

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1978**

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## TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1978

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS

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

Wine Industry Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Stock Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Health Act Amendment Bill.

### FEES PAID BY CROWN TO PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING AGENCIES

#### RETURN TO ORDER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 3 August last, on the motion of Mr. M. D. Hooper, showing all payments made by the Government to public relations agencies or consultants and advertising agencies or consultants during the 1977-78 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received separately.

### PAPERS

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

Reports—

Department of Harbours and Marine, for 1977-78.  
Beach Protection Authority, for 1977-78.  
Literature Board of Review, for 1977-78.  
Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, for 1977.  
Water Quality Council of Queensland, for 1977-78.  
Commissioner of Main Roads, for 1977-78.  
Department of Works, for 1977-78.  
Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies, for 1977-78.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Acquisition of Land Act 1967-1969, the State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1978 and the Meat Industry Act 1965-1977.

Orders in Council under—

Public Service Act 1922-1976.  
Gladstone Area Water Board Act 1975.  
State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1978 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974.

State Counter-Disaster Organization Act 1975-1978.

Industrial Development Act 1963-1976.  
Harbours Act 1955-1976.

Water Act 1926-1976 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1977.

Forestry Act 1959-1976 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1976.  
Land Act 1962-1975.

Fauna Conservation Act 1974-1976.

Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1977.

State Housing Act 1945-1978.

Magistrates Courts Act 1921-1976.

The Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Regulations under—

Public Service Act 1922-1976.

Queensland Marine Act 1958-1975.

Elections Act 1915-1976.

Children's Services Act 1965-1978.

By-law under the Dental Act 1971-1973.

Statute under the University of Queensland Act 1965-1973.

Rule under the Coroners Act 1958-1977.

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1977.

Report of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of North Queensland for 1977-78.

Report of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of South and Central Queensland for 1977-78.

### DEATHS OF HON. J. D. HERBERT AND MR. J. BURROWS

#### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier) (11.11 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable John Desmond Herbert, recently serving as member for the electoral district of Sherwood and Minister of the Crown, and James Burrows, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widows and families of the deceased gentlemen the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

The late gentlemen were held in high regard for their unstinting service to their respective electorates, and for their practical dedication to the sound government of the State through their presence and their representations in this House over many years. Each has left his individual mark on the State's history and contributed to its growth.

My former ministerial colleague and very good friend John Herbert—I am sure that he was also the good friend of every member of this Assembly—entered this Parliament in May 1956 as the member for Sherwood. He represented that electorate virtually until his untimely death on October 30.

Mr. Herbert rose to Cabinet rank in January 1965, taking up the difficult Labour and Industry portfolio. In June 1966 he became Minister for Labour and Tourism. In June 1972 he became Queensland's first Welfare Minister, when sworn in as Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services. He continued in this role, bringing distinction to the portfolio over a period of more than six years. In December 1974 he became Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that, throughout his political career, John Herbert proved himself to be a person of genuine concern for those under his charge. In his capacity as a Minister of the Crown, he demonstrated his flair for far-sighted planning and able administration. Perhaps some of his naval training rubbed off on him, for he served in the Royal Australian Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Mr. John Herbert held several important posts, including Government party secretary from 1957 to 1965; delegate to the General Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in London in 1961; delegate to the Australian Area Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1963; and leader of the Parliamentary Delegation to the Pacific Area Travel Association Conference at Djakarta in 1974. He was a member of the Liberal Party State Executive from 1950 to 1956, and held numerous positions on electorate and area bodies.

Despite failing health and severe discomfort, he remained in Cabinet until last September, when the severity of his physical condition forced him to resign after having served Cabinet for some 13½ years. He was, in fact, at that time, the longest serving Liberal member in Parliament. It speaks well for the man that, almost until the end, only his closest friends and associates were aware of the gravity of his health. He was never one to complain.

The late member was represented on virtually every social and sporting organisation within his electorate. His cheerful disposition and abiding interest in the welfare of his fellow-man assured him of a warm welcome to the countless functions at which he officiated or attended as guest of honour.

