was running at a real rate approaching 20 per cent. Today it is around 10 per cent.

Mr. Gunn: It is 9.2 per cent.

Mr. DOUMANY: On the latest data it is 9.2 per cent. It has been halved in something like a year and 10 months. That is an achievement. Furthermore, when the present Federal Government took over in 1975, the deficit was running at a potential annual rate of \$8,000 million. Mr. Hayden, the Labor Treasurer, had budgeted with enormous boldness for something like \$3,000 million; he was prepared to let it run at about three times his budgeted rate. At that stage he had already run up a \$4,000 million deficit in five months of management—really only two months of management of the Budget. The present Federal Government has cut the deficit right back not only in actual money terms but in real money terms, because money has deteriorated in value a little bit more. There has been a real achievement at the Federal level.

Unemployment six months before the end of the Whitlam era was almost within striking distance of the current figure. In the glorious year of 1974-75, which was the year of the greatest destruction and wrecking that the Whitlam Government achieved, unemployment escalated to the level that we have become accustomed to. It was in that period that the present order of magnitude of unemployment was achieved, and not after the Fraser Government took over. With the enormous momentum that the Whitlam Government had put into the spending machine, it is creditable that after not quite two years the Federal Government has managed to put the brakes on and hold everything back. It is completely unreasonable to point at the unemployment figures alone and condemn the Federal Government's management on that score.

As for labelling people dole bludgers—I have not heard any Government member use that term. I certainly have not heard any irresponsible statements about unemployment from either Ministers or Government back-benchers. I believe that most Government members have done their best to help many people find employment. I have assisted many young people in my electorate in their attempts to find work.

I sympathise with those who are genuine in their attempts to find work, as most of them are, but the fact remains that there are some who do not want to work. I think that anyone who denied that would have his feet about a mile off the ground. Certainly no irresponsible statements have been made by Government members and I think it is a gross insult for the honourable member for Archerfield to attribute the use of the term "dole bludger" to them.

In the building society story, it would be best if the honourable member for Archerfield kept his counsel to himself. He has already done enough damage. He seems to have learnt from the Federal member for Oxley, Mr. Hayden, the lesson of irresponsibility. By his efforts over the last year, Mr. Hayden has done grievous damage to the Australian dollar. There can be no denying that he has talked down the economy and the dollar, just as the honourable member for Archerfield has talked down the building society industry. The largest bank in the nation would have been dragged down if a member of this Parliament had incessantly attacked it with innuendoes and all sorts of claims, some false some true. Any company whose products were constantly attacked, whose faults were constantly brought to the fore and about which gossip and malicious stories were constantly spread from this place would find its position in the market-place deteriorating and it would ultimately go to the wall.

The claim of the honourable member for Archerfield that he is in effect the Don Quixote tilting at windmills in this place is absurd and, what is worse, tragic. With all his crocodile tears and supposed great benevolence, he forgets that it is the ordinary little people who have invested in building societies, not only the Queensland Permanent, whose money he has put at risk by his irresponsibility. It has not been within the power of his leader to contain him, and that has probably been the most serious fault of all. This can be tolerated no further, and the House can be assured that in the coming election campaign every effort will be made by the coalition parties to remove the honourable member for Archerfield from this place. I have a lot of confidence that those efforts will succeed.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (3.4 p.m.): I understand that this will be my last speech in this Parliament prior to the coming election. I think it is important for us to reflect upon the alternative Government in this State—in other words, what the A.L.P. has to offer and its performance over the last three years.

The speech of a rather tedious hour and a half that we have just heard from the honourable member for Archerfield sums up in many ways the state of the A.L.P. in Queensland. This is something that unfortunately the media has not highlighted. It is an area in which the media has, I think, been irresponsible in that it has the capacity

to explain to the people the actions and attitudes of members of the Parliament but chooses instead to put forward only certain views.

When we think about an Opposition in a Parliament, we expect it to make a worthwhile contribution. Although there were 30 speakers in the Budget debate, the honourable member for Archerfield, who is the Opposition Treasury spokesman and apparently the alternative Treasurer of the State, did not speak. He might bleat about the fact that he was not given an opportunity to speak on the motion relating to the Queensland Permanent Building Society, in which quite valid allegations were made against him to which he should have replied, but the fact remains that he did not do so. There was only one speaker to that motion from the Government side, the Treasurer, and, although the appropriate person to speak for the Opposition was the Treasury spokesman himself, he did not do so. He was protected by the honourable member for Bulimba, who spoke for the Opposition.

Mr. Casey: It was a deliberate tactic that he would be the main speaker today.

Mr. BYRNE: If it were a deliberate tactic for the honourable member for Archerfield to be the main speaker today, I think this only shows how low the A.L.P. has sunk in this State. If the Opposition really believes that the honourable member for Archerfield is the quintessence of the ability of the A.L.P., then I think the A.L.P.'s prospects for the future are dim and its hopes for increasing its numbers after the election will not come to fruition. In fact, its numbers will decrease. The situation reflects the fact that there is a great dearth of talent in the A.L.P.

For the Opposition to validly represent itself as an alternative Government, its members must at least have shown in the last three years some sort of a capacity to govern. I have already mentioned the role of the Opposition, and part of that role is the moving of amendments to Bills. At various times Opposition members have complained about all sorts of things and how they opposed certain Bills brought before this House by the Government, but until early this year, of a total of 16 amendments moved to Bills since this Parliament began in 1975, 14 were moved by Government members. In all that time the Opposition moved only two substantive amendments to legislation in this Parliament. If that is the way the Opposition thinks it should perform in this Parliament—

Mr. Casey: I moved four to one Bill the other night.

Mr. BYRNE: I said that I was speaking of the period up till the last month or so, when the Opposition put up a facade for the election. Opposition members will go out saying that they did not agree with the

Government on all these things and yet until earlier this year they moved only two amendments. In no way have they endeavoured to show the people of Queensland that they are an alternative Government. In no way at all have they accepted their responsibilities in this Parliament. The Opposition Treasury spokesman failed to speak in the Budget debate, and today, although he referred glibly to Government policy and read large slabs of Treasury statements, he made no mention of his own economic point of view or that of his party. That is indeed a condemnation of the A.L.P. in Queensland. Instead of speaking about Treasury matters, he began talking about sewerage, massage parlours and all the sorts of things that we have come to expect from him.

I will be brief because I know we still have a great deal of work to get through, but I think it is absolutely imperative that the Press and other forms of the media at least be fair to the people of Queensland and explain to them the performance of various members of Parliament, and especially the performance of an Opposition. Most of the opposition to Bills in this Parliament has come not from the A.L.P., which one would expect, but from the back-bench members of this Government. Amendments to legislation and pressure for changes in legislation have come not from the A.L.P., but from Government back-benchers. As much as the A.L.P. members have talked about the need for certain things, they have given this Parliament and the people of Queensland virtually nothing.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines and Energy) (3.9 p.m.): With the honourable member for Belmont, I could not agree more that the attitude of the A.L.P. in the last three years has been one of generating gloom and despair among the people of this State.

Mr. Aikens: Wait till they take full credit for the sugar agreement.

Mr. CAMM: They will take full credit for everything. That applies particularly to the honourable member for Mackay, who should be named the member for doom and despair because of his utterances over the last six months in respect of the sugar industry. He has indicated his complete ignorance. He has no knowledge of the intricacies of the organisations that control the growing, milling and marketing of this product.

I am fast coming to the conclusion that the A.L.P. relies on this policy of generating distress and hardship as a basis for its pseudo claim to be ready to render assistance. It has been devoid of any constructive criticism to level at the progress or development of this State.

Only yesterday the honourable member for Mackay attacked the Government for what he considered to be its lack of interest in the sugar that Queensland is shipping to

Japan. The shipping of sugar to Japan is the result of an agreement that was entered into by the sugar refineries of Japan through two big marketing agents in Japan, Mitsui and Mitsubishi, and the Queensland Government through the agent of the Sugar Board, CSR Limited. The agreement was negotiated by CSR Limited and the representatives of the Sugar Board and the sugar industry and was signed and ratified by the Japanese Government and by the Australian Government.

I make it perfectly clear to the people of Queensland, and in particular to the sugar growers, that it is the desire and the aim of the member for Mackay to create a feeling of insecurity and lack of faith among the sugar producers of this State that will go through to the commercial and financial institutions associated with the industry.

Mr. Aikens: They are trying to white-ant the sugar industry.

Mr. CAMM: They are trying to white-ant the industry and bring about despair and doom, as I indicated earlier, through the irresponsible utterances of the member for Mackay. These statements are being made by the honourable member at a time when confidence in the industry and its leaders is very important.

Let me make it clear that just a short time ago the representatives of every organisation associated with this great industry—representatives from the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, the Proprietary Sugar Millers' Association, the Sugar Board and CSR Limited, its marketing agent—waited on the Premier, the acting Minister for Primary Industries (Mr. Tomkins) and me and reiterated their confidence in the policy of the Queensland Government on the argument that is developing between the sugar refineries in Japan and the industry in Queensland.

We have met our contractual obligations by shipping the sugar on time and delivering it in accordance with our contracts. Does the honourable member for Mackay think that we should leave it in the sheds in Mackay, Townsville, or Cairns, so that the refineries could claim that we had not met our contractual obligations? The Japanese refineries have the responsibility of unloading the sugar.

The only recourse that the Government now has—and in this it has the blessing and concurrence of the sugar industry in this State—is to take the matter to litigation and see whether it can obtain redress for the sugar growers of Queensland. I repeat that the Government is taking that action with the acquiescence, concurrence, or whatever one may wish to call it, of all representatives of the Queensland sugar industry.

I noticed in the transcript of the utterances of the honourable member for Mackay on Wednesday that the prediction of doom extended to the possibility of negotiating an international sugar agreement. He said that it was most unlikely that an agreement would be negotiated. Ever since I represented the Queensland Government and stood in for the Minister for Primary Industries in Geneva, the honourable member for Mackay has been talking about the lack of action and saying that there was little possibility of an International Sugar Agreement being negotiated.

Once again the honourable member has shown his complete ignorance of the manner in which the International Sugar Conference is conducted. The Australian sugar industry was represented by: the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for National Resources and Minister for Overseas Trade (the Rt. Hon. J. D. Anthony), the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries (Mr. Sullivan), three top officers of the Commonwealth Department of Trade, an officer from the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry, four officers of CSR Limited, the chairman of the Queensland Sugar Board, the secretary of the Queensland Cane Growers' Council, and the secretary of the A.S.P.A. They are all top men and Australia could not have had a better group of delegates representing it at an international conference.

Mr. Aikens: The member for Mackay would want Tom Burns and Arch Bevis there.

Mr. CAMM: He certainly would like that, so that he could spread his message of despair among the sugar producers of the world.

At an international conference such as this, the delegates are formed into separate committees. Australia had the distinction of having representatives on all the committees that were formed. The principal committee, of course, is the one set up to establish basic export tonnages for individual countries. Another committee is the one appointed to decide the price range. In other words, it decides the price that is considered to be so low that sugar should be withheld and also the price that is considered to be so high that in-store sugar should be released. Another committee is associated with the price itself and the responsibility for this in-store sugar.

Those committees meet every day. Each morning at 8.30 the whole Australian delegation meets in conference and at that conference the Australian member on each of those committees reports to the delegation as a whole. The delegation then determines the policy to be followed by each representative at the next meetings of the committees.

It would have been quite easy to arrive at an international sugar agreement at the preliminary hearings in Geneva if Australia had

agreed to finance or share in the financing of 4 000 000 tonnes of sugar, if it had agreed to accept a large reduction in its basic export tonnage and if it had agreed to accept a lower price, one that would have been uneconomic for the sugar producers in Queensland. But the Australian delegation refused to give its agreement. We agreed to certain aspects of the negotiations and to principles on which the second conference was based.

I pay a tribute to each member of the Australian delegation for his dedication and for the work that he did at the various meetings. It is wrong to say that because the Premier was not there Queensland was not adequately represented. Anyone who makes such a statement shows his total ignorance of the communication facilities that are available these days.

As an example—in Geneva we discussed a matter that necessitated a reply from Australia the same afternoon. That reply was there in a Telex message within hours, ready for analysing and study. Furthermore, one evening, here in Queensland, the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr. Sullivan) addressed a Chinese trade delegation and by next morning, at 8.30, the whole text of his speech was available to all of us at the conference. The wonderful communication facilities that exist render it unnecessary for the Premier himself to be at such a conference. All that is required is that he keep in touch with his Minister and in constant touch with his officers.

As I have said on earlier occasions, the Minister for Primary Industries has my complete confidence. Although he is not a cane farmer, he has acquired a tremendous grasp of all the intricacies of the sugar industry—its marketing arrangements, cane-growing, and all the aspects that make it the wonderful industry that it is. I am quite sure that he played no mean part in finalising an agreement that will be regarded by Queensland as a successful one.

I believe that the conference will extend for a few more days to enable the finer points to be ironed out. Briefly, the Queensland sugar farmers may rest assured that this Government, through the good work of the Minister for Primary Industries, the growers and millers' organisations and the Sugar Board, has done a good job to benefit the sugar industry in Queensland.

Let me point out what has been achieved. At present we can expect to market a little over 3 000 000 tonnes of sugar. A basic export tonnage of 2 350 000 tonnes has been obtained. Bearing in mind that home consumption is about 800 000 tonnes, the present peaks of sugar mills in Queensland are protected. Admittedly, because of the low price prevailing for sugar, there will have to be a reduction in the export quota so that the price will rise gradually to a reasonable level. The reduction anticipated as a result

of this conference is 15 per cent of our basic export tonnage—not 15 per cent of our peak. Queensland has the right to extend that to 17½ per cent, but there are certain contingencies. If Queensland does not take advantage of the 2½ per cent, it cannot take advantage of certain shortfalls. That issue can be resolved easily. There is to be a 15 per cent reduction to bring about a higher price. At the same time, we have entered into an obligation to store 15 per cent of our basic export tonnage over a period of three years. During that three years it will be 40 per cent in the first year, 40 per cent in the second year and 20 per cent in the third. This extra sugar in storage will take the place of the tonnage by which we reduce our exports in order to gain a reasonable price.

The price range agreed to by the delegates is in the range of 11c to 21c a lb. We hope it will settle at about 18c to 19c a lb., or 17c to 18c. If it falls below 17c, more sugar will be placed in store so that excess sugar does not go on the world market. The price will thus be maintained at a reasonable level. When the price rises above 18c, extra sugar will be released on to the world market so that countries importing sugar will be able to obtain sugar at a reasonable price.

If all the signatories abide by the agreement, there will not be violent fluctuations in the world price of sugar. At present the world market price is about \$A160 a tonne, which is really not an economic price for producers. Both the growers and millers cannot produce sugar economically at that price. If we can boost the price per lb. to 17c or 18c, the price per tonne will be about \$A370. If the price drops to 11c a lb., or about \$A200 a tonne, more sugar will be placed in storage, and the price should then rise.

A successful sugar agreement has been negotiated as a result of the efforts of the men whom I worked with for over a week in Geneva during the previous conference. I again emphasise the gratitude that all in the sugar industry have for these men. Most of them are employed in the sugar industry—in the cane-growing and milling sections and in the Sugar Board. Our representatives also included officers from the Canberra Department of Primary Industry and the Department of Trade, and Queensland departmental officers.

