

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 1978

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

SEMP

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to inform honourable members that there will be a further showing of films on SEMP in the Legislative Council Chamber this evening between 6.30 p.m. and 7.15 p.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Clean Air Act 1963–1976.

Orders in Council under—

Clean Waters Act 1971.

City of Brisbane Act 1924–1977.

Regulations under—

Queensland Marine Act 1958–1975.

Local Government Act 1936–1977.

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924–1977.

Report of the National Trust of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1977.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

SELECTION OF TARONG AS SITE FOR NEW POWERHOUSE

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.6 a.m.): Since State Cabinet made its decision on the Tarong powerhouse, the people of Queensland have been subjected to a welter of claims and counter-claims, leaked documents and deliberate misinformation by the Opposition Leader.

As Premier, it is my duty to support the collective decision of Cabinet. However, I must now break a long-standing rule and outline the facts involved in a Cabinet decision. At the end of the Cabinet meeting on February 13 this year, the following statement by the Treasurer was recorded in the minutes: “That regarding the establishment of a power station at Tarong, it would be incorrect for anyone to say the decision in favour of the Tarong site would mean an increase in electricity tariffs greater than there would have been had Millmerran been chosen”.

Mr. Burns: Mr. Camm didn't say that outside afterwards.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That is the Treasurer's statement as recorded in the minutes of Cabinet.

That statement completely disposes of the claim that Queenslanders will have to pay more for electricity because Tarong was chosen. It completely disappears into thin air.

Let me turn now to the second, much-trumpeted claim that it will cost \$259,000,000 extra over the next quarter of a century to build the powerhouse at Tarong instead of at Millmerran. This is pure assumption. It is wrong. It is misleading.

Cabinet, in making its decision, considered all the facts. Its decision was based on what would be best for the largest area, taking everything into account, and the answer was, of course, Tarong. Three years ago, the State Electricity Commission recommended Tarong and rejected Millmerran. Let me quote from the submissions that were made at that time—in 1974—by the commissioner.

Mr. BURNS: Mr. Speaker, I move—

“That the documents from which the Premier is reading be tabled.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 22

Blake	Milliner
Burns	Prest
Casey	Shaw
D'Arcy	Underwood
Davis	Warburton
Fouras	Wilson
Gibbs, R. J.	Wright
Hansen	
Hooper, K. J.	
Houston	
Jones	
Kruger	
Mackenroth	

Tellers:
Vaughan
Yewdale

NOES, 51

Ahern	Kippin
Akers	Lane
Armstrong	Lee
Austin	Lester
Bird	Lickiss
Bishop	McKechnie
Bjelke-Petersen	Miller
Bourke	Moore
Camm	Neal
Campbell	Newbery
Doumany	Porter
Edwards	Powell
Elliott	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Scassola
Glasson	Scott-Young
Goleby	Sullivan
Greenwood	Tenni
Gunn	Tomkins
Hartwig	Turner
Herbert	Warner
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Wharton
Hewitt, W. D.	White
Hinze	
Hodges	
Hooper, M. D.	
Katter	
Kaus	

Tellers:
Bertoni
Frawley

PAIR:

Scott Gygar

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition was thwarted in his attempt to stop me from giving the information.

I was at the point of quoting from the earlier report in 1974 by the Commissioner for Electricity Supply. On one vital subject he says—

“In relation to Millmerran the problem of water supplies appears to be insurmountable—(see Appendix C).”

He concludes ultimately by saying—

“Because of the water problem any development would be limited.”

That report was made in 1974, and it was signed by C. N. Barton (the Co-ordinator-General), L. A. Hielscher (Acting Under Treasurer), and E. D. Murray (Commissioner for Electricity Supply). They said that in 1974. It was because of the somersault that the State Electricity Commission has now made that I had the Co-ordinator-General review the S.E.C. report and recommendations.

Cabinet postponed a decision for a fortnight so that all Ministers would have time to study the report.

One factor that has been highlighted in leaked reports waved around by the Opposition Leader is the claim that “more than 20 State and Federal departments were consulted”.

The impression was given that these departments recommended Millmerran. This is totally false. They were asked a question without knowing how the answer would be applied. They were not told how the S.E.C. would use this information and they were not given any opportunity to comment on the final report. In other words, some twenty departments have not approved this report.

Mr. Burns: We never said they approved the report; we said they participated in it.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind all honourable members that I will not allow persistent interjections while the Premier is on his feet. The Premier is making a statement about the matter and it is up to the House to listen to what he has to say.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have some very interesting information here. I, with others, have thoroughly researched this information, as we did on the previous occasion.

For instance, the Air Pollution Control Division was not even consulted, yet the S.E.C. allocated \$17,000,000 against Tarong for air pollution control and only \$3,600,000 against Millmerran. I take the S.E.C. to task for not being accurate or honest in its report to Cabinet. The Air Pollution Control Division has now advised that air pollution control costs at either Tarong or Millmerran would be similar, and I have that report. This means that the two power-stations would cost almost exactly the same.

The next major item was water. It has been claimed that Millmerran had an assured water supply from existing dams, while a new dam would have to be built to serve Tarong. That reads very strangely two years after a report which said that the water supply problem was insurmountable.

Mr. Burns: Are you saying that the S.E.C. is crook?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition may draw his own conclusions. I am not saying that at all.

In fact, the S.E.C. loaded \$22,000,000 against Tarong, but only \$3,500,000 against Millmerran for capital charges for water costs. The Leader of the Opposition should think that over quietly in view of the announcement made by the Air Pollution Control Division. But what Cabinet discovered was that the S.E.C. was grabbing a big proportion of water already allocated to primary producers at Millmerran. I made a lot of that point at the Cabinet meeting and at various other times. The various dams and weirs in the area were built to provide water for primary producers and never at any time was it suggested otherwise.

I objected very strongly to the S.E.C. even mentioning this point in its report and recommendations, even if such information has been sought in respect of other areas, as is done by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. What it proposed to do was to divert some 40 per cent of the water allocated to primary producers in order to supply the powerhouse, in direct contravention of Government policy. The Government's policy was that water from the Coolmunda Dam, the Glenlyon Dam and the Cunningham Weir was to be for primary producers. I know that because the A.L.P. colleagues of the Leader of the Opposition who were in Government at the time in Canberra welshed on their part of the agreement to provide funds for the construction of the Glenlyon Dam on Pike Creek and we had to make up the difference. So I know a lot about it!

The S.E.C. listed three sources of supply—the Glenlyon Dam on Pike Creek, the Cunningham Weir and the Coolmunda Dam—all built at a time when construction costs were much lower. And what a complicated supply scheme it was to be. Water was to be released from the Glenlyon Dam and flow down to the Cunningham Weir, where it would be pumped into Coolmunda Dam and then to the powerhouse. The carefully selected passages from the documents leaked to the Leader of the Opposition did not disclose that to give this supply to the Millmerran power-station it would be necessary to restrict irrigation development to about 60 per cent of that envisaged when the Glenlyon Dam was built. In other words, there is not even enough water for farmers, let alone a power-station. And yet the commission was talking about a coal-to-oil conversion plant on top of all this. How utterly absurd and ridiculous it was!

But the most serious aspect of all is the astounding revelation that, to make up this shortfall, the S.E.C. was going to rely on what was called “harvesting floods in the Dumaresq River”. In Australia, as we all know, authorities regard our climate as a permanent dry spell broken by occasional good seasons. Yet the S.E.C. intended to rely on floods to keep a super powerhouse

supplied with enough water to keep operating! Honourable members should remember what was said about water supplies in the commission's 1974 report. No-one could tell me that it did not have enough information about what water supplies could be obtained at that time.

I point out that the Glenlyon Dam is run by the Border Rivers Commission, a joint body operated by the Queensland and New South Wales Governments. To make up the deficit that would have been incurred by a powerhouse at Millmerran, a new dam would be necessary and the only suitable sites are in New South Wales. No talks have been held at a high level between the Queensland and New South Wales Governments on such a dam.

So honourable members can see how unfairly Tarong was treated in the S.E.C. report compared with Millmerran. And even more importantly just what difference these two items—air pollution control and water supplies—make to that magic figure of \$259 million so widely quoted. I will demonstrate that difference in a moment. In fact, the extra dam needed to replace the water taken from primary producers at Millmerran would have cost more than \$50,000,000—and that is a conservative estimate, not an exaggerated one. That estimate comes from the top officers of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

All the facts I have been quoting come from official departmental reports and officers—not from unnamed “senior officials” who keep turning up in the Opposition Leader's and newspaper stories.

Mr. Burns: Table the reports. I challenge you to table the reports.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It hurts the honourable gentleman so much that he does not want to listen.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am afraid that the honourable gentleman will just have to grin and bear it.

Over the life of the Millmerran powerhouse—25 years—the accumulated cost of this new dam would amount to an estimated \$250,000,000. The honourable gentleman cannot get away from that, either.

Add to this the revised cost of air-pollution controls, and the so-called difference of \$259,000,000 between Tarong and Millmerran disappears completely into thin air. That shows how ridiculous the whole attitude of the Opposition is.

But let me go further. Right at the outset, the basic tender price of Tarong coal is \$1.02 a tonne cheaper than the basic tender price for Millmerran coal. The tendered

prices of Millmerran and Tarong coals as selected by the S.E.C. from the alternatives and adjusted to a common basis are—

	\$/tonne
Millmerran	8.86
Tarong	7.84
Difference in favour of Tarong	1.02

So far, step by step, I have detailed how Cabinet analysed the S.E.C. report and found its assumptions wanting. Now let me deal further with the crux of this matter—the tenders.

The tender costs were not assessed on an equal basis, and this is where the S.E.C. report again goes wrong and misleads so many people, including the honourable gentleman opposite.

Mr. Burns: Do you say that the S.E.C. report was misleading?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It was wrong. It gave a wrong picture of the whole situation. Let me state why.

The Millmerran tender was based on 20 years, but the Tarong tender was based on 16 years. No-one in the S.E.C. asked Tarong to tender or name a price per tonne for the entire life of the powerhouse. In fact, the life of the powerhouse is not stated, but we now know it is 25 years.

The Tarong tender was based on recovering the capital and plant costs over 16 years. This means that if the life of the powerhouse is 25 years, the last 9 years could be supplied at prices from \$10 to \$14 a tonne cheaper. What has happened is that the S.E.C. has simply projected an escalating price for Tarong beyond 16 years. The commissioners went ahead and did that. Again I say that they were unjust in the attitude they adopted and the statement they made in that regard, and it has shaken my faith in the commission quite considerably.

Even if the same mistaken assumptions were made for the Millmerran tender, the Millmerran figures would cover only another five years, against the nine-year figure for Tarong.

From discussions with the Co-ordinator General and senior Government officials, including the State Electricity Commissioner, I have confirmed a figure as high as—listen to this—\$200,000,000 in favour of Tarong, even if Millmerran is prepared to drop its price after 20 years.

A Government Member: Very quiet, aren't they?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: My word they are! It is about time we brought some of this out, and I suppose I ought to thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity.

Let me set this out in two tables. Table "A" is the original assumptions as set out in the S.E.C. report. The vital comparisons are the two top items.

—	Millmerran	Tarong
	\$ (millions)	\$ (millions)
Interest and redemption on capital	4,018	4,131
Fuel costs	3,340	3,488
Operating and maintenance	1,033	1,033
Water pump costs ..	95	93
Total	8,486	8,745
Difference in favour of Millmerran	\$259,000,000.	

But, as I have shown from the analysis by the Co-ordinator General and others, these assumptions are completely wrong.

The interest and redemption on capital are wrongly loaded in Millmerran's favour because of the wrong allocations for air pollution control and water costs, as I outlined before. In fact the two costs are near enough to equal.

In relation to fuel costs—I have shown that both the projected tender price and the term of the Tarong tender are wrongly assessed.

A true table would be:

—	Millmerran	Tarong
	\$ (millions)	\$ (millions)
Interest and redemption on capital	4,000	4,000
Fuel costs	3,200	3,000
Operation and maintenance	1,033	1,033
Water pump costs ..	95	93

The difference then is definitely in Tarong's favour by some \$200,000,000. This is why Cabinet chose Tarong.

Because all costs were near enough to equal, Cabinet decided that a powerhouse at Tarong would create a greater benefit over a greater area than one at Millmerran.

The problem for the Opposition leader is that when one deals in stolen goods, the guarantees are worthless, one gets caught every time.

There are a number of side-issues, such as a claim that C.R.A. did not have a mining plan. In fact one was submitted and approved for Tarong in 1973. In its tender, C.R.A.

advised this plan was being updated and showed some 400 000 000 tonnes of proven and inferred reserves at Tarong.

Another claim is that Millmerran had a railway line and could supply coal to Swanbank in an emergency. In fact, neither the Millmerran line nor the Brisbane Valley line, which goes to Yarraman—right to the coalfields—could carry heavy coal trains for any length of time. In any case, Millmerran coal would create problems at Swanbank—we were told that again and again when coal was being carted from Central Queensland—whereas the Tarong deposits are an extension of the Ipswich coal measures. No-one can deny that.

Another equally ridiculous claim surfaced this morning, and it is a perfect example of what I called the welter of misinformation. This is that the Tarong decision is not final and depends on a so-called secret report that water supplies may not be adequate. Mr. Speaker, I already have had that report. Far from being a deciding factor, it simply is a follow-up to Cabinet's decision to site the powerhouse at Tarong.

The report says,

"To include an irrigation capacity in the Boyne River Dam to supplement the function as a supply source for the Tarong power station would entail a simple seven metre extension of the height of the main wall".

So much for secret reports!

Why was the S.E.C. report not made public? Well, as honourable members have heard, a most charitable description of the report would be that it is wrongly based and misleading. I say that very deliberately.

Mr. Speaker, instead of being condemned, the Government should be congratulated on its thoroughness in considering the S.E.C. report.

Cabinet is the body responsible for the good government of Queensland. It is charged with the duty of making decisions—many decisions—and it carries out that responsibility.

With my own background and experience in dealing with contracts and assessing reports, I can assure this House that I always carefully check the major decisions made by the Government. My judgment and that of Cabinet has been shown to be correct.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

PETITION

AMENDMENT OF TRAFFIC ACT

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Greenslopes) presented a petition from 1,194 electors of Queensland praying that the Parliament will reconsider recent changes to the Traffic Act and regulations in relation to the holding of processions.

Petition read and received.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.37 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member knows the restrictions on the moving of a motion.

Mr. BURNS: I seek leave in accordance with the rules of the House to move a motion without notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member knows the rules about seeking the leave of the House to move a motion without notice. However, to be fair I will put the question to the House.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 22

Blake	Milliner
Burns	Prest
Casey	Shaw
D'Arcy	Underwood
Davis	Warburton
Fouras	Wilson
Gibbs, R. J.	Wright
Hansen	
Hooper, K. J.	
Houston	
Jones	<i>Tellers:</i>
Kruger	Yewdale
Mackenroth	Vaughan

NOES, 52

Ahern	Knox
Akers	Lane
Armstrong	Lee
Austin	Lester
Bird	Lickiss
Bishop	Lockwood
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Booth	Miller
Bourke	Neal
Camm	Newbery
Campbell	Porter
Doumany	Powell
Elliott	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Scassola
Glasson	Scott-Young
Goleby	Sullivan
Greenwood	Tenni
Gunn	Tomkins
Hartwig	Turner
Herbert	Warner
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Wharton
Hewitt, W. D.	White
Hinze	
Hodges	
Hooper, M. D.	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Kaus	Bertoni
Kippin	Frawley

PAIR:

Scott Gygar

Resolved in the negative.

STATUS OF CHILDREN BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to remove the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock.”

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Queensland Law Society Act 1952–1974 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

REAL PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Real Property Act 1861–1976 in certain particulars and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Clean Air Act 1963–1976 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads): I move—

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

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. T.A.B. COMPUTER

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

(1) With reference to his ministerial statement on the T.A.B. computer fiasco, did the T.A.B. set up a group of experts to advise it on the computer contract before it was granted to Control Data Australia Pty. Ltd.?

(2) Did the experts, after fully investigating tenderers and holding lengthy discussions, including visits by senior T.A.B. officers to Japanese racecourses, etc., unanimously recommend Facom and entirely discard Control Data Australia Pty. Ltd.?

(3) Why did the T.A.B. Board override these recommendations?

Mr. KNOX: In answering this question I should bring to the notice of the House that when the honourable member for Lytton asked the question I believed that he was genuinely seeking information, and as it was a question about events which occurred some three or four years ago I believed that that sort of information was not readily to hand and in an endeavour to provide him with complete and correct information I indicated that it would be desirable for him to put this question on notice. However, outside the House the Leader of the Opposition took the liberty of saying that, because I was trying to cover up something or because I was trying to blame the former Treasurer, I was endeavouring to dodge the question. The other day when he asked the question I could have given him an answer that would not have been satisfactory, but today I am in a position to give him the full information; I presumed that he asked the question because he was seeking information and not in some way stunting.

Mr. Davis: What a shocking thing to say!

Mr. KNOX: I have reason to believe that he may only have been stunting. I now read the prepared answers.

Answers:—

The information for the answers to the questions has been supplied to me by the Chairman of the Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland:

(1) Yes.

(2 & 3) No. The board gave careful consideration to all recommendations submitted. P.A. Management Pty. Ltd., the board's principal consultants, recommended Control Data Australia Pty. Ltd.

In addition, the board had regard for the fact that Control Data Australia Pty. Ltd. had already successfully installed two computer systems for the Victorian T.A.B. The first of these, code-named CARBINE, was phased in in the latter half of 1967. The second system, RIMFIRE, was introduced in mid 1971, and these systems had operated successfully up to the date of the board's contract.

Attention is drawn to Question No. 14 answered by the then Treasurer and Minister in Charge of Racing, Sir Gordon Chalk, on Friday, 6 April 1973. The late Mr. Hanson asked the Treasurer—

“(1) Has he noted the ‘Financial Review’ of April 5 wherein it was stated that \$5.4 million worth of computer

stock is to be purchased by the Totalisator Administration Board and that the equipment being supplied by the preferred tenderer is not of the most modern and efficient design?

“(2) Have tenders for the equipment been widely invited and what are the details of the tenders?

“(3) Is he aware that the computer stock to be installed is to be of 1700-type and is not as modern as the new Cyber stock which is being installed for the State Government Insurance Office by the same firm, Control Data of Australia Pty. Ltd.?

“(4) As there will be a somewhat outmoded link-up with the central terminal, are the interests of the punter being considered?

“(5) Will he call on the chairman of the T.A.B. to justify the purchase or will he endorse the action?”

The answer by my predecessor was as follows:—

Answer:—

“(1 to 5) I have seen the statement referred to. The facts are that the Totalisator Administration Board received five tenders for differing types of computer equipment and, of course, at differing prices. Because of the complexity of the required installation the Board engaged leading computer consultants to fully examine the tenders, and also referred the consultants' report to the Chief of the Department of Computer Science at the Queensland University. Several Management Officers of the Board were also deputed to form a Committee to tender advice to Board Members. The conclusions were that for the purposes required there was very little technically to choose between the CDC and the FACOM equipment.

“However, the Board after several hours' consideration chose the CDC equipment because in the first place the tender price represented a saving of approximately half a million dollars, and CDC had been established in Australia since 1963 with a work force of over 400 employees. It has an established first class Service Department, and its units have operated successfully at the Victorian Totalisator Board, and the Company recently won a contract for installation of similar equipment in New Zealand.

“I see no reason to call on the Chairman of the T.A.B. to justify the Board's action in purchasing CDC equipment—in fact at the time of consideration of the tenders a set of documents was in my possession, and I very firmly arrived at the same conclusion as the Board. I regret that the source of the Honourable Member's information has of recent

months been somewhat in conflict with the Board's consideration and its ultimate determination."

2. PREMIER'S ALLEGED STATEMENT ON SITING OF NEW POWER-STATION

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

(1) Did he, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" of 1 February, state that only a few million dollars would be saved if the power-station went to Tarong instead of Millmerran?

(2) Did he, as reported in "The Chronicle", Toowoomba, of 1 February, state that the S.E.C. said it was almost a 50-50 choice and, if so, will he table the section of the S.E.C. report that makes that claim?

(3) Did he, as reported in the "Telegraph" of 7 February, say that the difference between Millmerran and Tarong was either \$7,000,000 or \$14,000,000, depending on which set of figures in the report was used?

(4) Did he, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" of 8 February, state that he was advised by the Priorities Review Committee that it would cost the same to build the State's next powerhouse at Millmerran or Tarong?

(5) Did he, as reported in "The Chronicle", Toowoomba, of 14 February, state that Cabinet's decision had not been political, but had been based on economics and the greatest good for the greatest number?

(6) In view of the answer given in this House by the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, which indicated that the difference in establishing a powerhouse at Millmerran instead of Tarong is \$23,700,000 in 1977 dollars and that the cumulative annual charge advantages of the Millmerran Power House over Tarong during its life is an estimated \$259,000,000, allowing a low inflation rate of 5 per cent per annum, will he table in the House the reports that were used to provide the facts for his statements that indicated a difference of only a few million, \$7,000,000, \$14,000,000, or the same cost, etc.?

(7) In view of his statement in "The Chronicle", Toowoomba, of 14 February that Cabinet's decision was based on "economics", will he provide details of the economic facts that caused him to override the S.E.C. report?

Answer:—

(1 to 7) I refer the honourable member to the ministerial statement I made earlier this morning.

3. LOADING ON INSURANCE PREMIUMS, DEFENCE SERVICE HOUSES

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

(1) Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government has added a 20 per cent loading to insurance premiums on Defence Service houses in Queensland because of excessive acts of God over the last six years in this State?

(2) Will he make representations to the Commonwealth Government to have this unfair loading removed and applied equally throughout the Commonwealth?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) There is no State involvement whatsoever in this field of insurance but it is known that for many years past, the insurance premium charged for Defence Forces houses has been much lower than comparable insurance rates available from other insurers.

I understand that flood and storm and tempest coverage are automatically extended under the Defence Forces homes insurance scheme.

Possibly the disasters which have occurred in these areas in recent times have led to the imposition of the loading referred to by the honourable member, but no doubt an approach by him to the Commonwealth Minister for Veterans' Affairs would clarify the reasons for the loading charge.

4. ANCIENT ORDER OF FORESTERS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY

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

Will the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Association take over all commitments of the Ancient Order of Foresters' Friendly Society, which recently announced the closure of its operations?

Answer:—

The Commissioner for Corporate Affairs advises he has no information that the independent Order of Odd Fellows Friendly Society will take over all the commitments of the Ancient Order of Foresters' Friendly Society in Queensland.

5. CONTROL DATA AUSTRALIA PTY. LTD.

Mr. Jones for **Mr. Houston**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Has his Government or any of its boards or instrumentalities any contract with Control Data Australia Pty. Ltd. other than the one in the process of termination with the Queensland T.A.B.?

(2) If so, what are they, when were they let, what stages are they now in, what was the value of the contracts and what amounts of money have been paid on the individual contracts to date?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2)—

Department	Equipment	Date Contract let	Stage now In	Value of Contract
State Government Insurance Office (Queensland)	Twin Cyber 70 Model 72 Computers plus peripheral equipment	27-12-1972	Completed	\$ 2,257,291
	Disc equipment plus controller Communication Processors Disc equipment and Central Memory	27-7-1976	Completed	221,747
		15-12-1976	Completed	722,900

In addition, certain Visual Display Units, Terminal Printers and software are being used on a monthly rental basis. There are ongoing contracts for the maintenance of the equipment.

The equipment at the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) has been installed and operational for five years. It was installed on time and over the period of its operation has performed better than contract specification. The equipment was purchased as a result of open tender and was selected after extensive investigation. It was also the lowest tender.

Department	Equipment	Date Contract let	Stage now In	Value of Contract
Health— Royal Brisbane Princess Alexandra Hospital	Control Data 1700 Computer plus peripheral equipment Additional Central Memory	5-2-1973	Completed	\$ 94,000
		8-2-1973	Completed	2,720
	Control Data System 17 Computer plus peripheral equipment Front end mini computer . . . Site preparation, air-conditioning, false floor, electrical reticulation	3-8-1976	Completed	96,082
		10-10-1977 April, 1976	Completed Completed	41,081 32,355

The Control Data equipment for the hospitals laboratories was purchased by open tender. It was selected after a detailed investigation and similar equipment was seen in operation at the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science in Adelaide. The Queensland hospitals were able to take advantage of programmes already developed at the institute. As a result of this the initial computer installation at Royal Brisbane Hospital came into successful operation quickly and this pattern was repeated at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

All of the equipment installed at the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland), the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital has been paid for.

6. MINIMUM BETS, T.A.B. AGENCIES

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

What are the reasons that caused him to endorse an abolition of the 50 cent win and place bet at T.A.B. agencies?

Answer:—

The fundamental reason was one of cost. It was costing 6.3 cents to handle each 50 cents win and place ticket but the commission available to the T.A.B. averaged 4.75 cents. With 50 cent bets making up approximately 39 per cent of the win/place tickets issued by the T.A.B. but

representing only 10 per cent of the total win/place turnover, it became obvious that changes had to be made.

The step taken to raise the minimum win and place bet to \$1 will eliminate this constant drain on T.A.B. profits and the resultant detrimental effect on the revenue of racing clubs. The processing cost for the \$1 bet is naturally the same as for a 50 cent bet but the commission doubles to 9.5 cents.

From the investors' viewpoint, the percentage return on a winning \$1 ticket will be the same as for a 50 cent ticket. Following a proposed amendment to the

Act, the return, in fact, will be marginally higher overall. For example, by altering the divisor from 50 cents to \$1 whilst continuing to deal with fractions on the basis of the nearest 5 cents on the downward side, approximately \$600,000 extra per annum would be returned on winning investments.

7. STATE GOVERNMENT AID TO
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

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

(1) What massive assistance has the Brisbane City Council received to 13 April from the State Government, as claimed in his article in "The Courier-Mail" of 10 April?

(2) What extra amount is anticipated to be paid to the Brisbane City Council between now and 30 June?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) It is gratifying to see that the honourable member is also concerned over the mismanagement of the council.

In 1975-76 the Brisbane City Council received from or through the State: \$9,180,000 in free grants, which included \$5,090,000 in subsidies; \$31,100,000 through debenture loans, of which \$16,340,000 was provided by way of Treasury controlled funds; and \$16,830,000 indirectly most of which was in the nature of freeway expenditure. The total assistance in that year was \$57,100,000.

By 1976-77, the free grant figure had risen to \$12,650,000; the debenture loan figure to \$34,500,000 which, with a special sewerage loan of \$2,600,000, brought the loan assistance to \$37,100,000; and the indirect assistance had risen to \$19,960,000, that is, \$15,800,000 for freeway expenditure and \$4,160,000 as part of the planned \$60-odd million expenditure for the cultural centre. The total assistance provided in 1976-77 was therefore \$69,710,000.

This financial year, the total assistance level will reach approximately \$75,100,000. \$17,350,000 is expected to be in the nature of free grants, which will include about \$5,750,000 in subsidies, \$5,000,000 for urban transport, \$4,910,000 directed from Commonwealth funds by the State Grants Commission and upwards to a further \$1,200,000 of Commonwealth grants and State funds, being the two-third contribution towards purchase of city council buses and for the establishment of bus-train interchange facilities.

On the loan allocation side the council in 1977-78 will receive loans of \$39,500,000, including a further \$1,700,000 for special sewerage work. The loan allocation has therefore risen by \$8,400,000 since 1975-76 and a major portion of such funds has been provided from State resources.

Additionally, approximately \$18,400,000 of indirect expenditure on freeway development and for the cultural centre will be supplied this financial year.

I think the figures I have cited speak for themselves, and there should not be any further whingeing from the Brisbane City Council.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the House proceeded with Government business.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY

Debate resumed from 13 April (see p. 361) on Mr. White's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (12.1 p.m.): When the debate was adjourned last Thursday, I was dealing with some matters raised in the Governor's Opening Speech, and I should like now to make a few observations on the utilisation of the State's vast natural resources.

The total value of all minerals mined in Queensland in 1976 was \$1,135.9 million, and the total value of all royalties from minerals mined in Queensland in 1976 was \$45,600,000. That represents a return to the people of Queensland of approximately 4 per cent, which is little better than savings bank interest.

The \$45,600,000 included \$24,900,000 from coal production valued at \$629,100,000 and \$20,700,000 from all other minerals mined. That represents a return to the people of Queensland of 3.9 per cent from coal, which again is little better than savings bank interest.

To further illustrate the utilisation of the State's vast natural resources, I point out that the total value of minerals mined in Queensland between 1956 and 1976 was \$6,028.1 million. The total value of royalties received by the Government on behalf of the people of Queensland was \$128,000,000, or 2.12 per cent—much less than savings bank interest.

By comparison, in the year 1977 alone the Utah Development Company made a net profit of \$158,300,000, and in the last four years Utah's net profit has totalled \$444,400,000. It is my belief that the people of Queensland are not being compensated fairly for the "utilisation of the State's vast natural resources".

Let us look, Mr. Speaker, at the biggest single mining industry—the coal-mining industry. In the year 1976-77 overseas exports alone totalled 18 900 000 tonnes, of which Utah exported 15 800 000. By virtue of the export levy, the Federal Government received \$66,300,000, at the rate of \$3.50 a tonne, and \$55,300,000 of that \$66,300,000 came from Utah.

I make it quite clear that I do not blame the Utah Development Company for accepting handouts from the Government. I hold the Government fully responsible for allowing the exploitation of this country's mineral deposits to that extent. If money is handed to any company, it cannot be blamed for taking advantage of it.

Because the Federal Government since the 1975 election has reduced the export levy from \$6 a tonne to the present \$3.50 a tonne, the people of Australia have virtually handed back \$47,400,000 to Queensland export companies, of which \$40,000,000 went to Utah.

It is my firm belief that the Queensland Government should increase royalties on all minerals, particularly coal, so that the people of Queensland receive a just return from the "utilisation of the State's vast natural resources". Then there would be sufficient funds to build hospitals, roads, schools, dams (including a dam on the Boyne River for the farmers of the South Burnett), etc., and this would create employment for the 68,665 Queenslanders who are out of a job and who will have little opportunity to obtain employment in the near future. Then there would be sufficient funds to do something positive for the cattle and sheep industries and the people in the West.

I was going to point out to the honourable member for Flinders when he was speaking about the situation that existed in the West that I know something of the position out there because my home town is Richmond, and I spent the first 15 years of my life in western Queensland.

As I am the Opposition spokesman on Mines, Energy and Police, I would like to make brief reference to the power situation in Queensland at present and in the future. Since last Thursday, because of continuing problems at the Gladstone Power Station, South-east Queensland has been faced with black-outs. Since the first unit at Gladstone went on line in August 1976 there have been continuing problems with the boilers and other plant which have resulted in serious power shortages. These problems are more than teething troubles and, as I understand it, could cost many millions of dollars to rectify. As a result the power situation in Queensland is serious.

Depending on whether Comalco goes ahead with the Gladstone alumina smelter (and I don't think it will) and other industrial development, the next power-station must be in operation between 1985 and 1987 or Queensland will face a serious power crisis. I understand that there are risks involved going beyond 1985. I believe that Queensland cannot afford to gamble about future power needs. The next power-station must be well designed, well built and, above all, reliable. I have investigated the power position in New South Wales, and after making a comparison with the situation in

Queensland I am of the opinion that the recommendations of the State Electricity Commission must be accepted. The next power-station must be built on the Millmerran coalfield or Queensland will have serious power problems from 1985 onwards. If there is any decision of the Premier's that must be reversed, it is this one.

There is much more I would like to refer to, but time does not permit. However, in the few minutes I have left I would like to refer to a number of remarks made about me in this Chamber by a couple of honourable members prior to the election in 1977 and on the first day of sitting. I can assure this house that I am not a "front" man for anyone; nor do I intend to be a "message boy" or a "pimp", as was suggested by some honourable members. I represent the people in the electorate of Nudgee. They chose me knowing full well that I have been a trade union official and that I am a member of the Australian Labor Party.

As for my being a "Trades Hall heavy", as was claimed by my opponent during the election campaign, and as I have been referred to in this House by one honourable member, I was an elected official of the Electrical Trades Union for 13 years. During that time I travelled the length and breadth of this State, mainly by car, and had dealings with most of the major industries in the State—power, railways, sugar mining (coal in particular), meat and alumina. Although I was involved in many negotiations, conferences and disputes, I believe I was and still am reasonably respected by employers, employers' organisations and members of the State and Federal Arbitration Commissions. I make no apology for any of my statements or actions as a trade union official. I am proud to have had such an experience.

I have no intention of hitting back at anyone in this House. As far as I am concerned, the past is past. I would prefer to be judged by my performance in this House and in my electorate. As I said at the outset of my speech, I am appreciative of the responsibilities that go with being a member of this Assembly, and it is my earnest wish to serve Queensland and Australia to the best of my ability.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am deeply concerned with the situation in Queensland today. I am very fearful of the future. Over the past few years divisions have occurred in this State that hitherto did not exist. Queensland is a great State. However, it is still a part of Australia and I hope that it will always remain so. The divisions within the State, and between this State and the rest of Australia, are doing untold damage. We can go too far. What may be political expediency today could be our ruination in the future. Who will pick up the

pieces? All of us in this House have a responsibility to this State and this nation. I appeal to all honourable members to face up to those responsibilities before it is too late.

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (12.11 p.m.): In joining this debate I reaffirm my loyalty and that of my electorate to the Crown. I congratulate His Excellency the Governor, Sir James Ramsay, upon his Opening Address to Parliament. I also thank His Excellency for the public relations exercise he has undertaken throughout Queensland, particularly in my own electorate, where he and Lady Ramsay have made a very favourable and lasting impression. What he has done speaks volumes for the Westminster system of government in our State.

I was pleased to hear in the Governor's Opening Speech reference to the many proposals that will come before this Government in its lifetime. While some of the proposals may have seemed a repetition of what has been said in Opening Speeches delivered to other Parliaments, I believe that improvements must always be effected for the people of Queensland.

Queensland continues to progress in spite of the inflationary problems besieging our country's economic stability. Unlike some Opposition members, I am confident that Queensland, in many ways, is the leading State of the Commonwealth—not only in its ongoing enterprises but also in its acceptance of social responsibilities.

I am pleased that the Governor referred to a very important project that is under way in my electorate. I speak, of course, of the construction of what will be the largest bulk-sugar terminal in Australia, if not in the world. This project was commenced only after very mature consideration several years ago by the Sugar Board and a former Queensland coalition Government. I am happy to report that great progress has been made and that construction is more than half completed.

There was much competition in Queensland for this major maritime facility, but it was only on merit that it went to Lucinda Point. The sugar industry in my electorate is such that reliable, high-quality production can be guaranteed. The expansion of the overseas bulk-sugar trade through this new port with the use of super bulk carriers will do much to sustain the reputation of the Australian sugar industry as a reliable producer and exporter of a high-quality product.

The sugar industry has traditionally survived and prospered through close management and statutory control. We see and hear a good deal of criticism about the statutory control of industry; but I am quite certain that none of the critics of the sugar industry could find any fault with the system that has withstood the test of time for so long in the sugar industry and been of such advantage to the rural and exporting capacity of this State. I have great sympathy

with other rural industries that have not fared so well in their efforts to resolve their marketing problems through management.

I do not hold the sugar industry out as in any way superior to other industries in its management; but I do feel that it was indeed lucky that the foresight of many years ago led to the present measures being adopted. Unfortunately, however, a degree of factional disagreement and division has arisen which seems in some way to threaten the stability of the industry. It seems to me that some people want the best of two worlds. We have what we feel to be one of the best democratic organisations available; yet we find factions in it that do not accept decisions democratically arrived at unless they favour a certain point of view.

I was distressed to see recently that this type of factional pressure entered into this House. In spite of decisions made by recognised statutory tribunals that have been charged with these responsibilities—tribunals that have no pecuniary interest in the outcome of their decisions—we are aware of heavy lobbying intruding into this House. Indeed, there are rumours of lobbying intruding into our Executive Government. It disturbs me greatly to witness members rising in this House to join in the factional arguments from the floor of the Chamber and broadcasting them to the world, when in fact we should be grateful that, because we have authorities whose decisions only require sanction by our Executive Government, we do not really need that kind of intrusion into our political system in Queensland. Tribunal members do not need to be directed or to have their decisions upset, thus creating embarrassment for them.