He was a former State president of the Father and Son Welfare Movement and patron of the Family Life Movement. He was director of the Queensland Society for Crippled Children, inaugural president and founder of the Mental Health Federation of Queensland, and chairman of two local Salvation Army welfare organisations. He was also federal president of the Australia Day Council and president of the National Trust.

Mr. Herbert was a councillor for the Girl Guides, Queensland School of Arts, and Naval associations. He was a member of the State Branch Council of the Scout Association of Australia, and president of its Tarcoola branch. He was a recipient of the Scouting "Thanks" badge, the highest award the movement can make to a lay person.

At one time, he was an A grade football player, and an oarsman and chairman of the Brisbane Rowing Association. As a mark of the community's respect for this man, he was named Queensland's Father of the Year last August—indeed a well-deserved honour. The late John Herbert dedicated himself in so many ways to so many organisations and people in his electorate and throughout the State.

Suffice it to say that John Herbert dignified his high office and proved faithful to every trust through precept and example. I know that honourable members of this House mourn his passing and extend heartfelt sympathy to his widow, his five sons and other members of his family.

The late Mr. James Burrows entered this Parliament as member for Port Curtis in August 1947, after successfully contesting the general election in May of that same year. He defeated the then Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Thomas Williams, in the Labor plebiscite.

I remember Mr. Jim Burrows' entry into this House well, for it was in that session of Parliament that I, also, made my entrance. Jim Burrows and I, in that respect, were newcomers together, and I recall that I followed his Address-in-Reply speech with mine, the Speaker of the day being the Honourable Sam Brassington, the then member for Fortitude Valley.

Tall, wiry, with a mop of greying hair, Jim Burrows immediately made his presence felt. During his subsequent 16 years of continuous service as a back-bencher, he became a frequent and forceful speaker on matters before the House. His contributions to debates invariably reflected his keen mind and his personal integrity. He

was a man who knew how to press the point of an argument and to steer clear of non-essential side issues.

He was a staunch supporter of an electorate that embraced the promising Callide coal-fields and the then developing town of Gladstone. Of paramount concern to him was the rational development of the area he represented, with utilisation of its vast resources (which then lay largely unexploited) to the best advantage and in the national interest.

Born in Eidsvold in 1899, Jim Burrows was a battler in his early years, taking on many and varied labouring jobs. Entirely through his own efforts and studies, he became a local government clerk, an auditor, and a registered valuer. In 1926 he was appointed secretary of the Gladstone Hospital Board.

The late Jim Burrows was a worthy citizen, a popular personality, and a true friend to many Gladstone people and others in different parts of the State. We are the poorer for his sudden passing, and I join with all honourable members in extending our deepest sympathy to his widow, sons and other members of his family.

**Hon. L. R. EDWARDS** (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (11.18 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier.

Firstly I, too, refer to the passing of John Herbert, who served the people of Sherwood as their member for 22 years. He was only a very young man when he won the seat of Sherwood for the Liberal Party in 1956, and he was one of the very few Government members who served a short period in Opposition.

The late John Herbert was a very hard-working local member who placed local representation for his constituents above all other demands made upon him. His active role in many organisations in Sherwood was well recognised, and he was instrumental in the foundation and continuation of many worthy activities for the benefit of his fellow-man.

He related very well to people, and his regular attendance at school functions, charitable organisations and other activities was remarkable. As one meets people in the Sherwood electorate during this campaign to elect his successor, the constant reminder voluntarily comes forth of what John Herbert did for Sherwood. He was a people's man who understood grass roots politics. He loved people, and he loved working for them.

As a family man, John Herbert was a good husband and a devoted and proud father to his sons. The achievements of his family were a real delight to him, and he spoke freely and proudly of them on many occasions. He was fully supported in every way possible by his wife Yvonne, whose untiring community and charitable efforts were a source of great pleasure and pride to John Herbert.