The attitude that we should all project to the people of this State is a feeling of confidence in those who have the responsibility of negotiating markets for our primary products; not a feeling of doom and insecurity, as is projected here time and time again by some members opposite. The sugar industry is a wonderful industry. In all the years I have been in it, I have said many times that politicians are better kept out of the

sugar industry. The industry, through its own organisations, should be allowed to run its own affairs.

Mr. Aikens: Particularly if the politicians are like the member for Mackay.

Mr. CAMM: Particularly if the politicians know nothing whatever about the ramifications of the industry. The only time politicians should be involved is when an International Sugar Agreement is negotiated (as has just happened) or the industry enters into marketing arrangements or export contracts that have to be endorsed by the respective Governments. Politicians should be there to help the industry, not to criticise it—especially when that criticism is made through a lack of knowledge of the industry itself.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (3.26 p.m.): It would appear that the Minister for Mines and Energy may have been a little bit upset by some comments of mine yesterday. In his speech to the House today he has introduced a lot of new material. Quite a number of things that he has attributed to me have been entirely incorrect.

Firstly, I would like to correct the point he made when he referred to my comments yesterday about the International Sugar Agreement negotiations. The only reference I made to them was when I said that it looked as though there were problems in negotiating a new agreement at Geneva. Whilst I was speaking—

Mr. Camm: Have a look at the newspaper.

Mr. CASEY: I am having a look at the newspaper. The "Telegraph" of 5 October—yesterday—which was published at the time when I was speaking, referred to comments by Mr. Anthony, the leader of Australia's sugar delegation at Geneva, who at that time said there were considerable hitches in negotiating an International Sugar Agreement. He said at that time that it was unlikely that the matters could be resolved unless some major breakthrough was negotiated on behalf of Australia. The words of Mr. Anthony were, "Clearly my Government could not be a party to such an arrangement." That was at lunch-time yesterday. Certainly the picture changed considerably between then and today, when the Premier made a statement to the House on the International Sugar Agreement. I think that in fairness the Minister for Mines and Energy should accept the fact that I had to go on the same indications as were available to Mr. Anthony.

Certainly, a new International Sugar Agreement has now been negotiated at Geneva. It has been negotiated on a reasonable basis, particularly with regard to prices. The Opposition in this House has no objection whatever to the pricing arrangements. I

think they will be very satisfactory to the industry, as long as they put it back onto a stable pricing basis once again and enable it to move away from the deep and disastrous trough that world sugar prices have taken it through.

However, what has been of concern in the negotiations—indeed, it has caused a breakdown of the talks over the last two weeks and apparently was not finally resolved until last night—has been the quota figure. From back in May, when the negotiations originally got under way, everybody accepted that some sort of stockpiling provisions would have to be incorporated into any international agreement. I said years ago, long before I came into this Parliament, that there was a need to have better stockpiling provisions for our sugar. The Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Police will remember the period during the 1960s when they had to destroy cane on their own farms because of the very low world prices and because we did not have sufficient storage to manufacture the sugar and hold it until a better price could be negotiated. Back in those days, before I entered Parliament, I strongly advocated additional storage for our sugar in periods of fluctuating sugar prices so that sugar would be available when the price rose and we could gain an advantage.

We have had no clear indication yet whether we will accept the 15 per cent direct quota cut or the direct quota cut and an additional 2½ per cent. If we accept the 15 per cent direct quota cut we will have to put 160 000 tonnes of sugar into storage the first year, another 160 000 tonnes the following year and a further 80 000 tonnes the following year. In all, approximately 400 000 tonnes of sugar will have to be put into storage.

We will be negotiating a home-consumption price for about 700 000 tonnes of sugar. It is hoped that over the next few years home consumption will rise to 800 000 tonnes. That means that we will be restricted to peaks next year, with the possibility that we could not even store all the sugar made from peaks. I am going on the figures given in Parliament today. The industry must have a very good look at this.

Mr. Camm: You are displaying your lack of knowledge because there will be tremendous shortfalls in many major sugar-producing countries next year as some of them have very low export quotas, and we will be called upon to fill them so don't—

Mr. CASEY: The Minister said there will be tremendous shortfalls next year. We hope that there will be, because we will be able to take up those shortfalls if we have surplus sugar in Australia. If there are these tremendous shortfalls—

Mr. Camm: There will be shortfalls.

Mr. CASEY: The Minister said "tremendous shortfalls". If there are tremendous shortfalls next year, it is hard to believe why so much time was spent in negotiating the quota figure in the International Sugar Agreement. It certainly does not agree with the figures I have seen.

As I mentioned, there is a feeling of insecurity in the sugar areas in Queensland. I am not knocking, nor have I ever endeavoured to knock, the representatives of the Queensland sugar industry who have been negotiating in Geneva. The Minister referred to lack of interest. I have never said anything about lack of interest in the sugar industry. What I referred to was lack of action. The Queensland Government should have moved much sooner to take the steps it has taken on the international long-term agreement with Japan. If it had we might have been in a better negotiating position at Geneva. Everybody at Geneva knew that Japan was rejecting 600 000 tonnes of our sugar until something is sorted out. Now Japan has a better figure to work on under the International Sugar Agreement to achieve a drop in price. All of the problems we have in selling our sugar, and all of the barriers we run into, are Government sponsored. They cannot be overcome by the industry. They must be overcome by the Government. Queensland is unique in that the Government acquires all the sugar that is produced, so it has the awesome responsibility of ensuring that every grain of sugar that is manufactured is sold, and that it is sold at the best possible price.

It was obvious 12 months ago that the Japanese were not going to continue to pay the same price for sugar this year. They had already arranged through CSR a rescheduling of shipping of last year's crop to Japan to help them overcome their stockpile situation. This year ships have gone to Japan and the Japanese have refused to unload them.

Again I correct the Minister. I said yesterday in the House that CSR had to continue to send ships to Japan this year so that it could not be said that we were breaching an international agreement. The Queensland sugar industry continued to supply sugar so that it could not be blamed for a breakdown in negotiations. That is what has happened, and that is what I said yesterday, and it is wrong for the Minister to make the accusation that he made today. I repeat that negotiation of the long-term contract with Japan was carried out at industry level and at the request of the Japanese industry. It was ratified by letters of agreement between the two Governments. At the request of the Japanese industry, it was on the basis of a fixed contractual price, with no escalation clause.

When it was obvious 12 months ago that the agreement was going to break down and the first shipload of sugar was rejected,

the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries and Mr. Anthony, who had already had discussions a month previously in Canberra, should have gone immediately to Japan to negotiate with the Japanese Government to ensure that it adhered to the agreement. Instead, there was procrastination. The Government sat back and waited. It then waited another month until the Prime Minister was going to Kuala Lumpur to meet the Japanese Prime Minister. Everybody in the industry said, "This is great. Malcolm Fraser is going over there. He will talk to the Japanese Prime Minister and sort this problem out for us." As it now turns out, Malcolm Fraser did nothing in Kuala Lumpur in August of this year to help the sugar industry. Consequently the Government sat back and waited another month before it started to take steps to have legal advisers consider ways of sending the matter to the arbiter in London.

Between yesterday and today there has probably been enough said on sugar matters. After the next few weeks, when the industry has had a chance to see the figures and assess its involvement in the international agreement, a different picture might emerge. I am a great supporter of international agreements—I think they are most wise and necessary and I will continue to support them—but it is always necessary to fight for what is best for our own industry. If the Queensland sugar industry does not get a good deal the blame must fall on the Queensland Government and on Mr. Anthony and the Federal Government.

From a quick glance at the figures negotiated in the international agreement, it seems to me that it will be most necessary to have an increase in the home consumption price in Australia if production costs are to be met and the industry is to remain viable. Responsibility in this matter, too, rests on the Queensland Government to make the necessary approaches to the Federal Government. Unless that is done very soon the sugar industry will have a very difficult time this year, particularly because of lack of revenue from the Japanese agreement.

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (3.39 p.m.): The honourable member for Mackay referred to the sugar industry. Sugar plays a very important role in my electorate. It includes the Rocky Point mill, which returns an annual income of \$11,000,000 to \$12,000,000 to the people in my area. That area is expanding rapidly, but the Albert Shire Council has made sure, through town planning, that the industry is preserved. It is a pity that we have had problems with sugar sales, but it appears that the sugar industry, which I would say is the best organised industry in the State, well and truly knows how to look after itself. We saw this with the delegation to Geneva led by the Honourable Doug Anthony and our Minister for Primary Industries, the Honourable Vic Sullivan. After what the Premier

said this morning it would appear that the industry's problems have been satisfactorily sorted out.

It is a pity that the honourable member for Mackay so often speaks in such a critical and negative way about the sugar industry. It is no wonder that the industry is worried when it hears so much from the honourable member that is negative and critical and not constructive. In many ways the honourable member for Mackay has contributed to the confusion in the industry, especially when he says that the Government is responsible for the industry's problems because it did not act quickly enough or in the correct manner. It is difficult to deal with overseas countries, especially Japan, in relation to sugar contracts. They have tough businessmen who want the best possible deal they can get, just as we would if the roles were reversed. The announcement by the Premier this morning shows that the Government and the people responsible have acted properly. I am particularly pleased with the result for the people in my area who are dependent upon sugar for their livelihood because they cannot diversify. We see many side effects of a downturn in the sugar industry because cane farmers spend quite a large amount of money in the community, especially in the purchase of machinery in an effort to streamline their operations. I know they will be very happy with the result which has been achieved through good business dealings in a very difficult set of circumstances.

I have on my desk letters I have received today from the Minister for Works and Housing regarding schools in my electorate. We have faced many problems with the schools in Albert over a fairly long period, particularly those caused by shortage of buildings and the expansion of the school population. The Albert Shire is growing at a rate of over 20 per cent a year and the Gold Coast at 9.5 per cent. This sort of growth creates problems, but in the last two weeks I have received notification that at the Beenleigh High School we are to get a library, a communications block and a doubling of the size of the science block. Today I have been told that the Beenleigh Primary School is to receive more teaching blocks and extra toilet blocks, which will bring it up to an acceptable standard for 1977 school year. A couple of schools in my area still have earth closets, but I know that the Minister for Works and Housing will do his best to have them replaced by septic systems. On behalf of my electorate I once again congratulate those involved with the preparation of this very good Budget.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (3.45 p.m.), in reply: As is to be expected in a debate of this nature during the closing stages of this Parliament, and after a fairly comprehensive debate on

the Budget, very little new material has come forward. Indeed, some honourable members took the opportunity of mentioning matters of concern to them in their electorates or matters of public interest. That, of course, is perfectly legitimate, but I do not think that I need to comment on them.

I was intrigued by the contribution of the honourable member for Archerfield, who was strangely silent during the Budget debate. After all, he allegedly was the spokesman for the Opposition on Treasury matters—I do not know whether he still is—and one would expect him to be the leading speaker on the Opposition side in the Budget debate. Not only was he not the leading speaker; he did not speak at all in the Budget debate. For him to suggest that he had been excluded from the Budget debate by some form of gagging is quite erroneous. In fact, no gag was applied to that debate, and the honourable member had an opportunity to speak on a number of occasions during the course of the debate but he did not choose to do so.

It may be that it takes the honourable member for Archerfield a little longer to prepare his speeches than it does other people. Judging by the delightful turn of phrase that he used today, obviously he spent a considerable time consulting authorities such as "Roget's Thesaurus".

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I did not catch the name.

Mr. KNOX: Thesaurus. I know that the honourable member would have difficulty in saying it at this time of the day, but I have no doubt that he consulted all his reference books to get the delightful and colourful phrases that he introduced to the House. In fact, his speech was as colourful as his appearance today, and I should like to say that I think it is a big improvement. It is obvious that he has become the Opposition's Treasury spokesman only because he is good at figures. He is known in his own party circles as a numbers man and, obviously, the A.L.P. has taken its best numbers man as its spokesman on Treasury matters. The "numbers", of course, refers not to dollars but to votes in the party room, which he is a master at organising.

No doubt we will hear more on the subject that the honourable member for Archerfield discussed, but I believe that he has taken liberties in this House in again dealing with matters that are public knowledge without being able to substantiate his allegations. The matters to which he referred have been debated and discussed in many places and I have seen them mentioned in many journals, but the honourable member trots them out in this House as though he has suddenly discovered them. In fact, he may have

suddenly discovered them and not noticed that they have been discussed in other places and at other times.

Appropriation legislation is important because it symbolises the Government's ability to govern and provide the necessary Supply to His Excellency during the course of the year. An inability to provide Supply is, of course, an indication that the Government cannot govern. The fact that we are able to provide in the House today a Vote that will take the State's administration through to the first two months of the next financial year is an indication of the stability of the Government and of its ability to manage the affairs of the State in a proper manner. That is the real test.

I trust that the fortunes of the State will prosper and that the funds which will be voted today will ensure the continuance of the good government that the State has had.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

QUEENSLAND PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY BILL

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate initiation in Committee of the Whole House of a Bill intituled 'A Bill to provide for the control of the affairs of the Queensland Permanent Building Society and for related purposes'; and the passing of such Bill through all its stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND PERMANENT BUILDING SOCIETY BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (3.52 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to provide for the control of the affairs of the Queensland Permanent Building Society and for related purposes."

In statements to the House on Wednesday, 28 September 1977, honourable members were advised that, as a result of repeated attacks under privilege in this Parliament on the Queensland Permanent Building Society, there had been an extraordinary and rapid run-down in liquid funds of this society brought about by withdrawals by investors of approximately \$18,000,000 in recent weeks. This had led to an unprecedented rush on its cash resources in the preceding 24 hours.

Because of such a huge drain, the society was not able to continue to pay out money to investors wishing to withdraw their funds, nor was it able to readily convert its substantial assets, tied up in long-term home mortgages, to meet these demands. Despite efforts to overcome this shortage of liquid funds, the society was unable to secure additional cash backing in the time available to it once this chain of events had occurred.

As a consequence of these peculiar circumstances, the board of directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, acting on independent legal advice, advised the Registrar of Building Societies on the morning of Wednesday, 28 September 1977 that the board had considered its position. The board further advised that it considered that the society could not continue to carry on its business and in the interests of all concerned requested that a liquidator be appointed to the society.

The Government is concerned that all possible steps be taken to protect the position of the members, depositors and creditors of this society. The Government further believes that, having regard to the size of this society and the great number of persons who are involved with its operations, it is necessary to ensure that the Government has the flexibility to take whatever course of action is appropriate to protect those interests. In this Bill, the Government is providing for the control of the affairs of the society.

As all honourable members will know, a liquidator has certain responsibilities at law and, because there has been insufficient time to fully examine all the possibilities available, this Bill will preserve the position of the society as an entity pending further discussions. This Bill empowers the Governor in Council to direct to be done all such acts and things as in his opinion are necessary. Clearly one of the first things to be done is preserve the position of the society at this time pending the outcome of discussions on its future. An appropriate direction will be given to ensure that this is done.