I trust that the established procedures will prevail; that sanity will prevail. What we in this Parliament are perhaps short of is a measure of statesmanship rather than political pressure. Clearly, there are only issues of right and wrong. It is so easy to be wrong—and probably difficult to be right at times. The Honourable the Premier said in one of his Press releases only a couple of months ago that the Queensland State Government has one of the best records of any Government in Australia. I say to all honourable members, "For goodness' sake, let us keep it that way. Let us keep Queensland developing along the lines that make it the envy of the other States." We hear a lot of what could be called criticism. My interpretation is that it is not criticism, but envy of the success of the Queensland Government.

Every honourable member, whatever his position in this Parliament, carries electoral responsibilities on his shoulders, but I believe that electoral regions can be promoted without parochialism. There are only two paths in life and, indeed, in our vocation to follow. For my part, I do not intend to follow the wrong one if I can help it. The path to the left looks easy, but leads downwards. The one to the right probably has more obstacles, but leads upwards.

We only have to look at the success in the face of pressure and seeming adversity that is gained by the leader of this Government, our own Premier. It is when the pressures and challenges are really on him that he finds the truth, and sticks to it. And how often has he succeeded in the face of all kinds of criticism?

In a world full of modern marvels, progress and many benefits, there are still many grey areas. Challenges everywhere have to be met. How they are met and resolved is the key to the future of humanity. In this regard, this Parliament has a huge responsibility.

We who live in what is commonly termed the Western civilisation, have to do more than simply look to our laurels to survive. We who live within that concept, and those who have done so for probably 20 centuries, survive basically on the concept of a Christian democracy. I concede that there have been certain minor variations; but today they are taking on sinister proportions. In a new era of enlightenment we tend to lose our inhibitions. We also are losing the balance between the academic and the practical. The human tree is becoming a thing that is all branches, with no roots. We are tending to lose the substance in the shadow. Academic concepts have begun to create a wide diversion from what has, for so long, been accepted as the norm; hence the confusion over events such as the rise and fall of SEMP and MACOS. Because this happened in Queensland, it does not make Queensland guilty of being non-conformist; rather, it is the reverse. It might well be that the world is guilty and that Queensland is not yet entirely polluted. In the hands of bad engineers, social engineering can be bad practice in a basically Christian and democratic society. Fortunately, there are many exceptions, and we can accept the better elements to our advantage.

In my opinion, the Government's decision to ban SEMP from being used in our State schools was both right and proper. SEMP, or Social Education Materials Project, is a series of resource materials to be used in association with many subjects by teachers in secondary schools. I think it is fair to say that although there are many subjects that can be used in association with SEMP, the main thrust of SEMP is the assistance that it can give to those subjects that are associated with social science and subjects of a philosophical nature. I think the standard of the material, on the whole, is fair to good. I do not claim to be an expert on SEMP. I have not had the advantage of assessing its material. All I can say is that I believe its standard is fair to good. Much of the language used and the standard of English in it cannot be regarded as ideal. Academics defend the use of this so-called English in the material by saying that it is used by children in the playground and therefore it is acceptable.

The question arises whether we should condone second-class English in the so-called interests of communication with students, or whether the schools should maintain a high standard of English so that the students aspiring to a higher standard of education are able to express themselves in such a way that the whole community can understand them.

My first objection is to the low standard of language used in the material. This fact was very evident in the films that we were privileged to see here last week. I do not expect that there will be any improvement in the films we have been invited to see this week.

If we use a lower standard in the schools, we are giving a seal of approval to a lower standard of education. A thread runs through much of the material which gives an indication that an official stamp of approval is given to constant criticism and the questioning of parental authority.

I am the father of seven fine young Australians. I believe I have had sufficient experience in the rearing of children to know that parental authority is absolutely essential. I also believe that I have the parental right and privilege to decide the kind of attitudes that I want my children to grow up with.

The proponents of this material claim that discussion of this type should be stimulated in schools. They ignore the basic fact that young people from puberty to maturity are psychologically unstable and this instability, in the main, is countered by family influences which guide the adolescent, often against his wishes, through this difficult period. If the family lacks stability, the youngster looks for a stabilising force and usually finds it in the school, the church, or some other organisation with which he may become associated. The responsibility is a very grave one. If too much questioning of the psychological crutches is encouraged, the youngster is likely to become even more unstable.

Research in the United States of America and the United Kingdom supports the view that where a social science course is using resource material similar to SEMP, a marked increase has occurred in absenteeism, drug-taking, and even suicide. Young people require stability. The schools should, if anything, be encouraging young people to discuss problems within the family circle instead of encouraging them to question the family's influence.

Another major question to be answered in the whole debate on the inclusion of such resource materials and courses as MACOS is whether there is enough time in the school day to include such discussions. There is clear evidence that the community is dissatisfied with the present standard of education and wants schools to return to their major task of preparing youngsters to play a useful role in the community. I have noted that proponents of these resource materials have pointed out that independent schools are using them and are

asking why we should be different. Some church school authorities have authorised the use of SEMP materials after adequate consultation with parents, teachers and the clergy. It must be pointed out that the private school system has full control over the content of the class-room lesson and has the opportunity to get rid of any teacher who does not comply with the requirements laid down by the school. The State does not have that control. Further, parents send their children to private schools by choice. They pay extra fees and therefore have a greater say in what is taught. By necessity, parents of children at State schools do not have either that choice or that control. Finally, the Education Act is quite explicit about this point because it states that the final responsibility for materials taught in State primary and secondary schools rests with the Minister. I remind those people who have challenged the right of Cabinet to remove this resource material that this is the case; responsibility rests with the Minister and with Cabinet. It is therefore right and proper that the Minister should approve or disapprove such courses. That this has not arisen in recent years is no argument against it.

Academics must realise that the public not only pay their salaries but also provide the funds for the buildings, facilities, etc., that they use. Every three years the public elect members of Parliament to represent them, and they must realise that they have a responsibility to represent their constituents properly. Candidates go to the polls espousing philosophies which people know well, and once elected a member must carry out his responsibilities to his electors. Academics must also realise that parents have every right to demand courses which will best suit their children for their future role in the work-force. It is no use preparing children for philosophical debate and leisure activities if they have no job by which to earn the money to enjoy them. I am somewhat heartened to have received this morning a letter from the Queensland State High Schools Principals' Association, which contains this resolution—

"That our Association is of the opinion that problems faced by secondary education may best be solved by careful consultation among all interested groups. In this process, it is essential that responsible Ministers, administrators, as well as teachers, parents, students, and self-appointed guardians of public morals be permitted to play their due part, but no more than their due part."

That is a very worthy contention—"no more than their due part". I remind certain teachers that they also are entitled to play no more than their due part.

As I said earlier, there are grey areas, and in that respect education is no different from other fields. Many bushels of apples contain some bad ones, and Government members are not sufficiently naive to think that

that is not true of life generally. However, I believe that in Queensland, and particularly in this Parliament, we have taken proper steps to discover how many bad apples there are in the education basket. Upon discovering them, we will remove them.

I congratulate the chairman and members of the Select Committee on Education recently set up by this Parliament. I wish them well. I hope that they find that the system of education in Queensland is a good one and ensure that it will continue to be a good one. They, too, must remove the bad apples from the basket.

One of the most controversial aspects of the argument on education is the criticism of the role of Government. I say again that the Government has a distinct responsibility. In fact, it has the prime responsibility in all matters of public interest. It might be argued, of course, that that is an oversimplification of the issues; but I do not believe it is, and I am quite certain that my contention will be proved to be correct.

I wish that a few more people in this State would stop babbling in the shadows and do a bit of plain, basic thinking. That is what is needed. I, for one, am becoming very tired of public apathy and impetuosity, particularly impetuosity, on issues that bring out elements in the community that thrive on someone else's adversity and on human feelings.

The Aboriginal question is one of the issues that have become not only a political football but also a football for the media and every other element that derives a benefit from sensationalism. What a misconstrued, misreported, misunderstood mess the Mornington Island/Aurukun dispute turned out to be! I am pleased that the issues seem to have been resolved, at least for the time being. However, the Aboriginal problem will not go away, and I am sure we can expect that the responsibility for Aborigines will rest very firmly on the Queensland State Government for a long time to come. I hope that I am a compassionate man.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: We think you are.

Mr. ROW: I am pleased about that.

I have great sympathy for disadvantaged minorities in this country, and that, of course, includes the Aborigines.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why didn't you pay them the full wage when you had them cane-cutting on your property?

Mr. ROW: I would remind the honourable member for Archerfield that it was a Labor Government in the 1920s that introduced the White Australia policy in this country. It barred coloured labour from the agricultural areas of the State. It rounded Aborigines up and impounded them in the reserves that this Government has now turned into something much more acceptable than the prisons they were. I would also remind the honourable member for Archerfield that I

grew up on a property in North Queensland with Aborigines all around me. I also remind him that my father hid them from the police, and signed them on as domestics. He kept them from being marched off to the compounds created by the Labor Government. People of the same political philosophy, in their ignorance, point the finger at me, yet I know more about Aborigines than the honourable member for Archerfield will ever know. He should consider his remarks before he questions me about the Aboriginal issue.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You never paid them award wages. You know that is true.

Mr. ROW: I was too young to know what wages were in those days. I didn't get any wages, either. I certainly did not get any wages of sin, which some of the honourable member's friends seem to be involved in.

The placing of Aborigines in this country at a disadvantage can be basically and logically explained, and something can be done about it. More has been done about it in Queensland than in any other State. The Queensland Government has shown more responsibility towards Aborigines than any other authority in Australia. Legislation enacted for their welfare and maintenance has always been a credit to Queensland. Only the political insurgents and white stirrers have tried to create any other impression. The modifications to that legislation have met the changing times and have allowed the Aborigines to progress. At the same time they have maintained a degree of protection for the Aborigines, which has been greatly to their benefit.

I am not so naive as to believe that there are no faults in the system. There are faults in every system. However, I have no time for the parasites, either white or coloured, who sweat on a system merely to promote their own ends for political reasons, to gain publicity or to sell newspapers.

I regret to have to say that in this country these days there seem to be many more of these floaters than genuine people. I am surprised at the attitudes of some leading figures who occupy positions in life which call for better examples of honesty and integrity. In that respect I do not spare the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs; nor do I hold any higher regard for the Minister who administers that department. I have had personal dialogue with Mr. Viner concerning the Federal Government's involvement in Aboriginal Affairs in my electorate. For several years I have received absolutely no satisfaction from that source. I have been misled and disappointed, as, indeed, have been the Aborigines. Some of the story bears mentioning.

In the Whitlam era a person came to my electorate ostensibly as a manager of Aboriginal affairs on behalf of the Commonwealth. He had an open cheque-book. He went to a certain shire containing a large number of Aborigines and began buying property in the names of individuals. He started

competing in the acquisition of land at prices that were far beyond the means of the local citizens. I received many complaints about this and eventually, with the change of Government, went to see Mr. Viner. I pointed out to him that two speedboats, worth \$22,000 each, were lying wrecked on beaches in my electorate and that they were registered in the name of the Commonwealth Director of Aboriginal Affairs in Brisbane. After I raised that issue they disappeared mysteriously overnight. This person gave to local authorities large sums of money—hundreds of thousands of dollars—for Aboriginal projects without any documentation or proper agreements. He simply acted ad lib.

I am pleased that the gentleman to whom I refer has been withdrawn from my electorate. When he departed recently he left parked illegally at the Townsville Airport a Range Rover vehicle with the keys in it. By good fortune, I suppose, I ascertained that this was one of five vehicles that had disappeared in the time that this person was in my electorate. All were owned by a car rental company, and all were on permanent hire to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra. Each one was written off when it was lost. The rental on the Range Rover must have been about \$50 a day. And it was on permanent hire! I hate to think how many years that was going on.

This incident highlights what is happening to our taxation money—and the benefits flowing to the Aborigines were infinitesimal. All this was done in competition with the actions of the Queensland State Government, governed by a reasonable budget, in trying to do something for the Aborigines. The only beneficiary was the operator. When I finally put pressure on Mr. Viner about him, lo and behold, he said, "He does not really belong to us; he is seconded from the Australian National University." I feel that that story caps any others that could be told in this House on this subject.

I have not referred to many parochial issues, but I will conclude by saying that I am deeply conscious of the need to improve roads and access generally in the wet tropical areas. We are not getting very far with this. Drainage is very important in my electorate and I am pleased that an authority responsible for it has been established by the sugar industry and other interested parties. To its credit, it is functioning well. I trust that the Minister in charge of water resources will recognise the worth of this body and match its responsible attitude. Our marine tourist facilities are badly in need of upgrading, and reforestation must always be kept in mind. I trust that my colleagues in the Ministry will respect the wishes of all Queensland constituents, but particularly those of mine.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (12.50 p.m.): In rising to make my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate,

on the motion of the honourable member for Southport, I am very pleased once again to express my loyalty and that of the Toowoomba North electorate to Her Majesty the Queen. I congratulate His Excellency Sir James Ramsay, Governor of this State, and his gracious lady, Lady Ramsay, the representatives in this State of the monarch, on the way they are carrying out their duties. Their job is not a simple one; however, as everybody in my electorate knows, they have busied themselves by visiting our city of Toowoomba and areas throughout the State. They have already been to centres that a great many Queenslanders have never yet had the opportunity of visiting.

They have taken a great and personal interest in the lives of our people, their occupations, how they are affected by all manner of difficulties, including the drought, and how they are coping with their commerce, their industries and their social lives. They have done this not merely out of duty. As I said before, they are acutely conscious of visiting widely and being informed at first hand of the needs of the people of Queensland, because the Governor, above all persons, is an integral part of the Government in this State. He, with the 18 members of our Cabinet, is the Government. When at the opening of Parliament he says, "My Government will do this", very few people in Queensland realise just how much he does in the government of this State.

I am pleased to say, too, that the Queen was well and truly received by her loyal subjects in this country during her visit here last year. There were regrets in a great many centres that she could not spend the time to visit more widely throughout the State. Nevertheless, a great many more people came to see her when she was passing through Brisbane than any critic would have dared suggest. She was royally received. Despite the actions of the republicans, who were very active in Australia at that time, posing under many and varied names, the Queen was very well received. Obviously, the people still regard her warmly and dearly in their hearts.

Even at this time in England, when one member of the Royal family is under great criticism and stress, it is pleasing that the British people are still rallying very closely to the Royal family. They do not hold the actions of a member of the Royal family who may be on a permanent holiday against the Queen or any member of her personal family, who are working so hard for the benefit of their country and for what remains of the Commonwealth.

It is pleasing also to note that at last it has been decided that "Advance Australia Fair" is a piece of music. Some critics would dare to say that it is not even a good piece of music. As there are no formally recognised words for it, there is no longer any requirement that Australians sing it. It will be a national tune. However,

on great occasions—State occasions and occasions of loyalty—"God Save the Queen" will be sung. Indeed, I do not think that has ever been challenged seriously throughout the nation. A survey was allegedly taken by one Government. Neither I nor a great many other people in Toowoomba could find any person in that city who had been invited to take part in it, despite the assertion that a great number had. No-one who had taken part in that survey ever came forward to verify that. I am very doubtful about how the Whitlam Government conducted that survey.

This is a new Parliament. Since the Parliament of 1974, there have been 20 or more changes in those who make up the Parliament. With new members, there will be new objectives. New policies are already being formulated. Along with other members on the Government side, I look for considerable reform in the management of the affairs of this Parliament. It has been traditional for legislation to be drawn up by departments and be taken to Cabinet, where it is considered. It is the responsibility of every Minister in that Cabinet room to consider the effect of a piece of legislation on any other legislation that he administers. There are far too many examples of legislation being passed and then being seriously challenged at a later stage. It is to be hoped that there will not be as many in future. Nevertheless, serious challenges are made. Thankfully, most of them come from within the Government and not from persons who would be put to great expense to have complicated legislative tangles unravelled.

From Cabinet, legislation goes to one of the Bills committees. Each Minister has a Bills committee. It considers the legislation. I repeat that usually the legislation has been drawn up by a Minister's department. If the committee approves of it, it goes to the joint party meeting, where every honourable member, including Ministers, should vote according to conscience in the light of the effect it could have on the electorates.

A great many of us do not believe that, at a joint party meeting, Cabinet Ministers should vote as a solid 18-man bloc. This would destroy the whole purpose of joint parties and would bring the Government to a perilous situation where the Cabinet bloc vote of 18 would sway the joint party meeting in any argument that might arise during deliberations.

The joint parties should debate every issue on its merits. Not one issue should be settled on party lines. Regrettably, some issues have been. I believe that this practice should cease. If it continues, there will be a degeneration into town and country politics within the joint parties. This would be to the detriment not only of the joint parties but of the whole State.

New policies are coming forward. Some of the most detailed policies being worked on apply to housing. The Government is considering policies and schemes to help aged

persons. Those living alone are having a great deal of difficulty in maintaining their houses. Perhaps they own them lock, stock and barrel. If they do, they are hard pressed in paying rates and even more hard pressed in maintaining their homes, which are usually among the older homes. Most of them are constructed of timber and, therefore, need to be painted externally every seven years. These days, depending on the size of the house, external painting costs \$500 to \$800. Interior painting could be required to be done in the interval between two exterior paintings. This is beyond the budget of any pensioner.

If a pensioner is renting a house, he would be paying something of the order of \$40 a week rent. If he is renting an older, smaller house, he might be fortunate enough to be paying only \$20 to \$30 a week, but I venture to suggest that this would be only because his landlord is being gracious in extending him a concessional rent.

It is not primarily a function of the State Government to see that pensioners are subsidised in regard to their housing. It is a role of the Federal Government to ensure that a pensioner's fortnightly cheque is adequate to let him live and to let him live decently. Nevertheless, the State Government is being drawn into discussions on and consideration of ways to help the aged in regard to their accommodation.

I should like to see a great deal more attention given to the provision of self-contained flats for one or two people. If this were done we could have a great deal of movement from houses to flats, with the houses becoming available for persons with families, who need more space and an outside area for their growing children. However, there is one problem. About four or four and a-half years ago, the Queensland Housing Commission built a single person's flat at a cost of \$16,800. About two years ago the cost was \$18,600. I cannot help thinking that there must be a way out of this, with a much lower expenditure per unit by the Housing Commission and its budget being spread over a greater number of deserving pensioners.

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

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Before we adjourned for lunch, I was discussing the changes that are needed in Government policy to bring about better housing for the people of Queensland.

During my election campaign I noticed in my electorate—and I dare say it is typical of most electorates—that there were many more signs on houses saying, "House for Sale" than there were signs saying, "Vote for this candidate in the election." Some of these houses have been empty for as long as 12 months. I know that there are hundreds of houses vacant in every electorate, which, to my mind, proves that the problem is not in providing houses but in providing finance so that those wishing to purchase their own homes can achieve their ambition. In 1977

the State Government did help on this particular aspect of home-ownership by making funds available, but I believe it is now time the Federal Government took a critical look at its own policies so that funds can be made available for the purchase of new houses, in particular, and medium-aged homes, by families who wish to buy those homes, and even short-term loans to young couples who wish to buy an old home and then set about renovating it. This is a very popular way for young couples to gain a home these days, and I thoroughly commend those couples who have gone about doing this.

There are many products today that enable young people who are handy with tools and have reasonable skills, with the advice of tradesmen and staff of hardware stores, to renovate old homes very adequately and make them very bright. They can put new windows in them or purchase new kitchens, virtually by mail order, and they can make these homes very bright and attractive. The purchase of these old homes by young couples has resulted in a great many of them being taken off the rental market. The Queensland Housing Commission is receiving a tremendous number of applications from people who want some assistance in renting an older home rather than being forced into renting a much newer home at a higher rental. The Queensland Housing Commission could fill the bill here in several ways. Even now the Minister's committee is considering these things, and I do hope that the Government will be able to make progress in this direction.

There is a particular need in Toowoomba, and I am sure in every city electorate, for the Queensland Housing Commission to make one and two-bedroom flats available for rental. There is a need for duplexes with two or three bedrooms and even homes with up to four and five bedrooms. If there are not the funds available to purchase them new, perhaps the Queensland Housing Commission could examine the profitability of buying some of the older homes on the market. This system would have many advantages. The Queensland Housing Commission would be able to see what it is buying; the houses are already built. If funds are allocated to this end, there will be instant relief in the waiting lists of those who are desirous of renting a house from the Queensland Housing Commission. The Queensland Housing Commission could also make some of these houses available for purchase by those who are renting them.

There is also a need for the Queensland Housing Commission to look at inner city areas. Toowoomba is no exception in this regard. It is an old city—more than 120 years old—and the city centre is ageing. Some of the existing old homes have been divided into six or seven flats. I can't approve of many of them. Many have inadequate fire-prevention facilities. Some of the homes were converted before the new regulations came into being. Certainly nobody could build on a floor plan like that today. He would not get approval to build from the

local government. Nevertheless, these houses are still there and they are definite fire hazards. I think the sooner the Government encourages the tenants to get out of these fire traps and into more suitable housing, with a minimum of two exits in case of fire, the better. If the demand for these low-rental homes is removed I think people will prefer to move out of them and many of these old buildings will then fall beneath the demolisher's hammer and be replaced by better, more modern, more comfortable, and certainly safer dwellings.

We have already seen a redevelopment in the heart of Toowoomba without Government intervention, and I am pleased with the way it has been proceeding of its own accord. I think we as a Government need to look particularly at the design of all Government buildings to see that they are functional and also to see that architects are kept within certain bounds when they draw up their plans. They all seem to design monuments to themselves and strive to outdo one another. Because of this I am very pleased to see that the Government has seen fit to follow the lead of private industry. When one sees a Colonel Sanders' take-away chicken bar anywhere, one knows what it is because they all seem to have been built from the one plan.

Mr. Akers: God help us!

Dr. LOCKWOOD: That is a comment from an architect. Let us hope that he uses his influence to improve designs. The same comment can be applied to an Austral Pacific shed. Years ago one could see a building half a mile away and say, "That's a State school." It is no good designing a building so that nobody knows what it is, whether one is inside or outside. A design has to be functional and safe, but I am afraid that a great many of our Government buildings and other projects have been overdesigned. This is a subject upon which I have spoken before.

Some people have been critical of the Housing Commission for the way it has been building in brick in recent years, while others are just as critical of the commission for not doing so, but the plain facts of the matter are that in many recent Housing Commission contracts the Government has been able to obtain brick for the same price as timber and other exterior cladding, and I hope that this situation will also apply in Toowoomba. Certainly people building in the developing areas of Toowoomba hope that all buildings, and certainly all Housing Commission homes, erected in the area will be built of brick. That has not been the case in some developments and the Housing Commission has greatly disappointed some people because it has not built in brick. There have been claims made that the Housing Commission officers concerned promised to build in brick, although this was firmly denied by the former Minister for Works

and Housing, the Honourable Norm Lee. Nevertheless, residents in newly developed areas hope that any Housing Commission homes built in those areas will be brick. Apparently they based their hopes on the fact that in Bundaberg, on the south coast and in other places the Housing Commission was building in brick because it could do this for the same price as building in timber or asbestos cement. If developers wish to see their estates built entirely in brick, I think that they would be well advised to seek legal advice so that they can compel subsequent purchasers of land to build only in brick. If this occurs and a person decides not to build in brick after he has given an assurance to the developer that he will do so, then some action can be taken. Some people in new estates around Toowoomba have been disappointed that the commission has not built brick homes, but I think this is a matter they should take up with the developers.

The Government also needs to look closely at the equipment provided in its buildings. A great deal of equipment used in Government buildings is specified by people who are no longer experts in the field. They might be engineers, but they are almost certainly 20 years out of date. In one project I came across the contractor was bitterly disappointed that the Government would consider installing refrigeration and cold-room equipment as per specifications when he and a great many other throughout Australia can provide this equipment just as a dealer can supply a Holden.

These days a person can walk in, take his pick, order the equipment and have it delivered and installed. It is not necessary to go into the specifications. It is possible to see equipment running, test its efficiency, speak to the people who own it, and have it supplied. That can be done not only with cold rooms and freezer rooms but also with kitchens and laundries. The Government's calling in of engineers to design basic nuts, bolts and screws is just a waste of public money. I am pleased to say that the Treasurer and others have been looking at the question, and I hope to see the benefits of that in a saving in public funds in the provision of space in public buildings.

I turn now to a matter that has provoked a great battle in the media. I refer, of course, to the decision to build Queensland's next major generating plant at Tarong. I do not really believe that it is a battle between Tarong and Millmerran; I do not really see it as a battle between Cabinet and Parliament. There is a battle of the "leaks", though, and I think it is up to the various Ministers to discover the source of these leaks and have them stopped for ever.

An Opposition Member: Are they embarrassing you?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: They are not embarrassing me. Some of the people who leaked them might be very embarrassed, and one

of the things that Parliament ought to do is see that they are tracked down and confronted with what they have done.

Every possible step should be taken to discover exactly why the decision of the State Electricity Commission favoured Millmerran instead of Tarong and what steps led to that change of preferred site. Certainly, I have always believed that the next major power-station would be built at Tarong. Quite accidentally I became aware of surveys being made relating to power lines and water supply to Tarong. I did not become aware of any surveys being made in order to get water to Millmerran or to get power lines from Millmerran to major centres or into the State grid.

Cabinet had the role of deciding where the power-station was to go, and it did just that. The reason for the delay would seem to be that a small group of public servants had set themselves up against Cabinet. For my part, no representations have been made to me by either party, and it has been rather a shock to me to see all the claims and counter-claims, virtually none of which has been fully substantiated, being made through the media.

It has been claimed that this decision, standing alone, would deny Australia a solvent refined coal and liquid fuel extraction plant. On its face, it might be said that if the power-station went to Millmerran it would be easier for Millmerran interests to launch a solvent refined coal and liquid fuel process and, the Lord only knows, Australia does need it. But if one examines the figures, one finds that Tarong was prepared to commit one coalfield and Millmerran was prepared to commit one coalfield and that both were similar in size within a percentage or two—from memory, I think 209 000 000 tonnes in one case and a similar quantity in the other. There is no advantage one way or the other, although I think that the coal at Millmerran probably is better. However, if there is not to be one giant open-cut, there is no advantage in having two mines 150 miles apart, 100 miles apart, or even five miles apart. If Millmerran were to commit one, two or even three projects such as a generating plant, a solvent refined coal and liquid fuel extraction plant and an export coal plant, all from one gigantic open-cut, conceivably savings would be made in giant extraction, giant drag-lines, giant machinery, in one vast continuous operation. But that is not to be the case, so I fail to see how the siting of the plant at Tarong can adversely affect the solvent refined coal process.

Water does pose a problem at Millmerran. With more than one State involved with border rivers, there undoubtedly would be feuding over the water. There was a proposal to take water from just inside Queensland into the Coolmunda Reservoir and then again cross country. There is no doubt that everybody who sees water thinks that it is

his. I fear for the people along the Boyne River to the north-west of the proposed Tarong generating plant. If they think they are going to get water from a dam there, they might be bitterly disappointed unless such a dam is specifically designed to cater for them, too.

We know that water is a problem in Millmerran. Just prior to the announcement that Tarong was the site chosen, Millmerran was desperately trying to buy Toowoomba's sewage effluent for use in a coal-washing plant. Toowoomba pays a vast amount of money to pump water uphill. We are entering into our third dam now to provide water for the inland streams via pipes and sewers. Perhaps that would have been a suitable use for Toowoomba sewage. I certainly would have no objection to Millmerran gaining that supply of water for use on its coal. That indicates the desperate shortage of water in that area and the great uncertainty about obtaining water from the border streams. If Millmerran interests have made one mistake, I think it is that they left their run too late. Perhaps they were over-confident that the State Electricity Commission report recommended the Millmerran site.

If coal is going to be exported from Millmerran it will not be as cheap as people believe. I, for one, will not see coal trains rumbling through the streets of Toowoomba day and night. There are already enough delays and obstructions to Toowoomba traffic. Many of us motorists have been delayed up to half an hour at a time. It has almost got to the stage when we wish we had a man walking along the road ringing a bell; at least he could tell us how long the train would block the road. There is no way the coal trains will rumble through Toowoomba streets.

If coal is to be exported, the Gowrie-Wyreema link, which was ripped up, will have to be re-laid and re-laid in much heavier line. Sections of the range will have to be redeveloped or perhaps even bypassed between Toowoomba and Helidon. Alternatively, there would be a need for long sidings to allow coal trains to get off the main track to allow other traffic past.

A year ago an attempt was made possibly by Millmerran interests, to survey a new rail link or a power line from the Downs to the coast. Surveyors were running around but when I put it point-blank to the then Minister, the late Keith Hooper, he did not know anything about it, so it had nothing to do with the Railway Department. I think it must have been Millmerran interests looking for ways to get round the range and out of Toowoomba. Certainly they will have to solve that problem between themselves and the Government before the exporting of coal can proceed.

The solvent refined coal process will need two things to get it going. It will need a huge amount of money invested and an assured market. We can all well do with liquid fuel even now. The use of it can be

justified by adjusting the price of crude fuel to realistic levels. Some interests will say that the price of crude oil needs to be increased fourfold to make it viable, but I do not really believe that. At the Federal level, at last a great many politicians have suddenly become interested in driving their motor cars for the next 10 years, but it is a bigger problem than that.

In my maiden speech I said that the priorities for this country were: first, defence; second, essential transport; third, farming. In no way can we get around that. Essential transport must include a lot of road transport to railhead. I am pleased that the Government is proceeding with rail electrification.

It will have to look at ways and means of getting electrification into city transport, particularly in Brisbane. The city councils may not like it, but we must face the fact that the diesels will eventually run out of diesel fuel—it is as simple as that—and people because they will be unable to afford fuel, will not be able to take to the roads in cars. This will happen in 10 or 15 years and it will take 10 years to bring a solvent refined coal process on line. I am pleased to say that, in some spheres, the cry is being heeded. We will need fuel for defence. Some countries are burning their fuel up at an incredible rate while others are saving theirs with defence in mind. We should follow the latter example.

Farming cannot be undertaken these days with horse-drawn implements. In no way can we return to labour-intensive farming similar to that undertaken before the turn of the century. Australia enjoys a glorious role as an exporter of grain. If we have to return to horse-drawn or steam-drawn vehicles for planting and harvesting, we will be history; we will not survive. That will be yet another great Australian industry to go down. The National and Liberal Party interests have to guarantee the survival of the grain industry. The beef industry is tottering and precious little can be done about it, but the grain industry must be guaranteed fuel. A few years back, during a fuel strike, the grain industry faced a crisis. Defence reserves were drawn on to get the farmers out of their plight, but that procedure cannot be continued. The next fuel shortage will not be caused by a strike; it will be real and permanent. If the Federal Government cannot back the development of a solvent refined and liquid fuel process, the State Government must do so. It will involve an expenditure of about \$800 million to \$1,200 million. We need to set about doing it, and be seen to be doing it, in case the Federal funds never come to light.

At this moment a consortium from Germany is supposed to be examining the prospects of two sites in each of three States, that is, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The first site was to be given a full work-up from resources and feasibility

through to an environmental impact study with the idea of establishing a solvent refined coal and liquid fuel process. However, I was very disturbed to read a report in a recent Press release that the study was to be undertaken only in Victoria and New South Wales. In the near future our Minister for Mines, Energy and Police should indicate to Parliament whether that report was mistaken—whether it was an omission by the media or an outline of deliberate policy. I wrote to the Federal Minister, the Honourable Kevin Newman, seeking clarification on the point. I hope the information will be forthcoming that Queensland will have two sites considered. If that is done I believe that the first site to be considered should be Millmerran. I am not at all certain about the No. 2 site. Perhaps the Minister could indicate to us, as soon as feasible, where that site will be.

Mr. Moore: No. 1 should be Tarong.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: No. The honourable member has not heard the debate.

There has been much debate on Milan Brych. A great deal has been said about whether he is a charmer or a charlatan. I am afraid I am inclined to believe that he is a charlatan. In my opinion he has not demonstrated that he has anything to offer cancer sufferers beyond false hope. In the newspapers we have read of people pleading for vast sums of money—between \$9,000 and \$16,000—from the generous public so that they can go to the Cook Islands. I am sorry to say that the reports are coming through one by one that the people who have received this incredibly expensive treatment are in fact dying. Mr. Brych has achieved nothing for them beyond giving them false hope, and that is incredibly cruel.

With Milan Brych it is money before mercy. I am quite adamant about that. I do not believe he can patent his processes. I do not think he has anything to process. He has all the airs and mannerisms of the generator of a false religion. The discovery is always round the corner, as it was to those who went into the caves in the island of Crete, in the false religion they had of the worship of the Minotaur.

Milan Brych has had ample opportunity to demonstrate that he has something. He says that the best medical brains in this State cannot understand him. I refuse to believe that those people who are involved in all the aspects of cancer cannot understand what he has to offer. I believe that he uses cortisone in massive doses. I make that statement after observing people on television. They have the features of Cushing's disease or, as doctors would say, they are Cushing-oid. They are people who have been given massive doses of cortisone, which I tell this Parliament could have been achieved in Queensland under the National Health Scheme for \$6, \$8 or \$10, which is the price of three, four or five National

Health prescriptions. There is a big difference between \$10 and \$16,000. I would say this to cancer sufferers: "The man's after your money."

I believe that he also uses cytotoxic drugs, which are anti-cancer. In fact, they attack every tissue. I have given them to a young boy who suffers from a particular disease. It is rather strange, because I give him an intravenous drug with a tourniquet around his head. If I do not do that, he would lose his hair. Those drugs kill any and every tissue. They are the same sort of drugs as were postulated for the chemical shearing of sheep. I would be against that in case the workmen were affected by it. Those drugs are lethal. I believe he uses them in massive doses. Certainly he will knock the cancerous tissue back, but he will knock hair, bone, bone marrow and kill the lining of the gut and the bronchial tree. I believe that people have died in the Cook Islands from the effects of massive injections of cytotoxic drugs.

In my opinion he cruelly used Queensland because he was looking for a new power base in case of a change of Government in the Cook Islands. When that did not eventuate he was no longer concerned with Queensland or with setting up a clinic here. He may claim that he is—but will he? No, he won't. It is a spider-and-fly situation. He knows that the spiders are here waiting for him and that he is the fly. He did not like the way he was treated when he was here before; he will like it even less if he comes back. I would appeal to persons who have cancer to accept the word of their doctors, (certainly they could get second opinions), and stick to the advice of the Radium Institute and those specialists in this State who can and will treat cancer fully, sympathetically and effectively. There are a great many doing it even now, and they will continue to do so.

In the two minutes left of my allotted time, I would like to say that I am sorry people are outside on the footpath protesting, some of them to the point of arrest. I doubt whether they are as concerned in their protest as they are about being arrested. A great many of them come here to be arrested. I am afraid that is what they are about. I adopt the same stand as I did before the election, and my electors are aware of it. They voted for me on the issue. I spoke out about my attitude. I believe that the march legislation has to be amended. I will continue to believe that. I adopt that attitude because far too many police are employed containing and controlling people who wish to march. Those police should be involving themselves in other things. I have had people wait for five days for a fingerprint team to arrive. There should not be hundreds of police in one spot until their desks are cleared of their backlog of clerical work.

There are bigger issues at stake in this State than containing the marchers. I do not know how we would react if ever we had

real trouble. It is time we got back to having just sufficient police to control the marchers, which I believe should be held on Saturday afternoons when those taking part will not disrupt other citizens. If people insist on disrupting other citizens and police, to the point of arrest, they should get their just deserts. The penalties imposed on persons arrested in those circumstances are far too light. Realistic penalties should be imposed.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt): Order! I call the honourable member for Townsville South. I remind the House that this is the honourable member's maiden speech.

Mr. WILSON (Townsville South) (2.46 p.m.): On the occasion of this my maiden speech in this Assembly may I needlessly express the loyalty of the people of the electorate of Townsville South to the Crown and to this country of Australia.

I should like to thank my campaign director (Mr. David Parker), my campaign committee, branch members, and all the other people in Townsville South who worked so hard for the success we achieved.

As the newly elected representative for Townsville South, I have the honour of representing a very important part of Townsville, which is one of the fastest-growing cities in Australia. It will continue to grow at a fast rate.

The big industries in Townsville South are the copper refineries, cement works, and the Stuart and Ross River meatworks. No doubt as the city of Townsville grows, so too will the number of bigger type industries increase. As this is so, now is the time to plan for that expansion.