The late John Herbert was a politician who gave outstanding service to his party. His service to Liberal principles and philosophies was constantly reflected in his attitude in the administration of his portfolio. As a Minister, he was a man of compassion and understanding in the portfolios he was allocated. His special interest in sport and children and youth was the driving force in his outstanding contributions in these areas, culminating in his being named Father of the Year in Queensland in 1978. As Minister for Tourism, he did a great deal to promote Queensland nationally and internationally.

His passing has removed a politician of great knowledge, experience and devotion, but he leaves behind in the minds of thinking Queenslanders a heritage of humanitarian programmes and dedicated administration and activities. As a man he was deeply respected and this respect grew even higher because of the brave and heroic way he fought his terminal illness.

He faced the real issue of a rapid malignant disease with courage and faith and his example in displaying a fortitude that was so much of his life was an outstanding influence on all who knew him. He never lost the will to live, despite the fact that he knew the full facts of his disease pattern.

The large attendance at his State Funeral was the community's testimony to a great man, who will be long remembered. The people of Queensland and this Parliament have been fortunate that a man of the stature of John Herbert has passed this way. On behalf of the parliamentary Liberal Party, I join with the Premier in expressing our sincere sympathy to his wife Yvonne and his five sons.

The late Jim Burrows, as the Premier has indicated, was the member for Port Curtis, having entered this House in 1947, at the same time as such other distinguished members as the Premier, the former Deputy Premier (Sir Gordon Chalk) and the late Ernie Evans. He was a very conscientious member who served his party, his people and the Parliament very well. I extend to his family the sympathy of the parliamentary Liberal Party.

I therefore pay tribute to these former members of this House and I associate myself and the parliamentary Liberal Party with the Premier's motion of sympathy to their relatives.

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.23 a.m.): An occasion such as this, when Parliament resumes after a recess and we find that some of our colleagues—men who have served Parliament and the people of Queensland so well—have passed on, is indeed a sad one. It is even sadder when we have known the persons concerned.

Since my entry to Parliament in 1972 and during my brief term of four years as Leader of the Opposition we have spoken to motions of this type concerning persons

about whom we knew very little or nothing. John Herbert, however, is a man whom I will personally remember.

After I entered Parliament I used to spend a fair bit of time in the Parliamentary Library, sitting in the chairs near the windows. John Herbert used to come over and sit down near me and talk about all kinds of matters—not only politics and occurrences in the House but also things that were happening in my electorate and the contents of letters that I had written to him. I felt that he took a personal interest in my problems and I enjoyed with him a personal rapport that probably I do not have with some other Cabinet Ministers. So I was saddened to see the gradual effect of this terrible disease on John Herbert.

I admired him for the tremendous fight that he put up against it. When I used to see him, say, in the dining-room and recall his career as a boxer in the Navy, I used to think to myself, "He's in a bad way." A few weeks later, however, he would appear to be the picture of health and I would think that he had won the fight. We thought that maybe he was going to be one of those who turned the tide—one of those very few who seem to be able to survive the ravages of that terrible disease. It was sad that he was finally forced to retire from the House. And very shortly after that he passed away.

I offer my condolences and the condolences of the Labor Party to Mrs. Herbert and their five sons. In saying that, I realise that our messages of condolence are merely words and that they don't really give much tangible support; however, when I saw those lads in the church on the day of John's funeral service, I knew that John would have been proud to have those five sons standing beside their mother and helping her. I am sure that she is in very, very good hands and that they will give her every care and assistance.

My relationship with Jim Burrows involved a different set of circumstances. Jim was always a mate of mine. I first met him when I became an organiser for the party and was going through Gladstone. He was one of the type of men who made up the Labor Party in the old days—the battler who started off with little or no education and fought his way to the top. Looking at the history of Jim Burrows, we see that he was a railway fettler, he worked on sheep and cattle properties in the West and he worked in flour mills and sugar mills. As he said in a statement to a friend in his own area, "The further you get away from the shovel, the bigger it grows in the imagination, so I made up my mind that I would never go back to that again." He set himself a course of study. He became a local government clerk, a registered valuer, secretary of the hospitals board and he served on the Gladstone Harbour Board. All of

those positions developed out of his determination not only to improve himself but also to better serve his area.