At the time of enacting the previous legislative changes, it could not have been foreseen that a situation such as that which confronts us today would arise. As honourable members will recall, the Government showed its concern for the welfare of building society investors by establishing a

Contingency Fund, the purpose of which is to protect those persons who suffer a loss as a result of the failure of a building society. The situation that faces us today is, because of its size, a very different one from that contemplated when the fund was established last year.

Although the fund presently holds sufficient moneys to cover the present estimate of the deficiency within the Queensland Permanent Building Society, it is essential that appropriate liquidity support, whether from within the industry or external to the industry, be settled before there can be access to the funds held by the society.

I am advised by the present liquidator that, at the time the society was forced into liquidation by the heavy run on its liquidity, the management systems then in operation within the society could not be faulted.

This is the view also of two separate and independent firms of chartered accountants in this city. It will be obvious to the members of this Committee that had the society not been subjected to the run on its funds, precipitated as a result of certain comments made in this Chamber, it would today be in business and slowly but surely gaining a firm foothold.

I will now briefly comment on the principal features of this Bill. In Part II, provision is made for the incorporation of the Contingency Fund Committee for the purpose of performing its functions under this measure. The Government has had this included to ensure the protection of any funds that may be loaned by other societies through the fund to Queensland Permanent Building Society.

Part III of the Bill deals with the process of liquidation and specifically provides for the special circumstances that exist in this case. In particular, it allows for the society to continue in liquidation without requiring the liquidator to release assets immediately. This, of course, requires the approval of the Governor in Council. I wish to emphasise that this measure will provide flexibility for the Governor in Council to take action considered necessary to protect all concerned.

Part IV of the Bill provides for the possibility of the society being taken out of liquidation and placed under the control of an administrator. This course would only be possible if sufficient liquidity support could be made available. The Bill allows the Governor in Council to arrange liquidity resources to meet the needs of the society and, if necessary, through a process of compulsory loans on the rest of the industry.

Part V of the Bill incorporates the powers of the Governor in Council and allows the Governor in Council to explore alternative propositions to protect the welfare of members, creditors and depositors. This part also incorporates the offence provisions.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (4.1 p.m.): It is pleasing that the Government, in the last days—in fact, in the last hours—of this Parliament is doing something about the Queensland Permanent Building Society. I congratulate the Minister on moving his last Bill in this portfolio. According to the Press, he is to be sacked for his incompetence and inefficiency in this portfolio. Now, as his swan-song, he is doing something about this matter.

Let me read a few statements by the Minister himself. When he introduced the Building Societies Act Amendment Bill in 1976, he told us that it was going to be the best in Australia. He said that it was going to protect everybody in the building society industry. In fact, I refer members to these two paragraphs of that speech as recorded in "Hansard" on 7 April 1976—

"I further believe that the legislation when introduced will be among the strictest and best in Australia in respect of building societies and on a par with other legislation in respect of other commercial-type operations.

"The object of the legislation is to further protect building society members, depositors and creditors, and its introduction should do much to foster the interests of permanent building societies in Queensland and should also have the effect of completely restoring public confidence which is so essential to the home purchaser and the building industry. Because of the controls outlined in the current Bill, the prospects of building societies getting into financial difficulties in future will be greatly reduced."

At that time he was warned by the honourable member for Archerfield that there was trouble in the Queensland Permanent, yet in this Parliament today he blames the honourable member for Archerfield. Let us have a look at some of the statements that have been made since he blamed him. One newspaper headline read—

"School 'rumours' blamed for the \$5,000,000 run".

The school kids were blamed. The article read—

"Rumours circulating in Queensland schools were blamed yesterday as a major cause of the run on funds which led to the collapse of the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

"On Thursday the Housing Minister (Mr. Lee) claimed that rumours had contributed to the run on the society."

It went on—

"Financial circles claimed this last night and added that the situation was made worse by two Government departments which 'leaked like salt from a shaker'."

So first the Minister was blaming Mr. Hooper; but within a couple of days he said that it was the kids at schools. Let us find out which schools—

“The schools involved were identified by other sources as being in the Woodridge, Chermside, Wynnum and inner city areas and in other suburbs.

“One student was able to tell his mother, an employee of the society, that the place where she worked was ‘going broke’.”

The Government departments that were mentioned were the Education Department and the Crown Law Office—the Crown Law Office, mind you, Mr. Hewitt.

“Crown Law was blamed for the claim in the Parliamentary lobbies on Tuesday morning that the society would close that afternoon at 5 o'clock.”

Firstly we are told that it is Mr. Hooper. Then we are told it is the school kids. Then Ian Miller in the “Telegraph” said—

“The stated aim of the government is for the society to be re-formed under a new board and eliminate mismanagement which the government now recognises occurred within Queensland Permanent.”

And here, a couple of days later, we have the Government admitting mismanagement in Queensland Permanent—not the runs caused by Mr. Hooper.

Four years before, according to “Sunday Sun” and a Mrs. Walsh, the Minister and the Government were told of a number of allegations about Queensland Permanent—

- “• Loans were authorised for investment purposes and not for housing.
- Records mysteriously disappeared. Details of major loans were lost leaving the society no record of them.
- \$25,000 on one occasion was written off to make the books balance.
- The computer chewed up a senior staff member’s deposit book and erased all record of it.
- One man’s loan account was lost for two years before it was found.
- Records were kept in condemned buildings in cardboard cartons and boxes and many were lost.
- Computer tapes were mysteriously erased before reconciliations were made making it impossible to cross-check figures.”

Four years ago there was talk that threatened the people’s money, the ordinary workers’ money. The Government spoke then about \$2,300,000, then \$2,600,000 and now about \$3,800,000. Government spokesmen are talking about the ordinary pensioners who put their money into the society because the Queensland Government told them in April 1976 that everything was all right. Every time the Minister was asked a question, he brushed it aside. He did nothing about it. He ignored questions time

after time. If he had faced the facts and done something about it, those people would have been protected and he would not be introducing this Bill. But the Minister for Works and Housing was smiling and grinning across the Chamber and brushing the whole thing aside. He left those people with the belief that they would be protected by the new stringent Act that was introduced in April 1976. He said that it would protect building society investors—restore their confidence, to use his own words. No wonder the headlines say that he will be sacked after the election because of his mismanagement in handling his portfolio.

He has the colossal hide to come in here today and introduce a Bill to take the society over. Government control! If a Labor Government did it, there would be screams of socialism all round the House. A Bill is introduced to control the Queensland Permanent Building Society and yet the Government says it was Mr. Hooper’s fault. I believe that Mr. Hooper should take the credit for at last making the Government act. If there is not a full, open, public, frank inquiry into the Queensland Permanent Building Society, no-one will have faith in the Minister’s administration or his statements on these matters in the future.

As far as I can see, the remaining societies are properly managed. They should be protected. The way to protect them is to look into what happened in the Queensland Permanent Building Society. Let us throw the cards on the table and have a good look at them. If something is wrong with the management, if there has been incompetence, if the society overreached itself in taking over Sunstate and if Norm Rix was paid too much for his property, let the Government admit that that is what happened.

Then let us make it clear that properly managed building societies can be of tremendous benefit to the community. And they can be. The old system of co-operatives is part and parcel of Labor background and Labor make-up. My family and I were brought up to believe in it. We believe in people pooling their money and co-operating for the common good. Building societies are a first-class idea.

The troubles in the building society movement in Queensland have resulted from mismanagement and incompetence. I hesitate to use the word “crooked” because I am not too sure. I would like an inquiry to be held so that I can find out. Everyone who has ever worked for Queensland Permanent is entitled to an inquiry and the publication of the facts. If that is not done, a question mark hangs over every society, the people involved and the investors.

When I heard that a Bill was to be introduced today I thought that the Minister might be going to show some concern for

the ordinary little fellow who has been involved, who did not make any statement, who did not listen to the school kids down the road, who was not a politician who got tipped off to get his money out in time, and who did not work in the Crown Law office or the Education Department, but who put his faith in that society and the Government's statement and put his money in the society—his whole pension or part of his wages—and who is now starting to suffer the consequences of the trust that he placed in this Government and the statements that were made in this Parliament. Fortunately the Department of Social Security stopped payment on the cheques that were lodged with the society the day before it closed. But what about the people who have to pay rates or an electricity bill or have to meet some emergency and are asking the Government to do something about it?

I thought that a Bill would be introduced to allow the liquidator, knowing that there will be sufficient funds in the Contingency Fund, to say to people in emergency circumstances, "We have checked your book against the computer. You have the money invested. Here it is." Why can't that be done? We always seem to have to accept bureaucratic bungling and the view that it cannot be done in a hurry.

I asked a question this morning and the Minister, in reply, said that nobody has received anything yet. He answered the last part of my question with the word, "None." Why can't we give them some money? Why can't it be done now? Why can't we say to the liquidator that we want him to do two other things? He should allow anyone who has money in the society to have it used to meet his repayments to the society on his house.

In other words, the Government should be trying today to ensure that those who put their money into this society will have it protected. That is the simple thing that should be done if the Government really has its heart in this matter. The Minister says that the necessary money is in the Contingency Fund. That means that it would be simple to ask the liquidator and his staff to check the accounts of depositors and let them have some money.

After listening to the Minister's introductory speech, it seems to me that today we are saying that the Government will take it over and that this will be a way of keeping the society going while mortgages are transferred from one place to another in an attempt to get the society back on its feet. I am not against getting it back on its feet. In fact, I will be pleased to be one of the first to deposit a few dollars when it is back on its feet. Actually I have never been an investor in building societies. I have always put my money in the Commonwealth Bank; the little that I have is there.

Mr. Lee: Give me the money now.

Mr. BURNS: When it gets going, but not with the present Minister in charge. If the Government will sack the present Minister, I will put some money into this building society. The Minister has handled this matter so badly and ignored matters that have been drawn to his attention on so many occasions that he can no longer be trusted in this administration.

Mr. Yewdale: All his mates are involved.

Mr. BURNS: All his mates are involved and he is there to protect them? I do not know; I cannot say that.

Mr. Lee: You were the first in line to draw your money out.

Mr. BURNS: I never had money in the Queensland Permanent Building Society. I have never had much money to stack away. I am not a millionaire. I do not have a large milk quota and I am not able to use my money and my position in the Government to get a quid.

Mr. Lane: Tell us about the Trade Union Building Society.

Mr. BURNS: I have no money in that society. Here is old "shady" Lane still carrying on and roaring on the last day of this Parliament.

One of the most important things that the Government should do today is stop passing the buck to someone else. Let it stop blaming school kids, the Crown Law Office, the Education Department. Anyone who resorts to those tactics will sink to the level that "shady" Lane sank to when he was a secret policeman in this town and stood over the poor old Italians in New Farm, telling them he would send them home for being illegal migrants if they did not vote for him. If those are the tactics that the Government wants to use today, let it go ahead. But I suggest that what the Government should be doing is protecting the 140,000 people who put their faith in the Minister and found it was sadly misplaced.

Mr. LANE: I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition about my standing over Italian migrants quite offensive. It is well known that the Leader of the Opposition stood over my meatworkers in the electorate of Lytton. I ask for a withdrawal of his statements.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! The honourable member for Merthyr finds the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition offensive. I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. BURNS: I withdraw, Mr. Kaus. The only work with meat that he has ever done is bashing the skulls of poor old men.

Mr. ALISON (Maryborough) (4.14 p.m.): I am happy to support the Minister on the introduction of this legislation. I hope to be able to say more about it later when I have

had a chance to peruse it. It is proof, if proof is needed, of the Government's very serious concern for the thousands of people who put their money into the Queensland Permanent Building Society in the belief that it would be safe. Of course, it would have been safe if we had not allowed parliamentary privilege to be abused in this House. I shall have a little more to say about that in a moment.

This afternoon we have had a quite remarkable admission from the Leader of the Opposition. He was about to say that the board of the Queensland Permanent Building Society was a bunch of crooks. But he stopped himself and said, "No, I am not too sure if the board is crooked." That, of course, will appear tomorrow for all to read in "Hansard". If the Leader of the Opposition is not sure that the board of Queensland Permanent is a bunch of crooks, why did he allow his spokesman on Works and Housing to carry on for 18 months blackguarding the board of Queensland Permanent and using the term "crooks"? I do not know how many times the honourable member used the term "crooks" when referring to the board of the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

It would be a very interesting exercise if, during the election campaign, it were possible, legal or practicable for all the depositors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society from Archerfield to be given copies of the honourable member's speeches about the society where they put their money. They would then see clearly what the honourable member has been saying. He says that the directors are a bunch of crooks, but he never says why. He has been saying the society has been mismanaged, but he never really got down to specifics.

I think it is pretty dreadful that parliamentary privilege can be abused as it has been abused over the last 18 months by the honourable member for Archerfield, yet he gets away with it. I will not rest until the honourable member for Archerfield is brought before the Committee of Privileges and made to account for what he has said in this place.

Mr. Lane: How much has he cost the people of this State?

Mr. ALISON: That is a very good question, and the answer might come out during the election campaign. I regret this mischievous, capricious campaign of straight-out blackguarding of the people on the board of the Queensland Permanent Building Society. The Leader of the Opposition has been very quiet about all this, but the blame lies squarely on his shoulders as the Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party in this place. It was the Leader of the Opposition who allowed the A.L.P. spokesman on Housing to carry on in this way for month after month—

Mr. Lane: He sacked him.

Mr. ALISON: That is right, he did sack him; nevertheless he allowed him to carry on with this blackguarding. Who is going to

be next? Not even one of Australia's banks could cope with this sort of abuse under parliamentary privilege and remain in a sound financial position. Just imagine if someone started to say that the members of the board of a bank were a bunch of crooks and then kept on saying it. If a person keeps telling the same lies often enough, people start to believe them. That is why I ask who is going to be next on the list of the honourable member for Archerfield in an endeavour to work something, he thinks, to his political advantage. We have seen a breach of parliamentary privilege, and I repeat that this Parliament has fallen down on its job in not bringing the honourable member before the Committee of Privileges. I will not rest until he has been brought before that committee and made to account for his statements under parliamentary privilege.

As I said, I support the legislation so far as I understand it, and I look forward to further debate as we get to know more about the legislation.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (4.18 p.m.): Today we find ourselves in a unique position. It is 20 years since this Parliament has sat right up to the brink of an election. Unfortunately, the necessity for this phenomenon that we have not seen for so long has manifested itself in many ways. First of all, it has manifested itself in the demonstration of desperation on the part of members of the Opposition who today have endeavoured to gain some dirty, filthy capital out of the last few days of the sitting of this Parliament. They have been prepared to throw any sort of mixture of mud and muck at the Government and its members in the hope that some skerrick of it might stick and so erode the majority which some members on this side enjoyed at the last election. Of course, we all know as, indeed, do the great silent majority of people in the electorate, that it will be quite fruitless for them to employ this tactic.

It is obviously an act of desperation, as could be seen so readily in the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition in this place today. We saw the look on his face today as he used his last desperate tactic of innuendo and invention. Of course, that is quite consistent with the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition since he has been in this place, and I have repeatedly stood in this Assembly and pointed out to other honourable members and to the populace at large how inadequate the Leader of the Opposition is on the floor or Parliament. I have said it privately around this building, I have said it in this Chamber, and I will say it once again: it is no good anyone coming into Parliament as a Leader of the Government or as a Leader of the Opposition unless he has some adequacy in his role on the floor of the Parliament. Of course, that is where the present Leader of the Opposition falls down so badly.