The most essential commodity for that growth (which seems to be overlooked) is water. If ever there is a city that was known for its water restrictions, it is Townsville. It is only in the past couple of years, since the building of the Five Head Creek Dam in the Upper Ross River area, that it has been free from water restrictions. This is, however, only a temporary affair, as the first stage of the dam, along with two pipelines from the Mt. Spec area, is estimated to be adequate only till 1980, and even when the second stage is built it will be adequate only until 1985, when the people in Townsville will be faced with a continuing water shortage, necessitating water restrictions.

Therefore it is essential to the people of Townsville and to the people in the whole of the Burdekin area that the Burdekin Dam be built at the falls to ensure that the people in this area have sufficient water for domestic purposes, agriculture and secondary industries.

The magnitude of the Burdekin Falls Dam, if built to its full height and capacity, can be gauged by a realisation that the

water held by it would back up for 50 miles up the Burdekin River and for 70 miles up the Suttor River. The volume of water stored would equal approximately six times that in Sydney Harbour.

As Australia is in the main a dry continent, we must become very conscious of the need for water conservation. The area from Mackay north to the tip of Cape York represents 5 per cent of the area of Australia, but the run-off of water in this area represents 30 per cent of the total for the whole of Australia.

The importance of such a project is vital to the vast areas surrounding it. The areas it could supply with water include Townsville city, Thuringowa shire, the Lower Burdekin area, the coastal plains between Mt. Elliott and the Elliott River and the Burdekin River valley below the Leichhardt Ranges. Other places that could be served with water are Bowen, Collinsville, Moranbah, Peak Downs and Goonyella mines. When viewed in its right perspective, as a source of water for mining, agricultural and secondary industries, as well as for the domestic supply of the ever-increasing population of the area (which now stands at approximately 150,000), and also as an energy source by way of hydroelectric power to help meet the future needs of the area, the building of the Burdekin Falls Dam becomes very important and indeed a must.

Secondary industries that, with a good supply of water, could be established in Townsville are a zinc refinery, fertiliser works, alumina plant and smelter, and an elementary phosphorus plant, with a steel smelter and works at Bowen. In the field of agriculture the Burdekin Falls Dam will supply the water needs to the ever-expanding sugar industry and the four mills in the area. Very importantly, too, it will stop the heavy drain on the underground water supply in the Lower Burdekin River, thereby offsetting the dangers of the encroachment of salt water into the underground water supply in that area and also along the coastal strip.

While sugar is the predominant crop in the Lower Burdekin area, I must say that rice also has become a very important crop. The long-grain rice growing in the area is considered to be the best in Australia, if not the world and has a large export potential, but because of the lack of water the area cannot grow enough rice to meet the needs of the home market let alone export any. I understand that large orders came in from New Zealand, the Middle East and Britain but all had to be turned down because they could not be fulfilled—and all because of the lack of water.

The Government has failed to give priority to the Burdekin Falls Dam scheme. Such a dam would be the only source that could ensure an adequate water supply to the expanding rice industry as well as look after and meet the needs of the whole area I have mentioned.

Maize, sorghum and cotton are also crops with a good potential, while other parts of the area would lend themselves to cattle-fattening and thus provide a source of supply to the meatworks at Merinda, Cape River, and the two Townsville works, Stuart and Ross River.

A paper entitled "An Industrial Development Model for the Burdekin River Basin, North Queensland", presented to the annual engineering conference of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, in May 1976, by G. L. Baker and T. L. Euler, described possible industrial projects which could be based on the resources of the Burdekin area in this way—

"(1) Additional sugar mill capacity; (2) fibre-based industries such as bagasse pulp, kenof pulp, elephant grass, furfurals; (3) starch-based industries, cassava chips, starch, maize and rice starch, single-cell protein; (4) molasses-based industries, ethyl alcohol, monosodiumglutamate, citric acid; (5) oil seed processing, soy bean and sunflower; (6) horticultural-based industries, mango and tomato products."

The submission on the water requirements and the water resource development in the Townsville and Lower Burdekin area by the Senate Standing Committee on Natural Resources goes into a lot of detail and I will content myself with quoting the last two paragraphs of its submissions—

"This submission concludes that if projected industrial growth rates are to be maintained and general development of the region is not to be restricted immediate action must be taken which will lead to the completion at the earliest practicable date of a surface water storage capable of satisfying the requirements of the region until at least the year 2000.

"It is considered that the Burdekin Falls Dam best meets this requirement, and that the role of the Commonwealth should be to accept financial responsibility for the implementation of this project."

After 21 years in office and all the evidence before it, the National-Liberal Party Government in this State still refuses to give this worthy and necessary project a priority. It is a deplorable state of affairs that a project as important as this, which was started in 1949 and the very early 1950s has been stopped. A project started by a Labor Government in the interests of the people in this area was stopped by the refusal of funds by a Liberal-Country Party Government in the Federal sphere. At that time the cost would have been minimal in comparison with today.

That reminds me of the electrification of Brisbane's suburban railways. That project also was stopped by a Country-Liberal Government in this State at about the same time. Now we are told that the Brisbane suburban railway system is to be electrified and the cost will be many times what it would have been if the project had been completed in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Moreover, the people of Brisbane would have had the benefit of electrification for at least the last 15 years.

So, too, the people in the Burdekin area from Townsville to Bowen would have had the benefit of an adequate water supply had money been made available for the construction of the Burdekin Dam. This dam would have greatly assisted with flood mitigation, and cane farmers and others in the Lower Burdekin area would not have suffered crop and property losses in the floods which have occurred in recent years. No doubt industrial growth in Townsville would have been greater and the population would have risen at a much faster rate if the area had had an adequate water supply, something which only the construction of the Burdekin Dam can guarantee.

In 1951 there was an appraisal of the potential of the area to which water could be reticulated from the Burdekin Dam, which was known as the Kemp report.

The Commonwealth Labor Government initiated a further report when it was in office because of the time which had elapsed since the previous report. That report on the resources and potential of the Burdekin River basin by the Burdekin project committee in June 1977 merely confirmed the 1951 Kemp report, except that it went further in one respect. It found that rice could successfully be grown in the area, a fact which was not known earlier.

So it is clear that the potential of the area covered in both reports will become even greater as time goes by. The Kemp report also recommended that a hydroelectric power-station be built, and this was confirmed by the Burdekin project committee report of June 1977.

Yet here we have the Government calling for yet another report to ascertain whether a hydroelectric power-station on the Burdekin Falls is a viable proposition. It would seem that if the people of Townsville and the rest of the Burdekin area are to get the water they need and deserve, it has to be proved beyond a shadow of doubt, at least to the Premier of Queensland, that a viable hydroelectric power-station can be built before the project is approved. As far as I can ascertain, Townsville is the only city in the world in which, before people can get a drink of water, they have to prove that a viable hydroelectric power-station can be incorporated in a water reticulation project. Surely this is a delaying tactic, a red herring drawn across the trail, to deny people in the Townsville and Burdekin areas something to which they are justly entitled while the money that should be made available is being spent elsewhere—the power-station at Tarong being a case in point.

While on the subject of the neglect of the Townsville, Burdekin and Hinchinbrook areas—the section of the Bruce Highway between Tully and Bowen would have to be the worst in the whole of the State. The

Flinders Highway from Townsville to Charters Towers is in a similar condition and is just another example of the Government's neglect of this part of the State. The closer one gets to Townsville, the worse the roads become. Both these highways are, in the main, narrow strips of bitumen, with narrow, one-lane and low-level bridges, and with long stretches subject to flooding where it is obvious that causeways and, in some places, bridges are required to keep these areas trafficable and to avoid travellers having to traverse long stretches of road covered with water. There are many such places. Some that come to mind are the reed beds near Giru, Helen Plains just south of Ingham and, of course, the area near the R.A.A.F. base at Garbutt. When one travels these roads, it is possible to pick out the sections of road that have been built by day labour and those sections that have been built by the profit-motivated contract system called private enterprise. On those sections done by day labour—that is, the Main Roads Department's work-force or the shire council's work-force—though the road is narrow it is reasonably smooth and has a long-wearing surface. If it has been done by contract, it is not long before settlement of the foundations begins and the road surface undulates. One would think that one was in a small craft at sea and not travelling a stable road by car.

Another example is the section of the Bruce Highway between the Cluden Racecourse and the Stuart Drive-in Picture Theatre. Here the settlement of the foundations of the road has brought about very marked cracking of the bitumen, the cracks running along the road. There is a need for the building-up of the day-labour force of the Main Roads Department in order to build roads that will stand up to the heavier forms of road transport today.

While we are talking of roads, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we become very mindful of the speed restrictions that are placed on different areas. One asks oneself whether they are designed to protect the public or to gather revenue for the Government, because there are great anomalies in speed restrictions in various areas. For example, Woolcock Street, from Kings Road to Hugh Street, which is wide open, with no buildings along it—in fact, there is a salt-pan on each side over the greater part—and no street lighting, has a 60 km/h speed limit, and possibly rightly so. But on the highway through the suburb of Oonoonba, a built-up area with street lighting, the speed limit is 70 km/h and almost all of the children who go to the Oonoonba State School have to cross the highway. The speed limit has been reduced from 80 km/h to 70 km/h only since that part of the highway has been declared an export road, and that is in spite of the efforts of the people of Oonoonba to have the speed limit reduced to 60 km/h, which would be more in keeping with the safety of the children who attend school.

The position at Wulguru is even worse, for the speed limit through that suburb is 80 km/h even though it is built up on each side of the highway, with adults and schoolchildren having to cross the highway. It still remains an 80 km/h zone despite the efforts of the people of Wulguru to have it changed, in the interests of safety, to 60 km/h. It appears that once the bureaucrats have made a decision rightly or wrongly, they refuse to alter it.

While still on the subject of roads, I might say that we in Townsville are having our streets attended to, thanks to the Australian Labor Party city council. In the older areas of Townsville road-works on streets are being carried out for the first time in 30 years, and in some cases more, and I again thank the Australian Labor Party administration in the city council. But although good work is being done, there is need for much more work to be done on roads, kerbing and channelling, parks and gardens, sewerage and other public works, and a safety fence should be built along the greater part of the road up Castle Hill, which is a tourist attraction.

All this takes money—money which should be forthcoming from the State and Federal Governments by way of grants. The individual is paying enough by way of income tax at 38 per cent, which, incidentally, is higher than the amount that was paid during the Second World War—a world conflict that threatened our very existence. Of course, there were Labor Governments in both State and Federal spheres at that time.

The people are taxed too highly now without being asked to face up to the ever-escalating cost of rates to meet the needs of local government because sufficient moneys by way of grants are not forthcoming from the State and Federal Governments. Local authorities should be able to receive grants direct from the national Parliament. If they were able to do so, local authorities outside the metropolitan area may get a fair go.

In connection with the State Works Department—there is a great need for additional pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools in the Townsville area. Whenever a primary school is built a pre-school, too, should be constructed in the area, as there would be a need for a pre-school. A high school is urgently needed in the Kirwan area. A primary school and pre-school should be built on the reserve at the bottom end of Thompson Street and a pre-school is required at Oonoonba. As well, a second general hospital is needed in Townsville and it should be built in the western suburbs and used as a training hospital in conjunction with the James Cook University, which should be built up to cover all faculties, including medicine.

I turn now to the greatest social evil of our time—unemployment. It is most degrading for a person to be unemployed, because he feels that he is not part of society and is

unable to pull his weight in society. Although he is healthy, willing and able to work, he is denied the right to work in a country and in a State as rich as ours. And rich our State must be, because we are continually being told of the untold wealth of its minerals. Despite that, this State has the highest percentage of unemployment—well above the national average.

How is it, then, that, with so much work that needs to be done, this State that is so rich in resources has the highest percentage of unemployment? Surely something must be wrong—drastically wrong—with the form of government we have. Surely it is up to the Government to see that the people of Queensland receive their share of the wealth this State provides and that such wealth is used to create full employment for our work-force in doing the jobs and building the things that are required to meet the needs of the people.

I have said that there is a need for water conservation, for hydroelectric power from the Burdekin Dam scheme, for the upgrading of highways and the Mt. Isa railway line, for the building of hospitals and schools as well as for many types of works programmes in the local government area. The first question the Government will ask will be, "Where is the money to come from?" The answer is quite clear—"From the mineral wealth of this State, wealth which rightfully belongs to the people." It behoves the Government of the State to ensure that the people of this State get their rightful share of that wealth. The placing of a realistic royalty and an export charge on our minerals will enable this State to carry out in the interests of its people a works programme that would not only meet the needs of the people but also ensure employment for all who want it.

Two places where a realistic royalty is charged on the export of mineral wealth come to mind. The first is the Province of Alberta in Canada, where a 35 per cent royalty is charged. In other words, of every 100 barrels of oil produced, the people of Alberta receive 35 barrels. I understand that in order not to embarrass the neighbouring Province, charges have not been reduced in the past couple of years.

I also refer to the Arab States of Iraq and Iran, where the royalties are 50 per cent. That means that for every 100 barrels of oil produced, the States receive a 50-barrel share. That puts those countries into the money-lending, not the borrowing, area. This State, with all its mineral wealth, should be in the same position.

The money raised from mineral royalties should be used for getting on with labour-intensive jobs that bring long-range benefits as well as for all the little jobs that need to be done. We have the need; we have the know-how; we have the work-force; and the money is available in this very State if the Government really cares for Queensland and the people in it.

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (3.10 p.m.): I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and to reaffirm my loyalty to the Queen and to Sir James Ramsay, her appointed representative in Queensland.

I congratulate Mr. Speaker on his re-election to office and thank him for his help in the past three years. Unfortunately, his election was marred by undisciplined behaviour on both sides of the House. I hope that will never be allowed to occur again. It is hard to believe that such an important election should be turned into a free-for-all. I am sure that anyone who was in the public gallery at the time would agree with me.

During this debate much has been said about water storage. The storage of water and associated difficulties continue to be a problem in South-east Queensland. The decision to locate the next power-station at Tarong has highlighted the need for a complete review of water storage. It is apparent that the water supply necessary for existing users and future needs must be closely examined. I have in mind especially the envisaged coal-conversion plant at Millmerran. It would be dishonest of me to say that I believe that the decision to build the new powerhouse at Tarong was correct. Quite simply I do not. Cabinet made its decision with far more facts at its disposal than ever I could muster or would be able to look at in the time available to me. It is Cabinet's right to make these decisions and I have no argument with that. I will remain disappointed, of course, that Millmerran's huge potential was bypassed. This huge potential could remain in the ground for a considerable time.

I know that the guaranteed availability of water posed many problems to those making a decision. Glenlyon and Coolmunda Dams were built for irrigation purposes. The Cunningham Dam and a second stage for Glenlyon were contemplated, but in the first place these dams and the Coolmunda Dam were considered for irrigation purposes. They may have provided the water necessary for a new powerhouse at Millmerran, but there were doubts that the New South Wales Government would see eye to eye on how much water could be made available. There was certainly no guarantee that enough water would be made available for the powerhouse project at Millmerran or, for that matter, how much water would be needed for the New South Wales irrigation scheme that is contemplated.

The importance of irrigation not only to Queensland, but also to the whole of Australia, must be recognised. Previous speakers have emphasised the importance of water to provincial cities. Water is extremely important, especially for irrigation purposes. I do not think anyone would disagree with that. Returns from irrigation are considerable. In

the Condamine Basin area of the Darling Downs alone, irrigation returns \$14,000,000 a year. We must project and protect this development. Toowoomba's prosperity depends on it.

There is always a tendency to forget that we experience prolonged droughts. Rainfall in the past seven years has been fairly average. Some areas have received very heavy rain while others have not received any. Areas where droughts occur most often have had a fairly good season. However, come droughts of the future and we will need our dams, bores and irrigation more than ever, because we are more dependent than ever on them. This Government recognises that need. Those who have experienced droughts, as I have many times in the past, will confirm that.

What concerns me more, however, is our complete dependence on liquid fuels—oil to feed the tractors and pumps, the trucks and the trains that our whole economy depends on. Without oil, we would be destitute. Experts from around the world have warned us that within 30 years—I have heard a member of this House say 15 years, but I believe it is about 30 years—this nation will be suffering from a short supply of fuel. If fuel is denied to us for our tractors and trains, the economy of this country will collapse. Without liquid fuel, a nation like ours is virtually defenceless. It is a warning we should heed. Therefore, we should give the utmost priority to the matter by implementing projects such as Millmerran as soon as possible.

Millmerran coal is possibly the most suitable for conversion in Queensland. Its huge deposits, converted to oil, would give supplies for years to come. At present the cost is prohibitive. However, one has only to study the problem to realise that the costs are comparative, since the Federal Government's decision to align our crude oil prices more closely with those on the world market. Taking into account that world prices could continue to rise, which might happen through international price rises, serious devaluation of the Australian dollar or a war in the Middle East (as happened before), a 40 per cent rise in the retail price is not impossible to believe.

Mr. Tenni: You only want a 20 per cent rise to make the production of pure alcohol from sugar-cane a viable proposition.

Mr. WARNER: Yes, it might be 20 per cent.

The cost of crude oil could be doubled, or go even higher. Nobody really has the figures. Nobody really knows. The last oil crunch came in 1973-74 and resulted from an Arab-Israeli war. That could happen again. It is the most explosive area in the world. At that time prices jumped fivefold. The next price jolt could be just as bad. Who knows where the money will come

from or what it will come from? Because of these factors, oil from coal must become a commercially viable scheme. Generally most big international oil companies remain sceptical. We all know why. They believe that coal conversion costs have to be a lot lower before it will be a commercial proposition.

It has already been proved that vast Queensland shale deposits could be viable, and assessments put operating and maintenance costs for producing oil from shale at only \$3.75 per barrel. That sounds very low, but these are the figures given to me. They compare with today's current international oil price of \$13. Already the Bechtel Corporation is examining production proposals for the Rundel oil shale deposits. They are as large as 250,000 barrels a day, which is about the current level of crude oil imports into this country. There are also reports of total reserves of oil shale in Australia of 3,000 billion barrels—an enormous reserve, in anyone's language. It is of absolutely no worth to us at all in the ground. It is already known that deposits in the Gladstone area alone could contain over one billion barrels of oil. A similar field at Julia Creek is known to contain about the same amount. Towards the end of the century we may well need the energy that can be obtained not only from shale and coal but also electric traction. Also we may have to produce it on our own farms.

The establishment of an S.R.C. plant at Millmerran is still dependent on a decision by the Japanese to construct it. I repeat that no decision has been made by the Japanese to construct anything at Millmerran under three years. Although it has been announced as being definite in this State, without a powerhouse base it is highly unlikely to be built until the 1990s. That would be far too late. Owing to the inflation associated with a project of this kind, the cost will be enormous. This plant should have received high priority as a training ground in respect of larger plants which will be necessary if liquid fuel is in short supply within 30 years or less.

Millmerran is in my area. I again mention my disappointment that this plant was not established there before this. It could have produced a vast number of products ranging from heavy oil residues to acid bases and a full range of oil liquids. These could be produced from variations of such an S.R.C. plant. One has only to consider Germany's effort in World War II to realise how easily it did it. These processes are very important to Australia. They are more important than most people believe.

Our proven reserves of oil are limited. We do not have any reserves of heavy-type oils. The Bass Strait field cannot continue to cushion us for much longer. New finds have not been made yet, although they are being looked for at the present moment. It is important that we plan ahead and make

sure that we are not left without liquid fuels. Had the decision favoured Millmerran as the site for the next powerhouse, it would have helped to give some security in Australia for the future.

Whatever part water may have played in the decision taken by Cabinet to place the powerhouse elsewhere, it was purely a matter of priority and economics rather than a lack of water supply. If there is a deficiency of supply from the stated sources, such as Glenlyon Dam and Coolmunda Dam—and I believe there is—we must look at other sources that are available.

The diversion of only portion of the water from the Clarence River into the headwaters of the Condamine River is not a pipe-dream but a practical solution to a huge problem of water shortage for all uses in the Condamine Basin and South-west Queensland. Already the Condamine River is overcommitted. It is overcommitted so much that, as I have pointed out here on many occasions, water for household purposes could be in short supply in towns such as Dalby and Millmerran itself.

The catchment area of the Clarence River is one of the largest in Australia. It is some 8,500 sq miles in area. Its potential is equal to, if not greater than, that of the mighty Snowy River scheme, which has a catchment area of something like 2,000 sq miles. The Clarence River area has a rainfall of some 70 in., whereas the Snowy River area has only 60 in. The potential of the Clarence River is tremendous.

For many years the Condamine Basin has urgently required water. It could get an assured supply from this source which, if implemented today, would be a feasible project and would reduce the number of dams that would be necessary for the development of the whole Condamine Basin. We would be kidding ourselves if we did not think we had to produce more water for that area in the future. At the present time Toowoomba is finding difficulty in even completing the Cressbrook Dam with the money available for that project. That is the last dam from which we can get water for Toowoomba itself. If my suggestion was adopted, there would be no need to build the second stages of the Glenlyon and Leslie Dams. More than enough water would be available from the Clarence. However, I am not suggesting that we should not build them. I believe that we should develop every source of water supply available, and that means Tarong as well.

The development of such cities as Toowoomba and Warwick from this source would be assured, and such projects as the Millmerran S.R.C. plant and further irrigation projects would be assisted. I can assure everyone that we need the development of further irrigation projects in the Condamine Basin at the present moment.

Every year the problems facing Queensland in providing adequate water are becoming more evident and every year I have risen in this House and stressed the need to have adequate supplies of this most essential commodity and its importance not only to this area and Queensland generally but also to Australia. The ultimate development of Queensland, especially such cities as Toowoomba, will depend entirely on how much water is available in these areas and the extent to which this water can be harvested.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What about the water in "Drayton Harbour"?

Mr. WARNER: I shall speak about that later.

The growth of urban areas means that much of the water now being stored for agricultural purposes will soon have to be diverted to domestic purposes and it is very evident that every means will have to be employed to see that this is avoided. Already provincial towns and cities are thinking along the lines that water for domestic purposes should take precedence over water for irrigation. That is an argument in itself. We must ensure that irrigation projects continue and that not a drop of water is wasted, and in the light of our regional water shortage a diversion scheme such as the Clarence proposal becomes virtually inevitable. This is not the first time the proposal has been raised. In 1967 it was mentioned in this House, but it was dropped like so many other things have been dropped. I hope that this Government will give urgent consideration to this proposal and urge our national authorities to do likewise and determine an overall plan to provide adequate water for South-east Queensland and possibly the whole of Queensland.

A comprehensive scheme to divert water from the Clarence has been devised by eminent engineers and awaits only favourable consideration from the State and Federal Governments to be placed on a priority listing, and that priority becomes more urgent each day. I believe that it should be given priority right now.

I do not like to raise subjects that have been mentioned in this House over and over again, but I believe that I should remind the House that two years ago several members of the Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs committee found that affairs at Aurukun and Mornington Island were getting out of hand, and it was evident then that the administration was breaking down and would have to be resolved one way or another. However, I believe that the question has now been resolved and will be brought to the attention of the Government within a few days. There was no doubt in my mind that the Aboriginal people were suffering then from dietary deficiencies. That was quite obvious to everyone. There were also reports

that only 40 per cent of pupils were attending school. That fact was also very obvious when we were there. All recent reports confirmed our findings then, and it was indeed no surprise to read a further report that the store operating in the area was at one stage approximately \$66,000 behind in its accounts and was charging customers more for goods than comparable stores were on other reserves. That fact was brought to the attention of the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs.

Because the situation at Aurukun and Mornington Island has to be resolved, I believe it is important to draw to the attention of the public the fact that when we went there it was to investigate not mining but the conditions of the Aborigines themselves, and I do not want honourable members to forget that. It seems to me that in recent discussions about this matter we are always talking about the bauxite deposits and not the Aborigines, but it was about the problems of the Aborigines that we reported to this House.

At the time of our report very few Aborigines were involved in any outside work or projects which would have helped them to assimilate into the wider community. That was very obvious because we saw that the cold-storage facilities provided were not being used and that several other projects that had been initiated by this Government had been closed down, and I instance in particular the timber mill.

It is Government policy to support Aborigines on reserves, wherever possible giving them opportunities to become involved in outside work which will help to assimilate them into the community and eventually to remove the need for reserves and thus ease the huge burden on the taxpayers. It has been a burden for many, many years, and the situation must be resolved. I believe this policy is being implemented on most other reserves, although I appreciate the peculiar difficulties associated with Aurukun and Mornington Island. One has only to go there to see what they are.

I believe that few would doubt the sincerity of the churches in the past and their efforts to improve the welfare of the Aborigines. That their efforts have not proved to be adequate is unfortunate, but that they have not been adequate has been proven by what we have seen in the past few weeks. Although there are a few dedicated churchmen who are still prepared to work to improve conditions on those reserves, the isolation and oppressive conditions in these areas, where for at least nine months of the year the wet season completely cuts people off from access to the outside world, make their task a difficult one and there is little reward for the work they perform. We are all very concerned about these reserves, but I believe progress will always be slow under the conditions I have mentioned.

When one considers that \$750,000 was allocated to these two reserves last year, and no doubt will be again this year, one must begin to wonder what has happened to that money. Both the State and Federal Governments have already made more finance available to improve housing on both reserves. There is no doubt that it is a real problem and that not enough has been done. But when one considers the isolation, one also realises how little can be done in each year. Every building costs at least four times as much as a comparable building in Brisbane. A small house on Mornington Island could cost as much as \$50,000. This brings me to the question whether we are building the right type of house for Aborigines in those areas. As much as we readily accept western-type housing, I do not believe the true Aborigine accepts it. Such housing is certainly not accepted at places such as Doomadgee, which we visited, I spoke to the manager there and asked him why so many Aborigines were living in tents on the river bank. He said that, although there were houses available, they did not want to live in them.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Because the Government won't build homes for them.

Mr. WARNER: I am not suggesting that we should give them tents and not provide houses; what I am suggesting is that we should go into the question of housing far more deeply than we have, and possibly ask the Aborigines on the reserves what they would be happy to live in.

Although many allegations have been made by the Opposition—and we have just heard an interjection from a member of the Opposition who is not sitting in his own seat—that the Government is not doing the right thing by Aborigines in Queensland, it should be remembered that Queensland has approximately 60,000 Aborigines, which is one-third of the Aboriginal population of Australia. These allegations are, of course, unfounded, and I believe that the State Government is being consistent in its approach to Aborigines and other Queenslanders.

That is about the last thing I could say about the Australian Labor Party, which apparently believes that if oil or minerals were found in the backyard of any white Australian, he would not be entitled to them, but that if they were found in the backyard of a coloured or indigenous person, he would have a right to them. It was also mentioned in this Chamber that Red Indians in America were able to call these reserves their own, but mineral rights were shared in the interests of all citizens of the United States and were not available exclusively to people of Indian extraction. I will oppose anything that takes away the rights of Queenslanders, and I include both Aborigines and people of white Australian descent.

Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (3.37 p.m.): In speaking to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Governor's

Opening Speech, it is my pleasure to assert my loyalty to the Crown in the person of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I hope that the day will never come when this preamble will no longer be necessary. By that I mean that I hope the A.L.P. will never hold the reins of office in the Federal sphere to bring about a republic, which is one of the major planks in the party's platform.

I congratulate the Governor, Sir James Ramsay, on the splendid job that he has done since he took up that position, and I also thank Lady Ramsay for the important part that she plays. Although they are down-to-earth people, people with whom the man in the street is able to speak easily, they carry out their office with the dignity that has been characteristic of all past Governors and Governor-Generals.

I congratulate the mover of the motion, the honourable member for Southport, for the splendid speech that he made. He is a young man of military bearing. He has served his country, and he will play a very important part in this Assembly. Every new member has a certain number of teething problems and has to learn where the toilet is. The honourable member for Southport has now found where the toilet is, so he will be right. In virtually every job one has to find out where one is going. As a matter of fact, members of Parliament do not really settle into the House till they have been here for one term. It is about three years before they really know where they are going.

In fact, quite some time elapses before a newcomer really feels that he is a member of Parliament and learns how to conduct himself. When I met someone, I used to say, "I'm Bob Moore, member for Windsor." Now I say, "I'm Bob Moore, and to hell with you. If you want to find out who I am, you will.", and it doesn't bother me.

I also congratulate the seconder of the motion, the honourable member for Warwick. He is a man with a good rural background, a man who knows the dairying industry. He has pride in rural industries and will play a major part in this Chamber. He does not indulge in much fulmination but displays a great deal of common sense, and he will be an attribute to this Chamber.

His predecessor, David Cory, retired after contributing 14 years—and 14 good years—to this Assembly, and he always made responsible and reasonable contributions to debates. With a property in Warwick and a young son, he felt that there was a need to establish his own holdings on a firm footing so that there will be something viable for him to hand over to his son when the time comes. In addition, his son will be able not only to grow up in his company but also to become his mate. One of the problems of being a member of this Assembly who does his job properly and attends to everything that is virtually forced upon him is that it is his family who have to pay the price. The children of a member who has served here for a long time are likely to

have a great kinship or friendship with their mother but not really know their father very well. That is a terrible price to have to pay to be a member of Parliament.

In spite of all the criticism about the number of days that Parliament sits in a year, the work of a parliamentarian is almost unending to the tune of 15 or 16 hours a day. The wives of members are called upon to do a great amount of work, too. My wife would put in 10 hours a week. Whatever I am paid for my work, my wife makes a voluntary contribution of about 10 hours a week. It is not all beer and skittles; but I am not complaining. Of all the jobs I have done, none has been more challenging. Very few persons in this Assembly do not accept challenges. If they did not accept challenges they would not be here. One would imagine from reading the Press that members of Parliament are weak-kneed, lily-livered fellows without any guts. Since I have been here I have not seen one member who, when a certain situation has arisen, has not stood up to be counted and thereby placed his own position in jeopardy. That sort of thing is never reported in the Press. All the Press is interested in is hearing news before it happens so that it can speculate upon it. It does not hear much from me, so it cannot speculate.

I congratulate Mr. Speaker on his reelection unopposed. I thank him for a job well done. I have served in this House under three Speakers. I know it is in bad taste to make comparisons, but in these circumstances I do not mind telling the truth. In my time in this House we have never had a better Speaker. When we consider the present privileges and conditions of members and staff, and the functioning of Parliament in a proper and worth-while way, we realise that we will have to go a very long way to find another Speaker as good as Mr. Houghton.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I have to go through all these little preambles before I take Opposition members apart. They will be taken apart in a moment or two.

I congratulate the new members on both sides of the House and wish them well. It is true that during an election campaign we fight our opponents tooth and nail in an attempt to get our own candidates in.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You are very dirty.

Mr. MOORE: I get a bit dirty, but so do my opponents. Once members get into this House very few of them fail to do their very best the way they see it. There are those whose philosophies I do not accept, and at next election I will be doing my best to get rid of them. But while they are here they are doing the best they can for their side, and I wish them and their families well.

As this is a debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech, it is virtually the Governor's Opening Speech that should be replied to, so I will attempt to do that. The Governor's speech is prepared for him by Cabinet and as the head of Government he reads the speech of his Government.

One of the first topics in the Governor's Opening Speech concerns the responsible way in which the Government obtained an extra \$50,000,000 to be used on capital works to try to overcome the unemployment problem in Queensland. That was a mere drop in the ocean, but building and other similar work is self-generating. If someone buys timber or manufactured product it has to be processed by someone else, so the benefit spreads along the line. That \$50,000,000 meant a lot of dollars in a lot of pockets. The Treasurer did his best, but he would like to have provided more money.

Mining was the next matter referred to by the Governor. Without mining in Queensland and its effect on our balance of payments, our Federal colleagues who decry and ridicule us and consider us to be living in the deep North would be in trouble. I don't care how damn deep the North is, I wouldn't want to be in the cold South, where the sun is like our moon, giving a little light but no heat.

We have vast quantities of coal which could be tapped not by underground mining but merely by removing up to 60 feet of overburden with modern draglines and so on. That would uncover seams of coal 10 to 12 feet deep and the coal could be handled quite cheaply. At the same time a goodly number of virtually unskilled people could be employed. Underground mining, on the other hand, is a highly skilled, unhealthy game, made hazardous by coal dust, black damp and so on, which do not affect open-cut mining.

We have vast quantities of coal in Queensland and we are still finding additional coal-fields. However, to some extent we are considered to be irresponsible because we are exporting so much coal. It is the Government's policy to leave in the ground more coal than is removed for export. Irrespective of the quantity of coal contained in a lease, the authority to export covers less than half. We are doing something to protect the future. But our future should not be looked at in terms of 50 to 100 years. In historical terms we think of Magna Charta as coming into being only yesterday, yet it was signed in 1215. I should like to think that now we are looking ahead 700 or 800 years and are not intent on using up every last natural resource. If we had such an intent, posterity could well say, "Cripes, they were burning up the coal, that wonderful natural resource, that great chemical compound from which, by one form of conversion or another, we

could make plastics, all forms of chemicals, dyes and building materials." Coal is virtually too good to burn. We should be looking at using H₂O—water—and breaking it down with electrolysis or some catalytic system whereby we use the hydrogen and the oxygen becomes a by-product and is not a pollutant.

The expenditure on coking coal at Norwich Park is estimated at \$550,000,000. One of the great advantages in exporting coking coal for use in overseas blast furnaces for the manufacture of steel and so on is that the top layer of coal, which is softer, is available to us. It is a different grade of coal—in effect, a steaming coal.

The Department of Mines has agreements with the various mining companies that the overlay of steaming coal is to be transported to our powerhouses—Gladstone, for example—at a cost of \$6 a tonne, which is virtually less than production cost. Various people complain about the cost of electricity in Queensland. However, if we were paying world market prices for our coal, our electricity would be about twice its present price. I hope that we can continue to enjoy the subsidising of local production by overseas exports. Although no-one sees it in that light, that is what is happening. There are those who do not believe that the Government has any foresight; but what more can we do?

We should also remember that, company tax being what it is, for every dollar a mining company earns the Commonwealth gets 43c or 47c. People ask, "Why haven't we got a controlling interest?" To earn a return of 8 per cent interest on capital invested, we would have to put in hundreds or thousands of millions of dollars; but we can get 43 per cent for putting in nothing. If we did have a controlling interest, with our bungling, I wonder how effective it would be. It would probably run at a loss. So very little just criticism can be levelled at us on that score.

The Governor spoke also about electricity generation, for which we will be spending about \$181,000,000 this year. All these projects mean work. However, it is saddening to me that, whilst we are spending vast amounts of money in many areas, there is unemployment in other areas. I refer to industries such as footwear, textiles, light machinery, television, electronics and the other areas in which, because of our Federal policy, there is virtually no tariff protection. We are quite prepared to pay the plumber \$160 a week and the electrician \$160 a week; but we are saying to the fellow who makes our footwear or our garments that he must compete with the Taiwanese on \$30 a week. It is a little unreasonable to single out one section.

To a certain extent we adopt that attitude with those involved in primary production. We say, for example, "Your beef prices will

be based upon the world market price." Because it is low now, they are giving the party. We have people engaged in primary industries whose income is so low that the women are turning their dresses inside out and sewing them up the other way to make ends meet. They are making their own soap and doing many other things to make ends meet. Therefore, if the rest of the community is prosperous, it is necessary for us to take a serious look at the rural industries also. Let us spread it around a little bit.

Mr. Akers interjected.

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member is not doing too badly. All the architects I see are running around in Rolls-Royces and Mercedes Benzes. I am driving a 1961 Austin Freeway.

Mr. Davis: You're lucky to have that.

Mr. MOORE: As the honourable member for Brisbane Central says, I am lucky to have that, because, if the A.L.P. were in power, I would be back on a push-bike.

The next problem concerns the Wivenhoe Dam. I am completely in accord with the Government's proposals concerning that dam, which will assist in flood mitigation in Brisbane. Many suburbs of Brisbane are built virtually on a flood plain, and we experience a very severe flood once or twice a century. Because there is no suitable place for a dam on the Bremer River, flooding from that river will continue to have a bad effect on Brisbane.

Wivenhoe Dam, with its vast catchment area and storage, will be very beneficial in many ways, including flood mitigation as well as water supply. As the Premier said today Australia is a dry continent. It is dry most of the time with a sprinkling of good seasons, rather than having good seasons with a sprinkling of droughts.

I believe that a small confidence trick was played in relation to the Wivenhoe project. The powers that be have been conned into providing a hydroelectric scheme. During the off-peak period in electricity use, water will be pumped uphill so that it can flow down during the peak hours. Surely they will know when to expect the peak load so that the boilers can be flashed? This complex will burn up our coal and other resources to pump water uphill so that it can run down again (with all the inefficiencies of pumping) for electricity production (with all the inefficiencies of turbines). We will not gain by it. In addition, there is the capital cost. I think it was a confidence trick. Someone wanted to put something down on a piece of paper. He drew large blueprints and we fell for it. Actually, I did not fall for it but I got done in my party room. I never did agree with it.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. MOORE: It would be an engineer who needed the money. It would not be an architect. Architects are out of work, but the engineers in this field must be doing all right.