I know that a lot of good stories could be told about Jim Burrows. I remember his telling a story about compensation. He used it in this House, but I was unable to find it in "Hansard". Jim was always very proud of the actions of the Labor Party at that time in introducing the Workers' Compensation Act. He told the story that, in the days before the Act was introduced by the Labor Government, he was riding a horse in the West. The horse was bucking and he was going up in the air, and he said, "Before I hit the ground, they sacked me." Jim always used that story as an explanation of the reason why workers' compensation was needed.

He wrote to me a couple of days before he died. I would like to quote a couple of passages from the letter because it shows the tenor of the man. He was talking about memories and old days. He said—

"It brought back memories to me of the time of the big split in 1957.

"From a personal point of view, I went through hell.

"I had been discharged at my own risk from hospital after fourteen (14) weeks on the morning of the Caucus meeting."

Those who knew Jim will remember that he was always a very thin and wiry little man. In fact, a story is told in Gladstone that anyone wanting to find the secretary of the Hospitals Board only had to look for the thinnest man without pyjamas on and that was Jim Burrows. So he had himself discharged from hospital at his own risk after 14 weeks. He had to be virtually carried up the stairs of the House. There was no lift here in those days. He goes on in his letter—

"I pleaded against Gair's expulsion and claimed it would be better to wait and not endorse him at the next election, which would have been two (2) years away."

Finally, he said in the last paragraphs of this letter to me—

"I am still kicking, but not very hard, these days. I will be 80 in February, if I last that long, and would not be truthful if I said I had no regrets. It would be more correct to say I have no apologies and perhaps I should be remembered as the luckiest man to have ever been elected to Parliament.

"An old chap who had bet 20 to 2 against me at my first election said to me when he was paying the bet to a friend of mine 'My man had more friends than you had, Burrows, but you had the most mates.'"

On behalf of the Australian Labor Party, I join in the motion moved by the Premier and seconded by the Deputy Premier and offer our condolences to both families—Mrs. Burrows and Mrs. Herbert. All of their mates will greatly miss both of them.

**Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Treasurer) (11.29 a.m.): I wish to be associated with the motion proposed by the Premier and seconded by the Deputy Premier. When I first entered Parliament and came into this building, the late Jim Burrows was the second person I met. I spent about an hour listening to his advice about all the things that I should and shouldn't do while in the Parliament. I am sure that on another occasion we could recall some of the interesting tales that he could tell. He always had a magnificent sense of humour, a very dry wit and a remarkably retentive memory. Even if he embellished his tales on occasions, it was enjoyable to listen to him. I always found him to be very good company. I often had cups of coffee with him in the refreshment room, when he would recount some of the very early history of this House.

He was very dedicated to the cause of Parliament and to his people. He was a very assiduous representative of his people.

In the days when I was trying to push a railway line through his electorate, there were many problems associated with resump-tions and so on. He never let up for a moment. It did not matter whether the people involved were extremely wealthy or of modest means; if he felt that there had been some injustice, bureaucratic oversight or problem that needed attention, he was immediately responsive and acted promptly in their interests.

He was completely impartial in the way that he went about his parliamentary duties. Most of us could learn a lesson from the way in which he attended to them. He was a very distinguished member of this House and was very much liked by all of us who served with him.

It is always a sad occasion when we speak to a condolence motion. It is even more so when one speaks of the passing of a very close friend like John Herbert. The association of our two families actually goes back to the days of World War I when two girls attended a high school together—the Perth Modern School—and sat together and became friends for the rest of their lives. They were the respective mothers of John Herbert and me. At that time they did not dream that their eldest sons might serve in the Queensland Cabinet. They were closely associated during all of their lives, and so were our families. John Herbert was very closely associated with me long before we got into politics and entered Parliament. In fact he was the godparent of one of my children.