Even I would be prepared to concede that it is well known that on the floor of Federal Parliament Whitlam behaves like a parlia-

mentarian, that he understands Standing Orders, that he uses Parliament in a real way, that he is able to match the Leader of the Government, and that when he was Prime Minister he was able to match the Leader of the Opposition in some real and reasonable way across the table of Parliament. People know that Whitlam is at least a parliamentarian. Burns will never be a parliamentarian while he behaves in the loutish way in which he behaves in this Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I advise the honourable member that he should get back to the motion before the Committee.

Mr. LANE: Of course, Mr. Kaus. The honourable member's conduct has become manifest in regard to the building societies' legislation, and the unfortunate part about it is that his desperate methods have such an effect on the people out in the suburbs, the small investors, the people who put their daily savings or their pensions—invalid pensions, age pensions, superannuation and sustenance—into accounts in decent building societies in this State. Their savings are eroded, frozen and condemned by the band of people who sit on the other side of this Chamber and do not even pretend to respect this place or behave like members of Parliament.

The fact of the matter is that many members of the Opposition in this place are better on the streets and in the gutters round this town with placards in their hands. In particular, the Leader of the Opposition is better on the front lawn of Parliament House, speaking before the television cameras and into microphones, than he is performing the role of Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament.

Most members of this Assembly understand that there are only two bodies respected in this Assembly—a Government and an Opposition—not political parties, not a National-Liberal Party Government, not an A.L.P. Opposition, but a Government and an Opposition. It is evident in the policies of the Labor Party—the fact that it would destroy this Parliament as an institution and put it out of business, that it would abandon the role of the Governor of this State—that it has no respect for the roles of Government and of Opposition. Consequently, the Leader of the Opposition feels no obligation, no requirement, to perform as the Leader of an Opposition group on the floor of this Assembly, irrespective of the party of which he might be a member outside this place and on the streets of this city and this State. That is the difference; that is the distinction; and that is where Tom Burns falls down in this Chamber.

Of course, all honourable members recall the pathetic photograph in "The Australian" on 20 September 1973, showing the Leader of the Opposition sitting on a packed suitcase—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I advise the honourable member to get back to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. LANE: Certainly, Mr. Kaus. I am commenting on the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition in respect of this Bill and his opposition to it, and the disastrous attitude—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member that we are debating a Bill relating to the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

Mr. LANE: That is so. On that particular occasion, Burns said, "My political career has ended." I hold up this newspaper clipping so that all honourable members can see the pathetic figure sitting on a suitcase in his home. He had just handed in his resignation as the A.L.P.'s shadow Health Minister in this place. The shortest shadow in the State's history—that was Tom Burns, a man who could not stand the smallest pressure in this Assembly.

We also recall the headline in "The Australian" on 2 March this year, "Burns may quit as A.L.P. chief". As A.L.P. chief! As A.L.P. pawn for the Q.C.E., that is what he might quit as. I think it is the third or fourth time he has threatened to quit in as many years. As soon as the pressure becomes too strong he threatens to quit. As soon as the pressure in this Chamber becomes too strong for him he flees from the place with the lame excuse that he has to address some branch of the Labor Party or a meeting of the Labor women's committee or a meeting of the seamen's women's committee or the waterside workers' women's committee. He never performs in this Chamber as a Leader of the Opposition. He is totally inadequate and he will be shown to be inadequate in "Hansard" for years to come. Tom Burns is a nonentity in this Parliament. But put on the lawn in front of television cameras he shoots his mouth off every day of the week.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have just told the honourable member that the Committee is debating a Bill—I shall read the terms of the motion once again—"to provide for the control of the affairs of the Queensland Permanent Building Society and for related purposes." I advise the honourable member once again to get back to the principles contained in the motion.

Mr. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Kaus.

The principles as outlined by the Minister are designed to protect the interest of the small investor—the person who has put his savings into a building society to obtain a reasonable return for his money, the person who has invested his money so that he can enjoy it in his retirement, the person who has invested his money to save for a home in this great State of Queensland.

The small investor is motivated by something that is not dissimilar from the desires that motivated investors a year or so ago to deposit their money in an organisation known as the Trade Union Building Society. That society, of course, crashed, too. Like the Leader of the Opposition, it was inadequate and could not keep going.

I should like to put on record the reasons why the Trade Union Building Society collapsed. It failed because, like the Labor Opposition in this place, its management, including its branch and local management, was put into the hands of party hacks and trade union hacks. Any check of the credentials of the persons who managed the offices of the Trade Union Building Society from Brisbane to North Queensland will reveal that they were persons whom the A.L.P. and the Trades Hall wanted to dispose of from their ranks. They were put out into sweet jobs and they were not required to have any management ability or any knowledge of building societies. Nor did they have any real concern for the investors who had their money in the Trade Union Building Society.

Mr. Frawley: They were touching the till, too.

Mr. LANE: I do not have any evidence of that, so I shall not make such an allegation in this place. But I do have abundant evidence to substantiate my claim that party hacks were put in charge of the branches of the Trade Union Building Society, just as party hacks are put into this Parliament by the Trades Hall and the Queensland Branch of the A.L.P.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LANE: They sit over there accepting their salaries—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member for Merthyr that when I rise to my feet he will resume his seat. I now warn him that if he continues in this vein I will have to order him to resume his seat.

Mr. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Kaus. I am reminded.

Mr. Hinze interjected.

Mr. LANE: Had I not been stopped by the Chair, I would have pointed out how the member for Bulimba—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have warned the honourable member for Merthyr.

Mr. LANE: Jack Houston was required to answer the Government's charges.

Mr. Hinze: Tell us about Hooper, the architect of this collapse.

Mr. LANE: The member for Archerfield is probably the man who is directly responsible for the need to introduce this legislation this afternoon. I listened to his arguments

in the earlier debate hoping that I would hear some concrete comments or positive suggestions about what could be done to preserve or conserve the savings of the people affected by this unfortunate set of circumstances which have beset the Queensland Permanent Building Society. But I did not hear anything positive from the honourable member for Archerfield. I heard him throwing names, tipping buckets and making allegations and wild charges. But we are concerned—I know from the people in my electorate that the world at large is concerned—about protecting people's savings. They are protected. In 1976 legislation was introduced by the Government to establish a Contingency Fund to guarantee the savings of those who invest in Queensland building societies. I understand from representations I have made to the Government that the fund is adequate to cover all investments in this society.

All the bleating, veiled threats, innuendoes, allegations, blackmail, and even untruths by some Opposition members will not convince the people of Queensland that the Government is not dealing adequately with this matter.

As I said, the Opposition's performance is a last desperate move before the election is held. It is quite pitiful that Opposition members should indulge in such a performance on this vital legislation dealing with permanent building societies.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (4.32 p.m.): I suppose that the speech made by the honourable member for Merthyr makes this Parliament's attitude over the past three years very clear.

Mr. Lane: Particularly the Labor Party's attitude—the Burns's.

Mr. HOUSTON: Unfortunately, this Parliament is very one-sided in numbers—certainly not in ability, but in numbers—

Mr. Lane interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: This Parliament is so one-sided in numbers that the Government has been able to use—

Mr. Lane interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order!

Mr. Lane: He can't handle it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! If I have to warn the honourable member for Merthyr again, I will deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. HOUSTON: When the Minister introduced this Bill I thought the Leader of the Opposition made it very clear that we were interested in it, because it gave the people of Queensland, particularly investors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society some chance of getting their money out by Christmas. On that basis, the Leader

of the Opposition very clearly stated his case. Unfortunately, the honourable member for Merthyr caused the debate to degenerate into a personal attack. I hope the people of Merthyr read his speech. After all, they will no doubt be very interested to see how little thought he devoted to the problem, and how he was content to make personal attacks on two honourable members of the Chamber who have, at all times, tried to foster building societies and protect those who invest in them and borrow money from them.

One of the sad things about this whole episode—I can go back months or years—is that the Government refused on every occasion to take note of what was going on. It appears now that the Government knew full well. Only last Wednesday week the Treasurer made a speech about the Queensland Permanent Building Society immediately after the Minister for Works and Housing had made a ministerial statement about that society. The Treasurer did not suggest then that the Government would introduce a Bill to protect those who have invested money in the society, and for 10 days the money invested by them has been frozen. Ten days ago the Government should have introduced this measure, and we could have co-operated. But it did not want to do that. According to the Government that was not good politics. The Government thought it could blame the honourable member for Archerfield, but that plan backfired badly. A fizzer of a motion was moved by the Treasurer on behalf of the National and Liberal Parties in this State.

One of the great problems has been the half-truths, the cover-ups and the statements made that did not accord with fact. It was the Treasurer himself who let it be known that the problem was not \$2,500,000—that was the amount that was generally thought to be missing—but \$3,800,000. He repeated it again the other day.

There has been much talk about something going wrong in a computer. A computer is an electronic device, certainly, but it can function only on what is put into it. If information is not put into it, then information cannot come out. It is no good saying that the amount was lost in the computer. The point is that it has to be found. Therefore, I support the call by the Leader of the Opposition—the member for Archerfield has made the call on several occasions—for a full public inquiry into just what has happened. I believe that the people of Queensland will not have confidence in building societies until this matter is cleared up. In the future interests of building societies, their soundness and their development, it is absolutely necessary that the full circumstances of this society be revealed.

It is not good enough for the Minister to make one statement, only to find that it was not sufficient, and then finally to suggest that it was schoolchildren who caused the trouble leading to the final run on the society's

funds. It was well known round some circles in Brisbane—when I say “some circles” I mean that it was obvious from anyone we spoke to—that on Friday the society had its problems. By Monday it was mooted that there was to be a top-level meeting of the board and that certain decisions could be made. These were the rumours that were circulating, and the Minister must have known about them. He must have known about them on Friday, but no statement at all was made. No statement was made over the week-end. He left it right till the end. Although the Act lays it down that the Minister could act at the request of the registrar, or the registrar at the request of the Minister, no action was taken. The Minister could have acted at any time that he so desired. If he had made some positive move 12 months ago this situation would not have developed.

When one looks at the official documents that accompany the Budget one sees how the Contingency Fund stood at 30 June. We also know approximately what the income would be over 12 months, and it was a simple matter to add that estimated income to the amount of money that must have been held. However, if everyone who had invested money in Queensland Permanent wanted to withdraw it, it would be impossible for any contingency fund to cover that amount, particularly when one remembers the value of all the homes that had been built and the money still owing on them.

The Government has come in. I think that is the purpose of the Bill. Naturally, we have no argument against that at all. It is the only thing that can happen. It is the only thing possible, but it should have happened 10 days ago. That is what I am criticising the Minister for—leaving it till now—when he knew full well what the state of the fund was. I had an idea of the state of it, but I could not be accurate. However, it did not require any brains for anyone who looked at the official documents that were available to us to realise that it would be impossible, if there was a major run and everybody who had money invested wanted to take it out, to meet such an event. The \$18,000,000 that was drawn out in one period would be only chicken-feed compared with the amount involved if they had all decided to withdraw their money.

I think it is a fact—the Minister can put me right if I am wrong—that two major private institutions have first claim on the society's assets if it is finally wound up. I think a bank and an insurance company are secured creditors of the building society. Consider those amounts alone, apart from all the unsecured money that was put into it.

Let me go back a bit further in time. When the S.G.I.O. Building Society was set up, the Act was amended in several parts—and not just to allow the formation of the S.G.I.O. At about that time the Government allowed building societies to change the margin between their borrowing rates and their

lending rates. We know that the Act was amended to allow the building societies to come into longer-term deposits—to act really as banks or as investment companies. The societies were saying to the investors, “We will give you 10½ per cent if you will deposit your money for two years.” To my knowledge this was the only society to do what it did. Therefore it is not unfair to suggest that, when the Government altered the Act to allow this to happen, it had the Queensland Permanent in mind because it was obvious then that the society needed permanent money, if I can call it that, to overcome some of its problems.

When I spoke to the people associated with the industry, as their guest, I pointed some of these things out. It was a closed meeting so it did not in any way affect anybody outside.

A building society cannot be run like a bank. A bank can diversify its investments over a wide field. In some instances the bank's rate of return on one investment is higher than on others. Losses in one field can be carried. Building societies cannot do that if they observe the terms of the Act. It must be like that or building societies would cease to be what they were set up to be.

The whole sorry mess today, the worry that so many people have about their money and the loss of the use of that money are brought about by the failure of the Government to take the appropriate action that it can take under the law that it brought in. It was this Government, about 18 years ago, that amended the Building Societies Act to such an extent that building societies started to operate as banks. Before that, they were fairly well restricted. I well remember the introduction of that legislation.

Five small building societies were grouped together so that the S.G.I.O. could take them over. At that point of time was Queensland Permanent in any different position from them? It was in the same situation then. The Minister has admitted it then?

Mr. Lee: No.

Mr. HOUSTON: He did, or he must shake his head back to front. Or is he left-handed? So that we can clear the record up I think the Minister will agree with me that 12 months ago when the S.G.I.O. took over the five societies, he knew that the Queensland Permanent was in financial trouble to the extent of at least \$2,500,000.

Mr. Lee: Everybody knew that.

Mr. HOUSTON: Everybody knew? But only the Government had the power to do anything about it. The person down the road and the person who put his money in the building society could not do anything about it.

The Opposition, through the honourable member for Archerfield, tried to do something about it. If ever that honourable

member's actions were vindicated, it was a moment ago when the Minister admitted that everyone knew. If everyone knew, why wouldn't there be a drain on the society? The only ones who could do anything about it were the Government.

Even 10 days ago the Government tried to get some cheap political capital out of passing a motion that it was not responsible, that it was the honourable member for Archerfield who was responsible. What a great lot of nonsense that was!

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister should not talk. He supported the motion.

Mr. Lowes: This Parliament came to the aid of the people.

Mr. HOUSTON: Only now, and the reason is that the election date has been announced. Government members have had time to realise that their attitude in blaming the schoolchildren and the honourable member for Archerfield and their personal attacks on the Leader of the Opposition are not getting them anywhere at all. They have to take this action. I am pleased that they are taking this action. I do not know how they will crawl out of it with some of their supporters. If ever I have seen socialism at work, I am seeing it now. This is a socialist project. The Government is coming to the aid of private enterprise or what is operating as private enterprise, and I fully support it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (4.45 p.m.): This Bill has been introduced in great haste.

Mr. Dean: Indecent haste.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is so. I want to make known to the Committee that another agreement has been broken by the Government. The Government Whip (the honourable member for Landsborough), who I respect as a man of integrity, came to me today and asked for an agreement that the Opposition would not speak on the Resolutions this morning. We agreed. We also agreed that there would be only two speakers on the Appropriation Bill and that Parliament would terminate at 4 o'clock to enable members and friends to have a convivial glass of “milk” with other people in the refreshment room.