Criticism has been raised in this House, and the Premier has given a fairly good explanation, concerning Tarong and Millmerran. I served on the Minister's committee, but one is never privy to all of the information and details.

I do know that Tarong coal is steaming coal. It is not suitable for anything else in the short term, apart from such by-products as plastic. By comparison with Millmerran coal, it is suitable only as steaming coal. In the Tarong district and the Barker's Creek area, the rainfall is 10 inches a year better than in Millmerran or the catchment areas of the northern district of New South Wales where dams would have been built had Millmerran been chosen.

Millmerran coal is very suitable for use in a petrochemical plant. According to the various journals and other information I have read, the production of petrol and other fuels from coal is not a simple process. However, it is surprising what can be done when necessary. It certainly becomes harder if an unsuitable type of coal is used for the purpose. Millmerran coal is suitable so, for that reason alone, Cabinet should be supported in its decision on the siting of the new powerhouse.

The Governor mentioned apprenticeship training and the introduction of an Industrial Training Commission. Our high school children are being taught a lot of gobbledegook and their time is being wasted in being taught all sorts of humanities subjects. They are being taught very little of practical use. I wonder whether these young men and women before leaving school could not be far better trained for their first years of apprenticeship. If they were taking on an electrical apprenticeship they would need two or three years of solid theory. Several honourable members are highly efficient electricians and they know that electrical theory is not an easy course. A person can be a good and practical electrician, but he is of little use unless he knows his theory. Many of the high schools could well be used for teaching the basic principles of electricity, carpentry, plumbing, drainage, electronics, spray-painting, panel-beating and many other trades. There is no need to have a special technical college to do that. The teacher-pupil ratio would be fairly low. When the students leave school and take on a trade course, they could then attend the various technical colleges to further their education on the more practical side.

In the Governor's Opening Speech he mentioned a scheme to enable public servants to retire at age 60. If we take into account that a youth leaves school at around 18 or 20, if he has university training and he can expect to retire at age 60, it means he is only working for half his life and then

he can retire and live in luxury. If there is to be a retiring age of 60, there should be no compulsion on any person to retire then but he should be allowed to keep on working until he is 70 or 80 if he wants to; he should not be compulsorily retired.

Mr. Fouras: There is no compulsion under this scheme for a person to retire at 60.

Mr. MOORE: What is the honourable member talking about? He's a galah!

Mr. Fouras: The compulsory retiring age is 65.

Mr. MOORE: I never mentioned 65. The honourable member should clean his ears out.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Row): Order! The Chair warns honourable members against using intemperate language and it does not countenance cross-fire in the Chamber.

Mr. MOORE: The Governor in his Opening Speech also mentioned the Police Force and the proposal to make greater use of computers. To my mind, computers are useless. For instance, if a person goes to buy a windscreen wiper blade for his motor vehicle he is told that it is not available, and when he asks when it will be available he is told that it is programmed by the computer to be available in three weeks' time. The same is true of a part for a carburettor, a set of brakes or points for a generator. If we want inefficiency, we should introduce computers. No-one knows what is going on until someone presses a button. We are told that for a policeman to be effective, whether he is a detective or a constable in the local police station, he must have an intimate knowledge of his district. He must know what is happening around him on a day-to-day basis. But if he is to be replaced by a computer which stores all this knowledge and it is not passed on to policemen except those few in the computer programming section, I think we are making a sad mistake. If we are going to use computers simply to identify quickly a motor vehicle registration number or something of that nature they can, of course, play a major part, but use of computer programmes which take immediate contact with people away from the lower echelon of the force would be a tragic mistake.

Dr. Lockwood interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, it would be a mistake. We are introducing more and more computers, and they lack the human touch.

Mr. Fouras: Don't human beings make mistakes?

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member's father made one.

Port facilities are continually being improved. The new conveyor-belt system for coal-loading at Lucinda Point will be a

great asset. Because of the cost of labour we have shifted away from the system which is used in countries like India and China, where coolies with baskets on their heads run around like little ants loading coal. We are upgrading our port facilities not only at Lucinda Point but also in the port of Brisbane at Fisherman Islands.

Mr. Bishop interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know how the honourable member is going to put the tourist industry on a conveyor belt. How would he do that?

Mr. Bishop: Why not?

Mr. MOORE: I am happy to do that. If the honourable member will just give me a hint, I will help him.

Mr. Bishop: New wharves.

Mr. MOORE: Now I see the point the honourable member is making. He has reminded me of something connected with wharves and the tourist industry. If people disembark from any tourist vessel in Brisbane and do not fall through the wharf and break their leg, and have to spend their time in Brisbane in one of our good hospitals, then they get splinters through their thongs. We certainly need facilities for tourist shipping similar to those at a modern airport. There is no reason why those facilities cannot be provided, and no doubt they will be in the new port.

Unfortunately, most industry is on the northern bank of the Brisbane River and our port facilities are being provided on the southern side and, unless there is some form of barge transport, goods will have to be transported by road an extra 20 miles through heavy traffic, which will lead to chaos. What we really need is a tunnel under the river. No doubt there will be complaints from people in North Queensland about the amount of money being spent in Brisbane, especially on the new port facility, but to my mind a tunnel giving easy access to the mouth of the river would be part and parcel of the port facility.

Mr. Bishop: Or a bridge.

Mr. MOORE: I am not a bridge man. We have the problem of aircraft using the airport which is near where a bridge would have to be built, and in addition there are maintenance problems. But a tunnel would not suffer from any of these problems.

Mr. Bertoni: Do you think you might be able to get a tunnel or a bridge on the Leichhardt River out at Mt. Isa?

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member for Mt. Isa is being facetious. The Leichhardt River flows into Lake Moondarra, as does the effluent from the sewerage system. There are miles and miles of plains around Mt. Isa onto which the effluent could be pumped as irrigation, or perhaps used to

water the racecourse, but lo and behold, it runs into the drinking water. So when the honourable member fixes his drinking water, I will fix up the tunnel.

Mr. Casey: It's what they call recycling.

Mr. MOORE: Yes, through humans—a good system!

The next problem—and it is a very real problem—is with the beef cattle industry. The price to the Brisbane housewife of rump steak on the table is about \$1.30 a lb.—quite expensive—but the grower is getting virtually nothing for his beef. We have a stabilised marketing system in the sugar industry; we have egg quotas; but we have not yet been able to solve the problem of the beef industry.

The fact is that a number of people in the dairying industry took advantage of the opportunity offered by amalgamation. Because they could not afford to pay labour, the simplest way of producing income was to run beef stock. If they were in tick-infested country, they had to dip the cattle only once every three weeks, which was a reasonable amount of maintenance to keep the herd progressing before it went to market. Because they then had more time available, if they were in country on which grain would grow they could have a beef-cattle and grain farm.

I have never seen an industry stay bad for ever. Natural disasters occur, and if there is a sizeable drought the depletion in breeder stock will be so immense as to be devastating. I see the cattle industry coming good, but I do not see how we can overcome the continually increasing costs at the meatworks. The grower is getting about 20c a lb. at the meatworks. There is another 80c a lb., or virtually \$1, elsewhere, and it costs about 35c a lb. to put the meat through a butcher shop. Something is wrong somewhere.

I sometimes say of the National Party that they are the greatest bunch of socialists one would see in a day's march. They socialised the pig industry, the dairying industry and the grain industry. In my opinion, they must get around to socialising the beef industry. If they do not, it will not survive. Although I do not agree with it in principle, I think it is the only solution.

Mr. Casey: If they are socialists, you are Communists. That is what we have heard lately.

Mr. MOORE: No-one said that, but I say that the honourable member's face looks pretty red.

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

Mr. Fouras interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I am not criticising anything. I am simply making my speech. When Bills come before the House, the honourable

member will have an opportunity to make his contribution. He is too new here. I heard the honourable member's maiden speech, and I gave him a little bit of a touch-up because he did not have the manners to appreciate that when he is given the courtesy of making a speech here without interjection he should not take the Government apart and then expect immunity. I gave him a bit of a touch-up, which he rightly deserved.

The Governor's Opening Speech also mentioned the Queensland Cultural Centre at South Brisbane. It might be necessary to spend \$80,000,000 or \$100,000,000, or whatever it eventually costs. Projects of this type all become more expensive in the long run, as did the Sydney Opera House, and estimation becomes "guesstimation". I must say that I wonder whether it is necessary; I suppose it is necessary to build it sometime.

However, when one sees X number of people going to the Queensland Housing Commission seeking houses and being unable to get them, one wonders whether our priorities really are right. Those people will never be able to obtain a house. Costs are escalating at a greater rate than savings are increasing. Couples are saving their money when a dollar is worth a dollar but spending it on a house when a dollar is worth only 50c, so the buying of a home becomes a real heartache.

Let us consider the inequalities. For example, Aborigines can get a loan at about 3½ per cent, and nobody cares whether they pay the money back or not. Their kids get pocket-money and so forth. Do not let it be thought that I am anti-Aborigine. I think it is fair enough that special consideration be given for the purchase of a first home. The Commonwealth Bank pays only 3½ per cent on the millions of dollars invested in its savings bank. People with savings in the Commonwealth Savings Bank are being tricked. That money should be lent at 4 or 5 per cent to persons who want to build their first home. If money were made available at that interest rate they would have a chance of paying something off capital, and not just making interest payments and praying that inflation would increase and increase to get them out of the mire. That is the sort of situation we have today. I have a filing cabinet full of letters in respect of which I have made representations to the Minister for Works and Housing about obtaining Housing Commission houses. Some of those people do not deserve them, but many do. Whether or not they deserve a Housing Commission house at a subsidised rental, at least they have the right to be able to buy a home of their own, put a fence around it, plant a garden and have civic pride.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Miller): Order! I call the honourable member for Murrumbidgee. I remind the House that this is the honourable member's maiden speech, and I expect the usual courtesy to be extended to him.

Mr. KRUGER (Murrumbidgee) (4.17 p.m.): It is with great joy that I rise on the occasion of this my maiden speech in the Assembly.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Speaker on his re-election unopposed. I would like to mention, as other members have, how well Mr. Speaker works for the good of this House. When one sees the antics here at times, one can see the need for someone of Mr. Speaker's calibre to keep things on a somewhat even keel.

I congratulate the Chairman of Committees, too, on his re-election, and hope that he will continue to do his duty in the manner that he has displayed over the years. I also wish him well in his efforts to keep sanity within his party.

I hope that in the years to come I will be able to assist the Government of this great State to iron out some of the problems that exist and, in some cases, seem to be getting worse.

I welcome the opportunity to pledge my loyalty to the Queen of the British Commonwealth, and Queen of all States of Australia.

My thanks go to the many people of my electorate who had sufficient faith in me and my ability to elect me to the position I now hold.

All members will, of course, realise that Murrumbidgee was a new seat after the redistribution of boundaries in 1977, a distribution that was again to favour the Country Party State-wide (or is it the National Party now?), the party that no longer gives support to the man on the land.

Our State has been stricken by possibly the worst drought in its history, and this has led to some sympathy from all walks of the community. But the cattle producers of this great State, once known the world over for its beef production, were in great difficulties long before the drought, inasmuch as they had a very depressed market for their produce, with little hope of any improvement in prices. One therefore has to look at ways of overcoming the marketing side of their problems as well as such things as water and fodder conservation and breed improvements for better production.

I could go on at length about the problems facing the man on the land, but as the electorate of Murrumbidgee is now virtually an urban area I will leave the primary production side out of my speech for the time being. However, I would conclude by saying that not only the beef producers but all people on the land would be better off if the powers that be could take note and look at some of the primary producers'

problems as much as they seem to interest themselves in multinational organisations. While we have to look at these projects we should not lose our heritage of being a primary industries State as well. There is quite a chance, I have been told, that the National Party may soon change its name to the Multinational Party.

I am available at all times to help my constituents. If any member from any party has a friend or associate in the electorate of Murrumba, I would be pleased to prove myself in his support.

Because I was born in the heart of my electorate I have quite a knowledge of it. It is an electorate that has been carved up more times than a week-end joint, an electorate that, if another redistribution took place, would possibly be put through a mincer. For those people who do not realise it, I point out that my electorate includes the northern section of division 2 of the Pine Rivers Shire, extends along the boundary of the northern section until just short of Deception Bay, which is the Caboolture boundary, and takes in the western side of the city of Redcliffe. The western area of the town of Redcliffe comes into the fast-growing areas of Kippa-Ring and Rothwell.

In 1958 the electorate of Murrumba was cut about to include a certain small area so that the then Speaker of the House could remain in his place of living and still be in his electorate. Of course, in the 1977 reshuffle, because the then member for Murrumba knew that Murrumba was to be cut up, he moved to the new electorate of Caboolture just prior to the election. I do not blame him for this. Caboolture in 1977 was possibly one of the very few true National Party seats left in Queensland.

As a result of these actions we saw not another three-cornered election, but one with four candidates from three major parties. I mention this point to bring to the notice of members and to the public the problems that lie in our electoral system. While the reasons for the move were obvious, the party did not consider the effects this would have on the good-thinking voters of the electorate. As I continue it will be quite clear why I make these points. I was able to obtain almost twice the vote of my nearest opponent, a clear indication that I had winning support from my electors. Yet after counting the combined vote of the two lowest-polling candidates, the aggregate passed the vote for the second contestant. This of course gave him no chance of picking up the required number of preferences.

The point I make is that the efforts to hoodwink electors failed because some 5 per cent of the people voting for the candidate with the lowest count were upset about the actions of the party they once believed in, and some 15 per cent or more

of the normal Liberal Party voters recognised the need for solid representation. These people did what had to be done to show a little of the democracy we once knew and enjoyed, and consequently passed their preferences to me.

I can assure the House that, even though the figures never came out, there was also a big leakage of preferences in my favour from the number three candidate on the list. These figures did not show up because, strange as it may seem, looking at all the figures, the third horse in the race was the closest of the combined group to taking line honours from me. I wonder if we could organise something similar at Eagle Farm on Saturday afternoons.

I believe it is high time that those parties that call themselves a coalition take the plunge and decide to go it alone, because it is quite obvious, if we can believe even a small portion of what we read in the dailies, that there is little harmony between the parties, and each party is only biding time until further back-stabbing can be done, a stab which will bring about the death of one or other of these parties that only confuse the elections by covering up their internal problems.

This is proven by the statement made on the night of the elections, by a man connected in some way with the National Party. Mr. Evans said the National Party had polled well with 28 per cent of the vote. I would not be very proud if I were in his shoes. If I were Mr. Evans, I would think more along the lines, that our boundaries and the preferential system had worked again.

It is amazing to find how many people think that this preferential system was introduced by the Australian Labor Party. This is not correct. In Federal elections, preferential voting was introduced on 21 November 1918 by the Hughes Nationalist Government. It was opposed by the Labor Party. It is even more interesting to examine the position in the States. In Queensland, preferential voting was initiated on 9 August 1892 by the Liberal Government of Sir Samuel Griffith. This occurred before there was any Labor Government in any State of Australia.

First-past-the-post voting was restored in Queensland by a Labor Government on 9 December 1942. It was removed again by the Country-Liberal Party Government on 21 December 1962, and preferential voting applied in Queensland for the first time for over 20 years at the 1963 elections.

Preferential voting was introduced in Victoria by the Murray Liberal Government on 30 September 1911. It came into force on 1 May 1911 in Western Australia, through the Wilson Liberal Government. The Butler Liberal Government inflicted preferential voting on South Australia on 12 December 1929. Tasmania has had proportional repre-

sentation since 1 November 1907. In other words, preferential voting as we know it today has never applied in Tasmania on a State basis.

The only instance in Australia of a Labor Government's introducing preferential voting occurred in New South Wales on 17 March 1926. New South Wales had previously experimented, in 1910, with a second-ballot system (a second election a fortnight after the first, the lowest candidate having been eliminated) and proportional representation from 1918 to 1926.

First-past-the-post voting applies in Britain, the United States and practically every other democratic country.

It is quite clear in my mind that the intention of the coalition is to use the present system of voting, along with well-selected boundaries, to try to hold office. However, the time is drawing near when people will be hurt so much by the actions of some coalition members that there will be a change of Government in the State, and future elections will be fought on a more even footing.

I would like to bring to the notice of the House the transport problems that exist in my electorate. A private bus company—namely, the Petrie-Redcliffe bus service—travels direct from Redcliffe through Petrie to Brisbane. This service has helped a lot of residents for many years, but only does a direct run, leaving much to be desired. It appears that the area is starving for a pick-up service that feeds through the streets to a main service or to a railway. The other bus service is provided by the Green buses from Redcliffe over the Hornibrook Highway to Sandgate—another service that has been of great help to Redcliffe people, although still not adequate for this fast-growing electorate.

The area's needs include a good form of railway. Honourable members will of course know of the proposed rail link to Redcliffe because the Premier gave it a mention while in our area in support of his candidates just prior to the election. At that time the Premier said there would be a rail link to Redcliffe, but now the draft report on the link study seems to contain different thoughts from those of the Premier. Such things as "the railway would not pay" have been mentioned. I ask if any member can advise me of a rail service that is paying.

We have to look deeply at the needs of the people and consider these needs along with other problems that are generated if a rail link is not built. We require pollution controls on vehicles (which cost a car purchaser quite a deal more when buying a car) to overcome the pollution problem. This equipment makes motoring more expensive, too, because vehicles fitted with the device use more fuel than vehicles not fitted with it.

We need to look at the extra danger to people on the roads because of increased traffic through lack of a rail service. We need to look at the number of families that are forced to have two cars because of the lack of rail service—again resulting in higher pollution levels. We also have to consider the necessity to upgrade a large section of our suburban and near north coast roads if a rail link is not provided. As the Minister for Main Roads would know, this is not a cheap item.

We would have to consider that the longer this rail link is delayed the greater will be the cost involved in acquiring land on which to build the line. Apart from the cost of that land, the desired location to service areas may not be available. The removal of homes or buildings could become a major obstacle to the line being laid in a desirable location. When we talk of the rail link, we should look at the rapidly developing areas near Kippa-Ring, linking to Deception Bay and an area of good housing land that will soon develop in the Rothwell area. Of course this will then not be far from the Narangba Industrial Estate and the large built-up area of Kallangur.

Without doubt, this rail link is a necessity, and it is time the Government took on the task and avoided further delays. I think the Premier may override the study findings and get on with the link, as he seems to have this power—or has had with the powerhouse.

I would bring to the notice of the Parliament that we had a rail line to the Gold Coast at one time and pulled it up just before the coast started to boom. Then a four-lane highway had to be built. I expect that people who reside at the coast in luxury would like to sit in a fast electric railcar when coming to Brisbane on business and so avoid the problems of car travel. And these problems don't finish on the highway. Once in the city, they cannot find parking space. Those people who reside in the areas towards the coast and travel to their daily jobs would like to board a fast electric train. However, the arguments for a link to Redcliffe are my concern and I believe that a rail link relatively short in distance is required to serve this area. We can only expect costs and inconveniences to accelerate, so further delays would be ridiculous.

It is now many years since Mr. Jack Duggan, the then Minister for Transport, had an electrified rail service almost organised. At that time the connection to Redcliffe was being considered. It took the present Government to wreck this planning and put the diesel engines on the suburban runs. The cost to electrify the suburban rail system in those days was almost nil compared with the cost of the 1978 plan. This is of course in keeping with the slow approach of the coalition parties in matters

of concern to the average people on average incomes as distinct from big companies and combines.

I am greatly concerned about our transport system because of the number of people in our State, particularly close to Brisbane, who need to get to the city to work. I sometimes wonder if the Government has some foul idea that one way to overcome this problem is to keep the unemployment figure rising. This will only be a short-lived problem because, if this Government does not soon do something about the situation, a Labor Government will. The people will not be fooled by election promises for ever.

It has been stated on several occasions that the problem of unemployment rests with the Federal Government, but the States can play a big part in easing the problem. Queensland is a State that should be looking at introducing a scheme similar to the R.E.D. scheme, so that a lot of the work could be done by people who are collecting unemployment benefits. I look mainly at things such as park development, roadside cleanliness and beautification, council work in the form of footpath construction and kerbing and channelling, and general improvements within our community.

The cost of such an undertaking would be comparatively small considering the amount paid in wages. And don't forget the amount that comes back in the form of taxation from somebody employed. Before any Government member jumps up and down, I point out that I am well aware that the benefits and taxation are Federal matters, but we are all a part of Australia, even if some Queensland politicians, just to try to make an issue, do threaten from time to time to leave the Commonwealth.

The State should also embark on better schemes to promote Queensland industry so that confidence will be restored and employment opportunities accelerated. I say this because, as I travel interstate, I find that Queensland is regarded as the retarded State. Yet we have more to offer than the other States. So it just comes back to one thing, and that can reflect against only the Government.

If we compare our growth in industry with that of New South Wales, we find that we are getting further and further behind, with the exception of a couple of big enterprises such as the uranium and coal-mining industries. Of course these are not really significant, because of the small amount of revenue to the State, in comparison with the total financial gain from our natural wealth to the companies concerned. These industries that could and should be encouraged to Queensland would improve job opportunities. This in itself is something that we should look forward to.

I believe that a lot of people think only of the pick and shovel class when talking about unemployment. But I am concerned

about all people because we have school-teachers being put off and engineers and clerks are out of work—in fact, people in all classes are out of work. Why then, don't we use some initiative and encourage industry and undertake some labour-intensive works? It can be done. Forgan Smith and other notable men in Queensland's and Australia's past have shown that it can be done. We do not have to be experts to work things out; we need just enough brain capacity to be able to read a little of our history books.

The State has a terrific amount of road construction that could and should be undertaken. This type of work would not only employ labourers but also engineers, draughtsmen, clerks, machinery operators and people from all parts of the work-force. The Main Roads Minister will no doubt say that he cannot get the finance from Canberra. But, here again, I would point out that our country is richer now than when some of our past politicians were successful in overcoming these problems.

We have seen a massive downturn in the number of people employed by the Department of Works, at a time when a lot of work should be done by this department, and at a time when we should be trying to ease unemployment. So it can only appear that the Government's plans are clearly to bring unemployment to the rate of from 10 per cent to 12 per cent, and this will happen around the year 1980 if the Government does not soon take notice of the Labor Party in this field.

Since the November election I have had a tremendous amount of calls and visits from people seeking to obtain Housing Commission homes. I can come to only one conclusion, and that is that the Government does not want a solution to the problem, because if we employed extra people and built more commission homes we would overcome unemployment and have houses available for these people in need. I therefore believe that these people in our State are not considered because these people are not in a position to contribute to the ideals of some political party.

At this stage I shall not go into the problems associated with MACOS and SEMP, but shall deal with the problems associated with our schools and with unemployment.

Our Premier was responsible for the importation of schoolteachers to our State and at the same time he tried to reduce the number of local teachers to be employed.

I believe that the number of children per teacher could be reduced slightly and this would therefore increase teacher employment. This request, of course, would fall on deaf ears because, if our teachers raise objection to the banning of MACOS or SEMP our Premier says, "We can do without you." I say to the Premier through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "I believe, Mr. Premier, that

72 per cent of the population of Queensland have said that they can do without you, but you believe that, because of your wholesome 28 per cent of the vote of the people, you have been given some phenomenal mandate to dictate to our fine State." I wonder where he is now—collecting bouquets? He'll only get "Brych bats."

When it comes to education, I believe that the Premier is still in the prep grades and that his chance of elevation has been reduced by his own dogmatic approach. Let him be realistic and understand that the Australian Labor Party, with its big percentage of votes, is the alternative Government, and a government that operated for many years while his minority-style Government was in opposition.

The strength of our State politically is with the working class and, if the Premier is prepared to rough them up at all times, he will find himself where he ought to be, and that will not be as Premier of the State of Queensland. There is a definite indication that those who oppose the thought of the leader of our State are not worthy of consideration, are generally classed as Communists or radicals or crows or something not in good taste, and are not accepted by the majority of our people. Christians in this House realise that mankind should have some sort of equality, and that those people who attend church on a more regular basis should not try to degrade the masses. The teachings of the Bible do not give any person these rights.

My recent tour of the West has made me realise all the more the need for Queenslanders to pull together and develop this State. We must discard the thoughts of the coalition in respect of our people in the more remote parts of the State and we must look to the solution of their problems. These problems should be looked at and related to problems that city-dwellers have, and some sort of equalisation should be undertaken.

I would go so far as to say that many of the people in this House would not last a week in the West. The country is harsh and only men of strength and determination would stick it out. The land is of course generally productive and good, but the lack of rainfall makes the life harder to accept; but the people have great pride in their environment and the towns are kept clean and are well looked after. Credit must be given and help extended in these parts.

Another step taken by the Government in recent times to discriminate against certain people concerns the right to hold political marches—indeed, nearly all marches irrespective of origin. This step was just another case where the Government parties, for their own political gain, wish to provoke the people of the State. The people of Australia have enjoyed living under a system that allowed for peaceful demonstration and most were peaceful until all rights were removed. It was mainly at this stage in our history that marches became less peaceful.

This action by the Government parties gave police a chance to hit out and, if one watches with interest the T.V. coverage of events, then one can see that police do hit out—one blow after another. Provocation is not the best way to overcome such problems.

The old descriptions of demonstrators as radicals and Communists then came forth from Government spokesmen, who were purposely forgetting those people who have legitimate reasons to demonstrate without violence. The problems could be overcome but for the infiltration of the marches by people organised to cause provocation. It is quite clear that our Premier intends to develop Queensland into a police state.

I also wish to make the point that, as one of the elected representatives of this State, I had to wait almost six months before the House sat. The situation is becoming worse as time goes on because the House seems to sit for shorter periods each year. This might suit those members who have been in Parliament for a long period and do not wish to hear from back-benchers or Opposition members, but surely an 18-man Cabinet, making major decisions without debate, is not quite what the people of our State desire.

There is always the need for the Government to continue during times of parliamentary recess, but in the last few months we have seen major decisions made on the siting of the new powerhouse and education, just to name a couple. Surely the Premier and his Cabinet must realise that, if the other people in this chamber are fit to be elected, there is a possibility that some of their ideas could have some merit, and their right to debate issues should not be taken from them.

There is a need to expedite the planning and construction of a technical college in the Kippa-Ring area. I am aware of plans for the construction of a technical college in the Bald Hills area, but I feel quite strongly about the ultimate need for a college in the Kippa-Ring area, which would meet the needs of Redcliffe and Murrumba in a much more adequate manner. Such a college would also assist people from the Deception Bay area. It might be said that a college at Bald Hills would be sufficient. However, because of the natural boundaries and road corridors, I do not see this as being correct. I urge the department to urgently consider these matters.

We have further school accommodation needs in the electorate, and I shall mention some of these problems so that the Minister may be made more aware of them.

We have at Petrie what is known as the Petrie Opportunity School, which is an annex of the Petrie State School and uses quite a portion of the school's land. At the same time the Petrie State School lacks accommodation to the extent that it has two demountables and requires a new block before the start of the 1979 school year. It would be common sense to relocate the

Petrie Opportunity School as soon as possible on the new site that has been acquired, and return the existing buildings to the Petrie State School. This reasonably inexpensive task would also overcome the lack of playground area for children attending the Petrie State School. I draw the Minister's attention to this needy cause.

I will continue on my journey around the schools and have a look at the Kallangur State School. This school has been in need of repairs and extensions for some time, and possibly the most urgent problem is the lack of toilet facilities. When sewerage came to the school, the old toilet block was connected and an application was made for extensions to the block. To date nothing has been done. I trust that plans are coming along quickly because this block is grossly inadequate, and would not come anywhere near local authority requirements. I believe that a health risk exists, and if a problem arose I would have to throw the blame on to the Queensland Government. Some roof repairs have been done after a lot of representation, but bird-proofing and other requests have not been attended to. This school, which is one of the largest in the area, has had masonite and tile squares on site for many weeks but nothing has been done with them. I urge the department to have a close look at this problem. I would be pleased to accept a visit from a departmental representative and take him on a tour of this school and point out the inadequacies that exist.

I continue on my education tour, and bring to the notice of the House and people of Queensland the fiasco that took place at the new Dakabin High School. This will be a beautiful school when completed. It lies in a natural watercourse and is constructed in a terraced landscape. However, the first stage was rushed through and the playground and construction areas are nothing but red clay. Each shower of rain results in flooding and deposits of clay silt finish up inside the downstream school buildings already constructed. This problem occurred because the Government had money to spend on schools and there was an election in sight, so hasty expenditure resulted in an effort to make things look good for sitting members. I trust that the department will see the problems that exist and speed up the completion of construction, as this is the only way to overcome the problem.

I was amazed when I spoke to the manager of a construction company, who was looking for directions to the grounds of the new Undurba School so that he could tender for its construction. He told me that he was short of time on the project because the project had just been advertised and tenders had to be lodged within two weeks. This is a clear indication of the speed with which departments can act when the Government is trying to enhance the position of its own politicians.

The amazing thing was that, with the redistribution, I finished up with two nice new schools in my electorate, but I still look forward to some reasonable attention being given to existing schools.

Possibly one of the most neglected operations within my electorate is the railway station at Petrie, and this goes to show how bad the representation has been in the area over the last few years. Petrie is used as a turn-about station for northern suburban trains, and is also used as a stopping station for major north and south-bound trains on the North Queensland run. Yet the station is just the same as it was when I used to pick up cream cans there as a pre-schooler, the only alteration being the removal of the goods shed. Perhaps the removal of the shed is understandable because Petrie does not have the rural area it used to have. However, one would think that that would be balanced by the need for better facilities for commuters.

I have heard some odd statements since I have been in the House, but possibly the most peculiar would be the reference made to the mosquito problem and the cost to pet lovers of treatment against heartworm in dogs. I think the amount of \$5 a week was mentioned.

In checking this, I found that heartworm tablets purchased in bulk worked out at \$2 for 100 tablets, each tablet containing 200 mg. I know, because we use quite a number of tablets. I continued with the equation that the heavy dosage for one average dog was half a tablet per dog per day, and this was at the rate of one tablet per 80 lb. body-weight.

If you work it out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you find that 100 tablets at half a tablet per dog gives you treatment for 200 days. Dividing 200 days into \$2, you have one cent per day, or seven cents per week. It is high time some people stopped eating spaghetti and chewing pizzas and started checking out some facts.

Let us look now at some of the greatest problems facing the housewife in trying to budget for the household needs. First of all we look at beef prices, as mentioned early in my speech and mentioned also by the honourable member for Windsor, and at this stage I would point out that I have checked around quite a deal on this subject. My first inquiries were with local butchers, and I found that their income is lower than it was five years ago. I then checked with some grazier friends and found, as we all know, that the grazier is not doing as well as he was a few years ago. The next step was to check beef prices, and I found that good cuts are still the same price as they were when beef prices, on the hoof, were booming.

It would appear that Government policies make it possible for big combines to own stations and slaughtering facilities, to purchase cattle at prices to suit themselves, and

then to adjust their books so that the price to the consumer is kept at a level well above what should be regarded as normally profitable.

I conclude with some comments regarding other essential commodities that a housewife has to purchase, and I speak with a great deal of authority on this subject. I refer to the price of fruit and vegetables, and I will quote first of all an incident that occurred two years ago when we were selling cabbages at eight cents a head.

These caggabes were averaging 15 lb. per head. We checked as to the purchaser and found that they had been purchased by G. J. Coles and were selling at K Mart, Chermside, for eight cents a pound. That, of course, was \$1.20 per cabbage, and good-quality cabbage that is hard enough to weigh 15 lb. is not regarded as a perishable item. It keeps well. It was pretty good money to take them from Brisbane to Chermside.

I also had an opportunity to check apple prices and found that only last year a case was selling at the markets for \$2. It contained 100 apples, which, of course, meant that the price was two cents each.

I checked the name and address of one greengrocer and found that he was not too far from my home, so I gave him a call to check out prices. He advised that he could sell me apples at nine cents each, which, of course, was \$9 a case, and when asked about case lots he replied, "\$8". Now, if we look at the City of Brisbane Market Act, perhaps we should look at the middle man as well. That would not happen, of course, because the Government does not agree with price control.

I could go on for hours about the difference between prices obtained by the man on the land and prices to the consumer, but I would only emphasise what we know already—that the ordinary citizen never gets a fair go. We also recall that the closest we have ever come to a fair go was under a Labor Government.

The only solution is some sort of price control, but that proposal was defeated when put to the people by the Whitlam Government, mainly because of propaganda released by the coalition Governments in most States and the Opposition in the Federal field. I think this backs up my belief that the National-Liberal Party coalition wants it this way to assist its moneyed friends.

I cannot see why more people on the land have not woken up to the fact that produce brings better prices when purchasers can afford to buy their goods, and that the way to obtain this goal is to elect a Government that is concerned.

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (4.50 p.m.): In replying to the Governor's Opening Speech many members in this House have expressed the loyalty of their constituents. I do likewise.

I, too, must congratulate the new members. By their speeches they have shown themselves to be quite capable. I am sure they will find their time in this House as interesting as I have found mine.

Whilst the Queen is saluted by an expression of loyalty to her through the Governor, on occasions she and the royal family have come in for a great deal of criticism. The one for whom I have felt greatest sorrow over the past few weeks is Princess Margaret. I was absolutely appalled to read in this week's "National Times" the article headed "How the Admen Would Market Margaret". As a woman I find it a thoroughly disgusting manner in which to treat Margaret and her public and private life. She has been almost publicly dissected by the Press. The things we do not know about her do not count. The article commences—

"The storm over Princess Margaret, her private life and her public duties, continues unabated."

Mr. K. J. Hooper: She is a middle-aged tart with a predilection for young men.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I am sorry the honourable member feels that way. Like a lot of other males, he considers it is right to sow his wild oats. But just because this member of the royal family happens to be a woman, she is suffering the sort of microsurgery that the Press is subjecting her to. If she had been a roué prince at the turn of the century she would not have suffered this, but would have been allowed to do whatever she wished to do. It is appalling that in this day and age, with modern communications, her every move is reported and every turn of her eye is discussed.

The manner in which this article discusses the princess and the way the admen talk about her only serve to convince me that in fact the public are being totally manipulated by the advertising agencies. I am thoroughly convinced that they consider women to be dumb, stupid creatures who are there only to purchase their goods and do nothing else.

The article goes on to discuss the royal family and how they do not deserve the amount of money they get on the Civil List. I am sure that some of the remarks about the royal family are quite true, not the least of which is the statement that they live in a Britain which has a rotten core and from which a lot of people, particularly the working-class people that these admen seem to be putting down, are trying to escape.

The manner in which this poor woman is dissected, gruelled and chomped over leaves no room for further microsurgery. Even her face is revamped—if I might use a word that I detest. I have always noticed in the popular Press that men are never “revamped”; although they have paunches, their jewels hang low, their eyes are puffy, and they even wear ear-rings now. They are considered to be near-perfect. This is also an occasion for us, the 82 members of this Queensland Parliament, to remember that we are the ubiquitous, amorphous “they” whom people often discuss.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mrs. KYBURZ: It is about to land on the honourable member's head.

At public meetings we are often made responsible for things that “they” do. We are beholden to the public and are ultimately responsible to them. Often, when we go to public meetings, people say, “They should do this” about that, or, “They should do this” about another thing. It involves not only a complete upheaval of the social system but also a total change of public attitude. That is something we cannot do. A total change in the public's attitude will not come about until the public is concerned about its attitude. In many ways people are not concerned.

Quite often I have noticed the manner in which the popular Press, T.V., radio and other media portray the lonely suburban housewife. She is shown as a weird creature who starts drinking about 9 a.m., smokes three packets of cigarettes by lunch-time and then goes out shopping because she leads such a dilatory existence. Modern research has proved almost undeniably that that is not the case but that in fact popular media portrayals are just that; that many suburban housewives are extremely satisfied with their lives and are doing everything they can to make outside social contacts; that if their home life is limited they are trying to widen it.

Data obtained from a survey undertaken in a suburban shopping centre suggests that women's clubs and various other social groups are helping women to solve this problem. Suburban neurosis is a big problem that is prevalent mainly among women with young children. The nuclear family has not helped. Many people in popular, modern politics like to rant and rave about the nuclear family, saying that we should all live on our own blocks of land, what a wonderful thing it is to own our own homes, with everybody setting up his own little fortress and not allowing his neighbour in because he is in fact plotting to overcome it.