He was a bank officer. He was a very active unionist in the bank and worked very hard for his people. During the attempts to nationalise the banking system he, and many others like him, worked very hard and became interested in politics. He was the campaign director for years for Jos Francis and I have no doubt that he learnt from him many of the aspects of being a member

of Parliament. Jos Francis was a most assiduous member. John Herbert would also have learnt from him many of the interesting aspects and wrinkles of politics.

In 1956 he entered Parliament and political life at a very turbulent and interesting time. He had a very interesting career in banking and had done accountancy. He was interested in many public bodies. He had been an unsuccessful candidate on a couple of occasions beforehand and knew what it was to be involved in difficult campaigns.

He became a Minister in the middle of the Mount Isa Mines strike. His portfolio at that time was extraordinarily difficult. A great deal of ability and composure was required in the handling of the difficult matters involved with it. He did that with a great deal of credit to himself and, indeed, to everybody concerned.

He introduced many important pieces of legislation into this House and, as a result of his efforts, many new activities were started in this State in the areas of sport, tourism and labour relations. He was very interested in many welfare and social activities in the community. On quite a number of the bodies on which he served, which had nothing to do with Parliament, I also served as either his deputy chairman or a committeeman. So we were very closely associated in many public bodies.

He was always a very urbane person. He was very difficult to rouse or to anger. He was always even-tempered. He was always very easy to work with and to be associated with in any project whatever. However, those who knew him well knew that on occasions, when annoyed or disappointed, he could become very much roused and exhibit a great deal of strength, personality and resources that people generally did not know that he possessed.

In his public life and in many other duties he was fortunate to enjoy good health. It therefore came as quite a shock to us to learn, well before it was even suggested in public, that he had a very serious disease that was likely to be terminal.

I remember going to see John in hospital, nearly two years ago now, when he had his first examination and operation. I am sure that most people did not know he was in hospital, because he chose to enter over the Christmas-New Year period when there was not a great deal of activity going on. He chose that time to attend to the matter that was causing him concern and, from a conversation I had with him, I think he realised that his prospects were not bright.

We had a long discussion on that occasion, not only about the past but also about prospects for the future. He was always greatly concerned about his family, particularly his children, with whom he had a close association. He was most anxious that all his affairs should be in order

should he suddenly depart. Indeed, he was most assiduous about matters relating to his family.

As one who knew him well, I can assure members that his personal life and public life are worthy of emulation by many people. He showed great courage and fortitude in his last two years. I am sure that many members regarded him, as I did, as a friend and colleague and mourn his passing.

**Mr. PREST** (Port Curtis) (11.37 a.m.): I am pleased to join other members in speaking to this motion of condolence this morning. Motions of this sort have been moved far too often in even the short time in which I have been a member of this House, and on this occasion we are hurt even more because we are speaking about people we worked with and knew so well.

In my short period so far in this House, I found John Herbert to be a gentleman. It is unfortunate that he has been taken from us at such a young age. As we all know, he suffered from his complaint for quite some time. He suffered in silence, but in the end it got the better of him. I saw his funeral on television. As we observed, he has left behind a very fine family. I am certain, as the Leader of the Opposition said, that Mrs. Herbert will not be left wanting, because she has those fine sons who will take very tender care of her.

The other former member we mourn this morning, Jim Burrows, was a personal friend of mine. In contrast to John Herbert, he was almost 80 when he died. Although he retired from this House in 1963, he was one who never lost touch with the development going on throughout the State. In fact, he voiced his opinion through the Press, particularly in his later years. In fact, only a few hours before his death he told his wife Bertha to make certain that a letter he had left at home was printed in the Press. It was not a letter of criticism but of advice. This was Jim Burrows' attitude throughout his life; he was a man who offered advice, and it was good advice that was taken by people throughout the State. As we have heard, Jim was not only a politician. He was a man who educated himself and became an accountant, a local government clerk, auditor and valuer, as well as an authority on tax matters.