But what has happened? Because of my speech in the debate on the Appropriation Bill today in which I exposed the Government's malpractice in relation to the building society industry and showed the incompetence of the Minister for Works and Housing, he had to race away in great haste and get the Parliamentary Counsel to draft the Bill now being introduced.

Mr. NEWBERY: I rise to a point of order. The agreement was on the Resolutions and the Appropriation Bill, and the

honourable member well knows that. It was not on this matter at all. We have not broken any agreement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not for me to adjudicate on agreements made between the Whips.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Bill has been rushed in and, after listening to the Minister's introduction of it, I think it is merely an exercise in cosmetics. I do not think it will do anything to assist the pensioners and others who have, in most instances, their life's savings tied up in the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

Mr. Hinze: Why don't you vote against it?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: There would not be much sense in doing that; it is better than nothing.

Mr. Hinze: Why don't you vote against it and let us see how good you are?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Minister for Local Government and Main Roads should not talk about building societies. He is a personal friend of the National Party candidate for Southport, Alderman Norman Rix, who was one of those who rorted the building society industry in this State by selling the building known as the Rix Building for an inflated price. I am not going to repeat what I said previously; but the Minister was in the House and heard it. The Minister is responsible for this person. He is a personal friend of the Minister's and, now that he has the candidature for Southport, the Minister has repaid him a favour as he guaranteed him the National Party endorsement.

Mr. Hinze: He'll be a great asset to this Parliament.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Minister is not a great asset to this Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee will proceed with the matter under discussion.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I make it quite clear, Mr. Hewitt, that when the A.L.P. is the Government in the latter part of this year, we will have an open inquiry, conducted by a judge of the Supreme Court, into the reasons for the closure of Queensland Permanent. It is public knowledge that the staff of this now defunct society have made allegations in the media that the society had trouble balancing the books for the past few years. That is common knowledge and no members can deny it.

As I have said in this Chamber on previous occasions, the blame was placed on school kids, schoolteachers, the Education Department and the Crown Law Office. I am also informed that teachers have been instructed not to speak in schools about the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

In last Monday's "Telegraph" one of Queensland's most respected political roundsmen, Ian Miller, said that the Government now recognises that management problems were the cause of the collapse of the society and that it is planned to refloat the society with a new set of directors. As I said in my speech this morning, this is just not on. There is no way in the world that this society can be restructured. It is finished; it will go to the wall. But, rather than come out now on the eve of an election and say that this society is finished, the Government is going to hold off till after the election in the forlorn hope that it will be returned, when it will come out in the open and say that, following presentation of the liquidator's report, it is no longer feasible to retain the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

I am told today that the Premier received a deputation of concerned citizens from the Gold Coast who asked him when they were going to get their money and how it would be repaid to them. I also hear that, as usual, the Premier was vague and indecisive. The point is that in the Press recently the Minister for Works and Housing claimed that an independent inquiry into a pre-warned collapse of a building society involving funds of 140,000 Queenslanders and their families would be a waste of time and money. The Premier then said the same thing. What evidence do they have over and above their own appointed liquidator, who, I might add, is a very respected chartered accountant with a very good reputation as an auditor in this city?

Mr. Houston: He's only looking at the financial side.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is true. He is not a detective. But as I said in my opening remarks, there should be an inquiry conducted by a judge of the Supreme Court. When the liquidator conducts his investigation, he has to decide why there has been such a summary dismissal by this Government of the rights of 140,000 Queenslanders. I note that the Commercial Bank, the South British Insurance Company and the Taxation Commissioner are to be paid in advance from the Contingency Fund or other sources ahead of the average Queenslanders and his family who rely on this society for their week-to-week sustenance.

If there was no evidence of mismanagement over the past few years, why does the Minister say that he can reconstruct the society under new management? He is very careful; all he is doing is hinting. He is not coming out into the open and saying, "We will reconstruct the society." Whilst I would certainly not like to use an unparliamentary word and call the Minister a liar, because you would quite rightly call me to order, Mr. Hewitt, he is guilty of deception.

Mr. Lowes: You are guilty, too, of innuendo.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am going to be very kind and not take that interjection from the honourable member for Brisbane. He is now what is known in political parlance as a never-waser. This is his last day in this Chamber. I will not call him a has-been but he is a never-waser.

The Minister says that the liquidator has certain rights at law and it is proposed that the Governor in Council preserve the society at the moment. This is not on. I think the Minister is just guilty of indulging in gobbledegook, as he normally is. He was hard pressed to read the brief handed to him by his assistants.

The Minister alleged in his opening remarks that he was going to introduce legislation to protect investors' funds if a building society collapses in the future. Of course, this is not on, as the Minister well knows. As my Leader said, the Minister for Works and Housing does not have a clue about building societies, and because of his lack of knowledge and inability to administer his portfolio he should resign. I have said this publicly on numerous occasions, and I repeat it: the Minister should resign. He is completely incompetent and has no knowledge at all of building societies. As I said, the blame for the plight of the building society industry in this State and the collapse of the Queensland Permanent Building Society should be laid fairly and squarely at the feet of this Government, and the Minister for Works and Housing in particular. At best, if he does not resign, the Premier should do the right thing by the investors in building societies in this State and move him to another portfolio.

I also noticed from the Minister's remarks that there is still no provision to pay depositors who are suffering hardship as a result of the collapse of the society. I have said on previous occasions that building societies should be properly controlled. The purpose of a building society is to provide funds to enable its depositors to build homes, not for some people to build nursing homes as has been done in the past by some societies. I have related that in the Chamber on several occasions; it is on record and has never been denied. The purpose of a society is to provide funds for home-building, not, like the Queensland Permanent Building Society, to indulge in expensive advertising for its travel agencies and suchlike. One thing I will say about the directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society is that when they went to the wall they went with a bang and not a whimper. They were still indulging in expensive advertising campaigns right up to the eve of the collapse.

We have had legislation introduced to preclude deceptive advertising by societies, but nevertheless by veiled implication some societies are still portraying themselves to the public as banks. If they want to operate like a bank, they should assume the responsibilities of a bank.

On previous occasions, Mr. Hewitt, I have referred to the close involvement of the honourable member for Maryborough with building societies. As I said before, he was a director of the Master Builders' Permanent Building Society, which merged with the Family Permanent Building Society. When he left, he did so under a cloud.

Mr. Houston: Where is he now?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not know where he is, but he left them under a cloud. As a matter of fact, at the time when I was exposing the deprecations of the directors of the Great Australian Permanent Building Society, the United Savings Permanent Building Society and the City Savings Permanent Building Society, the previous Leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Gordon Chalk, told the honourable member for Maryborough to resign from the board of the Family Permanent Building Society. He has never been honest enough to admit that the management of the Queensland Permanent Building Society has been incompetent. It is common knowledge round the town that the ability of some of the directors left a lot to be desired.

During this debate the honourable member for Merthyr saw fit to launch a vicious and unprovoked attack on my leader.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It was a dreadful attack, and it was completely unprovoked. From the way the honourable member for Merthyr performed in this Chamber—he was red in the face; he yelled; he screamed; he ignored the Chair—it is no wonder some of the poor old drunks trembled when he arrested them. We know what used to go on when he got them into the back room at the watch-house.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Sure. I was going to say, Mr. Hewitt—

The CHAIRMAN: Don't say it if it is not relevant to the Bill.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: You just spoiled a very good quote, Mr. Hewitt.

I will say in conclusion, as I said in my opening remarks, that the proposed Bill will not do anything to assist the borrowers and investors in this building society. It is just a cosmetic exercise to try to take some of the heat off the Government on the eve of a State election.

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (4.57 p.m.): Listening to the Opposition, one would believe that they are concerned about the investors who have put their money into the Queensland Permanent Building Society. What belated concern! For over 12 months the honourable member for Archerfield has been

attacking that society in this Chamber, and he has waited till just before a State election to make his final charge—might I say, an organised charge—against the society.

Let us look at exactly what the Opposition has done. It has created a run on a building society which for over 12 months had been guaranteed by the Government. Investors in this building society and all other building societies were told that all moneys invested in these societies would be Government guaranteed. Yet from that time till the present we have seen a concerted effort by members of the Opposition to create the run on the Queensland Permanent Building Society that has now taken place.

I feel sorry for the member for Archerfield and other members of the Opposition because they are now trying to convince the people of Queensland that the action they have taken is the correct action. How can they possibly say that it is in the best interests of the people of Queensland? I suggest that no financial institution could withstand a prolonged attack by an organised group in our society, especially a political group, and over the past 12 months we have seen an organised and prolonged attack by the A.L.P. on the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the honourable member please proceed?

Mr. MILLER: I am trying, Mr. Hewitt; there are so many other members speaking that I cannot proceed.

Mr. Burns: There is no doubt about it; you are trying.

Mr. MILLER: The Leader of the Opposition said that I am trying. What we have seen the Opposition do in this Chamber over the past 12 months certainly proves that they have been trying. They have been trying to achieve one thing, and one thing only—the downfall of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, indeed the downfall of all building societies—because they realise, as everybody else does, that no financial institution can withstand such a concerted attack.

What I am saying is that the Queensland Permanent Building Society or any banking institution could have withstood this attack if it had had the opportunity to trade on and overcome its difficulties.

Mr. Lowes: They hate home-ownership.

Mr. MILLER: Of course they do. Opposition members are endeavouring to create a political situation to suit their election campaign. They are using the poor little investors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society as the pawns in this game.

Since when has any member of the Opposition denied that the investors are protected by the Queensland Government? Not once

have we heard an Opposition member claim that the investors will lose their money. We are left to assume only one thing—that this is a political gimmick put up by the Labor Party prior to the State election.

The honourable member for Bulimba accused us of saying that children had taken home stories about the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

Mr. Houston: The Minister said it.

Mr. MILLER: Not for one moment do I believe that the children thought of these stories themselves. Is the honourable member for Bulimba suggesting that children came home from school and, in all innocence, told their parents that the Queensland Permanent Building Society was going to have a run on it?

Mr. Houston: The Minister said that they did.

Mr. MILLER: The Minister did not say that.

Mr. Houston: He did.

Mr. MILLER: If I might tell the honourable member through you, Mr. Hewitt, what the Minister said, it was that the stories came from "the schools". The Deputy Leader of the Opposition would like us to believe that the stories came from the children. The Minister said the stories came from the schools. Again I ask: does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition believe that kids would go to school in the morning, never having heard of the Queensland Permanent Building Society, and would come home in the afternoon and say to their parents, "Mum and Dad, the Queensland Permanent Building Society is going to have a run on it.?"

Mr. Lane: What rubbish!

Mr. MILLER: Of course it's rubbish. The stories came from the teachers. And would the Deputy Leader of the Opposition try to tell me that no teachers in Queensland belong to the A.L.P.?

Mr. Frawley: It's full of them.

Mr. MILLER: It's full of them.

Mr. Houston: What are you trying to prove?

Mr. MILLER: I am trying to prove that the statement made by the honourable member for Bulimba is completely wrong.

Mr. Houston: It's not wrong.

Mr. MILLER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition accused the children of this State.

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. I don't mind the honourable member for Ithaca quoting me, provided he quotes me accurately. What I said was that, as

reported in the Press, the Minister accused the children of bringing home the stories. That is what I said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Ithaca will accept that explanation.

Mr. MILLER: With due deference to you, Mr. Hewitt, I must point out that the Minister referred to "the schools", not to "the children".

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Bulimba is referring not to the Minister's speech but to his own speech. He is asking the honourable member for Ithaca to accept his explanation as to what he himself said. I now ask the honourable member for Ithaca to accept that explanation.

Mr. MILLER: I will accept the interpretation placed on it by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Ithaca to accept the explanation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MILLER: I have no alternative to bowing to your wishes, Mr. Hewitt, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows it. I must obey the Chair. It is a pity that some members in this Chamber say something, later deny it, and then ask the Chair to uphold the denial.

Mr. Houston: That's a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. MILLER: It is not a reflection on the Chair at all. The last thing I would do is reflect on the Chair.

As always, the Opposition is trying to create a political situation in Queensland. I am not prepared to create a situation from which the A.L.P. can benefit.

Nobody investing in a building society can believe that he is investing in a bank. Investors must realise that they are investing in a society which will enable people to build in brick and mortar, or in wood. They should realise that no financial institution can withstand a heavy run such as that experienced by Queensland Permanent.

Mr. Moore: With 7½ per cent liquidity.

Mr. MILLER: That is so. A building society needs only 7½ per cent liquidity, which is a lot less than that of banks. Banks do not lend such a high proportion of their deposits to people who want to build houses. Building societies were created for one purpose only, that is, to allow people of Queensland to purchase their own homes. While we have building societies, people will be able to do so. We have seen a concentrated attack on building societies for one purpose only, that is, to ensure that people do not purchase and eventually own their homes and that they remain tenants of houses owned by the Queensland Housing Commission.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.7 p.m.), in reply: I do not intend to get down to the low level of some Opposition members. They have attacked me personally and the Government. This legislation is among the most serious ever placed before the Committee. Therefore I do not intend to get down into the gutter with the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Bulimba and the honourable member for Archerfield. I certainly would not stoop so low. In twisting the truth, they even went so far as to say that I blamed the children in schools. As the honourable member for Ithaca ably pointed out, I did not say that—it was the schools—

Mr. Houston: Do you blame the schools?

Mr. LEE: No, I do not blame anything.

Mr. Houston: Who do you blame?

Mr. LEE: I will give the honourable member a little credit later, because he at least did get his teeth into some of the problems.

It was very easy to see that the Leader of the Opposition had no intention of trying to deal with the meat in the Bill or even recognise its seriousness. His only purpose was to gain political capital. He spoke as he did to have his remarks recorded in "Hansard" so that he could attempt to score off the Government in the forthcoming election campaign. If he wants to play like that when the interests of 140,000 investors are at stake, he can do so. He is the type of person who would want to do that. It is no wonder that the people have lost faith in him; in fact, they lost faith in him 20 years ago and they will certainly not have faith in him at the next election. After reading the rot that he talked, they certainly could not have any faith in him. It is very clear to me that he has absolutely no knowledge of what a liquidator should do. A liquidator has to liquidate. That is why he is given that title. That is what his job is. This Bill has been introduced this afternoon to try to avoid the liquidation—to provide for a stay of proceedings.

Mr. Houston: Why didn't you tell us that a week ago?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LEE: All that the Leader of the Opposition could talk about was an inquiry. I said in my introductory remarks that two very influential accounting firms in Brisbane said that this society was extremely well run and operated. Surely that should be enough to prove to the honourable member that the board of directors was doing its job.

When we consider what he said about the Contingency Fund, we realise that he certainly does not understand the law. He knows darned well that we are not introducing this legislation from a political point of view, but so that there can be a stay

of proceedings. I think even the member for Bulimba got onto the point that, if a liquidator paid out before secured creditors were satisfied, he would be at fault. That is the very reason why we are introducing the legislation.

Mr. Houston: You knew that over a week ago.

Mr. LEE: How the heck were we to do it? The member for Archerfield said this afternoon that we had just framed the Bill. That just shows how stupid he can be. Does he think that the Parliamentary Counsel, the officers of the Registrar of Building Societies and I stayed up all last night just to put together a Bill to keep the Parliament here this afternoon? Of course not. This Bill has been introduced to help 140,000 investors.