The nuclear family is not the most widespread life-style in the world. Certainly in China, in the vast Indian subcontinent, in Russia and in many other parts of Europe, the extended family is the norm. In that network women have a great deal of

emotional support to call upon. The physical layout of suburban development has worked towards suburban neurosis. I have noticed that the loneliness is exacerbated by the ghastly suburban shopping centres and, not least of all, by huge barns masquerading as shops. They are nothing more than that.

I shall draw an analogy between city and country women. During the parliamentary recess I travelled as widely as I could. It often seemed to me that women in the West are infinitely more adapted to coping with loneliness than are city women. I asked myself whether it could be that not only are they used to being alone within themselves in their family situation, but also they adapt better in a wider context. In the community situation they also seemed to be far more adaptable. Western women in small towns and provincial cities are more likely to help each other, and to help the community and the aged in the community, than are women in the city.

Probably it is just that city women lack guidance. Furthermore, I would say that the lonely, bored women in our community, those women who lack purpose and feel that they have too much time on their hands, should be given guidance so that they may know what to do with their time. At times I have considered organising a volunteer roster. I know of many organisations that could do with manpower—or woman power, for that matter. Take, for example, organisations attached to hospitals. When I was in a large city hospital last year for a lengthy stay—though it was not as lengthy as that experienced by many other women—I noticed women from the country who didn't ever have a visitor and who didn't ever see a cheery face saying, “Hello. How are you feeling? Can I get you anything? Do you need a box of tissues?” All they saw was the occasional nurse or nursing aide, whom they asked to do little jobs for them. I would advise those lonely women in our community to join an organisation and to do some work in that line—work that involves a social interaction between themselves and other people.

It is a disturbing fact of modern life that shopping has become such a chore. It is not only a bore but also jolly hard work, because shopping centres have become such insensitive places, because supermarkets have become purveyors of goods and not purveyors of services, and because they are cold, miserable holes where everything is marked with a tag. Even the shop assistants wear a tag.

The barnlike sheds I have mentioned are popping up everywhere. I do not particularly care for them. Apart from being frequented by people looking for a bargain—and often they do not obtain one—they are also frequented by horrible, patronising salesmen. It is a pity that, because the majority of the shopping public is female, we are often confronted by males who are called salesmen. Of course, they are nothing of the sort. Probably they do not know anything about

half the appliances they are selling. If a shopper asks them a question, they are quite put out that she dared to ask them. I often think that those salesmen need not just taking down a peg or two but being brought down to the level at which they put the little woman they are serving. They are so infuriatingly patronising! Half of them think they are God's gift to women. They strut around like cocks in a barnyard—"Which washing machine can I sell you, you poor little dumb female?" When I find a shop with an unpatronising salesman or woman I usually go back again without worrying about the prices. I feel it is worth it not to be hot under the collar for the afternoon.

Furthermore, I really question the manner of advertising of some of those so-called cheaper warehouses. They usually take two or three-page spreads in the Brisbane Press. At first sight their prices seem to be astonishingly low; but so often I have been rung by constituents who have complained about being at the warehouses at 25 past 8 or 10 to 9—very early in the morning—only to find that the goods had gone. In fact, the warehouses had only two or three of those articles for sale. Just last night I was rung by a gentleman who had read in Sunday's Press about a digital clock radio which was advertised at a very cheap price. He went to the shop, but they were out of stock. They were out of stock so early in the morning I really wonder whether they were ever in stock. Their stock-in-trade is to draw people in with cheap goods, and a lot of unsuspecting members of the public automatically consider that that cheapness is reflected in everything on sale. I urge women and men to shop around, because it is only by shopping around that they can find out that a shop they may have considered to be cheap is a real rub down on their purse. They might well be spending far too much for goods that have no back-up services. Often it is well worth while paying for those back-up services from a more reputable store.

Once again I would like to refer to the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Enforcement of Criminal Law in Queensland. This rather large tome that we have had given to us has had little discussion or debate in the House. I spoke about it last year and I intend doing so again. I am very concerned that two of the most important recommendations of that committee of inquiry have not even been discussed, let alone brought to the surface of public notice. Two of the main ones are 45 and 46. They are difficult for any Government to grapple with, let alone a Government that has been beset with problems largely of its own making.

No. 45 reads—

"The wisdom of continuing the present police cadet system should be carefully reviewed."

I add that this is one of the final recommendations from the three commissioners.

No. 46 reads—

"New methods must be experimented with in an endeavour to attract into police service a proper share of the most able and best educated men and women of the community. Ways and means must be found to allow serving members who have attained professional qualifications relevant to police work to practise their professions within the force."

Those two recommendations are extremely important.

In their preamble, the commissioners, in a discussion on the police cadet system, produced some extremely quotable quotes. I do not think any of them have been mentioned previously. The one that concerns me most reads—

"One problem, as we sought to point out earlier, is that given the most favourable conditions, police training by its very nature induces a rigidity of attitude which, together with the experience of actual service, will set the police officer some distance apart from other members of society."

That is important, considering the agents of socialisation. One of them is our peer group. To consider placing children of 16 or 17 years of age—adolescents, rather; once upon a time they would have been regarded as children—in an institution such as we have for our police cadets is quite frightening.

It goes on to state—

"With a trainee of limited experience of life, the easier the process is and, in most cases, the greater the distance he will be set apart" (That is, apart from society). "Each of us is troubled by the knowledge that children aged 15 and 16 years are being trained to become police officers. We believe we understand the arguments of the protagonists of this scheme, but we remain unconvinced."

The punch line reads—

"We recommend that before any more public monies are spent on this method of training, the wisdom of it be reviewed very carefully."

That is extremely important. It goes on, to my mind, to consider that we need not only some sort of sociology training within our Police Force but also a basic psychology course and that before entering the Police Force a person must be at least 20 years of age. The commissioners go on to discuss the problem of recruitment.

They were particularly concerned about who guards the Police Force. They say—

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

That is Latin and means, "Who guards the guardians?" In fact it is a very old question which has been pondered for some time. If there is corruption in the Police Force, is it there because they are unrepresentative

of the community at large? In that case, we would consider that there would have to be valves within the Police Force to allow for the checking of themselves. The commissioners recommend various checks and controls, and continued—

“ . . . but it is clear that many of these could be subverted from time to time by determined men. The answer to the question is that ultimately the guardians must guard themselves and this they will do only if they want to; and they will only want to if they understand, accept and are carefully identified with public sentiment.”

Then there is this very important statement—

“In our opinion there is nothing unreal or unattainable about this goal. Some professional groups have, by and large, succeeded rather well in a similar direction. However, it will require a police force of good sense and responsibility and one that is representative of the community it is there to uphold, not one feeling superior to or inferior to or one that is removed from the community. Recruitment of the right persons is the key to it all.”

It is that particular statement that I am concerned about. I hope that we can have a look at this whole recruitment problem.

I believe fervently that the Police Force today is unrepresentative of the talents and the sensibilities to be found in the community at large and certainly unrepresentative of the general educational trend of today's adolescents. What I am particularly concerned with is the social outlook and the psychological balance of the officers who make up our Police Force. I do not agree that they should all be heavy thugs. They do not need the outlook of a heavy thug, which is obviously what some honourable members consider is needed in the Police Force to uphold the law. Their job can be done in a quiet, undemeaning, democratic, responsible and gentle manner.

It is even more important to look at who is being kept out of the Police Force. The commissioners go on to state that the recruiting system filters very carefully who gets in. The recruiting system is not particularly concerned about who does not get in, and this system, which they go on to discuss, ensures that the very energetic, the really intelligent, the best educated—in short, the most talented members of the community—stay out of the Police Force, or if they do chance to enter, they get out as quickly as they can.

I urge all honourable members to read this report. I hope that it has been widely circulated among the Police Force because I do think that the general malaise which often confronts a Police Force from time to time in every community is one which we all have to come to grips with as members of the Legislative Assembly.

The commissioners went on to discuss the malaise which occurred within the Indian Police Force. They speak about the police officers in India sitting outside the police station, sucking betel nuts, rubbing their faces red with the wretched stinking things, while they squeezed the juice into the eyes of people they were supposed to be questioning rather than go through the legitimate methods of questioning. After rubbing this pungent liquid into the eyes of the suspects admissions to crimes which often they had not committed are obtained. One accepts, of course, that in India, people get away with a lot more than they should, but under the British system of justice that is not the case.

Another matter I should bring up relates to deposits on cans and bottles. I have with me an article in a magazine which is called “Aluminium Can Recycle”—a delightful bit of propaganda, of course—printed by Comalco. It tries to legitimise the spreading of cans over our countryside, and it discusses the deposit on cans and bottles in South Australia and the fact that legislation requiring a 5c deposit on cans and non-returnable bottles for beer and soft drinks came into effect in South Australia in July. I think that we as the State Government could do well to look at it. South Australia has made the placing of ring-pulls on bottles and cans illegal. As honourable members know, those ring-pulls can hurt the feet of people and animals. Of course, only the people have the political power in this State, and only the people can make demands of the sort that I think ought to be made on behalf of people and animals. The article states—

“Canned beer and soft drinks which have detachable ring pull ends on the cans are prohibited. Soft drink cans are identifiable by blue tops and beer cans by gold tops.”

Out on the far, far western roads there are mountains of beer cans. I shall not try to guess who put them there, but I think the very fact that they are there is an indictment not only of society but also of the lazy scums who carted them there in the first place.

Many of our pollution problems have a solution.

Mr. Katter: Hear, hear! Do you realise, Mrs. Kyburz, that I have a question on notice requesting the Minister to make all bottles and cans refundable?

Mrs. KYBURZ: Yes, I realise that. I think there is a solution to the problem of pollution on places like Fraser Island. If people who go across to Fraser Island on the barge in their four-wheel-drive vehicle—that new middle-income status symbol—were forced to bring back their empty beer bottles, there would be no pollution problem in that regard.

The fact that humans of necessity leave waste is, of course, beyond our legislative control; but if most of that waste were buried far enough under the ground we would not be faced with our present litter problem. I suppose having brought this up today I will be inundated with letters containing a whole lot of commercial garbage. The punch line in this pamphlet I have is that sales of canned beer and soft drinks were expected to be affected by the legislation. I really feel like cheering when I read this, because the pamphlet states the Coca Cola Bottlers in Adelaide estimate that their sales will drop by 50 per cent, and other companies expect a similar result. When one sees a big money campaign like this being waged, it is always done on the basis of an expected drop in profits. I am sure we will receive letters stating that this sort of legislation has no effect and that we cannot force people to bring back their cans and bottles because, after all, they are not concerned with pollution. I say we should all fervently push for the recycling of waste, not only cans and bottles but also any other waste which can be recycled. Are we a tame-cat Government? Are we pussy-footing around over the issue of waste or are we game to introduce deposits on cans and bottles? Let us state here and now that many of us on the back benches fervently believe in this proposal.

In Western Australia a tax on producers of goods which become litter has been proposed. The revenue from that tax would be used for litter collection and recycling research. Any firm using recyclable or reusable packages would be encouraged through tax rebates. I find this very interesting. I have stated before in this House that I would not buy fruit and vegetables packaged in those ghastly styropore trays. Fruit and vegetables are wrapped up in plastic and made to look pretty, just like a new toy we have only just discovered—in fact, just like the pumpkins the honourable member for Somerset mentioned last week. I think it is an indictment of us as consumers that we look more at the packaging than we do at the product.

I must say that whilst at times we berate the Government about the things that we consider should and should not be done in our respective electorates we very rarely give bouquets, and I would like to give a bouquet not only to the Minister for Health but also to his department because I am extremely pleased, for personal reasons, to see that approval has been granted for the establishment of a new spinal unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. This unit has been needed for two or three years. The new unit will contain 40 beds for spinal patients. I am very concerned about road-accident victims who suffer spinal injuries. This causes a great deal of waste of manpower because of the time that these people spend languishing in hospital. After all, some people remain in hospital for years recovering from their injuries. The Department of Health is doing all it can in the rehabilitation field,

and obviously the Commonwealth Government also has a responsibility in that sphere. In a recent Press statement the Minister for Health stated—

“It is also evident that the use of alcohol prior to driving is a significant contributory factor to most road traffic accidents.”

The frightening thing is that—

“The outcome of these accidents is perhaps made a little more sad because the majority of the people are young, less than 25 years old.”

In fact, we have often discussed in this House the frightening incidence of motorcycle accidents in this State. Of course, the problem is Australia-wide.

I am personally very concerned about the emotional decay of patients in spinal units. Because they often come from outside Brisbane and spend so long in hospital they suffer from a lack of emotional support from their families. They are lonely, and some of them are very sad. I think it behoves us all to consider that there are people in the major hospitals in this city who need to be visited often by people who genuinely care about them, not by people who are only doing so to be do-gooders. I think that spinal units of this type are an amenity that major provincial centres would like to see.

I should like to give the Department of Health a bouquet for its paper on “Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Services”, which I have brought to the notice of honourable members previously. Much has been said about drugs recently. I am concerned not about that aspect of the paper but about alcoholism. The fact is that there are many chronic alcoholics in our community, and the paper states—in case this is blown up, I emphasise that I am not stating it; it is stated in the paper—

“Unfortunately, those individuals who, by virtue of essential personality or social deficiencies, find themselves in what is commonly called a ‘skid-row’ situation, rarely achieve either full sobriety or integration into society. For these individuals it is important to develop a programme of care which is partly community based, partly State, partly voluntary; and which is backed up by the provision of beds in an institutional setting such as a State Retreat.”

It is a very important trend in modern treatment of alcoholism to provide farms to which people can go and on which they can learn to relate within the wider community.

The homelessness of the “skid-row” situation has been equally popularly portrayed on television and by other media, and I think that many of the people concerned are suffering not so much from the illness that is obvious—alcoholism—as from a sense of loss of identity. They cannot relate within the wider community; in fact, they have not

even learnt to come to terms with themselves. Probably many of us have been searching for many years for our true self and not found it. Many people who have personality or social deficiencies need help, as stated earlier, and they need the help of the whole community. It is a problem not only for them but also for their families, and it is in that context that I personally am very concerned.

Handicapped workers in industry deserve greater attention, and I have in mind particularly multi-faceted handicapped workers. I contend that many more industries in Brisbane could utilise handicapped workers. I know that some do, and do so very quietly and without the glare of publicity, but I should like to see many more taking on a number of these people.

I am intimately involved with a handicapped persons' workshop, within which there are spastics, paraplegics, quadriplegics and multiple-handicapped people, including some who have been diagnosed as being psychiatrically handicapped. Given the opportunity of working in a normal situation—that is, on the dirt of a factory floor, at a bench, or on an assembly line—some of these people certainly would achieve much more personal standing and personal stature within themselves, and that is very important. When you are working with handicapped people, you realise that very often they are put down not only by their very physical being and their emotional immaturity but also by the wider society in which they live. The fact that they lack mobility often holds them back from ordinary working pursuits. However, I believe that most homes for handicapped people now have buses and people could more readily be transported to factories or to work sites.

I should like to see the larger industrial enterprises taking on more of these people, because it is the responsibility of employer groups to take on as many handicapped people as they possibly can and give them opportunities. They are just as deserving of work as is every whole-limbed, whole-minded, whole-being person in the community. These people have so many opportunities open to them and this magazine "Rehabilitation in Australia" reports a discussion about an enclave of handicapped workers in industry; it talks about a group of workers who have been working in a very dirty, assembly-line factory for some 17 years. Those people would never be put off; the employer is so happy with them that he would not consider anyone else.

In the last few minutes I have, I intend to discuss the funding of universities. We so often hear whingeing and moaning vice-chancellors discussing the lack of funding from one Commonwealth Government or another. I state here and now that they will never be happy. They are empire-builders through and through, to the core, and the institution of universities is such that they cannot help being empire-builders.

It is a pity that a lot of institutions such as universities are not open more widely to public discussion. One often is in fear and trepidation about discussing anything. I am discussing now a perfectly public document. It is the University of Queensland Vice-Chancellor's Report for 1977. Some of the statements are piteously pious in their indictment not only of what is seen to be the system but of what is seen to be the funding. The "Final Note" says—

"Despite the major changes in our senior administrative posts and difficult financial circumstances, the University was able to maintain high quality in its teaching and increase the productivity of its research. Pass rates in most courses have improved. Students are performing well" (isn't that a lovely little statement?) "and staff at all levels have shouldered additional burdens with efficiency and good humour."

It sounds like the sort of thing that is written for a grade 7 pupil who has decided to move on to factory work at the age of 12 years. It continues—

"I believe general morale is high and if that persists we can face an uncertain future with confidence."

Well, tut tut! Pat, pat on the back, dear Acting Vice-Chancellor Davies! His statements appal me, simply because most cities would give their eye-teeth to have a university—to have half the university we have here.

The funding that goes into universities has been grossly overrated. Throughout this whole report there is a whingeing, moaning sentiment of "Give us more money or we sink. We are the Atlantis of the future." Statistical information is provided at the back of the report. Financial figures are given for the years from 1973 to 1977. In 1973 the Queensland University was funded to the tune of more than \$27,000,000. In 1977 \$54,000,000 was provided. If that institution cannot function with \$54,000,000 it should not function at all.

I have stated previously that as a State we need to look at closing down colleges of advanced education, re-allocating the resources that are pouring into education, and perhaps putting more into the technical education field. We cannot come to terms with that because it is, after all, a very difficult political question. If we had an apolitical Government we might be able to make these decisions quickly in a rational manner, but of course we can't under this sort of set-up. But a decision like that can be made rationally. It just annoys me to read this sort of thing that is going into the homes of some 3,000 parents of university students. They are not all young. It is read and students say, "Good heavens, we won't have a staff to teach us. We won't have these facilities." The aggrandisement of universities occurs not only in Third World countries but in countries such as India. In the larger cities of India the

very best facilities available are those of the university. If research is the all-important thing, which I believe it should be in a university, then research facilities are essential. Pouring money into grandiose buildings is not important; money spent on empire-building is never important, nor is money spent on showy facades for people whose life is, after all, only temporary on this earth.

I have only one minute left, and in that time I would like to beg this Government to join with the other States in seeking uniform environment laws. After all, we are a whole country—a total country; no State is an island entire of itself. We need the Barrier Reef and we need the protection of Commonwealth legislation to maintain the Barrier Reef in its present condition. No-one should be able to plunder and pull asunder the reef; after all, it is a wonder of the world. The Prime Minister stated publicly that he will seek uniform environment laws. I hope that we join in.

Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the debate stood adjourned.

ROADS (CONTRIBUTION TO MAINTENANCE) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Transport) (5.32 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act 1957–1972 in certain particulars.”

Honourable members will be aware that the “straw” company device is increasingly being used by fly-by-night transport operators to evade the payment of road maintenance charges in this State and in other States. These operators register themselves in South Australia or other States as interstate operators and their vehicles in the name of a straw company with which they have no connection except the use of its name. The straw company has no assets apart from \$2 paid-up capital; so a creditor, including a State Government, in default of payment of a debt has no recourse to any assets. The illegal operations by these straw companies are costing the States and Territories millions of dollars a year both in registration fees and road maintenance charges.

Honourable members may not be aware that, because of a decision of the High Court in relation to section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, an interstate operator can register his vehicle, whether it be a 10-tonne gross-weight truck or a 36-tonne gross-weight prime mover and trailer, for a nominal registration fee of \$5 per annum in South Australia. The annual

registration of a 36-tonne gross-weight vehicle, if registered in Queensland for intra-state use under the new rates from 1 May, would cost \$972. In many cases, once the plate is obtained the interstate operator does not even bother to renew the registration each year.

Until very recently the South Australian registering authority did not even require the vehicle to be produced at the time of first registration, and of course the deficiencies of the company law in that State are well known.

This Bill is a result of a decision of the 51st meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council held on 22 July 1977 that complementary legislation and other administrative action be taken by the States and Territories to reduce the degree of avoidance of the road maintenance charge by the straw company device. It is a fact that this straw company device has been aided and abetted by professional persons, including solicitors, residing in South Australia, who, for a fee, are prepared to register a private company, supply the directors and secretary, who own no shares, and do not participate in the company's activities but merely provide a cover and a registered place of business for the interstate operator to avoid his debts.

This problem of straw companies has been carefully considered by senior transport administrators and Crown Solicitors advisers as well as the Parliamentary Counsels' committee of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, who reported in favour of a proposal for each State to enact reciprocal legislation that a director of a company incorporated in that State be liable for breaches by the company of the corresponding legislation of another State where road maintenance charges are concerned.

There are precedents for this type of provision in other legislation, and in this particular context the Bill is directed towards removing the legal benefit presently enjoyed by the South Australian straw companies and affixing responsibility on directors of these companies for the debts and liabilities incurred in road maintenance charges.

Draft legislation on which the Queensland Bill is based was prepared by the Parliamentary Counsels' committee of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and it has also been the basis for similar legislation recently introduced into the Victorian Parliament. My colleagues in Western Australia and New South Wales have advised me that they are preparing similar legislation.

The Bill expresses in substance and substantially in form also the machinery provisions agreed to throughout Australia as appropriate to deal with the problem of straw companies registered in one State or Territory and carrying on activities unlawfully in another State or Territory.

The corporate veil which protects the people behind companies of this kind from prosecution when the company is a nominal defaulter is being lifted only in relation to road maintenance defaults.

To give effect to the reciprocal legislation of other States it is necessary to include in the Queensland road maintenance law provisions to deal with the case of a Queensland company attempting to use the device of a straw company to avoid the payment of road maintenance charges in other States. Directors' liability is similar to that under the provisions already contained in the State Transport Act at present.

As I have indicated, the Bill is mainly a machinery one setting out the procedures to be adopted for transmission to another reciprocating State, for registration in its reciprocating court, orders or convictions obtained in Queensland against companies registered in those reciprocating States.

It also provides the means whereby directors of Queensland companies can be proceeded against for defaults occurring in another reciprocating State so far as road maintenance is concerned.

This Bill is an example of co-operation between the States in solving a common problem.

I would like to give honourable members an example of the device that has been used. I read from an issue of "Highway Transport" an article headed "Road Maintenance Charges". This is the explanation given—

"In response to a number of enquiries by members, the following information on the workings of a typical 'Naracoorte Scheme' for the avoidance of road maintenance charges is published.

"(1) A company situated in any State with vehicles engaged in transport work arranged with solicitors in Naracoorte (which is, of course, in South Australia) for a company having a nominal capital of \$2 to be formed in South Australia. The minimum requirements necessary to form the company are—

"(a) Two shareholders residing in any State.

"(b) One Public Officer residing in any State.

"(c) One Director (must be a bona-fide resident of South Australia and who does not travel outside South Australia for the normal business activities.)

"(d) Address in South Australia for registered office.

"(2) The instructing transport company hires its vehicles to the new Naracoorte company which re-registers the vehicles in its name thereby becoming responsible for road maintenance charges incurred. The

Naracoorte company then commences subcontracting to the first company and, in fact, pays road maintenance charges for any mileages in South Australia.

"(3) In due course, the Transport Departments in the other States where the vehicle operates will make demands for road charges and may proceed to issue summonses and recover judgment against the operating company. They cannot, of course, proceed against the first company because it is no longer operating the vehicles, but merely hiring them to the operator.

"The period of time that it would be advisable for the Naracoorte company to operate would be dependent upon court action instigated by the various transport authorities to recover the charges. In view of the fact that the Naracoorte company would have no assets, and the authorities would be aware that another company could be set up in its place and the whole procedure repeated, it is probably unlikely that the State transport departments would take the matter as far as liquidation.

"(4) The various Transport Departments cannot proceed against the South Australian directors personally because the Directors do not leave South Australia in the course of the business.

"The above outline provides only the skeleton for the operation of this type of scheme and apparently many of the details, such as payment of drivers, payment of hiring charges between the companies, and so on, can be arranged to suit the particular needs of the person operating the scheme.

"Any members interested in this scheme, and requiring further information, may contact the Association offices."

I have read that article to indicate to honourable members what is going on in South Australia. It could apply in other States where the legal people are perhaps as active as they are there.

It is necessary to legislate to overcome this possibility. I commend the Bill, as I have outlined it, as deserving of the utmost support of all honourable members.

Mr. DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (5.41 p.m.): This would be one of the few Acts of Parliament that have not been amended in the past 20 years.

Mr. Lane: Is this your maiden speech?

Mr. DAVIS: No. My maiden speech will be delivered next week.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Recognising the honourable member's previous experience in this Chamber, I think that the word "maiden" is rather sullied.

Mr. DAVIS: I object, because we have a female member in the Chamber. I certainly will not raise tonight the time that I was attacked.

This legislation was first introduced in 1957. As I was saying before the honourable member for Merthyr interrupted me, it would probably be the only Act that has not been amended in the past 20 years. The original legislation was introduced by Mr. (now Sir Gordon) Chalk, who said that it was similar to the Victorian legislation at that time.

It had to be introduced following the infamous Privy Council decision on section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which allowed free trade between the States. At that time we had a problem with border-hoppers who sent goods to Tweed Heads and then back to Queensland for distribution. So something had to be done.

When the legislation was introduced in 1957, the Opposition—at that time there were two Opposition parties—agreed to support it. There were to be no exemptions. However, after six months, the then Transport Minister (Sir Gordon Chalk) introduced an amending Bill into this Chamber. The then Country Party had put pressure on the Liberal Party and required exemption after exemption.

I do not think any honourable member would oppose the principle of road transport hauliers having to contribute to the upkeep of our roads. As an official of the Transport Workers' Union, I had many problems with road hauliers, road operators and road transport drivers. I am quite sure that National Party and Liberal Party members would have had similar problems. This legislation has created many problems as a result of which drivers and operators have had to go to goal.

This would be one of the few pieces of taxing legislation in this State and elsewhere in Australia under which the body is collected. If a person is caught for evading the income tax laws, he can be sold up. However, if a person does not pay his road maintenance contribution, the body is taken. I have no doubt that many honourable members have been confronted with this problem.

The administration of this legislation has not been a success in other States. As has been pointed out by the Minister, South Australia might not be playing the game. I should like to refer to an interesting booklet titled, "Truckin' Life."

This publication takes up the case for the road operator, which is natural enough because the journal itself pushes the claims of the road operator. In a fairly interesting article it deals with a scheme put up by Mr. Virgo, who is the South Australian counterpart of our Minister for Transport in Queensland. I think that this scheme was mentioned at the last conference of the National Party—it is not often that I agree with the National Party—as one that receives a fair bit of accord throughout the community. It involves a surcharge on petrol tax and registration at only a nominal rate rather than

the present rate. In effect it means that the person who uses the roads the most is the one who has to pay the most. For instance, transport operators and taxis use the roads much more than the old lady who uses them once a week to drive to church, so they could expect to have to pay more. This scheme would also cut out a lot of the problems associated with the collection of the taxes.

As I pointed out before to the Minister, in 1957 the tax was one-third of a penny, and that has not been changed. The only change occurred in 1966 when decimal currency came in and the amount was changed to the appropriate sum in a portion of a cent. However, the actual rate itself has not changed in 20 years.

The figures reveal that administration costs must be absolutely outstanding. It is interesting to make a comparison between the amounts collected under the Transport Act (Goods Permit) and the Roads Etc. Act. The Government attempted to abolish the Transport Act (Goods Permit), but the figures are as follows—

	Roads Etc. Act	Transport Act (Goods Permit)
1972-73 ..	\$5,193,705	\$6,122,892
1973-74 ..	\$5,420,312	\$6,317,428
1974-75 ..	\$5,108,292	\$6,003,872
1975-76 ..	\$5,100,808	\$5,120,884
1976-77 ..	\$5,328,918	\$3,849,167

There has been no increase in the rate, but the figures have varied.

When this Act was passed in 1957-58 everybody in Queensland who had a 4-ton vehicle and a 40 per cent loading on the vehicle was incorporated. I studied this Act fairly carefully because I was previously involved with it. I can remember the words of Pat Hanlon at that time. His words were fairly significant, because at that time he said that, on the estimates made by Sir Gordon Chalk when he brought in the Bill, it would bring into the State £500,000, and that allowed for all exemptions. It would have paid us at that time to continue the permit fees and allow interstate operators to come in for nothing, because instead it would have cost £100,000.

I put it to the Minister that, in view of administration costs, the involvement of police, weighbridges and clerical staff, and gaoling, this Act has not been a very successful one. I think all States are agreed that the introduction of measures against straw companies in South Australia should stop the problems and that all States should be able to have the contributions paid. But is that really the answer? One proposition was put forward by Mr. Virgo, the South Australian Minister for Transport. A National Party committee also made a submission, which I believe was a fairly good one. I think the honourable member for

Cunningham was a member of that committee. Incidentally I contested that seat years ago and only just got beaten by a simple majority of about 3,000 votes.

I think the amount is a bit steep, but an 8c surcharge on petrol in place of registration and insurance fees is certainly a way out of this problem, especially if the Commonwealth is collecting it. But what put the kibosh on this, to use a truckie's expression, was the statement of the Commonwealth Transport Minister (Mr. Nixon) that he certainly will not be a collector of taxes for the States. I put it to honourable members that the Prime Minister himself has said that he would levy taxes so that the States would be able to balance their budgets. This would surely be the only option available, and it would solve all the problems we face at the present time.

I will go through them again. First of all, we have the problem that contributions will eventually catch up. Unless we raise the ante I very much doubt whether we will receive a large enough income to make the contribution to main roads. I think everybody would agree with the principle that heavy transport should pay its share of road upkeep. I think that the great majority of transport operators would agree with this. Because of an absence from this place I have not been out to Charleville and Cunnamulla for three or four years, but when I was last out there the operators said that, because of the rotten roads they have to use, they could not see why they should pay any maintenance to main roads at all. I think we have to overcome that sort of problem. Another problem that has to be overcome is the gaoling of truck operators.

We will look at the Bill when it is printed to see whether the Government has got around the problem of tying up the other States, but I put it to the Minister that there are a large number of people in this State who are still getting away with not paying because the Government cannot police the Act throughout the entire State. People end up not paying what they should pay and are getting away with it. The Government will have to come up with a solution that will cover everybody so that all people who use main roads contribute fairly to their maintenance.

Later on I would like the Minister to tell us whether he has any personal opposition to the imposition of a petrol tax to overcome this problem. I do not think we have the solution if we tie up just one State, because the problem exists Australia-wide. The Opposition will have a good look at the Bill to make sure it contains nothing undesirable, and perhaps during the second-reading debate we will be able to more fully explain our views on this legislation.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (5.54 p.m.): It is not often that Government and Opposition members agree—unfortunately the Press

always highlight this—but it would appear that the honourable member for Brisbane Central has been reading my mail again.

Mr. Wright: That's a shocking thing to say.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I really think that comment was made facetiously.

Mr. ELLIOTT: It was, indeed, Mr. Hewitt. But I believe that what the honourable member for Brisbane Central said is true. We have been working on this problem for a long time and we will probably be working on it for some time yet, but I would hope, following what the Opposition spokesman said about the matter, that when we finalise the legislation we will be in a position to agree on its implementation.

One of the very real problems experienced under the existing Act is that people who are honest and prepared to play the game are being disadvantaged because the Act leaves it open for people who are dishonest and flout the law to compete unfairly with them. This has sounded the death-knell for a tremendous number of small operators, and I believe it is very important that we should not look at this problem in isolation but should also realise that there is more to be done and that further consideration must be given to the Act.

The proposed amendments will close the loophole for straw companies, and I do not hold any brief for the straw companies that are using technicalities. If Tom Aikens were here, I am certain that he would castigate the judges, barristers and solicitors for the role they have played in regard to the stray companies in South Australia. In my opinion, those companies have played a very despicable role. They have had no regard for the letter of the law or for the consequences of their actions.

In Queensland, people have tried to play the game but through some fault of their own—and it must be admitted that it is their fault—they have been unable to keep up with their bookwork. I should like to go on record as saying that no-one has gone broke because he has had to pay contribution to road maintenance, but it was the straw that broke the camel's back. People got into trouble and then ceased to pay their contribution to road maintenance. They got farther and farther behind and, not being above the law, the law came to them and said, "You will have to pay the amount of money that you owe." In some cases people were not able to pay it.

I remind honourable members of the remarks of the honourable member for Brisbane Central in regard to the gaol sentence. I agree with him. Why should these people be sent to gaol when we see far more serious offenders, particularly companies, getting off scot-free? I think we have been rather harsh with some of these people.

Admittedly, some of them are breaching the law flagrantly, and if that is their attitude, possibly they deserve all they get. But I do not think their families deserve the same treatment.

We cannot afford, Mr. Hewitt, to simply put this Bill through and believe that the problem will be solved and that from here on everything in the garden will be rosy. It will not. There will be a tremendous amount of strife in regard to the proposed Bill. As the trucking industry has indicated, it is very likely that it will call protest stoppages in relation to it. If that is the case, I think that those involved ought to think again. Although they may draw a little bit of attention to themselves, they will not really achieve anything. They must work with all the people who are prepared to work with them and assist them to implement a better system of contribution to road maintenance.

Everybody in this Chamber knows my views on the subject. I believe that a tax on fuel is the easiest method; in fact, it is a pay-as-you-earn method. If serious consideration is not given to that method, I believe that we will be faced with problems similar to those now existing.

As time is limited, I shall resume my seat and allow other honourable members to participate in the debate.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.]

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (7.15 p.m.): The transport Bill under discussion really does not solve the total problems of the road or haulier transport situation in Australia. The Minister has introduced a virtual stop-gap measure. The shadow Minister for Transport (Mr. Davis) has already pointed out the deficiencies in the administration of the Act. For 20 years the legislation has remained on the statute-book without being amended. That has allowed the present constitutional situation to develop to such an extent that companies have been able to take advantage of the provisions of the Act which allow straw companies to exist in other States. The shadow Minister pointed out that for 20 years the administrative costs of the Act have risen out of all proportion to the revenue collections for Queensland. That is relevant.

In his introductory remarks the Minister continually referred to straw companies. It is very obvious that in Queensland the large transport and haulier companies invariably operate vehicles registered in South Australia. I am not talking about what the Minister referred to as straw companies or companies of minor significance, but companies like TNT, Greyhound and IPEC. It is so obvious that such companies register their vehicles in South Australia. The Minister has not explained this point.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central quoted from an editorial in "Truckin' Life". Of course, the Bill is the

result of a Transport Ministers' Conference in New Zealand, where the various States tried to bring about uniformity.

The Opposition has looked at the problem. We see the anomalies, but this is a patchwork Bill. The real answer is the one given by the shadow Minister—a pay-as-you-go or a pay-as-you-earn scheme affecting all road hauliers. This would mean a petrol tax across the board.

The laziness of the Queensland Government in every field, particularly in the transport field, is demonstrated by this Bill. Over the last 20 years, it has done nothing about increasing taxation in the road maintenance field. As the editor of "Truckin' Life" said, this Bill looks at the future of road transport in Australia. It is very relevant to read some of the editor's statements. He said—

"But the real issue of course, now, is the future of the Transport Industry in this country. It is true that the question of payment of Road Maintenance Tax has been a question of law for many years. Equally, though, it is a fact that many thousands of truckies have been able to avoid paying these taxes by registering with straw companies particularly with those in South Australia.

"They are not criminals, they did it mainly to survive. The fact that they found a way around paying road maintenance taxes is not a matter to be commended of course.

"Equally though neither are Governments to be commended for drawing up initial legislation which was not sufficiently tight to ensure that road maintenance charges were paid. There is no question—ever—that straw companies were illegal.

"This situation is about to change. As a result thousands of Australian truckies may go to the wall.

"What do Governments achieve by putting thousands of people out of work—thousands more added to the already huge unemployment force in Australia?"

What Mr. Virgo of South Australia had to say was covered in general by our shadow Minister. Mr. Virgo said that, instead of adopting the fuel road-tax proposals put forward by the South Australian Government, they blindly stuck to the old ways. Geoff Virgo of South Australia, in the opinion of "Truckin' Life" must be commended for his efforts to bring about a saner, more equitable distribution of the necessary costs involved in running not a huge trucking business, but motor vehicles of any kind on Australian roads.

Those points should be well taken by the Minister. This Bill is not solving the problems of Australian road hauliers, nor is it solving the problems facing the Government. It is a lazy attempt to patch up some of the things that have been let loose over the years. At one time Tom Aikens said something about lawyers. The only people

to make money out of this disreputable business have been the lawyers. They have a lot to answer for in the operation of this and many other Bills.