The member for Bulimba made some attempt to address himself to the real issues. He spoke about an administrator and a liquidator. Let us talk about it. The Opposition levels some accusation at us for putting in a liquidator. What else could we have done? We could not put in an administrator. No-one would accept responsibility under an administrator. This Bill will at least invoke some stay of proceedings.

I must address myself to some of the comments of the member for Archerfield. All I can say is that he is hell-bent on bringing building societies to their knees. That is all he cares about. He could not care less if an \$800,000,000 industry was brought to its knees—as long as he made some political gain. That is all he cares about. How the hell he can go home at night and sleep, I wouldn't know. I just do not understand it at all. He must have no conscience whatsoever.

Mr. Newbery: It's the Communist way of doing it.

Mr. LEE: I agree with my colleague that it is the Communist way to destroy a country's financial institutions.

Motion (Mr. Lee) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

SECOND READING

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.14 p.m.): I move—

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

As honourable members will be aware, a provision in the nature of this Bill is essential at this time. It emphasises the sincerity of the Government to ensure that every possible action is taken to protect the interests of those who are investors in and borrowers from the building societies of this State.

The Bill underscores the fact that the Government is prepared to take appropriate action to ensure that the Government has the flexibility to take whatever action is necessary to protect the interests of those involved with the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

The matters raised by the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition merely echo what has been public knowledge for some time.

Until last week the society was operating profitably for the financial year 1976–1977 and the only reason that it was forced into liquidation was the blatant political attacks on its management.

On all occasions the Government has acted responsibly. I shall repeat it so that it gets into the head of the Leader of the Opposition. On all occasions the Government has acted responsibly.

On the matter of the independent investigation the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition knows that the cards have been on the table face up for a long time. An independent inquiry has been going on for some time by Messrs. Touche Ross & Co., chartered accountants.

I do not intend to speak any further at this stage of the Bill. I commend it to the House.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.16 p.m.): I thank the Minister for giving me enough time to skim half way through the Bill during his “long” second-reading speech. No doubt this is the way democracy works. It is the way the Government designs the parliamentary system so that members have no opportunity of really reading the Bill before it is passed.

The Minister and the Government knew about this problem some time ago. On 29 September 1977 the Premier was saying that no rescue operation would be mounted. That was a rather irresponsible statement, because today we are told we are mounting a rescue operation to help the Queensland Permanent Building Society.

I should like to comment on some of the questions raised in the introductory debate. One honourable member said that we should have acted earlier. The fact is that the Government could have acted 10 days ago and the society need not have closed its doors. If the Government had been happy about the society, it would have taken then the action that it is taking today. As it did not act then, it is clear that it was not happy with the management, that it was not happy with its competence, and that it was not convinced that the society was doing the right thing by its investors. Under those circumstances the Government was not prepared to make the money available 10 days ago. It is prepared to do so now because the management has been sacked and the society is in the hands of the liquidator.

I have not had time to read the Bill, let alone study it. I am worried about this Band-aid legislation designed to cover up the deficiencies in the Government's operation in the Minister's area of responsibility. This Bill is only placing a last-minute Band-aid on the wound.

Again I ask: what is going to happen? Give me some dates and times. For example, when will people be able to get their money out of the society? As the Government is rescuing and propping up the society today and providing it with money, it should tell us when the cheques that were paid by the society before it closed its doors and that have been carried around for days will be cleared. Give us some facts. When will the people who hold those cheques be able to cash them? When will people be able to withdraw money that they invested on the basis of the Government's statement that it had introduced an Act that would protect them?

Do not let anyone suggest that there are Government guarantees. The Contingency Fund is not Government-guaranteed, and never was. Legislation like this had to be introduced. The honourable member for Ithaca mentioned Government guarantees. He knows very well that Sir Gordon Chalk, when he assisted in introducing the 1976 Bill, said that it was not Government-guaranteed.

The societies themselves have been collecting money under the arrangement made by this Assembly to protect investors whenever mismanagement occurs in a building society. I say very clearly to the Minister that he was ill-advised to try to blame someone else for his mismanagement. There is no person in Brisbane who does not believe that the people who ran the Queensland Permanent Building Society were getting themselves further into debt and trouble.

I see from a brief reading of the report that we are talking about an extra \$1,500,000 or \$1,300,000. We are making that up to overcome the losses that occurred as the result of mismanagement last year. The society lost money as a result of bad management. If it was lost as a result of mismanagement, we should not be allowing it to hold millions of dollars worth of assets.

I should also like to know when interest will again be paid. If the Government is rescuing the society and handing it over to some group to run it, when will investors start to get interest on their money? People who have borrowed money for homes are making repayments plus interest, so there is money going into that society. If the Government is reorganising and restructuring it, the people whose money is invested in it are entitled to demand payment of interest. They must not be left as the losers. The collapse was not of their making; it was of the Government's making.

When one sees the performance of Government in rushing in the Bill and having its members defending it, one realises the

extent of its guilt. It has allowed the ordinary investors to believe statements made in this House after the last collapse of building societies. They were told that Queensland would have the best building society legislation in Australia. Building societies are not going broke all round Australia, but they are in this State. Four or five collapsed previously and now another one has gone to the wall. And this under a Minister who is supposed to be competent!

I do not know who is writing the headlines in the Press but people are starting to believe the stories about school kids taking stories home. Three or four schools and the Crown Law Office are supposed to have put out stories about building societies. No investigation has been made of the allegations of the woman who worked as an accountant in Queensland Permanent and who spoke about money and records disappearing and certain material being stacked in old cardboard boxes in condemned buildings. Is that the way in which efficient management runs building societies? Is that the sort of thing that the Minister will allow and never investigate?

In the Press last Saturday morning there was a suggestion that the Minister was going to make a statement on Tuesday. We waited and waited and now, in the dying throes of this Parliament, a Bill is being rushed through. Next week, when we have a chance to read it, we will probably find the faults in it.

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (5.23 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition has made a point that I should like the Minister to clarify. I believe that the Government last year, by the establishment of the Contingency Fund, guaranteed to the people of Queensland that any money invested in building societies would be protected. I should like that question answered today by the Minister. I believe the Contingency Fund guarantees to all investors in building societies the return of their money in the event of any problems such as those that we are facing at present.

Mr. Burns: We are talking about Government guarantees.

Mr. MILLER: The Government has given a guarantee through the Contingency Fund. The Leader of the Opposition is dragging a red herring across the trail.

Mr. Burns: No, I am not.

Mr. MILLER: He wants the Press to say to the people of Queensland, "Your money is not guaranteed." I want the Minister to say quite clearly whether or not the money invested in building societies is guaranteed.

The Leader of the Opposition also indicated to this House that he believes the Queensland Permanent Building Society went further into debt in the 12 months following the time when this problem was first put before Parliament by the honourable member for Archerfield. I should like the Minister to indicate whether the Queensland Per-

manent Building Society went further into debt in the last 12 months or if it found some of the money that was missing.

Mr. Burns: Read the Bill.

Mr. MILLER: I want the Minister to tell me whether or not this society is further in debt now than it was 12 months ago.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.24 p.m.), in reply: In reply to the honourable member for Ithaca—when the liquidator moved in, it was found that the society was in a better position a week or two before the run on funds than it was 12 months previously. As far as I am concerned, the industry guarantees the money through the Contingency Fund.

Mr. Burns: That is right; the industry is guaranteeing it through the Contingency Fund.

Mr. LEE: The Act clearly explains exactly what the Contingency Fund does.

Motion (Mr. Lee) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Incorporation of Contingency Fund Committee—

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.26 p.m.): As I said earlier, I accuse the Government of rushing this Bill through the Parliament. If the Government had acted earlier it would not now be introducing this desperate measure. I think this is clearly shown in clause 4 and subsequent clauses. The clause refers to the establishment of the Contingency Fund Committee. I take it that a separate committee is going to be set up to administer this fund. Is that right?

Mr. Lee: I will answer you in due course.

Mr. HOUSTON: I get a second crack. Does the Minister want me on my feet a second and third time? The Minister did not answer the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition a short time ago so I have no faith in his answering my questions now. When other Bills of this type have been introduced they have laid down requirements to be met by members of the committee: that they shall be sane people, that if they die they are replaced, that if they become insane they are removed and so on. Normally there are several clauses in a Bill of this type relating to the removal of committee members under certain conditions, but there is nothing like that in this Bill. There is no indication of how many members the committee will have, whether it will be purely a Government committee, whether some of the members will be from the building society industry or even whether directors of the Queensland Permanent Building Society will be members.

So I ask the Minister what are the Government's intentions for the committee and who are likely to be members.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.28 p.m.): The Permanent Building Societies Contingency Fund Committee is already constituted under the Building Societies Act 1886–1976. Its function is to administer the Contingency Fund established under that Act for the purpose of providing protection for all shareholders, members and depositors and to persons who lend money or give credit to permanent building societies in the normal course of their business. Because of the power provided for in this Bill for the committee to give and take security of every description in respect of loan moneys received and made by it, there is a necessity to give the committee, in relation to matters contained in this Bill, corporate status. As a corporate body the committee will have perpetual succession and an official seal and be capable of suing and being sued.

Mr. Houston: Who are they?

Mr. LEE: They will be the same committee.

Mr. Houston: The existing committee?

Mr. LEE: There are six members.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Powers of Liquidator—

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (5.29 p.m.): I am somewhat concerned about this clause. I realise that this Bill is the Queensland Permanent Building Society Bill and therefore relates to only one society, but nonetheless I am concerned that the powers given to the liquidator are rather expansive.

I refer particularly to clause 8 (1) (d), which says—

“The liquidator is hereby empowered and it is declared that he has been from the time of his appointment empowered—

“(d) to do any act or thing whatsoever and to omit to do any act or thing whatsoever to which the Governor in Council consents.”

I realise that this comes back to the power and control of the Minister, and I would expect that the Minister would, for the same reasons as he has introduced the Bill (late though it may be in the session), do these things for the benefit, advancement and protection of the investors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society. However, it does give me some concern that such wide powers are given to the liquidator.

Subclause (3) of this clause refers to retrospectivity—something that always concerns me—and says—

“The consent of the Governor in Council to the doing or omitting by a liquidator of any act or thing may be

expressed to operate retrospectively and if so expressed shall operate accordingly."

Again I am concerned about the extent of the powers of the liquidator, and I should be pleased if the Minister could at this stage give the Committee some indication of the limits that he has in mind for the restriction of the powers of the liquidator.

I am mindful that this Bill relates to a particular society and that it has been introduced for the purpose of securing moneys of small investors. However, I am concerned that the terms of a Bill such as this, which I regard as rather a monumental Bill for introduction at this stage of the session, should be expressed more precisely. Perhaps the Minister may be able to determine the limits here during the debate.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.32 p.m.): I am sure that the honourable member appreciates that this is a very specific and unique situation. Therefore, the liquidator has to have great powers. Nevertheless, they are under the Governor in Council, and that is the protection. The honourable member will appreciate, too, that Parliament will not be in session after today, and although we may not like to have these powers, we have to have them to enable the liquidator to have room to move.

Mr. Lowes: You will exercise your powers?

Mr. LEE: Yes, most definitely.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Liability of liquidator—

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (5.33 p.m.): I am concerned about clause 9. Again I reiterate that this Bill is of rather a monumental size to be introduced at this stage of the session. I am somewhat concerned about the removal of liability from the liquidator rather than the expression of the liability of the liquidator.

I would expect that a liquidator appointed would be a person of some professional standing—a member of either the accounting or legal professions, or some other profession—who would have particular expertise, and he would be appointed for that reason. I believe that he should be given every outlet as far as his personal legal responsibility is concerned in all matters other than his own professional qualifications. But I do not believe that any person who accepts such an appointment should be relieved of the professional onus that he would normally carry in his own profession simply because he has been appointed under the provisions of this Bill. Therefore, I think that the provisions of this clause may be too wide, may give him too much freedom, and may give him too much of an escape. I wonder whether the Minister might consider that the terms of clause 9 are in fact too wide. I wonder whether the Minister would consider that the terms of

clause 9 do not keep the liquidator within the necessary controls that are required, controls that investors in the Queensland Permanent Building Society would expect in the management of their affairs. I would be obliged if the Minister could again assure the Committee that the liquidator will be required to perform his duties not only in accordance with the provisions of the Bill but also in accordance with his professional qualifications, whether they be accounting or legal.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.36 p.m.): I can assure the honourable member that all the points he raised are covered. I am sure that the liquidator will act responsibly. He will work under the same controls as those applying under the old Act to the administrator. The liquidator will act as if he were administrator.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—Liquidator may remove and shall appoint auditors—

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.37 p.m.): I draw the Committee's attention to the fact that in the heading to this clause a typographical error has been made. I hope the Committee will accept my assurance that it is only a typographical error. The word "Liquidator" should be "Registrar". I do not think it is necessary to move an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Committee willing to accept the Minister's assurance?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—Payment of money from Contingency Fund—

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.38 p.m.): This clause refers to the payment of money from the Contingency Fund. It mentions an imbalance of \$2,627,340 between the society's general ledger and computer subsidiary ledgers and an operating loss of \$1,205,852 for the period of two years commencing on 1 July 1975 and ending on 30 June 1977.

This clause confirms the point I was making about the inefficiency of the management. That loss of more than \$1,000,000 was incurred during the period in which the Queensland Permanent Building Society was under discussion in this Parliament.

On 7 April 1976, Sir Gordon Chalk, in answer to a question, stressed that the fund was not Government-guaranteed. I take the Minister's point that the people who are paying here are the investors in building societies throughout Queensland—in all building societies.

Mr. Lee: No.

Mr. BURNS: Yes they are. They are paying to the Contingency Fund.

Mr. Lee: I never said anything like that.

Mr. BURNS: I accept the Minister's point. I am trying to clear up the confusion in the mind of the honourable member for Ithaca. The people who put the money into the society are paying. All we did was introduce a law to allow the societies to collect money in a certain way.

The Contingency Fund will have to pay the sum of \$2,600,000 to meet accountancy imbalances. I think the Minister said that the auditors approved of the way in which the Queensland Permanent Building Society was being conducted. The auditors discovered this deficiency and are unable to say how it arose. If the Contingency Fund is to pay, the whole matter is clearly in need of a full-scale inquiry. Everyone who invests in a building society is entitled to know where his money is going, whether it is going in to make up the accountancy imbalances here or the operating losses. I am referring not to losses that have occurred since a recent run on the society, but to losses that have arisen from inefficiency, incompetence and bad management in the conduct of the affairs of Queensland Permanent. That should be made very clear.

Mr. Lowes: Why wouldn't an annual meeting of shareholders be sufficient for that?

Mr. BURNS: Look, it's here.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.39 p.m.): In answer to the Leader of the Opposition—to meet the total estimated deficiency disclosed in the latest published accounts of the society, it is provided that the Contingency Fund shall pay to the liquidator the full sum of \$3,833,192. These moneys are already held by the Contingency Fund Committee and are available for this purpose.

Mr. Burns: They have been collected from the investors before today?