It is obvious that the total idea of the legislation is abhorrent in some ways to the Federal Government. It is difficult to understand how the Prime Minister can foist on the States legislation to enable them to collect taxes and then, in the road-maintenance field, say, "Guess what, gentlemen? Mr. Nixon says we do not want to collect tax for you in this field." The Federal Government has much to answer for. It should explain to the Queensland public and the road hauliers and truckies' associations in Australia, why it is not prepared to collect this revenue from petrol tax. This legislation cannot be administered properly.

I lived in the West for 3½ years and I sympathise with one of the western members who spoke on this Bill. This legislation, which has meant that a large proportion of this tax has been collected in Queensland, is a disgrace to the Queensland administration. The State Government has a lot to answer for. As our shadow Minister pointed out, the legislation has been in force for 20 years. During that time administration costs have been high and returns to the Government low. High penalties have been imposed on individuals, together with goal sentences. Nothing has really been changed in the legislation. The Act contains harsh penalties. I am sure that each long-standing member at some time or another has known of someone in his electorate who could have been gaoled or forced to pay heavy fines under this legislation. In many instances, because of the economic circumstances of the family or business concerned, the money to pay the fines is unavailable. It is a "Catch 22" situation where operators are unable to earn an income and unable to pay the fine. I have seen such cases in this and other States where this type of legislation has been enforced.

The Act has been poorly administered on a physical basis, as well as at the administrative level. When an industry is fighting for survival in an economic climate created largely by many of the members on the Government side of the House, who could blame drivers or truckies for getting around the provisions by avoiding weighbridges or the tax? Of course they will do it! The only way to collect the tax is to put it on a pay-as-you-earn basis so that the tax is paid at the point of fuel distribution.

It is interesting to note, in conclusion, that this is a road maintenance Act. I have already pointed out, as has our shadow Minister, that this tax has raised less and less money over the years. Perhaps that is why we have the worst roads in Australia. The roads throughout the length and breadth of our State are the worst in Australia.

Mr. Gunn: They must have been a mess in 1957.

Mr. D'ARCY: Nobody except the member for Somerset would deny that that is the situation. We do not have one decent road in this State; yet this has been—

Mr. Newbery interjected.

Mr. D'ARCY: I suppose the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation is talking about the 10 miles outside Mr. Hinze's place. That may be different.

The trucking organisations should pay something towards the upkeep of our roads. I can understand why members from the North would be a little upset. We have already heard the member for Townsville talking about the condition of roads in that part of the State. I realise that we in Queensland have a large area to cover; but that is no excuse for the state of the roads in this State. Even on the road to the Gold Coast—and we know that the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads built the double-lane highway as far as Coomera, where he lives—once a motorist gets to the Crab Farm he is on a single-lane highway that has not been straightened.

Mr. Katter: You poor fellow.

Mr. D'ARCY: There is not a decent road in Queensland. That is what it comes back to. Because of this Government's inaction, there is not a decent road in the State, and at the present moment we are looking at a road maintenance Act.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is not a road maintenance Act. It is the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act. There is a world of difference, and I ask the honourable member to be relevant.

Mr. D'ARCY: I can well understand why the Government would be embarrassed by my straying slightly from the subject, Mr. Hewitt.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not remotely concerned about the embarrassment of the Government. I am insisting on relevance.

Mr. D'ARCY: In conclusion, I believe the most relevant comment is that this is a patchwork measure; but it is not the answer to the problem involved in the road maintenance Act. The Minister is patching up something that he should have patched up 20 years ago. The Government has not really performed. We are looking for the real alternatives that exist today.

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (7.27 p.m.): I support the remarks of other Opposition speakers that this Bill is merely a palliative. It does not solve the problem. Admittedly, it is an improvement. I agree, though, that the ideal solution would be the imposition of a fuel tax so that payment was made according to use of the road.

However, I say quite frankly that my purpose in speaking is to highlight for the information of the public some of the shyster operations that occur in the transport industry rather than some of the iniquities that occur when a transport operator is thrown into goal—a very severe penalty compared with those imposed under other facets of the law.

A young married couple travelling from Sydney to Bundaberg consigned their furniture under contract with a Sydney furniture removalist and, when they got to Bundaberg, they waited for it to arrive. However, it did not turn up at the correct time. Inquiries showed that the Sydney transport operator had subcontracted—no doubt at a profit to himself—the job to another contract operator. That subcontractor, in turn, had apparently struck a driver working for another company who was returning to Brisbane with an empty van. So he subcontracted it to that driver, but not with the agreement of the company that the driver worked for. He subcontracted with the driver personally, who promised to deliver the furniture in Bundaberg for a certain price.

When he reached Brisbane, his employers discovered what he was doing—a little job on the side for his own benefit. The company impounded the furniture of the young couple in its Brisbane warehouse and said to the young couple, "We will not allow you to have your furniture unless you pay us an additional \$120 to deliver it to the address at which the original contractor in Sydney agreed to deliver it."

The couple came to me and asked what could be done. I suggested that they go to the police, claim their furniture and insist that the original contractor deliver it. Legally, I do not know whether he was responsible for delivering it. In my experience in Parliament, I have found that the processes of the law are so expensive that it is not worth seeking justice if the case involves less than \$450.

Mr. Katter: Have you ever heard of the Small Claims Tribunal?

Mr. BLAKE: I accept that interjection. They have heard that that tribunal has made decisions but they have not heard of the tribunal being able to enforce its decision unless the party against whom it found has been agreeable. In theory, it is a wonderful idea and I support it but we should not be too explicit about a cheap avenue of getting justice.

The legal argument was whether the couple could claim the furniture and get it out of the warehouse whilst it was in transit. Frankly, I think it would still be in the warehouse with the young couple being held to ransom if I had not said, "If you do not deliver that furniture, I will name you in the House so that people will know just what sort of shyster operators you are." I do not intend to name the companies involved because under threat they delivered the furniture.

My purpose in raising this matter is to warn the public about the natural tendency, when going to a removalist or transport operator, to look for the best price.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the honourable member to make his point. He is not speaking to the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act. I ask him to do so.

Mr. BLAKE: The point I wish to make is that, on the introduction of the Bill, we are talking about the transport industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing the transport industry. We are dealing with a specific Act.

Mr. BLAKE: I agree with the previous Opposition speakers. The Bill is not a full answer to the problem. As the Opposition spokesman said, it is a palliative. I believe that if agreement can be reached between the States and the Commonwealth, the payment of road maintenance tax should be made by the users of fuel as they use it.

Mr. AUSTIN (Wavell) (7.34 p.m.): In rising to support the Bill I think I should explain what is involved in the payment of this tax and the reason for its being imposed. One of the most critical features of road maintenance is pavement design. The first considerations in road design are traffic volumes, horizontal alignment and vertical alignment. With these things in mind we should then determine what sort of traffic and what volume of traffic is going to use the road. Quite clearly, the type of traffic that is going to use a particular road is a major consideration in the decision on the type of pavement to be put down.

It is very obvious that the State Government and the Brisbane City Council cannot afford to put down a road pavement to cater for the heaviest vehicles which are capable of driving on our roads. Therefore it is only right that the people who are using those heavy vehicles should pay some contribution towards road maintenance.

State Governments and councils have limited funds. I believe that these limited funds are used in the best way possible, and I think that the State Government and the local authorities assess their priorities for road construction very accurately. I realise that they have limited funds and cannot afford to design pavements which will cater for all types of traffic.

I think a very simple analogy can be drawn with the standard concrete driveway of a normal household. That driveway is usually about 10 ft. wide and about 4 in. thick and can handle any number of private motor vehicles that use it, but that driveway will fail immediately if a removal van or a delivery truck drives on it. One has only to drive around the suburbs to see the number of private driveways that have been damaged in that way. If the analogy is continued, it is clear that the State

Governments and the councils cannot afford to design pavements which will cater for the occasional heavy load. Someone has to pay for maintenance of the road when damage is caused by heavy loads and I believe that the owners of these heavy trucks—individuals or companies—should pay for it.

I want to say something about straw companies. Some information is already before the House on this subject. These are \$2 companies that have been set up in South Australia. I do not totally blame South Australian Government for this; there is a reason why they have been set up there. I know that it is a Labor Government and that the honourable members opposite will say, "Oh yes, he doesn't blame the Government." But I don't blame the Government of South Australia because—

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: You are too charitable.

Mr. AUSTIN: I realise that. I am a very charitable person.

I do not blame South Australia. That State is very close to Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and transport operators can see that it is in their interests to set themselves up close to the border. Although they have to pay road maintenance tax in South Australia, they pay for only the number of miles they cover in that State and, being very close to the border, they pay only a very minimal amount. Most of their travel is done in the eastern States. That is why they have set up in that State.

While I am on South Australia, I mention that the Minister for Transport there, Mr. Virgo, espoused a petrol tax which could be levied on motorists. I was very surprised to hear honourable members opposite suggesting a petrol tax, because it is the most iniquitous tax that is known. It means that the private person has to pay the tax. There are petrol trucks as well as diesel trucks, so every private motorist has to pay the tax. I couldn't believe it when I heard my colleagues opposite espousing this petrol tax. It is an absolute disgrace for them to sit here and espouse that tax, because it is totally wrong. The people who are using the roads and causing the damage are the ones who should pay the tax. Let there be no doubt about that.

The New South Wales Government amended its legislation to try to cope with this problem. I think it related to section 10 of the N.S.W. Act. However, it ran into the problem of operators from outside its borders operating in New South Wales. There were several court cases involving this practice, and the Government was beaten. However, I think the amendment proposed by the Minister will successfully overcome this problem. I do not think there is any doubt about that.

We have got to stop these thieves and robbers who are imposing hardships on the ordinary people of the community. Ann Street, Brisbane, is probably the most heavily used commercial road in Brisbane; the city council is forced to resurface it approximately every three months. I do not blame the council. The street is an absolute disgrace, but the damage is caused by the heavy vehicles which use it. I am not saying that those people are not paying their tax, but that is the sort of damage that is occurring all over Queensland.

We cannot afford to subsidise these transport companies. It is not the drivers I am against; it is the \$2 companies. The directors lease their trucks to the company and then claim that they are not responsible for the damage they do. The company goes broke; a judgment is issued against it and yet there is no way for the authorities to get their money. I think that what the Minister is trying to do in this case is just, good and equitable to all people.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Transport) (7.41 p.m.), in reply: I would like to thank all members who contributed to this debate, even though some of them made remarks with which I did not agree at all.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central made a well-reasoned contribution, and as he supported the proposed fuel tax, as did other members, I would like to make some comments about it. I think there are a lot of misconceptions about it. For example, I am surprised that the Opposition would support a fuel tax in any circumstances. My reason for saying that is that if honourable members are going to impose a tax on fuel, what they are saying—I do not know how far they are prepared to go—is that this tax would be used to cover vehicle registration fees, driving licence fees and practically all other charges relating to motor vehicles. Quite obviously a big truck uses the most fuel and would pay the most tax. The argument against this, of course, is quite simple. When roads are built in Australia today they are built to cater for heavy transports and not for Mini Minors or Holdens. Because we cater for heavy transports we have to build roads to their standard. Honourable members should not forget that the people who drive these heavy transports are doing it to make a living on the roads. Good luck to them, too, I have no quarrel with that. But what I am saying is that a lot of people travel on the roads at week-ends for pleasure, and if they pay their registration fees, that should be enough, because it is not very hard to prove that with a fuel tax the person with the lighter car who travels a long way will pay far more in fuel tax than he pays in registration fees and the like. At a recent meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council which I attended in New Zealand, at which all States were

represented, there was not one State, apart from South Australia—and that includes Labor States such as New South Wales—which did not stick up for the road maintenance tax.

The honourable member for Woodridge suggested that we were attacking this problem piecemeal. This tax was introduced way back in 1957-58, and it is fair to say that it has never been amended. In other words, the tax rate is the same today as it was when it was first introduced, and the reason for that is that all States are worried about the validity of an interstate tax. It is also interesting to know that the Federal Solicitor-General and the Crown Solicitors of every State, apart from South Australia, all say that the tax is valid and that this is the only loophole. It might also interest the honourable member to hear that in 1957-58 the collections in Queensland were \$300,000. This amount quickly rose and in 1958-59 it was \$1,186,000. Suffice it to say that in 1976-77 the amount was \$5,328,918. This indicates, of course, that despite the rise more and more people are paying the tax—

Mr. Davis: More vehicles.

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes. This legislation has been introduced because the department says—and the honourable member for Bundaberg referred to this, too—that there are a lot of people who, by various means, are evading the payment of the tax, and any tax people can avoid paying is a bad tax. The reason they can avoid paying the tax is that they can form these straw companies.

Under the legislation that we propose, Victoria will become what is called a reciprocating State with Queensland. As soon as this measure is passed, if a company incorporated in Queensland commits an offence in Victoria it can be dealt with as if it were incorporated in Victoria. Unfortunately, South Australia has not come in yet. It is obsessed with the idea of a fuel tax.

Apart from the point that I made earlier about heavy transports and Mini Minors, another reason why a fuel tax will not be introduced is that a tax of this nature is an excise tax and can be levied only by the Federal Government. Even the Whitlam Government did not bring it in. No Federal Government will allow a State Government to enroach on its taxes. If a Federal Government said to a State Government, "We will levy what you want us to levy", all sorts of anomalies could arise as between the States, and so on. Long ago I was told in no uncertain terms by Sir John McEwen, who at that time was leader of the Country Party and also Minister for Trade, that no Government would introduce it, and, as I said, the Whitlam Labor Government shied off it. Even Governments of the same

political colour would be quarrelling. For that reason, apart from being manifestly unfair and unworkable, a fuel tax could never come in. In addition, I believe it would infringe the rights of a private motorist who works all the week and goes about his private business at the week-end.

The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned certain anomalies. I shall attempt to get some particulars about them and answer him at the second-reading stage.

I thank the honourable member for Wavell for his contribution to the debate. He covered the fuel tax very well.

The present state of affairs is rather sad. In this field it is terribly easy for people to defeat the law, and I think that we, as parliamentarians, should attempt to plug the loopholes. The proposed legislation is an attempt to do exactly that. In fact, when the Bill becomes law, the Government will be quite a bit richer because one of the loopholes will have been plugged.

It also is fair to say that this is a good tax because the money raised by it goes to local authorities roughly in proportion to what is collected in the various areas. Some of it also goes to the Minister for Main Roads, who is able to use it under section 19 of the Act to assist particular areas. The proceeds of the tax are well received by local authorities throughout the State, and I reiterate that I think it is a very fair tax. I will leave it at that, Mr. Hewitt.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

WORKERS' HOMES ACTS REPEAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (7.50 p.m.): I move—

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

As I said when I introduced this Bill, it is merely a machinery amendment. It will save 40 or 50 people each year from having to seek probate or letters of administration on small estates. It brings leases under the old Workers' Homes Acts into line with leases under other State Acts and allows them to be kept in line in the future without separate amending legislation. It also aligns fees for the paperwork on these leases with other fees charged.

It simply tidies up some technicalities, and although it does not affect many people, it is a worthwhile time-saver for those it does affect. I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (7.51 p.m.): The Opposition has examined the Bill. As the Minister indicated at the introductory stage, it is quite clear that its main purpose is to allow for the transfer of a lease of land to the next of kin where the gross value of the land does not exceed \$50,000.

A Government Member: It is a good measure.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is a good measure, and we are not objecting to it. What we are objecting to is the fact that the Government has waited so long before introducing this Bill.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Caboolture wouldn't know the difference between a Workers' Homes Acts Repeal Act and a pair of canine-kicking boots.

The Bill also seeks to bring fees under the Workers' Homes Acts Repeal Act into conformity with those charged in respect of other dwellings. As I indicated earlier, the Opposition has no objection to that, but I would like to reiterate the remarks I made at the introductory stage.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: They are very rude, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will control the House. The honourable member will continue with his speech.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The amendment to the Act is long overdue. It should be amended every two years to keep up with escalating costs. The Minister for Works and Housing is an erudite gentleman, and I know that he agrees with me. Apart from those comments, I indicate that the Opposition has no objection to the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Wharton) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

CONTRACTORS' TRUST ACCOUNTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (7.55 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Contractors' Trust Accounts Act 1974 in certain particulars.”

The Bill is aimed primarily at effecting a transfer of the administration of the Contractors' Trust Accounts Act from the Under Secretary, Department of Justice to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. It will also make those changes which experience has indicated are necessary for the proper implementation of the Act.

At the time of its introduction, the Act was administered by the Under Secretary, Department of Justice, but because of the inspectorial facilities, the administration of the Act was delegated to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. Inspectors appointed for the purposes of the Act are attached to the commissioner's office. It is appropriate, therefore, that the commissioner be charged with the administration of the Act.

The principal objective of the Contractors' Trust Accounts Act is to give home-owners and home buyers some protection in relation to money paid to contractors before the start of contracts to build or alter their homes. To enable effective enforcement of the Act, inspectors were appointed and, under the provisions of the Act, were given various powers. Experience, however, has shown that these powers are insufficient in those cases where a contractor is unco-operative or adopts evasive tactics. Inspectors are hampered, then, in not being able to require contractors to attend at a time and place specified to answer questions or to furnish information. Inspectors are also hindered by not being able to require contractors to produce books, accounts and other documents at a time and place specified by the inspectors.

The Bill extends the inspectors' powers in regard to these two matters. Similar powers are presently exercised by inspectorial staff of the commissioner's office in accordance with authority given them under the Auctioneers and Agents Act.

Concerning self-incrimination, the Bill clarifies the position of the contractor or any other person required by the Act to answer questions or furnish information. The Bill affirms their right to refuse to answer questions or furnish information which may tend to incriminate.

In prosecutions under the Act, proving the contractor's responsibility for his books will be simplified by provisions which make the contractor liable for the entries in books kept by him until the contrary is proved.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (7.58 p.m.): As the Minister said in introducing this legislation, the main aim of the Act when introduced, in 1973 or 1974, was the protection of prospective home owners or people who were getting jobs done by contractors, especially when they paid deposits. Cases were cited in the Chamber—I am sure honourable members have heard about this—of contractors using the money for everything but the purpose for which it was paid.

The Act required the contractors to set aside deposits in a trust account. Stringent checks were made of the trust accounts. I was unaware that the administration was being carried out by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. One of the difficulties of being in Opposition is that we do not realise these things happen. If that has been the position I should think it only reasonable, because, as the Minister said, the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs has inspectors who are competent to carry out this task of checking trust funds.

The Minister told us that we are virtually legalising the operations of the Corporate Affairs Office in that it is to be made responsible.

In 1974 the Opposition supported the proposal because we believed provision should be made to ensure that when money is given to any building contractor it should be used for the purpose for which it was given and that provision should be made to ensure that the money was not dissipated in the payment of debts or for other purposes. The Minister told us that most of what is proposed will make the legislative provisions more enforceable. We are giving better powers to the inspectors. Our approach would be that, if the inspectors cannot enforce the legislation because of absence of power, we should ensure that they are given power. We must agree with that.

I am pleased to see that onus of proof is being placed heavily on the "prosecutor", if I may use that term. I do not believe that a person should be deemed to have committed an offence simply because he refuses to answer questions that may tend to incriminate him. That is true of too much legislation in this Chamber. Recently a fisherman came to me and said that whatever way he acted he was gone. He said that if he refused to answer—

Mr. Akers: Why didn't you support us when we tried to stop that?

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member did not try to do anything. I doubt whether the honourable member was here when this legislation was put through. In fact, I am sure he was not here at the time.

Mr. Akers: I am talking about the fishermen's legislation.

Mr. WRIGHT: On the fishermen's aspect—as I was saying, we had fishermen who, because they refused to answer a

question about their nets, were in fact committing an offence. I do not believe that should be so. There is a common-law right to remain silent. A person has a statutory right under criminal law to remain silent in order that he does not incriminate himself. So why shouldn't it be so in all other areas of legislation?

The Opposition will be listening intently when the Bill is brought before the Chamber after it is printed; but at this point we have no reason to argue against it. We again say that the powers need to be expanded if necessary, and I see every reason why this Act should be administered by the Corporate Affairs Office.

Mr. AKERS (Pine Rivers) (8.1 p.m.): I do not normally support the granting of more power to any inspectors to travel round the countryside snooping on people. The very thought of it is offensive to me; but I believe that this legislation is important and I strongly support it. Not so long ago a firm called Congo Pools robbed dozens and dozens of people around Brisbane. I brought several instances of that to the notice of the Parliament, as did many other members. Honourable members will remember that in its advertising campaign the firm really poured it on with a big gorilla and a bunch of bikini girls dancing around the side of a swimming pool. That was the come-on it used.

When a representative of the firm arrived at a home he would demand \$800 or \$1,000 as a deposit before anybody would come onto the site. After the money was paid the home owner still did not get anything for it. Many people in my electorate were caught. Therefore, I strongly support this further power given to the inspectors to make sure that that type of thing is checked and corrected at an early stage, not after the problem has become clear and the contractor has gone broke.

It is in difficult financial times that this type of legislation becomes even more important. When a small contractor such as a fencing contractor can get his money easily from a bank, he does not need to ask for a deposit beforehand; but at a time when tradesmen and others are forced to take on small jobs they ask people for deposits. Recently I have had quite a few complaints from people that fencing contractors have asked them to pay the full cost or half the cost of a project before they will come onto the job. I want to make sure that this sort of thing is checked. From what I have heard in the Minister's speech and from what I understand of the Bill, I believe that the power given to inspectors will allow them to go further and to check that there is no problem.

The only question I pose relates to the matter of a dud builder. A couple of times people have asked for my advice—unfortunately too late—about what they can do when a builder says to them, "You will

have to buy the materials first," and then lets them down. They have ended up with the materials on the site, having paid for them—and probably more. I ask the Minister whether the materials bought beforehand can be brought under the control of this Act.

I strongly support the Minister on the introduction of this measure and I certainly hope that the rest of the Committee will support him.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.4 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Rockhampton and Pine Rivers for their support of the measure before the Committee. As has been explained, the purpose of the Bill is to ensure that the legislation is more effective in its administration.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

SECURITIES INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.6 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Securities Industry Act 1975 in certain particulars."

The Securities Industry Act 1975 provides that a stock exchange shall establish and keep a fidelity fund. The Act also specifies the matters in respect of which payments may be made out of that fund.

Recently it became apparent to the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission that section 97 (3) of that Act allows payment of up to \$500,000 to be made to every individual claimant who may be entitled to claim moneys from the fund in respect of a member of a stock exchange or member firm recognised by a stock exchange.

When the Act was originally drafted, it was intended to limit payments out of the fund to an aggregate of \$500,000 for all claims concerning that member or member firm. This was, in fact, the case in the repealed Securities Industry Act 1971. The examination of this section also disclosed that it could be interpreted that the payment of \$500,000 could refer to each partner in a partnership which is recognised by the stock exchange as a member firm.

The purpose of this Bill, then, is to amend the Securities Industry Act 1975 to give effect to the original intention to limit fund payments to an aggregate of \$500,000 regarding each sole trader or member firm.

As honourable members are aware, the Securities Industry Act is a uniform measure of this State and New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Accordingly, similar amendments will have to be made in each of the other States. Indeed, the appropriate legislation has already been passed by both Houses of Parliament in New South Wales.

Legislative approval in this State is, therefore, necessary so that uniformity may be maintained amongst the States mentioned, and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (8.9 p.m.): The Securities Industry Act 1975 is the first legislative measure to come out of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement which Queensland entered into with New South Wales, Victoria, and a year later, Western Australia. Honourable members will be aware that there had long been pressure to strengthen Government control over stock exchanges. No doubt many honourable members have had the opportunity to read the Rae report and consider the recommendations from that Senate Select Committee on Securities and Exchange.

When this matter first came before Parliament there had been repeated submissions stressing the importance of having uniform laws. It was rather strange to hear the Minister talking about the need to amend the legislation in four States. That was the sort of problem that we in the Opposition kept putting forward during that earlier debate.

Honourable members will recall, too, that when this legislation was first introduced action was being taken by the Whitlam Government to introduce national legislation in these areas. It was denied strenuously at the time but there was good reason for the Opposition to believe, and I daresay for the public to believe, that the Interstate Corporate Affairs Agreement of 1974 was nothing more than a political spoke that this and other Governments of the anti-Labor brand tried to shove in the Labor Commonwealth wheel.

The proof was there, because Tasmania and South Australia, both having Labor Governments, refused to enter into this agreement; they would have no part of it. One might wonder what would happen if they developed it now? What would New South Wales do? I say through you, Mr. Hewitt, that it might be three-all—a different ball game.

I believe that the criticism I made as the Opposition spokesman in 1975 has been substantiated, because I stressed then that we were getting unnecessary duplication and that, because only a limited number of States were involved, it was not national coverage.

The Minister has now said that amendments will be required in Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales. We could contrast this with what would have to happen now if there was national legislation. Instead of having amendments in every State and taking up a lot of time of the Assemblies, only one amendment would be required in the House of Representatives.

The Opposition does not oppose what the Minister is doing, but we still adhere to the view that there needs to be national legislation. I think this is the answer to this vital area of corporate and securities law. I acknowledge that numerous benefits have arisen from the arrangements that were made in that agreement. We have had reciprocal licensing arrangements for members of the stock exchange and their employees; we have had the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs in Queensland playing a significant role; and we have also had introduced protections that pertain to the pecuniary interests of licensees.

When one considers pecuniary interests and how this Government was prepared to bring down provisions to ensure that the stockbrokers, the dealers and their representatives and investment advisers had to declare their pecuniary interests, one might wonder why we do not have in this State some legislation requiring Ministers and members of Parliament generally to disclose any pecuniary interests or benefits that they might derive or be likely to derive from the dealings that they have with the public or with any organisation in the community.

I suggest that the example that we set in bringing down this legislation some years ago ought now to be followed in this Parliament and we ought to have a pecuniary interest Bill. There should not be one rule for Jimmy and another one for Joe. Surely there is a need to place everybody above any doubt and any thought that they would be involved in suspect activity. This was the question about people involved in the stock exchange.

Mr. Frawley: Why pick on Jimmy and Joe?

Mr. WRIGHT: I just thought that Jimmy and Joe went together. We often use Peter and Paul, but Jimmy and Joe sounded a unique way of approaching this issue, especially when one considers that we can spell the Joe with an "h". I do not disagree that this semi-uniform legislation—that is what it is—has resulted in some marked improvement in the securities law at least in the eastern States. I accept also that it has been advantageous in a number of areas in that certain firms have not had to register in every State. It is accepted that by registering in one State a firm is recognised in the other States. However, I think honourable members would agree that this would have been better approached at a national or Commonwealth level. We can certainly learn from this previous error.

I suggest to the Minister, as Queensland's representative when the Attorneys-General meet, that he ought to approach this issue of uniform legislation on a national basis in other areas. I notice the Minister is smiling now, but I suggest that one matter he could be looking at is the matter of hire-purchase. He could start looking at all the credit matters. I recently read a report that the Minister has in fact been involved in discussions to this effect. We are not quite sure whether the original recommendations of the Molomby committee or Mr. Story's own recommendations on uniformity will be accepted by this Parliament, so I use this opportunity to make the plug that we ought to approach the credit law amendments, changes or upgrading on a national uniform basis.

There is certainly a need to simplify the law in regard to credit transactions. We certainly need legislation that is going to protect consumers and ensure that, no matter which State they live in and where the firm may be registered or operating, the consumers have full information available to them as to the cost of the credit that is offered to them or that they are seeking.

We need to rethink the total concept of hire-purchase and we need to adopt a new approach of conferring ownership when goods are purchased. Numerous problems arise from adopting this hirer approach. I notice you are smiling, Mr. Hewitt, but I do not intend to depart too far from the principles involved in this legislation. I contend that we ought to look carefully at the constant criticism of hire-purchase firms. As an advocate for consumer affairs I have been told of cases where articles or goods that originally cost \$3,000 were repossessed and sold for some \$600.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest the honourable gentleman does not develop that point any further.

Mr. WRIGHT: I will not develop it further other than to back up my statement by saying that this has happened with caravans and many other articles.

Whilst we have uniform or semi-uniform legislation in the securities area, we should now look at uniform national legislation in the area of credit transactions. On the point of the actual proposal before the Assembly, we have no opposition if there is a provision in the original Act that is open to interpretation. The Minister says that originally there was a restriction of some \$500,000 which could be claimed against the fidelity fund, and as this has now been interpreted as suggesting that claims can be made to that amount against each partner, then we need to tie it up, or the fidelity fund will certainly go broke. We will certainly look at the amending provisions when they have been printed. At this stage we have no further comment.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.16 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for his contribution and his warning that uniform company legislation is necessary in Australia. I also note his criticism of the I.C.A.C. arrangement. Apparently the honourable member has not been keeping up his reading of the Press lately. The week-end before last I attended a meeting of Attorneys-General of the Commonwealth and the States in Melbourne, and as a result of that and, as a result also of the study of the Molomby report, I acknowledge that the Attorneys-General did agree to the presentation to the States of uniform legislation dealing with credit laws.

Mr. Wright: Separate legislation?

Mr. LICKISS: Uniform legislation will be introduced, and will, hopefully, be accepted in all States. The legislation will be in three forms—a credit Bill, a goods sales Bill and a chattels security Bill. The matter that the honourable member raised about the transfer of ownership of goods upon sale is one of the prime matters to be dealt with in these Bills.

For the benefit on honourable members, I would just like to say that if it had not been a bold move to achieve as much uniformity as we could in the corporations and the securities area, then we would not have reached as far as we have today in terms of uniformity.

For the interest of honourable members—next month in Queensland there will be a meeting of the Attorneys-General of all States and the Commonwealth. At that meeting we will be setting down the ground rules for an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States to obtain the necessary uniformity throughout Australia in the corporations and securities industry.

It is interesting to know that, although there was a change of Government in New South Wales after the setting up of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Council, New South Wales has elected to remain a member of that association. Also since that time, South Australia, Tasmania and the Commonwealth have been admitted to observer status. So, far from the idea that there has been a waning of interest in uniformity, with a change of Government there has been a tendency towards even greater co-operative federalism in the corporations and securities industry field. I am pleased over the past 12 months to have been a participant in these discussions.

It might be interesting for honourable members to note that the new uniform company legislation will be based on the I.C.A.C. legislation as it presently exists. Amendments are being discussed at officer level at the moment, and these amendments will also be considered at the meeting in Queensland in May in relation to the proposed uniform corporation and securities legislation. It is

proposed that this legislation will be enacted in the Commonwealth Parliament and will then be applied to State legislation.

It is not intended that one Minister will be in charge of this legislation. There will be a ministerial council, each Minister ranking equally, and any amendment to the legislation will only be by unanimous decision of the Ministers of the council.

I could go on and explain in more detail what the proposal is, but I believe that what I have said will at least give the honourable member an indication that we are moving towards uniformity in this field. However, we are not moving towards centralism; we are moving towards true co-operative federalism; and I hope that this move will set a pattern for future legislation that crosses State boundaries and affects Australia as a whole.

I think that I have answered the matters raised by the honourable member, and I hope that I have shown him that the setting up of the Interstate Corporate Affairs Council was a very wise move that will lead to uniform legislation for Australia. It has not thrown out States that were not in I.C.A.C. in the first instance; it has drawn all the States and the Commonwealth together. I think that Australia and the corporate security industry will be better for the fact that someone, in his wisdom, set up the Interstate Corporate Affairs Council so many years ago.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

MAINTENANCE ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.24 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Maintenance Act 1965–1974 and the Children’s Services Act 1965–1977 each in certain particulars.”

Before the Commonwealth Family Law Act became effective in January 1976, failure to comply with court orders under the Maintenance Act for maintenance of wives, or children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, was punishable by imprisonment. Failure to comply with maintenance orders made or undertakings given under the Children’s Services Act also could result in imprisonment.

The maintenance of wives and legitimate children now comes under the Commonwealth Act. The maintenance of illegitimate children remains subject to the State legislation. Under the Commonwealth Act, failure to comply with a maintenance order is not punishable by imprisonment; yet failure to comply with an order made for the maintenance of an illegitimate child is still punishable by imprisonment in Queensland under State law. A similar situation applies to failure to comply with maintenance orders and undertakings under the Children's Services Act.

The sole purpose of the Bill is to amend the Maintenance Act and the Children's Services Act so that failure to comply with maintenance orders and undertakings will not result in imprisonment. This amendment will make the law of this State in this regard the same as that of the Commonwealth and some other States. The amendment is therefore desirable.

Payment of orders and undertakings will still be enforceable by way of civil judgment, seizure of goods or attachment of earnings.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (8.25 p.m.): A few moments ago the Minister made the point that the Securities Industry Act was an indication of the type of co-operation the States can give when important issues are at stake. If one looks at the history of maintenance law, it can be seen that this is certainly an example of the co-operation that is possible between State and Federal Governments, irrespective of their political colour. I note that there have been reciprocal arrangements going back to 1914. In the 1950s, amendments were made to tidy up those arrangements. We have had amendments all the way through, but there has always been this co-operation. It seems that the States are now prepared to co-operate further and hand most of these problems over to the Commonwealth. But, as the Minister has outlined, we do need to ensure that there are no differences when it comes to what action can be taken in law if a person does not carry out the requirements under a maintenance order.

I have always been against the idea that a person should be locked up for not meeting the terms of such an order. It makes for a stupid situation. When that person gets locked away he has no ability to earn and therefore he cannot pay. Once he has served his term, the previous debt disappears. A wife may have been owed \$1,000 or \$2,000, but the moment the husband has done his time in gaol, that is the end of the debt. It means that she never got her money; he went to gaol, and, in some cases, had a bit of a holiday, and got away with it. It has been wrong.

I would rather see action taken to garnishee wages. Again we face some problems here. Repeatedly I have had people come to

me and say, "There is a maintenance order against my husband, but there is nothing much we can do about it because we don't know where he is." Some clerks of the court do not seem to try very hard to find the husband. Maybe that is not their task, but certainly it is the task of the authorities to ensure that an order can be enforced against a husband.

When one starts looking at the maintenance orders and the overall family assistance given by the State department one must commend the Children's Services Department in Queensland. It certainly adopts a humane approach to those people in need. In my own area many a woman has been in tears, not knowing what she was going to do, because she has had to leave the home as her husband had been belting her and she couldn't stand it any longer. She has simply been told by the officers of the Children's Services Department, "All right, dear, we will arrange some family assistance for you. All you have to do is take out a maintenance order." The moment she has been to the legal aid office and started proceedings, that assistance has been forthcoming. I commend those officers in the Children's Services Department all over Queensland for their excellent approach to wives, mothers and children.

I reiterate the point that no real attempt is made to find the husband. Although the Minister has put forward the idea that we should not imprison him—I totally agree with that—I do not think society ought to get too soft. I noticed during my trip to China—the one that the honourable member for Caboolture always likes to bring up in this Chamber—

Mr. Frawley: You didn't pay your own way.

Mr. WRIGHT: The point is we did pay our own way, just as Mr. Fraser, Mr. Peacock and all the others paid their own way. But that is beside the point.

When I was in China I discussed the matter of maintenance with some of the officials. I learnt that if a young man became involved with a young woman and there was a child of that association there was a requirement on that young man to care for that child until it was 21 years of age. There are no buts about it. He has that responsibility and he has to care for that child. I was told that, irrespective of the age of the young man or his earning capacity, he has that responsibility. It is a social and legal responsibility that is enforced.

I believe that we are getting too soft on many husbands and fathers. We do not enforce their responsibilities. When a man enters marriage he accepts certain contractual obligations. I think back to Federal Governments—I will not start referring to their political colour—that have tended to make it easy for husbands to opt out and cop out. They disappear and we do not enforce the orders placed on them.

I would not mind so much if no suffering were involved, but the families suffer. A woman who gets \$70 a week pays \$50 to \$55 a week in rent while the man involved may work for a mining company and earn up to \$250 a week and nothing is done about him. He lives a great life without any further responsibilities. He has a great time and gets away every Saturday night to the pub and plays bowls or whatever sport he is interested in. He does not give a thought to the family he has left behind, and he gives no thought to the responsibilities that he undertook when he was married or when the children were born.

It is time that we stopped being soft on the fathers and husbands and started enforcing these orders. While I do not want them put in prison, where they have no capacity to earn, we should follow these orders through. The clerks of the courts and the magistrates should ensure that wages are garnisheed and that the money goes to the family. At the moment, because of the difficulty in finding them, the Children's Services Department or the Social Security Department continues to pay. These departments will always pay so that the woman does not miss out on assistance. But the man gets off scot-free.

I realise that this matter does not pertain strictly to the amendments before us but I believe that it should be aired. I hope that the Minister uses his offices as both Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to ensure that society does not get soft in the enforcement of maintenance orders.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (8.32 p.m.): I rise to disagree totally with the honourable member for Rockhampton. I am not at all keen on the Bill. However, I recognise the plain fact that in this instance we must have uniformity and that the present law in Queensland is completely unacceptable. Imprisonment for defaulting husbands under maintenance orders is justified. I support it whole-heartedly. The problem we face is that the Commonwealth Government, under the Family Law Bill, has eliminated completely the penalty of imprisonment from the penalties available in the case of non-support of legitimate children. Unfortunately, as in many other fields, in this instance the State is being led by the nose by the Commonwealth and forced into a position that I do not believe it would have chosen of its own volition.

While all of us, I believe, recognise that it is quite acceptable that non-payment of maintenance in respect of illegitimate children should render fathers liable to imprisonment, it is not just that non-payment of maintenance in respect of legitimate children should not allow imprisonment. This gets away from the whole principle of whether or not imprisonment is a just and proper measure to be taken against those who default on their children. I for one have always believed that people should be

responsible for the consequences of their conscious actions. In this case we have people who have fathered children—be they legitimate or illegitimate—who expect us as legislators in respect of the law and the community at large to say, "If you want to wash your hands of responsibility for these children we will allow you to do so." Unfortunately that is what this Bill virtually says. The only thing that kept wayward fathers in line was the threat of imprisonment.

Mr. Wright: That is not true. They knew that they could go away and get rid of their debts.

Mr. GYGAR: I disagree whole-heartedly with the honourable member. I suggest to him that experience shows that that is not the case. One has only to talk to lawyers experienced in family law matters to be told that as soon as the Family Law Act dropped imprisonment, fathers who were subject to maintenance orders said, "That's it; all I have to do is shoot through. If they catch me they will hit me with a bill and garnishee my wages. I will simply adopt a new name and go to another town." If the Sword of Damocles, the threat of imprisonment, hung over their heads it would be a very different situation. I am assured by many practitioners with experience in this field that it was the threat of imprisonment, the thought of going to gaol, that kept these people in line. It was that, and that alone, which ensured that justice was done in two respects: firstly, to the mothers and the unfortunate children deserted by their fathers, and secondly, to the people of Queensland who will now be forced, through taxation revenue, to support these families whose irresponsible fathers wash their hands of them. Like it or not, this penalty of imprisonment was one which made people face up to their responsibilities. I do not criticise the Minister for introducing this Bill—and I hope my statements are not misinterpreted in that way. We are forced by an ill-thought-out Federal measure to introduce this Bill; otherwise we place ourselves in a completely unacceptable situation. However, I argue against the very principle of removing the threat of imprisonment against people who will not face up to their responsibilities.

It was suggested by the honourable member for Rockhampton that, as people have no ability to earn in prison, we gain nothing. I suggest to him that experience has shown otherwise. Imprisonment does not of itself convey the great virtue in this measure; rather it is the threat of prison, which keeps people in line, that is the valuable provision.

What happens now? We are going to see here, as we saw after the introduction of the Family Law Bill, that fathers who are the subject of maintenance orders will wash their hands of the whole thing. A long, tortuous and distressing procedure for the mother and in some cases for the children will now have to take place. Orders will

have to be taken out in court. Garnishees will have to be issued against wages. The cynic who unfortunately is involved in this will wait until the whole procedure has been carried out and will then up stakes and disappear to another town. When, if ever, the unfortunate mother is able to find him again, the whole procedure must start once more.

A lot has been said about unemployment in this State, but it is not so bad that people who are prepared to work—those who are prepared to change their names and to disappear in a trice—are not able to find employment in other centres. I am assured that that is exactly what will happen. The fathers will let this long procedure take place, they will get the garnishee and, two weeks later, they will have vanished from that town and reappeared in another, with another name and another identity. Once again the mother will be left destitute.

The provision of gaol was an excellent method of terror, if we like to call it that—and let us be blunt about it. It was a method of terrorising these people into facing up to their responsibility. We have no other way of doing it because, in our democratic society, the majority of citizens are simply unwilling to accept the social controls that would be necessary to enable us to track down defaulting fathers. We would need something like a system of social security or identity cards to track them down, and I do not think many of us here would lightly enter into such a scheme.

Mrs. Kyburz: Some of us would.

Mr. GYGAR: The honourable member for Salisbury would. I must admit that on occasions I have been tempted to consider it—not only in respect of this measure but also on under-age drinking, driver's licences and many other things. However, when one weighs it up on the balance, I do not think we really want a universal identity card. I have heard from people who have visited France, which has such a system, and heard them speak about the bureaucratic controls that are placed on people—about papers that have to be presented before they can get a job and papers that have to be presented before entering a hotel. I for one would be a little aghast to think that this State of the Commonwealth of Australia should enter into a scheme like that. I do not think Australians want it. We are too much of a freedom-loving people to want every person in the State recorded with an identity number and a card that had to be flashed when he wanted to go anywhere or do anything. That is just not a practical alternative.

If we recognise that, what we need is some other measure of law to ensure that these defaulters are brought to heel. At the moment unfortunately under the Family Law Act there is no such measure, because they know that they can treat the courts

and our judicial system with absolute contempt—and there is no other word for it but “contempt”—let the orders run their course, let the courts take their carefully trodden paths and then vanish from the scene and reappear somewhere else.

It is with a sense of grave disquiet that I see this Parliament introducing a measure such as this, but I recognise the inevitability of it and I mourn the disappearance of a provision that made people at least face up to their normal responsibilities in life.

Mr. BOURKE (Lockyer) (8.40 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Bill. I welcome its introduction, as it will bring the penalties for non-payment of maintenance in a narrow field of child support into line with those for non-payment of maintenance within the whole broad spectrum of maintenance under the Family Law Act.

Today it must be recognised that it is totally inappropriate in any civilised society to imprison a person for a debt. That is a very old-fashioned and archaic concept that goes back as far as Roman times. In times of slavery, a person's last asset was his body or the labour that he could perform. It must be recognised in modern terms that it is totally inappropriate to imprison any citizen simply because he owes a sum of money.

We have heard a good deal of talk tonight about the ideal of responsibility and how a parent must face up to his responsibilities. There are other aspects of fatherly responsibility. A parent has a responsibility to set a good example to his children and to teach them ways and principles that will see them through their lives. It does not stop at money; it goes far beyond it. I cannot honestly see how we can compel any person to be a good father under the law. Similarly, it is practically impossible to compel any individual to pay money if he is determined not to pay it. We are recognising facts here.

I am not a general supporter of the concept of welfare for every issue and in every case, but there is a very good role for the State to play here. The State should step in much more heavily in support of abandoned wives and children. This is in the children's interest. Children should never suffer. We must consider what we can do as a State to support these children.

Quite honestly the father who is bad parent is quite often better gone. The children are better off if he is out of the house. There is no reward for the State in trying to compel a person who is an incompetent or criminally bad parent to stay in the house. For the children's sake, let us get rid of him.

I welcome the recent trend to give women much more freedom in society and to look upon them as being on their own. They

have received far more financial independence and can make a choice themselves without financial pressure.

Any woman who has to live with a drunken or a sadistic man is not to be envied. Quite often such men are their own worst enemies and they ruin the lives of their wives and children. It is to be welcomed that women now have a choice. If her husband is no good a woman is better off getting rid of him. The State should encourage this trend.

I welcome this Bill. It is significant because there is a recent trend towards the de facto relationship. As a person who is concerned for the sanctity of the family and marriage, I cannot say I object to long-term de facto relationships as such. Quite often today people start off with high ideals and think their relationship will be long-term, but the harsh realities intervene and they break up. This legislation will put all people paying maintenance in respect of children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, in the same category, and this is to be welcomed.

It will remove confusion and it will tidy up the situation. It will remove an outmoded concept, one that has been recognised as being outmoded, to gaol people for failure to do doing certain things. That may have been disputed tonight, but it is recognised universally and I welcome it on that basis.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (8.44 p.m.): I regret and lament very much the statements by a number of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber in relation to this Bill. I view with a great deal of regret its rather obvious intended passage through this Assembly. The Minister's argument was based on uniformity with other States. If I am doing the right thing and everybody else is doing the wrong thing—if I am the only person out of the step with everybody else in the platoon—I am not worried. This might well be the case tonight.

I have very strong feelings about the Bill. I am not speaking in vague generalities that might appeal to the populace, nor am I trying to impress somebody with my rhetoric. Two mothers in western towns have rung me rather desperately. One has four children; the other has five children. The mothers have said, "We cannot get any social security payments." I rang the department and was told that, because there are two husbands around and they should pay the maintenance, money cannot be paid. That is quite a reasonable attitude for the department to adopt and I do not take umbrage at it.

I contacted the clerk of the court and I said to him, "There is an order out against these people. Get them to pay the money." He said to me, "I can no longer do that, because the Federal Government has removed the imprisonment clause. These people have been to their lawyers and they know of the

Federal Government's action and they will not pay the money." I asked, "What else can you do?" He replied, "Well, I can garnishee them or I can put a charge over their goods." I said, "Well, why the hell don't you do it?" He said, "Because both the bludgers"—that is the expression he used—"are shearers, they are both drifters. They own no goods in their own names. The things they obviously do own have been rather cunningly put in their de facto wife's name. They are both shifting from job to job, so garnisheeing their wages is a stupid, futile and useless thing. There is no way that these people can pay."

Let me outline the facts in both these cases. The husbands were happily living with their de facto wives and one or two illegitimate children, and looking after them quite well, while their wives and legitimate children were starving to death around the corner. It is said that society has to look after these two poor mothers, but they had to go around begging to relatives and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to keep body and soul together. At the same time the husbands were on the other side of town spending their money in the local hotel. That is the sort of situation that has been created by this particular piece of legislation.

If anyone doubts what I am saying, I can supply the names of the people concerned and the name of the clerk of the court so that he can follow the matter up. I am not just grabbing airy-fairy things out of the sky; I am talking about harsh human reality and human heart-break out in some obscure western town. I am quite sure similar situations exist in the city also.

I agreed with everything the honourable member for Rockhampton had to say except his statement that people have no fear of prison, that they are not worried about having to go to prison. I do not know if honourable members have ever been inside a prison, but I have been inside one in the sense that I have visited people in prison, and I can assure honourable members that it is a very harrowing experience. Walking through the gates was enough to make my hair stand on end, and I know from talking to some of the inmates that they live only for one day—the day that they can walk out through those gates as free men. The suggestion that no man would worry about going to prison is just not valid. The very thought of going to prison scares people, and it was that fear that enabled us in the past to get money out of those people who refused to pay maintenance.

In both the cases I mentioned these men had been paying only because they had been threatened with imprisonment, but once the Federal legislation came in they immediately stopped paying and they have been laughing ever since.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. KATTER: The previous speaker made some sensible comments, but I think he is wrong in one respect. I do not wish to cast aspersions upon any honourable members, but I have seen the reality of the situation. He mentioned imprisonment for debt. We are not imprisoning a man for a debt; we are imprisoning him to try to get him to provide some food for his wife and family.

Mr. Wright: That does not get him to provide food for his wife and family.

Mr. KATTER: We are imprisoning him in order to stop him from living with his de facto wife, then shooting around the corner and having an affair with another woman and producing several more children, and then deserting them also.

Until the introduction of the welfare State, society had a way of dealing with people of that kind. I think we should follow the example set by the animal kingdom. If the lioness will not go out and hunt, she is either killed by other lions in the pride or rejected by her mates in the gene pool and lions will not mate with her. The drones in a beehive are driven out. In the animal kingdom, and I would say in the human species as well, nature has had a way of dealing with these circumstances.

In the past it may have been a fairly brutal way. Some of our more primitive societies still have a fairly brutal way of dealing with these people, but, however brutal the treatment, a definite thing occurs. These individuals are either killed or driven out of the gene pool.

In this case we have men—and I will not use the name that I would like to call them—constantly going around fathering children irresponsibly wherever they like. One can conjure spectres of some people, but these spectres are reality. I could name three or four cases of men who have fathered up to 11 or 12 children, none of whom they paid for. Everyone in this Chamber and every hard-working person in the State is paying tax to look after these children. Not only that, but these children have no fathers and, unfortunately, in many cases they have problems with their mothers as well. These men have no sense of responsibility and their children are going to be left in the world without money and without a father.

I would go so far as to say that we are not only allowing this, but, with this legislation, consciously promoting it. We are creating a situation in which these people can do it again and again without any sort of responsibility attaching to the act. The argument is advanced that, because the Federal Government has done something, we, too, should do it on the grounds of uniformity. If the Federal Government has made a mistake, I see no reason in the world why we should then proceed to place an imprimatur upon its mistake.

Mr. SCASSOLA (Mt. Gravatt) (8.51 p.m.): With the greatest respect, I say at the outset to the honourable member for Flinders and those who preceded him in this debate that they were arguing in favour of the proposed amendment before the Committee. There is a requirement in the law of this country, whether it be State or Federal, that a man should maintain his wife and, indeed, should maintain his children, and that has been the law for a long, long time. All that the Family Law Act did in this area was to remove punishment by imprisonment; it did nothing else. All of the other remedies in existence remained, and they remain in force today. That position has not been altered.

In practical terms, it has long been recognised that imprisonment of a defaulter for non-payment of maintenance does not bring any sustenance to the family. That has long been recognised not only by the courts but by society. All that imprisonment does is make the man's subsistence and his family's sustenance the responsibility of the State. He does not earn anything in prison, or certainly not enough to maintain his family.

Another matter which has certainly been proved by experience is that those people who are intent on avoiding their responsibilities will do so whether the spectre of imprisonment is there or not. All the cases which the honourable member for Flinders put to the Committee were examples of that. There are many other examples of people avoiding their responsibilities. In the 1950s and 1960s a series of Australian yarns called "The Yarns of Billy Borker" were published. In a facetious and ironic way many of those yarns showed up the defaulter of maintenance, but they were a commentary on society then just as they could be a commentary on the society of today.

Difficulties arise because very often the husband or father cannot be found, and therefore the maintenance order cannot be enforced. That is the difficulty; to enforce a right, one must locate the person against whom the right can be enforced. In those circumstances society has seen fit to come to the assistance of the family that has been left. Indeed, if the spectre of imprisonment were effective, one might well suggest that the social security system would be unnecessary, but it is a commentary on our society that it is necessary.

Under the social security legislation of the Commonwealth, a person who seeks social security assistance is required, under the relevant provision of the Social Security Act, to take reasonable steps to enforce his or her right to maintenance, and the provision is in these terms—

"A pension shall not be granted to a widow, being a deserted wife or a woman whose marriage has been dissolved and who has not remarried, unless she has taken such action as the Director-General considers reasonable to obtain maintenance from her husband or former husband."

It is a sad commentary on Australian society that some 62.5 per cent of lone mothers receive Government assistance.

If one looks at the 1977 Queensland Year Book, one sees that some of the comments that have been made by honourable members who preceded me in this debate just do not hold, because the figures to which I will refer in a moment cover a period prior to the Family Law Act 1975. In this State in 1973-74, 1,083 deserted wives received social service benefits in the form of supporting mother's benefits, or deserted wives pensions, as they were then called. In 1974-75 the number had risen to 1,763, and in 1975-76 it increased to 3,005. It was only in 1975 that the Family Law Act came into existence, and there were dramatic increases between 1973-74 and 1974-75.

Not only has it been recognised by society that imprisonment does not achieve the result desired by some people, but it has also been recognised by the wife and mother who has been deserted. Remedies very often are not enforced, and they are not enforced because the errant husband cannot be located. In some instances, because the circumstances of the particular person have changed the remedies are not pursued. In other instances they are not pursued because, with the greater opportunities that exist for employment in our society today, many women would rather go out and earn money for their family and have a regular income than chase an errant husband and receive only spasmodic payments.

I agree with the amendment proposed by the Minister.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT (Greenslopes) (8.59 p.m.): This is one of those rare occasions when the measure placed before honourable members is devoid of politics and full of compassion, and deserves the sympathetic interest of every member. There are no politics in maintenance laws. We are concerned only that children who are deserted are properly maintained and that men who desert them discharge their proper obligations to them. That is what the proposed Bill is all about, and every last one of us should have sympathy for those who are disadvantaged.

There are those who think that women in our society have achieved equality. When I see deserted women raising young children by themselves, I am firmly of the opinion that they are not even close to equality. There is no section of our society that is more degraded, demeaned and belittled than the women who have been deserted and left all by themselves to raise young children. I have nothing but total sympathy for them in the struggles they face.

We do not sit in judgment tonight on broken marriages. When a marriage goes bust, it is judged on its merits. It could well be that the woman has contributed substantially, equally or to a greater degree to the rupture of that marriage. We are not looking at that, but at the issue—the

children—and the man's obligation to those children when he moves out of the woman's life. On this subject I am very basic and very fundamental in my views. He fathered those children, and they are his responsibility until such time as they can take their own place in the world. I get very annoyed about these soft laws that try to take the responsibility away from him. We should be finding laws that home the responsibility right back to him.

Under no circumstance should we take this soft attitude that the State should step in and look after the children. Certainly in no circumstance should the State stand aside when they are destitute and the father cannot be found and therefore cannot be forced to discharge his responsibility. We have come further along society's road than that. As I say, under those circumstances the State certainly stands by the woman and stands by the children to make sure that they are not destitute. But no way in the world should the father be allowed to walk out of their lives, shrug his shoulders and say, "The State will accept my responsibility. I'll have no part of it."

If there is one social problem that has had enormous impact upon me in the 12 years I have been in this Assembly, it is the problem of women raising children by themselves. Almost every other social issue fades into insignificance by contrast. The degradation of these women and the way they are demeaned amount to an experience that is infinitely saddening. One of the very early experiences I faced when I came into Parliament concerned a man who was told that his three-year-old child had a hole in the heart. The next day he was gone, out of her life, and to the best of my knowledge he was never found again. In my opinion all the processes of law should have been placed at his wife's disposal to find him and to make him face his responsibility.

I can give the instance of a man whose business went bad, and he thought he had greater opportunities overseas. He went away but made some very loose sort of financial arrangement for his wife and children. That woman, who led a reasonable social life and had some standing in the community, lives in fear month by month that the cheque will not be forthcoming and that she will not be able to maintain payments on the house and keep the children according to the standard to which they are accustomed.

All of this may not be greatly relevant to the issue under discussion. The simple issue is that we are no longer going to imprison men who default. Two of my colleagues have made the simple point tonight that it was the fear of imprisonment that very often made them measure up. I think those two colleagues who said that are spot on. I agree with them totally. If defaulting husbands who are sent to prison still do not pay the money after serving their term, well, I do not suppose much is proved. It is one of

those things that cannot be measured. How many men did accept their responsibilities just because of the prospect that they might have gone to prison? We can't measure it; we don't know. It is reasonable to suggest that a very great number could have done so for that reason.

Mr. Katter: I know two, anyway.

Mr. W. D. HEWITT: My friend from Flinders says he knows of two. There would be many more than that.

I emphasise again that this is a matter of great social consequence. It is one to which we should all be attuned, and it is one with which we should all be tremendously sympathetic. This is one of those occasions when we should return to raw basics and raw fundamentals. A man fathers children, and he has a basic responsibility to them until such time as they can maintain themselves. I do not know why, but that simple proposition cannot be embraced when we look at maintenance laws such as this. I believe very emphatically that deserted women with young children are terribly disadvantaged. It should be seen that a Parliament extends great compassion and sympathy to them and stands firmly on their side.

When maintenance payments fall into arrears women very often ring the appropriate Government department to ask that certain steps be taken. On occasions the insensitivity with which those calls are handled positively appals me. Sometimes the phone is put on the desk, with the mouthpiece open, and a voice says, "Hey, that woman so-and-so is on the phone again; has her old man paid up?" What degradation for the woman! She is entitled to greater dignity than that, and so far as I am concerned she will get it. I speak with great feeling on this issue because it is one of the problems that we in our soft society have allowed to creep in. The State should be ready at all times to stand by deserted children to make sure that they will never be destitute. But the State should also stand ready to enforce the proper obligations of errant husbands and fathers.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.7 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. Both sides of the argument have been well and truly canvassed. One could find oneself in agreement with the argument on both sides. However, it is fair to say that the Bill deals only with the maintenance of illegitimate children. Tonight, some honourable members argued in favour of all the children whose maintenance payments were not maintained. The issue before the Chamber is that, because of Commonwealth legislation, fathers who default in paying maintenance for legitimate children are not able to be sent to gaol, whereas fathers who default

in respect of illegitimate children could be required under State law to be imprisoned. That is the subtle difference.

I do not propose to dissect the argument. I think it is better left in the minds of honourable members to work out for themselves. However, it is fair to say that, had the Commonwealth Family Law Act not been amended to prevent fathers being imprisoned for the non-payment of maintenance, I doubt very much whether this measure would be before us this evening.

There is little more I can add. I again thank honourable members for their contribution. I thank particularly the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt for his considered approach. He explained the situation very carefully. Some of his remarks to the Committee were quite enlightening.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

STATUS OF CHILDREN BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.10 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to remove the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock."

On 8 April 1976 a Bill to remove the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock was introduced into the Parliament. The Bill was then allowed to lie on the table to enable interested parties to consider its provisions. A number of submissions were received and referred to the Law Reform Commission for consideration. The Bill now before the Committee is the outcome of the commission's subsequent recommendations.

The Bill declares that every person, whether legitimate or illegitimate, shall be of equal status. To achieve this result it is necessary to legislate for a number of other matters relating to the subject.

The Bill provides that instruments which are executed and intestacies which take place before its commencement shall be dealt with as though the Bill had not been passed. It further provides that executors, administrators and trustees are to be under no greater obligation to inquire if any person exists who could claim an interest in any estate or property by reason of the Bill.

Provision is also made that a child born during a woman's marriage, or within 10 months after the marriage has been dissolved, shall be presumed to be her child and that of her husband or former husband, in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

The circumstances in which paternity is to be recognised for a number of purposes are also set out. These circumstances include a declaration of paternity under the Bill made after the death of the father of the child. This provision was added to the original Bill. It follows the South Australian legislation and is in conformity with the existing Queensland law in the Succession Act. For the protection of the child, the declaration of paternity is to be taken to have been made immediately before the death of the father. This applies only where the application is made before the death of the father, or within six months after his death, or such further time as the Supreme Court or a judge thereof allows.

The Bill specifies the matters which are evidence and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, conclusive evidence of paternity. Instruments of acknowledgement of paternity may be filed with the Registrar-General, who may permit inspection of those instruments in certain cases. If the Registrar-General refuses to permit inspection, he may be called on to show cause why the inspection should not be permitted. Declarations of paternity made by the Supreme Court and certain orders under the Maintenance Act are to be filed with the Registrar-General as if they were instruments of acknowledgement.

The Bill also provides for applications to be made to the Supreme Court or a judge thereof for a declaration of paternity and for such a declaration to be made. In such proceedings the court or judge will be able to make an order requiring a person to give evidence material to any question.

A person may also be directed to submit himself or another person in his care and control for the performance of medical tests. A medical test cannot be performed unless consent is obtained. Where a person fails to consent to such a test, he is not liable to any sanction. The court or judge may draw such inferences from that failure as appear proper in the circumstances.

An acknowledgement by a person for the purposes of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act or this Bill that he is the father of an illegitimate child is not admissible in certain criminal proceedings against him, nor is a certified copy of an entry of the name of the father given under that Act. This is a new provision included because it is in the interests of an illegitimate child that its father acknowledges paternity.

The Bill is to come into effect on 1 January 1979. This is to allow adequate time for everyone to become conversant with its provisions.

I am sure honourable members will agree that the measure before the Assembly is a most desirable one and well worthy of support. I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.15 p.m.): It is legislation such as this that makes Opposition members—I know myself personally—consider very carefully the practice we have in this Chamber of having the introductory stage. Honourable members have heard the Minister outline numerous provisions. It is now the task of the Opposition spokesman to comment on or debate the provisions that have been presented in the Chamber. It must be realised that this is an impossibility.

Legislation was introduced in 1976 by the then Minister for Justice, Mr. Knox, to try to remove the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock. The action taken here had been taken previously in New Zealand and in most other States of Australia. It had been given much thought. It was when the legislation was introduced that the Minister for Justice said that he intended to obtain submissions from people in the community, because it was a very important piece of legislation and the status of children was of great social significance. I agree that it is. It is totally wrong to have discrimination against children because of the circumstances of their birth. It can best be summed up by a comment made by the Minister for Justice at that time, as follows—

“The law should not discriminate against any child or impose disabilities upon it merely by reason of the accident of its birth.”

That is a view that we would all hold very strongly. Children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, should be equal in the eyes of the law.

We have new legislation before us and it will be the task of the Opposition and, I hope, Government members, to make a very close comparison between this legislation and that presented on 8 April 1976. We must see what variations have occurred, how far the Law Reform Commission heeded the recommendations presented to it and what additional provisions are before the Chamber tonight.

We tend to talk about the status of children and we have had explained, in the legislation that was produced two years ago and in what the Minister has outlined tonight, the need for clearly stating the rights of children. I accept this.

As this is an introductory speech, let me suggest that we should expand the rights of children into the area of the rights of children to know. I speak specifically here of the rights of children to know exactly

who their parents are. I realise that this does not come within the ambit of the Bill before the Committee, but it is a matter that must exercise the minds of all members of Parliament, especially if they have been presented with detailed documents, as I have been, by one of my constituents, of the 15-year search he carried out to try to discover who his parents were. He asked me if I would raise this matter in the Chamber at the first opportunity. As I said, whilst it does not pertain to the Status of Children Bill, it is important to the community as a whole that children have a right to know exactly who their parents are.

I do not want to labour this point and be called to order by you, Mr. Hewitt, so I shall make one point. The Minister should consider this matter very carefully. We should enable people, once they reach the age of 18 years, the age of majority, to find out who their parents are. We should assist them in every way by giving them the facilities available through Government departments and so on so that they can search out exactly where they came from and who their parents are.

I did not appreciate the importance of this until I sat down and talked to this gentleman about the problems he had experienced and the darkness that surrounded his total life. He was not quite sure where he had come from. He said that when he found out that his father died, part of the worry was gone. But, regardless of the reasons for his mother's allowing him to be adopted, he said that when he met his mother, he set that fact aside, because it was a pleasure that no-one else could experience without going through it. I suggest that the Minister look at this matter and ensure that adopted people, once they reach a certain age, can be assisted in discovering who their parents are.

Mr. SCASSOLA (Mt. Gravatt) (9.20 p.m.): I concur with the observation that this is indeed a most significant measure. It may well be said to be one of the most significant measures to come before this Parliament in this session and, indeed, perhaps this year. As I understand the proposal before the Committee, it seeks to remove the legal disabilities under which illegitimate children have suffered and to give them rights at law which they did not previously have.

A child who was born out of wedlock suffered grave discrimination indeed, a discrimination which attached simply because he was born illegitimate. The word "illegitimate" is in my view totally inappropriate. It is one of those labels which people attach to classes of other people and for a period of time they have a connotation. It is a bit like referring to someone as mentally retarded or subnormal, and with the word is the connotation, the discrimination.

There is no doubt that to be born illegitimate is to be very gravely disadvantaged. To be called illegitimate is gross discrimination and unfairness in itself.

Ever since Roman times a person who is born illegitimate has been nullius filius, a child of nobody—a total social and legal outcast. Throughout English history a bastard child has been considered to be a most loathsome creature. Through no fault of his own he has suffered from harsh legal and social disabilities.

In fact, during the 13th Century, at the Council of Merton there was indeed an attempt—even as long ago as that—to change the disabilities which an illegitimate child suffered, but the English barons were all-powerful, and because rights of property attached to people and to heirs the barons prevailed. The barons owned a good deal of the land and they were against any change. A bastard child could not succeed to property; he was illegitimate and had no rights. If a man of property had a bastard child and no others, upon that person's death his property would escheat to the lord of the fee, and because an illegitimate child himself could only have direct descendants as heirs, if that child died without direct descendants, again the property would escheat to the lord of the fee.

It was not until some time in the 17th Century that an illegitimate child had any right of maintenance from his parents, and it was not until some time in the 19th Century that the mother of an illegitimate child had any rights against the father for affiliation proceedings, that is, for a direct right of maintenance against him.

Today, if a mother of children lives in a de facto relationship with a man and he dies, those children have no right of inheritance. The children simply have to rely on the goodwill of the father's relatives to see them through. So there is that great discrimination. There are other areas of discrimination as well which could be gone into at a later stage.

One of the significant things which this legislation does is to leave it open for a person to establish paternity. But because difficulties with proof grow with the passage of time, anyone who would seek to establish paternity would be well advised to take proceedings early—as has been said, before the passage of time makes the task very difficult. I totally agree with the proposal put forward by the Minister.

Mr. LESTER (Peak Downs) (9.25 p.m.): I welcome this Bill because any Bill which helps illegitimate children achieve a better status is a very good and realistic Bill indeed. It means that we in this Chamber are acting with some sense of seriousness and decency towards those people, who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in an unfortunate position.

Let us take the hypothetical case of John Citizen and Mary Bloggs, who have been living in a de facto relationship for a number of years. They could have been forced to do this for any number of reasons. No-one in the community knows that they are not

actually man and wife and that their two children are not the lawful children of a lawful marriage. They live a normal family life in a normal home. They have a car and go on family outings, etc. The children grow up, start working and get married. The mother works part-time for a small wage. Then John Citizen dies; it is found that there is no will and all of the property is in his name. In that instance the estate goes to his next of kin, and his *de facto* and the two children miss out completely. This is totally devastating and, unless some arrangement can be made, the *de facto* may be forced out of the house in which she has lived for years and in which she has raised her children. One would think that such an arrangement could easily be made but unfortunately I have seen instances in my electorate where it has not been so easy.

This Bill will be of great significance in situations like the one I have just mentioned. As I said, the effect on such a family is devastating, because especially in a small town everybody realises what the situation is. So anything which improves this archaic law is a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, the *de facto* often does not even know the law when she is faced with such a dreadful catastrophe. Ironically, though, if the estate is valued at less than \$2,000 it is divided between the *de facto* and the two illegitimate children, so there is a precedent for this Bill.

I would like to point out that this is not the children's fault. They cannot help the circumstances in which they were born. It is a fact of life, and they should not for ever be discriminated against. It might be said that in these modern days we are trying to avoid discriminatory laws, but a law of this nature is discriminatory. Unfortunately, these children do not find out what the law is until this catastrophe befalls them. They deserve an even better chance in life than you or I, Mr. Hewitt, because they have suffered an unfortunate accident of birth. If they have not been told that they are illegitimate, when they discover that fact it really hits them very hard. In some instances it makes them very bitter and they find it very difficult to face reality. So I commend the Minister for what he is trying to do to help these children and I think we should have more Bills like this introduced into this Parliament.

Mr. BOURKE (Lockyer) (9.30 p.m.): In my lifetime—and I am only 37—many deep-seated changes have taken place in the community attitude to the problems of illegitimate people, and I hope that they are genuine and permanent changes. To the shame of our Western society, for countless centuries illegitimate children have been made innocent victims, and we have visited upon them vicious social cruelty. Unfortunately, it seems to be a trait of human nature to look for someone less fortunate than ourselves and then to victimise them.

I feel that many children who were born illegitimate have had a lifetime of unnecessary sadness. As a child, I spoke to a marvellous person who at that stage was rather an old woman. On the death of her own mother, when the contents of the will became known, she discovered that she was illegitimate. She had gone through life up to that stage without knowing that. Apparently she had been born before her parents had married, but it had never been explained to her and she had never learnt about it until her mother's death. That was a source of great sadness to her.

I think that the biblical concept that the sins of the parent are visited on the child has been interpreted wrongly to victimise illegitimate children. I would not argue that it was a valid concept, and certainly to victimise illegitimate children is very cruel.

Pregnancy in human beings is a very unpredictable thing. It is perhaps one of nature's cruelest jokes that a woman or a girl can fall pregnant perhaps as a result of a single act of intercourse, and what has perhaps been a light-hearted affair becomes deadly serious and the responsibility falls upon the girl alone. I will support some aspects of women's lib, although I do not support it wholeheartedly, and I think this is one instance in which women have always had a genuine case. The guilt and shame that our society seems to delight in throwing up has traditionally fallen on the woman and her child; the man has escaped. That is something in which our society can take no sense of pride, and at long last we are perhaps getting round to doing something about it.

Since my childhood, when I lived at Sandgate, there have been changes in institutions such as orphanages. St. Vincent's Orphanage was quite a large institution in my childhood, although many of the children there may not have been orphans in the true sense. In many instances the old institutionalised orphanage has come to an end, and we have seen the new concept of family centres, with substitute mothers—people who are dedicated and cut out for this sort of work—giving children a touch of home life.

I should like to take up the comment on the subject of jigsaw made by the honourable member for Rockhampton. I do not want to argue about jigsaw as such now. I think there are good arguments for and against it. However, I take issue with him for introducing that concept into the debate on the proposed Bill. He should realise that adopted children are not illegitimate. They have a mother and a father, and that is shown on their birth certificate. They are not legally illegitimate in any sense of the word.

In our orphanages we have recognised the need for a family atmosphere and that both the mother and the father have valid roles to play in the development of a child's personality. It is recognised that there is a great need in any child for a stable mother-figure, particularly in its first five years. I

have heard it said by experts in the field that social workers now recognise that a bad mother is far better for a child than no mother, and they recognise that even if a mother is not performing her function well, in most cases it is far better to leave the child with her than to institutionalise him, where he will perhaps have no mothering of any sort.

De facto relationships seem to have become more prevalent in our society recently, and I feel that the Bill will go a long way towards recognising the rights of children of such relationships. I have had some experience in my electorate of mixed families, where there have been two successive de facto relationships, and this has complicated the legal position of the children.

The concept of fostering has also been developing, and I think that ultimately the Government and the community will have to look at a method of getting children into stable fostering situations rather than leaving them in a limbo where they have in effect been abandoned by their parents.

I stress that our children are our biggest national asset. They are innocent and equal before the law, as they should also be in the community. They are entitled to be protected and cherished by us equally on a community basis.

I support all the concepts and aims of the proposed Bill.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (9.35 p.m.): Whilst agreeing with the broad thrust of the Bill and what it seeks to achieve, and agreeing with what previous speakers have said, I point out one most unfortunate aspect of it. Perhaps I could refer to two cases in North Queensland, without divulging any names.

One case concerns a family in which all the children were originally illegitimate. The illegitimate children were the product of a relationship between an English aristocrat, a member of the English nobility, and a full-blooded Aboriginal tribal woman in the Gulf of Carpentaria. They ended up being extremely wealthy people. When the family in England that had thrown out the wayward aristocrat learnt that the half-Aboriginal descendants had secured large stations in the Gulf of Carpentaria, even though it took them a long time to find out even where the stations were, they had no qualms about immediately instituting legal action to try to secure those vast holdings. They were not even sure whether the fellow was still alive or whether the stations did in fact exist, but they were quite prepared to come in and try to take all of the supposed holdings off those people who had lived and worked on them their entire lives. Most of those children had contributed significantly to the buildup in cattle herds and improvements.

In the second case a similar situation existed. A number of illegitimate children had the run of the stations involved. They

had built up four or five vast station properties in the Gulf of Carpentaria. After the children had done all the work in building up the stations—they were bare country before that—because of the whim of the father on his deathbed they lost any entitlement they had to the stations. People who had never set foot on them in their lifetime secured those properties and the results of 40 years of hard work by the children concerned.

A third case is almost identical to the one I just outlined. The point I am trying to make is that it strikes me as being grossly unjust and unfair that a person in a far-off land, such as in the first case I mentioned, who has never even seen any of the assets involved, can successfully claim the property. The children concerned—I am talking about legitimate children now—may have spent their lives building the property up.

I can cite similar instances where businesses have been built up, not just cattle stations. After the father has had free labour for 40 or 50 years in a business or on a property, someone else can walk in as a result of this legislation and take an equal share in that business or property, just as if he had won the casket. I see this as a most unfortunate aspect of the Bill. After all, if a person has had nothing to do with the father, the business or the property, one doubts his entitlement as against others who have worked the business or lived and worked on the property for the whole of their lives. I would like the Minister to consider a clause that would place an onus on illegitimate children to come forward and declare that they would be beneficiaries in the event of an intestacy. What I have referred to is a very important aspect of this Bill that could lead in the future to some very harsh injustices.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.40 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for the way in which they have received this measure. The honourable member for Rockhampton said that it dealt with a very important issue. I am sure all honourable members agree that it is a very sensitive matter, one that must be handled with a great deal of compassion. The provisions in the Bill constitute a practical and humane approach to the rights of illegitimate children. The honourable member for Rockhampton also said that, in the initiation stage, it is sometimes difficult to become apprised of all the provisions in a Bill.