Mr. LEE: The money is held there now. It will ensure that there is a full dollar-for-dollar balance of assets and the total liability of the society as disclosed in its audited accounts.

Mr. Burns: Now that the Government has decided to give the society \$3,800,000 to overcome its problems, when can people expect to be able to withdraw some money, when can others expect to be able to cash cheques that they have in their pockets and when can depositors expect that they will be able to collect interest on their deposits?

Mr. LEE: The Government is certainly very mindful of these matters. I assure the honourable gent that I, as Minister, and my officers will be working endlessly and tirelessly to attend to them as soon as possible.

Mr. Burns: They want to know when.

Mr. LEE: It is not possible to say. I will not mislead the public in any way. The Leader of the Opposition would not expect me to tell lies. I could not say when these things will happen, but I assure the honourable member that we are doing our level best to make it as soon as possible.

Mr. Burns: Will the administrator or the people conducting the affairs of this society be able to reduce the interest payments charged by the Queensland Permanent Building Society? Because of its problems, the society has been charging a higher interest rate than many other building societies. Now that the society is to collect money from the Contingency Fund to overcome its problems, will the administrator, the Government, or whoever is responsible, decide that borrowers will pay the same interest rates as those who have borrowed from other building societies throughout the State?

Mr. LEE: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that the liquidator will act very responsibly in carrying out his duties.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.42 p.m.): The Minister is only heaping confusion on confusion. Under this clause we are dealing with about \$3,800,000 to make up a deficiency. This money could have been used for homes, but it was not there. The Minister said earlier that the society closed its door because of the run on liquid funds.

Mr. Lee: Yes.

Mr. HOUSTON: What will happen if, when the doors open, people decide to withdraw their money from this society and deposit it in another? On many occasions I have said that building societies, as such, are sound, but we are having problems with this one. How will further withdrawals be financed? The Minister said that \$18,000,000 was withdrawn in one day—

Mr. Lee: In one week.

Mr. HOUSTON: Very well. How many millions of dollars are held in liquid assets—

Mr. Moore: In bricks and mortar.

Mr. HOUSTON: No-one would deny that. I am sure that the Minister is following me.

If we are to allow people to get their money out, which is what the Leader of the Opposition asked for, will the money required to honour the further withdrawals and keep the doors open come from loans from other building societies? If it is by way of loans from other building societies, what effect will that have on the financing of homes by those societies? Will those societies be allowed to borrow against their own assets to cover what is required under this Bill?

Mr. Lane: Why don't you ask the member for Archerfield? He is responsible for the position.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield is not in charge of the Bill. The Minister for Works and Housing is.

Mr. Lane: The member for Archerfield is responsible for it, even if he is not in charge of it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have called for order. Through the Chair, the honourable member for Bulimba is directing questions to the Minister and I intend to protect his right to do so.

Mr. Lane: They are irrelevant questions.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Parliament is rising today. If the honourable member wants to debate something, he should rise and do so. He has had his opportunity.

The point is that the Parliament is rising today. It is all very well for the Government to say that it is introducing and passing this Bill. I am pointing out that it is being rushed through and we have not had a chance to study it. I am asking questions that can be answered, and the people outside will ask the same questions and perhaps a lot more than I have had time to think of. On behalf of those people who have money invested in this society—people from my electorate and every other electorate in this State—I am asking the Minister questions to try to get some straight answers. If the Government does not want to play it that way, ignores them, and wants to follow the irresponsible attitude of the member for Merthyr, that is O.K. with me; but I won't stop asking the questions and neither will the public.

Mr. PORTER (Toowong) (5.45 p.m.): I do not know whether I am seeing this in the larger lunacy or not, but on this clause, which specifically requires a certain thing to be done, we have the most senior members of the Opposition getting up one after the other demanding that the Minister answer a whole series of hypothetical questions on "what might happen if", which is the total technique that was used to kill this society in the earlier stages. What the Government is trying to do is rescue this society. What the Opposition is trying to do is not only to put it into the grave but also to put the turf back on top of it. That is not responsible at this stage. To ask questions of that sort and pretend that if there is not an adequate answer, there is something grievously wrong with the Bill is, I suggest, absolutely callous and cruel and exceedingly damaging politically to a party which hopes to achieve something at a poll only a few weeks away. It is hard to understand.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.46 p.m.): That was an interesting dialogue from the honourable member for Toowong. The point

is that this is the clause—if he knew something about the Bill he would realise it, but I do not suppose he has read it—that provides for the payment of money from the Contingency Fund.

Mr. Lane interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I understand the member for Merthyr has been warned under the provisions of 123A. If he continues to be disorderly, I will invoke that Standing Order.

Mr. HOUSTON: This is the only clause that allows money to be paid from the Contingency Fund. What we are asked to authorise is the payment of approximately \$3,800,000 from the Contingency Fund into the society. The Minister agrees with that.

I am querying whether that is enough. Should we have in that clause—call it an open cheque if you like—a provision that, if that is not sufficient, other money can be advanced? Let us not forget that all we are covering is the period up to the end of June 1977. From 1 July to the present day there could be other losses or other factors about which we have not been told. There is no provision to cover that eventuality. I am not interested in what the member for Toowong thinks about it. That is the question, and the Minister knows full well that this is the only clause that can deal with it.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.48 p.m.): The honourable member for Bulimba is trying to draw a red herring across the trial. It is not possible for me to answer all of those questions specifically, but I can assure him that we will be taking a very responsible attitude to this matter. He knows darned well that, to open the doors, all the money is needed, and we will ensure that we have it.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—Disbursement of moneys paid as precepted loan—

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.49 p.m.): Very briefly, clause 16 (3) says—

"The Society shall repay the said loan or loans, which shall be and form part of the costs and expenses of the winding up of the Society."

Are we mounting a rescue operation, as the honourable member for Toowong said, or are we winding up the society, as this clause seems to say? What is the intention of that part of clause 16, which talks "of the winding up of the society"?

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there any other clause that any honourable member wishes to speak to?

Mr. Houston: After the Minister didn't answer that one—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am asking a question. Is there any other clause that any honourable member wishes to speak to?

Mr. Lee: Clause 25.

Clauses 17 to 24, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—Administrator may remove and shall appoint auditors—

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.50 p.m.): Again, Mr. Hewitt, there is a printing error in the clause. It says "administrator", whereas it should be "registrar".

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the Committee accept that?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—Payment of money from Contingency Fund—

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (5.51 p.m.): Just briefly—clause 27 is the clause in which it is said that \$3,833,192 can be paid from the Contingency Fund. In view of the Minister's comments on clause 14, does this payment from the Contingency Fund that he is going to allow on a dollar-for-dollar basis mean that the Government has completely written off the \$2,600,000 accounting deficit or is it intended to try to recover it from the society in some way?

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.52 p.m.): The liquidator will be making continual investigations in the search for the \$2,600,000.

Clause 27, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 32, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

"That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 o'clock a.m. on a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker in consultation with the Government of this State."

Motion agreed to.

VALEDICTORY

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (5.53 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Not only because it is the end of the year but also because it is the end of the three-year period since the last election, it is customary to say a few words in conclusion. When His Excellency the Governor opened this Fourth Session of the Forty-first Parliament in August he said that the State continued to be in a sound financial position. The Budget I presented two weeks ago demonstrated that very clearly.

Normally the Premier would have moved this motion but he has apologised because he has been called away to an urgent commitment which he could not avoid. I hope that the Premier's apology is understood.

At the end of this Fourth Session we, on the Government side, have a great sense of satisfaction for the economy of the State of Queensland and for our achievements not only during the session but throughout the year.

Since we began meeting here on 2 August, Parliament has debated and dealt with no fewer than 32 Bills, including the Appropriation Bills, and the Budget. I should like to thank members on both sides of the House for their contributions to the debates and to those officers responsible for the smooth functioning of the Parliament.

I have been advised that a number of members will be retiring from Parliament. I understand also that there is a prospect of some members of the Opposition retiring through circumstances beyond their control.

Mr. Burns: Do you want to put some money on it?

Mr. KNOX: I hear that there is some money on it. I am not a betting man in these matters. As the Elections Act prohibits my betting on results in which I am involved, I am not in a position to accept the bet offered.

To those members who are voluntarily retiring, I am quite sure that we all extend our appreciation for the contributions that they have made in this House, some for many years.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. KNOX: Perhaps it would be in order if I mention specifically those who are retiring. Mr. Geoffrey Chinchen entered this House in 1963. Dr. Arthur Crawford came here in 1969. Mr. Harold Lowes was elected at the 1974 election. Mr. David Cory came here in 1963; Mr. Jack Melloy in 1960; Mr. Harry Dean in 1960; and Mr. Evan Marginson in 1969. All made their contributions and I am sure we all appreciated them very much.

Mr. Chinchen represented Mt. Gravatt for the Liberal Party since June 1963. He is a former Queensland manager of the Ford motor company and he was an Air Force fighter pilot. He succeeded Mr. Hart, who became Mr. Justice Hart, in that electorate.

We have all enjoyed Geoffrey Chinchin's company in many circumstances. He has always been pleasant company, and we hope that he will visit us in this rather exclusive club so that we can continue some arguments with him that we have not finished. He is one who has made a major contribution in the party room, on committees and in the House, and in the various public affairs in which he has been involved in his electorate and the community generally.

Dr. Crawford, who represented Wavell, is a very distinguished doctor whose presence in this Parliament added lustre to it. He has strong views on a number of matters and he did not hesitate to let us know of them. He showed himself to be a man of considerable principle in the views that he held. We are sorry indeed that he has seen fit to retire. A number of people are, I feel, retiring from Parliament far too young. That is a pity, but retirement is his choice and we wish him well for the future.

Mr. Harold Lowes retires by virtue of the redistribution. It may have been overlooked that Brisbane will not be represented in this House again, which means that Harold Lowes is the last member for Brisbane. Brisbane is one of the pioneer electorates, and it is a pity to see this name abolished. The electorate of Brisbane has a very fine tradition in this Parliament. As this Parliament is situated in Brisbane, Mr. Lowes was able to boast that he was always in his electorate and always on the job here available to his constituents. We all recall with great affection a former member for Brisbane, Mr. John Mann, who often used to have a long queue of constituents visiting him here in the House. We wish Mr. Harold Lowes well in his profession and in his retirement. We trust that he enjoys many years of good health. I understand that he is to be married later this year, and we wish him and his bride all happiness for the future.

Mr. David Cory, the member for Warwick, is one of the younger members who should not be retiring. He succeeded the late Otto Madsen. He, like Mr. Lowes, was a member of one of my Justice committees. I appreciated very much his down-to-earth contributions on that committee, and we have all appreciated his company in this House and elsewhere. He has represented this Parliament at parliamentary conferences, as many of us have had the privilege of doing, and he has always been a major contributor to both the debates and the dignity of this House.

Next is Harry Dean. We will miss him because he has become one of the most stable and reliable members of this Parliament. We could always rely on him to make a contribution on certain subjects on which he was very keen. I can always recall that he and the former member for Ithaca had a lot in common. They did not like certain things which went on in the community. They might have disagreed on matters of policy, but one thing on which they were

completely united was the demon liquor. We wish Mr. Dean a lot of happiness. He has served not only as a member of this Parliament but also as an alderman of the Brisbane City Council. Almost all of his life he has been involved in public duties of one sort or another. I understand he is going to retire to Runaway Bay, and we will all miss him very much. We have enjoyed his company and we look forward to his coming to see us as often as he can.

I understand that the honourable member for Nudgee is not going to stand again. He entered this House in 1960. I know him very well because he was involved in election campaigns for the Federal seat of Lilley. I think he was a candidate on one occasion.

Mr. Burns: Two.

Mr. KNOX: Well, that just shows how often one has to run to get into Parliament. He and I used to find ourselves on the opposite sides of the political fence quite often in the Lilley area and got to know one another pretty well. One way to get to know a person very well is to have him as an opponent in an election campaign. We got to know Mr. Melloy very well and he has been a very distinguished member of this House. It is sometimes overlooked that at one time not so long ago he was Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and while he felt it necessary not to proceed any further with his political ambitions, nevertheless he has made major contributions on many occasions to debates in this House. He was particularly interested in health matters, having once been, I think I am correct in saying this, a dental mechanic, and I think even in his Army career he was associated with medical work. He always made a major contribution to debates on health matters, and we will miss his company.

I now turn to Evan Marginson. It is rather sad to realise that his health has failed so rapidly in the last year or so, and even more so in the last few weeks. He was elected to this House in 1969. He was always a gentleman. He was a former Deputy Mayor of Ipswich and performed a lot of public work in many areas, particularly on the Ipswich Hospitals Board. I know we all feel very sad that his health has deteriorated so rapidly in the last few weeks, and sad that he cannot be with us at this time. We hope his health recovers sufficiently for him to be able to rejoin us.

I must add that the Clerk of the Parliament is also taking the opportunity to retire. Looking at the history of the Parliament, one sees that those who seem to serve the longest are the Clerks of the Parliament. There have been only five or six in the history of the Queensland Parliament. It must be a reasonably good job. It is certainly safe and secure compared to the jobs of members of Parliament. There was a time when the Clerk of the Parliament was

provided with a magnificent residence at the rear of Parliament House. It has since been demolished. As Treasurer I do not know whether the State could afford the magnificence in which the Clerk of the Parliament used to live. Cyril George has in fact been sitting at the centre table since 1933, which is a remarkably long time. Just imagine all the ear-bashing he has had to endure in that time, without being in a position to reply. I am not too sure whether the Clerk is immune from abuse or criticism, but if ever one was criticised I should imagine that the member concerned would not receive very much help from then on. But we do lean very heavily upon the quality of the staff at the centre table, and no matter how experienced a member of Parliament may be, and how much he claims he knows about everything, it is amazing how frequently we need to consult the Clerk on matters of procedure, determination of points of order and, in fact, on the rules generally.

Sir Erskine May, who was, of course, the Clerk of the House of Commons for a long time, became an honorary member of the House of Commons because he had in fact served so long and was regarded as the father of the House. I do not know that Cyril George wishes to be referred to as the father of this House, but he certainly has served longer in this Assembly than any member and we always think of him with great affection. When I first came here, he was Clerk-Assistant and Sergeant-at-Arms. No matter what political party one belonged to, what position one held, what status one had, he was always available and his door was always open to those who wished to consult him.

In the days when there was a tennis court behind this building, he and his wife frequently played on that court. It is a pity that we do not have facilities such as that these days. He was an athlete, a cricketer and a tennis player. In the days when we had table tennis tables along the verandas, he was a champion player. I think he beat not only all the members of the staff, including the staff of the Parliamentary Library, but also a number of members of Parliament.

In serving as Clerk, he enjoyed the opportunity of serving the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and he has, of course, visited many countries and been secretary to delegations from this Assembly and from Australia. Whenever I have visited Parliaments throughout the world, people have always asked after Cyril George, and I have been happy to report on his progress and his health. It is pleasing to know that this link does exist between the Parliaments, and when we visit various parts of the world and various Parliaments it is comforting to know that there is somebody back at base looking after us and making arrangements for our comfort. I certainly appreciate it, and I am sure that every other member does, too.