I am sure he would agree that that is a matter for the second reading stage. Because I believed that this was such an important matter I had prepared explanatory notes on the Bill which will be attached to the Bill when it is printed. I hope that they will be of assistance to honourable members in understanding the Status of Children Bill.

The most favourable argument expressed this evening on the measure was that advanced by the honourable member for Flinders. The argument he raised against the legislation was one of the main reasons for its introduction.

Mr. KATTER: I rise to a point of order. I did not oppose the legislation. I said I agreed with it. I simply asked the Minister to look into one aspect.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am sure the Minister accepts what the honourable member has said.

Mr. LICKISS: I accept it. I am congratulating the honourable member on the argument he put forward in support of the Bill.

On the matter that he raised concerning a case in Carpentaria which he wanted me to look into to see if something could be done, I can only say to him that had this Bill been in the form of legislation at the time, those illegitimate people would have had no worry. They would have been legitimate issue from the point of view of the estate.

I again thank honourable members for the way in which the measure has been received and I look forward to the debate at the second-reading and committee stages.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.44 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Queensland Law Society Act 1952–1974 in certain particulars.”

This Bill seeks to amend the Queensland Law Society Act in five different aspects:

- * Firstly, in relation to compulsory professional indemnity insurance;
- * secondly, in relation to restriction on the issue of practising certificates;
- * thirdly, in relation to liability of the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Guarantee Fund;
- * fourthly, in relation to the appointment of a receiver of trust property, and
- * lastly, in relation to reciprocal discipline.

As regards compulsory professional indemnity insurance, the Queensland Law Society proposes to implement from 1 July 1978 a compulsory insurance scheme for practising solicitors to indemnify against loss from claims of civil liability incurred by a practising practitioner in connection with his practice. This scheme is based on a proposed Victorian scheme, which in turn is based on a similar scheme in the United Kingdom. The practising solicitors will be responsible for payment of insurance premiums and there will be no cost to the Government.

The Bill provides for rules to be made for the purposes of the compulsory insurance scheme. These rules will be called “Indemnity rules”. Under the Bill a practising certificate will issue upon those rules being complied with and may be refused or cancelled if the rules are not complied with. Further, the Bill provides that, where a civil action is taken against a solicitor who is indemnified under the compulsory professional insurance scheme, that action will be heard and determined by a judge without a jury.

This year the Queensland Institute of Technology commenced a legal practice course. The solicitors’ admission rules have been amended to provide that law graduates will be able to complete the one-year full-time legal practice course as an alternative to two years’ articles to a practising solicitor and then be admitted as a solicitor. At present a person admitted as a solicitor by passing the required examinations and completing a period of practical training will be issued with a practising certificate by the Law Society and may then practise on his own account or in partnership.

As regards restriction on the issue of practising certificates the Bill provides that a practising certificate will only be issued to a solicitor who has not previously practised in Queensland if—

Firstly, he has previously served for the prescribed period as law clerk, managing clerk or articulated clerk to a practising solicitor;

Secondly, he has previously completed a period of 10 years’ service in stipulated legal offices of the State Government;

Thirdly, he has, since admission, been employed full time by a practising solicitor for one year; and

Fourthly, he has practised previously as solicitor in another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth for 12 months.

In relation to liability of the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Guarantee Fund, the Queensland Law Society presently provides that the fund is held and applied for the purpose of reimbursing persons who suffer pecuniary loss through stealing or fraudulent misappropriation committed by a practising practitioner or his clerk or servant. This stealing or misappropriation must be in respect of any money or other property entrusted to the solicitor or to his clerk or

servant in the course of his practice or on account of any trust of which he is the sole or a joint trustee.

The Bill amends the Act so that liability of the fund is limited to arise only in respect of any moneys or other property entrusted to the solicitor or to his clerk or servant in Queensland. I would mention that fidelity guarantee funds are common to all States, and the amendment sought would not leave a client suffering loss outside Queensland without a remedy.

As regards the appointment of a receiver of trust property, the council of the society may appoint a receiver of trust property where a practitioner has been suspended from practice or struck off the roll or has been refused a practising certificate or his certificate has been cancelled. Under the Bill the council will be able to appoint a receiver where the practitioner has not applied for a practising certificate or for renewal of a practising certificate. This appointment will be made only where the council resolves that a practising certificate would be refused, cancelled or suspended if the practitioner held a practising certificate or applied for one.

Finally, in relation to reciprocal discipline, the Queensland Law Society, at the request of the Law Council of Australia, desires to have uniformity throughout the States and Territories of the Commonwealth in respect of solicitors who have been struck off or suspended from practice in another State or a Territory. The Bill makes provision for the statutory committee of the council to strike off or suspend in Queensland practitioners struck off or suspended in another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth, unless cause to the contrary is shown. A similar provision has been made in Victoria.

I believe the provisions of the Bill will be of benefit to the public and to practising practitioners.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (9.50 p.m.): I do not intend at this stage to discuss the points the Minister has raised relating to practising certificates, the receiver who would be appointed for trust property or the reciprocal disciplinary arrangements.

I do want to comment on the proposal to establish a compulsory insurance fund. Under section 24 of the Queensland Law Society Act claims can be made on this fund by a person who has suffered pecuniary loss because of the actions of a solicitor such as stealing money.

However, we have been unable to do very much for the client who feels that a solicitor has been negligent. It has been a shocking situation. People have come to me and said, "I believe that my solicitor has been negligent. Can you recommend another solicitor in town who would act for me?" I have had the rather difficult task of ringing round the city asking for a solicitor. I have had one occasion on

which I found a man who said, "Yes, I am prepared to act." In most cases there were excuses. One said, "I am sorry. I cannot see my way clear to take on this client." Another said, "I am sorry. I just cannot handle the case." There were other reasons. It was almost impossible, where negligence was involved, to get anybody else to act for the person involved.

I believe that it is almost impossible for a client to be successful in suing a solicitor. Judges tend to say, "How do we get the money out of the solicitor?" There is no real fund that can be drawn upon. In the event of defalcation of funds there is the fidelity fund. We have all sorts of controls over those moneys, but none in cases involving negligence. I hope that with a solicitors' insurance scheme, which will be compulsory, judges might be more willing to give judgment in favour of a plaintiff who has suffered because of the negligent actions of his solicitor and sues him for damages.

Mr. Yewdale: The Queensland Law Society is not very helpful in most cases.

Mr. WRIGHT: I shall be making that point later on.

I hope that what happens with motor vehicle claims because of compulsory insurance will happen in these cases and that judges will look more sympathetically at the claims made by clients.

Solicitors do make mistakes; they can be negligent. It is not a common occurrence, but it does happen. It is only right, therefore, that people should be able to take action. Solicitors tend to stick together, and I do not blame them for that. It is said that the police stick together and that the teachers stick together. It is also said that even parliamentarians stick together when they are outside this House of hot air. It is only natural that colleagues stick together, because they have an affinity. This is true of the legal profession. However, it is wrong if justice cannot be done. I do not intend to cite the cases that have been brought to my notice, but it is true that people have not been able to get the representation they deserve and certainly require.

As the honourable member for Rockhampton North said, the Queensland Law Society is open to some question and criticism because of its operations. On a number of occasions I have written to it concerning complaints about solicitors, and I have received the reply that no action is to be taken.

Mr. Yewdale: "Get legal advice."

Mr. WRIGHT: I might make the honourable member my understudy in legal matters because he is certainly assisting me in this instance. We certainly receive letters suggesting that we seek further legal advice.

In my area a solicitor became the beneficiary in the estate of a client. I raised this matter with a Minister in this Assembly.

He said it was up to me to raise it if I wanted to. I do not intend to use the person's name. The point is that the matter was brought to me by another solicitor. It was not as if I was conducting a vendetta because I had had a blue with this solicitor. I was simply asked, "Are you aware of this?" I did carry out an investigation because of a personal interest in the matter and I found the facts stated to me to be true. I asked the solicitor what he had done about it and he said that it was not worth doing anything about it because everybody knew about it. He said he believed that the Law Society knew about it. No action was ever taken.

Surely it is wrong that a solicitor benefits from the estate of a client. I believe it is outrageous and that some action should be taken by the Law Society. I should like to see it tighten up on solicitors, be tougher and make an example of a few people. Since the introduction of controls concerning trust funds we do not seem to have the deficiencies that occurred in the past. I believe that we have got to get the solicitors out of their ivory towers. Many tend to live in them. I know that in saying this I am taking a risk, because of the 20 people on our justice committee, many are solicitors. They certainly perform a tremendous job for me, especially when it comes to advice on legislation and policy matters for the Australian Labor Party.

I hope that the proposal that the Minister is putting forward will certainly be in the interests of the consumer in the legal field and will bring the solicitor to grips with his responsibilities. I hope it will ensure that when negligence actions are instituted against solicitors some redress is available to the person who suffers.

Mr. D'ARCY (Woodridge) (9.57 p.m.): I would like to support the remarks of the honourable member for Rockhampton. As was pointed out by way of interjection and otherwise, the legal profession in Queensland has a lot to answer for. Fortunately, we have lost the services of the former member for Townsville South, who seemed to have a fetish about this subject.

Is the Bill going to be a real help in gaining compensation for a solicitor's negligence? That is virtually what we are asking the Minister. As the honourable member for Rockhampton said, people come to us as members of Parliament and complain that they have been "rorted" and robbed because of the negligent actions of solicitors. It seems that nearly every time a client goes to a solicitor the same thing occurs. The profession in this State certainly has a lot to answer for. I would not claim that in all cases of negligence the solicitors concerned are outright dishonest, but in the case of these white-collar criminals within the legal profession, it is outright dishonesty. They are protected by

their profession; they are protected by the Law Society of this State. We have all dealt with various complaints that have come from people and I think that if we were to pay the true cost of losses suffered through the negligence of solicitors in the State we would not have enough money in the Commonwealth to pay them.

In my opinion, the legal profession in this State has been guilty of some of the worst instances of white-collar crime ever perpetrated on the Australian public. The Bill is obviously a rort to protect the legal eagles, some of whom are the worst kind of white-collar criminals. It is not designed to protect the poor client who faces the impossible task of getting compensation when he has to obtain the services of another solicitor in an attempt to get justice. Is he going to do this? Or will he approach this nebulous Law Society in order to get justice? I take it that those members who have been here for any length of time have seen the letters that the Law Society writes back to these people. There was the instance that the honourable member for Rockhampton North mentioned. The Law Society simply says, "There is nothing we can do, so seek legal advice." We have all seen this happen. People keep coming back time and time again. Many lawyers in this State are ripping the public off, yet this Bill protects the lawyers.

Unfortunately, our society has held up the legal profession as an elite group, and the legal profession has attempted to perpetuate this myth. As I have said, the Law Society has a lot to answer for. It has not to date dealt with the problems of negligence created by solicitors. Some members, who seem to want to interject, are not worried about the person who does not understand the law and who tends to treat the lawyer as one of the elite. He does not really understand the problems. He is frightened to go to a solicitor because of the costs involved. We have all seen the bills that a solicitor sends a client no matter what the solicitor has done for him. The client is not getting the protection that he should be getting. Is this Bill going to give him any protection against negligence, if he has to go to another solicitor, incur further costs and still take the risk of not being able to get his money?

There are plenty of good firms of solicitors and plenty of good solicitors in this State, but this profession, more than any other, has for years been protecting the greatest mob of white-collar criminals in Queensland. I really believe that before we can make this Bill work we will have to clean up the profession in Queensland. One significant point that the Minister mentioned, and one that I think is well and truly worth while, is that solicitors who have been debarred in other States or Territories throughout the Commonwealth will

not be allowed to practise in Queensland. It is a pity that such a provision was not introduced earlier.

One point that the honourable member for Rockhampton made and is worth repeating is that these people tend to stick together. Have members ever tried to get a solicitor to sue another solicitor? Over the years I have seen many constituents try to do it, and it is virtually impossible. There is always an excuse. The Law Society gives people the usual runaround. The position is that many solicitors in this State should have been struck off years ago. I believe the provision relating to solicitors who have been struck off in other States should be very strictly policed by the Minister. I commend him for doing something, but along with a lot of other members, I believe that the Bill could go a lot further.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (10.2 p.m.): I cannot let the remarks of the honourable member for Woodridge go unanswered because what he virtually said was that just about all the lawyers in Queensland are crooks, that the Law Society is not worth two bob, and that lawyers are the biggest bunch of white-collar criminals one could ever come across.

The legal profession has a long and honourable history and we cannot let remarks like this—intemperate, ill-considered remarks which obviously must represent the policies of the Australian Labor Party—go unanswered in this Chamber. For hundreds and hundreds of years our democratic system has existed because lawyers have been prepared to stand up for the rights of citizens. That continues today, and I hope that it will continue for many, many years to come. In its history the legal profession has been recognised as honourable. You would recognise this, Mr. Hewitt, because under the Westminster system in the House of Commons it has always been said that qualified lawyers would be referred to as “the honourable and learned member”. This honour and accolade is not given lightly.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. GYGAR: I take the interjections of honourable members opposite—members of the Labor Party—who obviously do not feel that the legal profession is worthy of any accolade, honour, or recognition of studiousness at all. The A.L.P. has a long history of holding in absolute contempt any person who chooses to study, to work hard and to progress in society.

I cannot allow the honourable member to go unanswered in accusing, for example, the Law Society of being a collection of people who are there to protect crooked and snide operators. The Law Society is the honourable society of an honourable profession, and all the Minister has done here is introduce a measure that will protect people in the event of the unfortunate and

rare occurrence of one lawyer letting down that honourable and honoured profession. This cannot be used as an excuse to attack the profession as a whole, and I for one on behalf of the Government and, I am sure, on behalf of the Minister, am prepared to assert my feelings that the legal profession is one of honour and integrity despite what members of the Labor Party care to say.

Mr. SCASSOLA (Mt. Gravatt) (10.4 p.m.): It was not my intention to enter the debate on this Bill, but in view of the remarks of the itinerant honourable member for Woodridge, I am compelled to say something. It may well be, judging from the remarks of the itinerant member for Woodridge, that he has had experience with some professions, and maybe the oldest profession, but he has had no experience with the most honourable profession. The comments which he made are totally unfounded and demonstrate a total lack of knowledge of the subject.

In respect of the first matter that was referred to by the Minister, that is, the compulsory insurance fund, the point ought to be made that the provision in the Bill is being inserted very much at the request of lawyers in this State. It is a hallmark of the profession in Queensland that by having a system of compulsory insurance it seeks to protect the people with whom it deals, and at the same time it seeks to protect the members of the profession. The provision for the compulsory insurance fund was overwhelmingly agreed to by members of the Law Society.

The honourable member referred also to negligence. Of course, there are occasions when things go wrong, but the public has always had recourse to law.

It is indeed regrettable that the itinerant honourable member for Woodridge should have made comments that are a reflection, and a serious reflection, upon the judiciary in this State, and they ought not to be allowed to go unanswered. The judiciary in Queensland has had a long and honourable history, and I should say that, without exception, each member of the judiciary since 1859—and, indeed, before that—has carried out his duties in an impartial manner and in a manner which is a credit to him and to those who went before him in the most honourable of all professions.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.6 p.m.), in reply: I thought the debate was assuming reasonable proportions until the honourable member for Woodridge spoke. All I can say is that it was a deplorable exhibition and quite a vile attack made by a person who ought to know better on what has been rightly described as a very honourable profession. One would have thought that the honourable member, during his absence, might have taken stock of the

reasons why he had to leave this place, and I should have thought we could have expected better of him on his return.

Mr. D'Arcy interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LICKISS: I believe that his comments, vile as they were, have been answered quite adequately by my colleagues the honourable member for Stafford and the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt.

Mr. D'Arcy interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have called for order.

Mr. LICKISS: The honourable member for Woodridge ought to be thoroughly disgusted with himself.

Mr. D'Arcy: I'm not.

Mr. LICKISS: I am sure he will be disowned by his colleagues, because many prominent members of the legal profession subscribe to the politics to which he subscribes.

Mr. D'Arcy interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member for Woodridge under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. LICKISS: Again I say that he ought to be thoroughly disgusted with himself, and I think that the Committee should also be thoroughly disgusted with him and disown him for the way in which he has attacked such an honourable profession this evening.

The honourable member for Rockhampton made some mention of difficulty in getting solicitors to act against other solicitors in a case of negligence. I am sure that the president of the Queensland Law Society will arrange for a solicitor to act in any action against another solicitor. That has been my experience on the very few occasions on which a request has been made to me on these grounds. As I understand it, the president will provide a panel of solicitors who will so act, and I believe that there is a tradition or an understanding that, if no one will act in a particular matter, the president himself will so act. I do not think that one could be fairer than that.

Again I come back to the question of the compulsory professional indemnity insurance. In case the honourable member for Woodridge did not quite hear what I said in the first instance, I pointed out that the Bill seeks to amend the Queensland Law Society Act in five different aspects, and, firstly, in relation to compulsory professional indemnity insurance, I said—

“As regards compulsory professional indemnity insurance, the Queensland Law Society proposes to implement from 1 July 1978 a compulsory insurance scheme for practising solicitors to indemnify against loss from claims of civil liability incurred by a practising practitioner in connection

with his practice. This scheme is based on a proposed Victorian scheme, which in turn is based on a similar scheme in the United Kingdom.”

This is a scheme supported and subscribed to by members of the profession to further protect their clients. I think that the profession has demonstrated its bona fides in relation to its client relationship.

I feel that generally speaking the provisions of the Bill have been well and truly understood by the Committee, and that it is in favour of the measure. At this stage I will do no more than commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

REAL PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.13 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Real Property Act 1861–1976 in certain particulars and for other purposes.”

The main purpose of the Bill is to prescribe a different basis for the imposition of assurance fees under the Real Property Act 1861–1976. The purpose of levying the assurance fee is to provide an insurance fund against any award by the court for damages as a result of an omission or mistake in the office of the Registrar of Titles. The fund would also be used where there was, for instance, an action against a person who had become registered as a proprietor through fraud and, for various reasons, damages awarded against that person cannot be recovered.

The Real Property Act 1861–1976 presently provides for assurance fees to be levied on restricted classes of documents. Because the assessment, in some instances, rests on the value of land and improvement, valuations are required. As honourable members are aware, valuations are now no longer required for State succession duty purposes. Therefore, to require valuations merely for the purpose of the assurance fee, puts the public to unnecessary trouble and expense. The Bill removes the need for valuations. It provides that the assurance fee payable is to be a flat fee to be prescribed on any lodgment in the office of the Registrar of Titles for which any fee is payable under the schedule of fees for the purposes of the Real Property Act.

The flat fee is also to be imposed upon the bringing of land under the Act by alienation in fee from the Crown. Specific provision is made regarding the last-mentioned matter, because the necessary documents are lodged with the Lands Department. The present assurance fees in this regard are collected by that department on behalf of the Registrar of Titles.

All fees presently charged for the purposes of the Real Property Act appear in the schedule of fees to the latest Order in Council made for the purposes of the Act and the \$2 assurance fee per document will be included there.

The Bill makes provision for assurance fees to be paid by the Treasury to Consolidated Revenue instead of to a specific assurance fund. The Real Property Act of 1861, as amended, has always contained provisions referring to the constitution of a specific assurance fund. Before the inadvertent repeal in 1973 of a 1931 Act, the Treasury, however, had been authorised to pay the sums received by it from the Registrar of Titles as assurance fees to Consolidated Revenue. Payments made to Consolidated Revenue without authorisation since 1973 will be validated.

The Registrar of Titles is authorised by the Real Property Act of 1861 as amended to charge for the purposes of the Real Property Act and any Act amending the same, those fees prescribed pursuant to section 140 of the Real Property Act. Some doubt has been cast on his authority to charge fees in connection with titles for possession under Part III of the Real Property Act Amendment Act of 1952 because of the wording of section 140 and because Part III is a substantive provision. Therefore, provision is made in the Bill to make it clear that these fees are charged lawfully and always have been and to ensure that, despite the changed basis of assessment, the assurance fee is imposed with respect to these applications.

The effect of the Bill will be the introduction of a simplified means of assessing assurance fees. I commend it to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (10.18 p.m.): When the Bill is printed the Opposition will consider very carefully the proposals put forward by the Minister. I shall now take a few moments to comment on another aspect of the Real Property Act that has been brought to my notice by a solicitor in Rockhampton. I believe it substantiates that many members of the legal profession are certainly on the ball and have the general community interest at heart. Some four or five days ago I received a letter referring to the way in which certain finance companies are using the Real Property Act, in particular, section 30 under which equitable mortgages may be created and caveats may be lodged.

Simply, what is occurring is that when people apply for individual, personal loans to finance companies, they find that the

security is not placed over the chattel in question but rather over real property that is owned by them.

The best way to present the whole argument is to read to the Chamber the letter sent to me, which is in these terms—

“It has become the practice amongst most, if not all, Finance Companies in Queensland to lodge caveats over borrowers’ property as an extra security when making advances to borrowers for various purposes. It would seem to be the practice that, when a person approaches a Finance Company for a personal loan, that either no specific security is taken or security is taken over some chattel of the borrower, e.g. furniture, car, truck, etc. We have noticed that in many cases, the document generally either does not specify any security in particular or alternatively specifies the chattels which are secured. In addition, in the body of the document, there is a general clause whereby the borrower agrees to grant in favour of the Finance Company an unregistered equitable mortgage over any lands of any tenure and wheresoever, which the borrower may own then or in the future.”

I stress that latter part. The letter goes on—

“We have interviewed several people who have taken up such loans and on each occasion, according to our advice, the borrower has not been aware that any security would be taken over any of his real property, e.g., his home.

“It generally comes to light when the borrower decides to sell his home and finds a caveat has been lodged against the property by the Finance Company, the effect of which prevents the borrower from selling his home until the caveat is lifted by the Finance Company. This puts the Finance Company in the position of insisting that the loan be paid out in full before the property can be sold even though the Finance Company may have made its advance either on a personal loan basis or has taken other chattels as security. It is our opinion that, although the Registrar of Titles has been registering the caveats as non-lapsing caveats, he is doing so contrary to the Act, but this is a contentious matter yet to be decided by the Courts.

“However, regardless of whether the Finance Company’s actions be lawful or not, we feel that the manner in which the Finance Companies are obtaining security over borrowers’ homes, is, to say the least, immoral, underhanded and overall disgraceful.”

Honourable members would agree that they are rather tough words for solicitors to use, but I agree with them. It goes on—

“As an example, a person may decide to purchase a motor vehicle and approach a Finance Company for finance to do so. The person expects, and the inference

is made by the Finance Company, that the loan will be secured by security taken over the motor vehicle only and will be repayable over a certain number of years. The Finance Companies have been charging very high interest rates which have obviously been allowed because of the nature of the security which was generally taken. Generally persons taking security over, say, motor vehicles, charge a higher rate of interest than persons taking security over real property, because the security is not as solid as real property. Not only do the Finance Companies now take security over chattel but also take an equitable mortgage over the borrower's home or other property.

"The borrower is not made aware that the document which he signs contains provision whereby he agrees to give security over any land, either freehold or leasehold, that he owns at the time of executing the security or that he might later acquire.

"If, for example, he was to give security to acquire his motor vehicle and say, one month later, decides to dispose of his dwelling or other real estate, the purchaser may well then find that a caveat had been lodged against the title, thus preventing him from disposing of the property until such time as the Finance Company is either paid out in full or agrees to lift the caveat.

"It seems iniquitous that a Finance Company, which has taken security over a motor vehicle at a high interest rate, could then be put in a position that, because the borrower decides to sell his dwelling or land, it could call up the whole of the loan made the previous month notwithstanding that the borrower may be up to date with payments under the bill of sale over his motor vehicle.

"The document is so broad that even if the borrower owned no land at the time of execution of the bill of sale and subsequently acquired land, the Finance Company could register a caveat on the newly acquired land notwithstanding the borrower's repayments were up to date.

"It is generally recognised that Finance Companies have charged high interest rates on the basis of the risk factor involved in many of their transactions and it is for this reason that interest rates charged on loans taken over chattels such as furniture or motor vehicles are higher than loans made on say, freehold security.

"We have not, as yet, met one person who has been aware that a caveat would be placed over his house property. In fact if a Finance Company intends to take security over a house property in addition to any chattel simply to secure a personal loan then we wonder why the Finance Company does not take a mortgage or ask for a deposit of Title Deeds

in which case the borrower would have it made very clear that he was giving security over his home.

"In one particular experience only recently, we telephoned one of the Finance Companies in Rockhampton in a particular instance which we were investigating and asked the officer who made the loan whether it was made clear to the borrower that a caveat would be lodged against the borrower's home. The officer replied by the use of these words 'probably the word "caveat" would not have been used because most people take fright at the use of the word "caveat".'

"We have no objection to the Finance Companies taking whatever security they can obtain and which the borrower is willing to give, but we certainly think it disgraceful that Finance Companies adopt a policy of lending money either on personal loan or on the security of chattels at high interest rates and thereafter, using a general provision in their document, lodge a caveat against the home. Most people simply do not read the printed form which contains this power, but generally read the details which have been typed in showing the amount of the loan, interest rate, repayments and the principal security given, if any.

"We feel quite sure that many people borrowing money from Finance Companies on either a personal loan basis or on the security of chattels would not proceed with the loan if they were aware that security was being taken over their home.

"Our experience is that people have been very embarrassed financially and in fact put in very poor circumstances by having borrowed money from Finance Companies to later find security taken over their home. Finance Company advertising in relation to personal loans should, perhaps, be looked into.

"We feel that the legislation should be changed to protect the consumer and if a Finance Company intends to take any security whatsoever over a borrower's real property including his home then a specific acknowledgement should be signed by a borrower who thereafter cannot complain if he is fully aware of what he is doing."

I have quoted fully the letter received as I hope that the Minister might look into this matter very carefully. I have personally raised the issue with the officers of a number of finance companies in Rockhampton. I have rung a couple in Brisbane asking them to send me the documents in question. A couple have already done so.

I have been able to substantiate the claims of this firm of solicitors that this type of practice is actually occurring, that a person taking out a loan believes that the only security being taken by the finance company is over the property in question—be it a car, motor bike and so on—but finds in

fact that a non-lapsing or non-suspending caveat is being taken out over the real property that he holds or may acquire in the future. I believe it is iniquitous. I believe, to again quote the words of the solicitor in question, that it is immoral, that it is underhanded, and that it is overall disgraceful. It is something that we must enact in this Legislature.

It is surely wrong that anybody can go to the Titles Office, go through the index that is available, check out a person's name alphabetically, find out what property he holds and then have a caveat placed on that property. I ask the Minister to note what I have said. I read the letter in full so that he will have a copy of it in "Hansard", can see the exact claims that have been made and can thoroughly investigate it and use his office to ensure that this type of practice does not continue.

Mr. GYGAR (Stafford) (10.28 p.m.): The most interesting part of the previous honourable member's speech was his total repudiation of the remarks of the honourable member for Woodridge concerning the legal profession. I applaud him for that. He spoke about the honourable nature of the legal profession and how he supported it.

The purpose of the Bill, as the Minister introduced it, has to do with the payment of fees into the Titles Office on transmission by death of real property. The Minister outlined the previous procedure which required a valuation by a registered valuer to be lodged with the Registrar of Titles, thereupon a fee would be calculated, on a sliding scale, and paid into a guarantee fund. This made sure that the person who received the title got clear title and that if the title was defective he would have a remedy. There was a fund which would pay him by way of remedy.

I applaud the Minister for the progressive nature of this amendment. Unfortunately we have not heard tonight from the Minister for Survey and Valuation. I would imagine that registered valuers would be the only people who might be in any way opposed to this. I am led to understand that a large part of their business comes from the valuation of deceased estates for the calculation of this fee. That was fair enough previously when death duties were payable to the State Government. Then there was a need for a valuation in any event, and the fact that this valuation was used for the Titles Office assessment of fee was no great burden on the person who benefited from the passing of that deceased estate. However, as the Government saw fit to abolish death duties—and I applaud it for having done so—this valuation has now become virtually redundant. We now find that, although the valuation of a home might cost \$40 or \$50, the fee payable to the Registrar of Titles is considerably less than that amount.

The Minister has said that a fee at the flat rate of \$2 will now be calculated on all these transactions. One would assume that the Treasury will not pass up this revenue and that the funds coming in from the \$2 fee per transaction will roughly equate the fees previously paid in total by persons on transmissions of this nature. This shows quite clearly, therefore, that the greatest cost involved in these procedures has been, not the fee payable to the Registrar of Titles on transmission, but the valuers' fees. Plain common sense dictates, therefore, that the Minister introduce this legislation, and I applaud him for it.

I want to comment also on the Minister's remark that the State will carry its own risk. I am all in favour of free enterprise, which means that I favour private insurance companies. I see very little point, however, in the largest enterprise in this State, the State Government, with an enormous amount of revenue and a huge number of employees, going outside its own facilities to carry risks.

As I understand the Minister's comments, this has been the case over the past few years. Surely this is something that the Government should look at more closely. Wherever trust funds, special funds, fidelity funds and so on fall under the control of the Government, surely it is only proper that all the fees be paid into Consolidated Revenue and the Government carry its own risk.

Let us face it; fees are calculated to cover the expected pay-outs, and it is not reasonable that a Government pay revenue collected into other funds where they are tied up and not available for the benefit of all the people of the State, nor should it be put into private insurance schemes where it becomes available in profit form to be distributed to shareholders. Surely the Government of this State is a venture that is big enough to carry its own risk in all respects where insurance is involved. Here the Minister has said that the Government will do just that.

In this measure I see two separate and distinct features, both of which are worthy of the whole-hearted support of all honourable members. The first is that costs to people who are in the unfortunate circumstance of having lost a loved one and are going to be in receipt of an estate transmitted by death will be considerably reduced by this measure. The second is that the State is reaffirming the principle that it should carry its own risk, so that insurance moneys held are applied for the benefit of all the people of the State in all circumstances.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank both honourable members for their contributions to this debate. I feel that this measure will be of advantage to the people of Queensland in that it will reduce their costs in property transfer.

The matter raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton is one that has concerned me for quite some time. The question of equitable mortgages and caveats lodged in relation thereto has concerned me, and I have already directed it to the attention of the Law Reform Commission. I can assure honourable members that upon receipt of advice from the commission I will take such remedial action as is warranted to deal with this practice. What has occurred is not in the best interests of society, and we will act accordingly upon receiving adequate advice.

Again I thank the honourable members for Rockhampton and Stafford for their contributions, and commend the measure to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

BRIGALOW AND OTHER LANDS DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources) (10.36 p.m.): I move—

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

As I stated in my introductory remarks, the provisions of the Bill simply ratify a further agreement between the Commonwealth and the State relative to loan repayment concessions granted by the Commonwealth to the State which are to be passed onto Brigalow landholders. In order to pass on the concessions to the landholders, it is necessary to amend the Brigalow and Other Lands Development Act 1962–1974.

As it would appear that honourable members have no serious objection to the provisions of the Bill I think it would now be sufficient for me to restate briefly the principles involved in the proposed amendments to the Act. Consequent upon the agreement a moratorium is available to settlers on loans advanced by the Corporation of the Land Administration Commission and may extend for a period of two years. No interest accrues during this period nor is it capitalised. Loans already advanced by the corporation may be rewritten over an extended period up to seven years at the same rate of interest as applied to the original loans. It is mentioned again that no special arrangements were made in relation to existing arrears of instalments under developmental loans. However, it is proposed to amend the Act so that the corporation is authorised to make a special advance which will enable a lessee to repay current arrears over a period, with a maximum term of seven years. In effect no

concessions apply to arrears of loan instalments except that the State will provide in the amendments to the Act that arrears may be rewritten into a separate loan.

A very important provision has been made to allow a freehold title to issue when the lessee has repaid all instalments of the purchase price of the land. Previously, in addition to payment of the whole of the purchase price of the land it was a requirement that developmental loan instalments be paid in full also. This latter requirement will now be eliminated and the mortgage will carry across to the freehold title.

I feel that all honourable members will agree that the provisions of the Bill will bring welcome financial relief to borrowers and strengthen the State's ability to meet its loan obligations to the Commonwealth. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (10.38 p.m.): The Opposition does not oppose the spirit of the Bill before the House. In fact, we applaud its principles. I have spoken previously in this House about the vagaries of life on the land as a primary producer and I have applauded the extension of long-term credit in cases of hardship. The Bill before us ratifies a further agreement between the State and the Commonwealth. The principle of finance is similar to what we have at a State level with the Agricultural Bank providing finance and extensions.

We on this side of the House have always proudly proclaimed that the socialistic principle of providing such long-term finance to private enterprise is a very desirable thing. Strangely enough, though, on the opposite side of the House on almost every occasion other than those such as this we hear that anything socialistic is very, very bad in principle.

I do not hesitate to say that many people who claim to be great supporters of the private enterprise system support it only when things are good and the cream is on the top of the milk. The moment conditions become difficult, they all revert quite readily to socialistic principles such as the principle behind the Bill. I am not critical of that principle; as I said a moment ago, I applaud it.

Perhaps the only thing more heart-breaking than denying long-term credit to a battler in difficult circumstances—I do not mean a battler who is not efficient; I mean someone who is prepared to go out and battle with the elements and against adversity—is extending credit to people in hopeless financial circumstances who have no chance of getting out from under their liabilities. I do not think the latter applies in this instance. Through the amendment allowing mortgages to carry over so that there can be conversion to freehold, the Bill does give an out to people who are not successful with their debt load. No doubt they will be able to unload their assets and come out with some return for their years of labour.

Therefore, the Bill is very commendable in principle, and it is a socialistic principle of long-term low-interest finance.

The fact that there is a moratorium for two years also is very commendable. As I interpret the Minister's remarks, one could say that for two years there is a complete holiday from obligations to repay principal or even to pay interest.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: The Commonwealth 12 months and the State two years.

Mr. BLAKE: Is that a total of three years?

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: No, two altogether, guaranteed.

Mr. BLAKE: I interpret it as two years, but that is one of each.

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: That is correct.

Mr. BLAKE: The proposals contained in the Bill are acceptable to the Opposition, and we do not wish to oppose it in any shape or form.

Mr. HANSEN (Maryborough) (10.43 p.m.): I join my colleague from Bundaberg in supporting the Bill. As he has indicated, it is complementary legislation.

I do not think that this is a case of people borrowing their way out of debt, but it does extend credit to people who, because of the vagaries of markets, over which they have virtually no control, and the elements, over which they have even less control, have found themselves in a position where, if they were not given this assistance, they would be faced with the alternative of walking off the land. I do not believe that they are lost, although they certainly have their problems. Their optimism and the optimism of the people who took up this land remains unquestioned; but their ability to survive or to service further debts is perhaps questionable.

I ask the Minister: are the terms of the moratorium for two years mandatory in all respects, or are they subject to certain recommendations from the Development Bank, the Department of Primary Industries, the Agricultural Bank—all those who look at rural reconstruction and the ability of people to continue to service their debts?

Mr. N. T. E. Hewitt: Yes, ability to service.

Mr. HANSEN: Something will be taken into account. I do not know what will happen to their holdings if people are not able to take advantage of the legislation. It is continuing legislation. The suspension of the liability for a period of two years does provide them with an opportunity to see some light at the end of the tunnel. In many respects they are in the same position as the bookmaker who, after six losing weeks says, "I would give it up, only it is my living." I believe that the optimism of these people is even greater than the optimism of that bookmaker.

I do commend the legislation. As the honourable member for Bundaberg said, it is a case of the Government's assisting private enterprise. Private enterprise itself has fallen down on the job in many respects, and Government assistance is necessary. I applaud the Government for giving just that.

Hon. N. T. E. HEWITT (Auburn—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources) (10.47 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Bundaberg and Maryborough for their contributions.

As I indicated earlier, one good thing about the Brigalow Land Development Scheme was that in the first instance the land was cut up realistically into areas that even today would allow people who had to sell out to receive a reasonable amount of cash. That would not have been so if the areas had been considerably smaller.

All in all, although prices are bad in the beef industry, land values have held up reasonably well in that area, and naturally that would give some opportunity to people if they wished to cash out of various brigalow blocks.

Motion (Mr. Hewitt) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

The House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.