We wish Mr. and Mrs. George all the very best for the future. I understand that they are going on a world tour, and we trust that they will enjoy themselves. During his holidays, Sir Erskine May used to visit Parliaments in Europe; that is all he did. I trust that Mr. George will dodge a few of the Parliaments while he is away; but if he does call on any of the Parliaments, I hope he will keep a diary, as Erskine May did, and tell us what went on in them. I believe that they are quite interesting places. With the retirement of members from this Assembly and with Mr. George's retirement, once again we have cause for rather sad reflection.

We would like to express our thanks particularly to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all the staff of Parliament House—Miss Glennie and the staff of the Refreshment Rooms, the reporters, the Hansard staff, the library staff, the gardeners and the multitude of people who work behind the scenes to make our life here easier. With the pressures today, it is tremendously difficult for members of Parliament to attend to all their duties. But for the support of the staff, our task would be quite impossible.

There was a time when members of Parliament—it was a long time ago—used to drive to Parliament House in their horses and buggies, and people were employed to look after the horses and feed them. We do not enjoy the luxury of people coming out to polish our cars, or anything like that, and we do not expect it; but we do have people who make sure that our relationship with our electorate and our relationship with one another runs smoothly, and they do this for us with very little complaint.

I extend my good wishes for the festive season to the Leader of the Opposition—not necessarily for the election—and I trust that in due course we will see him back again in his usual place, although I believe that he will be under fairly stiff competition in his electorate. On behalf of the Premier, I thank him for the manner in which he has conducted his affairs as Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition.

To the Whips on both sides I say that we appreciate very much what they do to ensure the smooth working of Parliament. On the Government side there are two Whips, Mr. Mike Ahern and Mr. Bob Moore, and on the Opposition side the Whip is presently Mr. Kevin Hooper. Previously the Opposition Whip was Mr. Evan Marginson. The Whip is not an official position in Parliament; nevertheless it is recognised by the parties as essential to the smooth running of the House.

From many people we have received a great deal of help. Unfortunately, on occasions we appear to overlook it, but we do appreciate it. I particularly thank Mr. George and his team at the centre table and the Hansard staff. Mr. Bannenberg and his

staff in the Parliamentary Library have improved their services enormously—with a generous Treasurer's assistance—and the Parliamentary Library now does a tremendous amount of work that previously it could not do. I also thank the members of the Police Force who look after the security of the building and the security staff who look after our welfare and effects.

I wish the gentlemen in the media gallery all the best for the festive season. There is no doubt that in the forthcoming election campaign we will see them, and I hope that we see them again next year.

I express my thanks and those of all members to the departmental officers—to those who sit in the under-secretarys' lobby and make their services available, to the Parliamentary Counsel and his assistants, who work for all of us to ensure that legislation is of a high standard, of value and available on time. Some honourable members may not realise that quite often the Parliamentary Counsel and his staff work well into the night to prepare legislation for our consideration.

Whilst those who enter Parliament may differ in political philosophies, I am sure that all have a genuine desire to contribute to the advancement and well-being of the people of the State. To those members who are leaving us, to those who may not return, and to those who will return, I extend my best wishes for the future.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (6.12 p.m.): Since we made similar speeches in 1974 quite a few changes have come about in this House. This afternoon while I was sitting here I wrote down the names of those members who are about to retire. I was also thinking of others who have gone—Marty Hanson, Ivan Brown and Keith Hooper. In 1974 we did not really believe that they would not be around now. John Murray is another one who was here. Although we miss our fellow-members, I suppose that with the passing of time and the pressures of our job we do not think of them as often as we should.

Of the 82 members who constituted this Parliament, three have died and eight are about to retire. In other words, nearly one-eighth of the Parliament has changed.

I am always grateful to the families of members of Parliament for putting up with everything that goes with having a husband or a father in Parliament.

To Harold Lowes I would say, "Good luck in your new career." We in the Opposition refer jokingly to him as "Mr. Justice Lowes". I do not know whether that will ever come about.

As a trustee of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund, I am sorry to see that Dr. Arthur Crawford will not receive a lump-sum reimbursement. Perhaps next year we should look at some of the loopholes in the scheme. After all, he has paid his money into

the fund. Certainly, like all of us, he has taken a chance. Nevertheless I would have liked to see him receive some sort of reimbursement for the money that he put in.

I remember running a campaign against Geoff Chinchin when I was working for Labor as campaign organiser and when David Cory won the Warwick by-election I was once again Labor's campaign director.

Mr. Moore: You were pretty weak.

Mr. BURNS: I must have been pretty weak. We were very unlucky not to win at that time. I found David a decent fellow to fight a campaign against and I have never felt that I should change my opinion of him. I wish him luck in what he is going to do.

To Harry Dean, on my side of the House, I might say that some of the fun in being Leader of the Opposition has been the 11 members I have led for a period. One night when Lew Jensen and Harry made speeches, Lew said that he could drive a car better drunk than sober, and Harry said in the next speech, on behalf of the Opposition, that all drink-drivers should be shot. I am not too sure how Opposition unity looked at that stage. Harry is a man with strong principles. His tremendous courage is obvious, because he has walked in the infernal machine he carries on his body all his life. His father, an engineer, made the original frame out of light and heavy pieces of metal. He has shown a lot of courage. People like him show similar courage day in and day out. I wish him and his new wife a happy future. I was going to say family, but I had better not say that.

Mr. W. D. Hewitt: First it was "Justice Lowes", and now it is Harry Dean; you are being prophetic.

Mr. BURNS: I hope not. I will leave it at that.

Evan Marginson has suffered one of the great disappointments in this Parliament. He was looking forward to the election and fighting hard. He had signs up everywhere in his area. I believe his current illness was caused partly by his working so hard erecting signs and distributing dodgers—forgetting that he is not as young as he used to be. Evan is to make a decision today, I think, and tomorrow he may undergo an operation. I hope that we will see Evan back here having a cup of tea with us, as he did day in and day out in the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms. To Queenie and the others, I can only say that I hope to see Evan back on his feet, out and about as soon as possible.

When I became Leader of the Opposition in 1974, Jack Melloy became my first deputy leader. Irrespective of politics, it is a very difficult job in a Parliament of 82 members to be an Opposition of any merit with only 11 members in the party. It is very difficult.

For example, Bill Prest, who entered Parliament 12 or 15 months ago, had to become shadow minister for a couple of portfolios after two to three months. That would be very difficult because most of us believe it takes the first term to realise what Standing Orders are all about. I thank Jack for the services he rendered at that time.

I listened to the Deputy Premier talk about Cyril George. He has been sitting at the centre table for nearly as long as I have been alive. It is remarkable that a man should serve Parliament so long and so well in such a gentle and kindly way. I have never known him to be angry. I do not know whether anyone who has been here longer than I have has ever known him to be angry or to raise his voice. He has always been kind, gentle and considerate, prepared to assist us at all times.

Mr. Speaker, to all your staff at the centre table, the attendants, the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms staff, the gardeners, the Parliamentary Library staff, the typists, the Hansard staff, the private secretaries, the Press secretaries, the cleaners, the drivers and so on, I give my best wishes. A tremendous group of people work hard to assist you, Mr. Speaker, to make this Parliament work well. It makes things so much easier for us to know that when we need something we can always call on someone with a happy, smiling face, or get a nice, cheery nod from the gardener as we come here in the morning, perhaps after having had a fight with someone and feeling a little grumpy with the world. It is well to know that there are others around who will try to cheer us up or try to make our lives a little easier.

To the Opposition Whips (Evan Marginson and Kev Hooper), and to the National and Liberal Party Whips, I say thanks very much for their co-operation. We have had a few snarls in the three-year period, and possibly we would have had a few more if the session had lasted a little longer. As the session gets longer and we get closer to an election, more things than necessary are said in anger.

Finally, I think the thing I should say to all honourable members, having in a very short time spoken so often about members of this Parliament who have died, is, "Good health."

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable members, In the words that Lady Godiva might well have used—I have now come to my close.

I would like to offer my appreciation and thanks to all those people who have contributed in any way to making the running of Parliament so easy. I endorse all the remarks of the Honourable the Treasurer and Deputy Premier, as well as those of the Leader of the Opposition.

It has been my honour and privilege to serve Parliament in the role of Speaker for the Forty-first Parliament. Might I say that

it has been a period of co-operation, and one that I am very proud of because not one of my decisions has been challenged in that time. I deem that a great honour. I am not saying that I have always been right, but I have endeavoured to do the right thing at all times. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve all members of the House as Speaker.

We have chalked up a few accomplishments over that period. We have reached a very satisfactory agreement as to the rule of sub judice that should apply. I regard that as a great step forward taken in the life of this Parliament. The Privileges Committee and the Subordinate Legislation Committee were set up. I must say that they are working very well and very satisfactorily.

I would like to compliment our library staff on the Parliamentary Handbook they put out this year. The preparation of that publication is a great tribute to the library staff. In it the history of the Parliament is traced right back to its beginning—and the handbook will be brought up to date from time to time.

To all those honourable members who are leaving us—to those who are retiring and to those who will not be coming back—I wish you a happy time in your retirement. I also offer to Evan Marginson my wishes for a very speedy recovery from the illness he is now suffering.

Cyril George, the Clerk of Parliament, has been with us for 47 years. I have arranged a farewell function for Cyril to be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on 28 November. I extend an invitation to all honourable members here—including those who are retiring and those who will be beaten (to those who will be here as strangers) to join us on that occasion. Unfortunately, I cannot authorise rail warrants or air tickets for the purpose.

As Speaker, I believe that in some ways the Parliament should put its house in order. First is the matter of hurried and rushed legislation. The amount of rushed legislation in this sitting has been very, very evident. I believe that we would do a lot better to hasten slowly. Amendments to legislation have to be introduced from time to time. It must not be forgotten that we do not have a House of Review. Consequently, I believe that we should have a closer look and a longer look at some of the legislation that is introduced. I commend that matter to the serious consideration of honourable members. It is particularly true of proceedings over the last 12 months or so.

Another matter that I wish to draw to the attention of the House is late sittings. Late nights are for the owls: they should not be for Parliament. Parliament should not be here from 11 a.m. till 5 or 6 o'clock the following morning dealing with legislation. I believe that we should put our house in order by amending Standing Orders to provide that there will be no business after

11 o'clock or 12 o'clock at night. I think the time has arrived for this Parliament to do that.

I draw to the attention of the House the fact that never before have I had so many people who want to be brought before the Bar of the House because of the attitude of members to the subject of privilege under this roof. We should have a close look at this matter. I have never had so many people writing to me as I have had in the past 12 months about their personal character assassination on account of something said in this House, where they do not have the right of reply. This afternoon I mentioned that parliamentarians should have in their possession some information that they are prepared to table if they intend to assassinate characters or use parliamentary privilege to put something of that kind before the House. They should not use something that they merely heard in a taxi-cab. This is the more important because the person attacked does not have the right to state his case here. We should have a close look at ourselves to make sure that we adopt a better code of ethics than we seem to be adopting at present.

Parliament should have a look at its behaviour in the presence of the many school children who come here. I would be the last to refuse permission for children to visit Parliament to see it working. But we should have a very close look at the behaviour of Parliament because children, after visiting Parliament House, leave here with an indelible impression of what they have seen. By all means, children should come here. Under Standing Orders they cannot speak in the gallery; they cannot write in the gallery; in fact, there is practically nothing they can do. But it is wrong for youngsters to come here and hear a tirade of abuse in the Chamber below them and observe some of the behaviour of politicians. They could very well carry away from here an incorrect picture in their minds of the operation of Parliament.

We should have closed-circuit television installed so that the youngsters could assemble in the former Legislative Council Chamber and watch on the screen the proceedings of this Assembly. There they could ask questions at the time and the teachers would have a far better opportunity to explain everything to them.

For the benefit of the children who cannot visit Parliament House, the Government should prepare a film depicting what happens right from the opening of Parliament, the Premier and Ministers introducing Bills and the Leader of the Opposition speaking on behalf of the Opposition. The film should be circulated to the schools, which now have the necessary equipment to screen films. This would be of great advantage because many children have a wrong impression of Parliament.

During the last year we have accomplished a great deal. The construction of the new building is well under way. I express my appreciation to the Parliamentary Buildings Committee and all of the other committees that have served to make the conduct and operation of Parliament much easier. The new building will be opened about September next year. A tremendous amount of work has been done behind the scenes in relation to the building.

Our new mace will be available next month, I understand. I believe it should be used in the opening of our new building. The Standing Orders should be amended to provide for its use at that opening.

The response to my request to all local authorities to contribute something to our new Parliament House has given me a great deal of satisfaction. Many people have the wrong idea that Parliament House is only for Queen Street parliamentarians. When my request was put to the 130 local authorities in Queensland to present a canvas or some other work of art, the result was rewarding. I think 124 local authorities have accepted. This has been a tremendous boost, which will be apparent when we move into the new building.

When I return—and I will be back after the election—I will give members of the public the opportunity to contribute a work of art. I will not be the judge, of course. So many artists say of a painting, "That's a good canvas. That's a better one. That's a better work of art." Decisions will be left entirely to the committee of the Queensland Art Gallery, who are the best judges.

In the matter of portraits of Premiers and Speakers, I hope soon to have this collection completed.

I say to all members that it has been a pleasure to serve you. I extend my sincere thanks to all of those who have assisted in any way in the running of the House. I thank the "Hansard" reporters and members of the media—even though they get cheap meals and still complain about it. I still say that this is the cheapest boarding-house in the State; nevertheless the ones who throw the stones and cause all the controversy use its amenities. I hope they appreciate the privileges that go with the positions that they hold.

I think we should also give consideration to the identification of journalists working in the House. Many people without identification seem to be able to wander in and out, masquerading as journalists or photographers. I think security is another matter that will have to be looked at closely in the near future.

Without further ado, I extend to members my best wishes—good luck to the winners; bad luck to the losers—and invite members and staff to join me in the Refreshment Rooms for "coffee and biscuits."

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.32 p.m.

BILLS ASSENTED TO AT CLOSE OF SESSION

The following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty on the dates indicated:—

(6 October 1977)—

Coroners Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;
Miriam Vale Shire Council Budget Enabling Bill;
Racing and Betting Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

(7 October 1977)—

Appropriation Bill (No. 2);
Queensland Cement & Lime Company Limited Agreement Bill;
Animals Protection Act Amendment Bill;
Brisbane Milk Board Extension Bill;
Brisbane Forest Park Bill;
Australian Shipping Commission Authorization Bill;
Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act Amendment Bill;
Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment Bill;
Queensland Permanent Building Society Bill.

 DISSOLUTION

On 10 October 1977 the following Proclamation was issued by His Excellency the Governor:—

A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency Commodore Sir JAMES MAXWELL RAMSAY, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Distinguished Service Cross, and Commodore in the Royal Australian Navy (Retired), Governor in and over the State of Queensland and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[L.S.]

J. M. RAMSAY,
Governor.

IN pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State aforesaid, I, Sir JAMES MAXWELL RAMSAY, do, by this my Proclamation, Dissolve the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House, Brisbane, this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven, and in the twenty-sixth year of Her Majesty's reign.

By Command,

J. BJELKE-PETERSEN.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