Jim represented Port Curtis very well from 1947 to 1963. In those days it was not the small electorate it is now. It covered a very wide area extending at one time from North Bundaberg to areas such as Mundubbera and Monto. Knowledge gained through his work on the land in his younger days stood Jim in good stead and he was able to talk to the rural people in his electorate on their own level. He enjoyed life. I never found him in a bad mood. Only some days

before his death I was talking to him and he was, as usual, giving me some good advice. It came as a shock to me when I was in Mackay on Monday morning to learn that Jim had passed on.

Jim was interested not only in the affairs of the State but also in sport. He was a great supporter of the Gladstone Turf Club, being its honorary auditor for many years. It was only during the last few months that Jim gave away betting on the course, but he still used to have a small punt through the T.A.B. I remember quite well that Jim, after a day at the races, would say "I had a terrific day. I won \$30." So he did not go to the races to try to break the bookmakers; he went because of the friendship that he received there. He enjoyed his outings to the races.

I join with other members of the House in supporting this motion of condolence. In doing so, I, too, express my sympathy to Mrs. Herbert and her family and to Mrs. Burrows and her family.

**Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL** (Aspley—Minister for Labour Relations) (11.41 a.m.): The untimely passing of the Honourable John Herbert has brought to a conclusion a rich, warm friendship extending over three decades. John and I were associated not only in the political field but also, through various fraternal organisations, in other community activities. I add to the remarks of previous speakers my own expressions of sorrow to Yvonne and her family. This House will be poorer for the passing of John Herbert.

I had the acquaintance of Jim Burrows for only three years, but in that short time I learned to recognise him as a man of sterling character and warmth, although his appearance perhaps did not convey that impression. I also came to value his friendship.

I therefore join with others in expressing my sympathy to both the Herbert family and the Burrows family.

**Mr. FRAWLEY** (Caboolture) (11.43 a.m.): I rise to support the other speakers. I can safely say that I knew John Herbert longer than anybody in this House. I first met him in 1938, on our first day at the Brisbane Grammar School. We were in the same class for two years. We played in the same cricket and football teams. Because I knew John Herbert personally for so long, I feel his loss greatly. It is hard to realise that such a quiet, unassuming man was also the heavyweight boxing champion of the Royal Australian Navy. I am quite certain that Mrs. Herbert and her five sons can be very proud of the man John was.

I met Jim Burrows on only one or two occasions, but I know, from listening to other speakers and from talking to other people who were associated with him, the work that he did in this Parliament.

I offer my condolence to the families of both deceased gentlemen.

Motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### GREENVALE NICKEL PROJECT; OVERSEAS BORROWINGS BY STATE

**Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Treasurer) (11.44 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, for the information of members I wish to make a ministerial statement in relation to my recent discussions overseas with various parties associated with the Greenvale nickel project, and in respect of other matters.

The Greenvale nickel project consists of a mine at Greenvale, some 175 km west of Townsville, a connecting 225 km railway and a treatment plant at Yabulu, 22 km north of Townsville. The project is operated as a 50/50 joint venture of Freeport Queensland Nickel Incorporated, a subsidiary of Freeport Minerals Company of the U.S.A. and Metals Exploration Queensland, which is 100 per cent owned by the Australian Company Metals Exploration Ltd. It employs 1,200 people directly and a further 3,000 indirectly.

The project cost in the order of \$290,000,000 to construct and involved backing from lenders in Australia, America, West Germany and Japan.

When the feasibility of this venture was investigated and put to the Government prior to commencement of the project, its prospects for success were very bright. The companies had long-term contracts for sale of most of planned production, and the future of the world nickel market appeared satisfactory.

The Queensland Government stood to gain directly by way of revenue from royalties and profits on rail haul. The project was to make a tremendous contribution to employment and industrial growth—both directly at mine, treatment plant, railway, etc., and indirectly through materials, equipment, etc., purchased from Queensland suppliers, people involved in meeting needs of project employees, etc.

In view of the very large potential benefits to Queensland and Queenslanders, to ensure that the project got off the ground the Queensland Government initially agreed to assist with the very large financing needs of the project by guaranteeing repayments of principal and interest to 8 per cent per annum on loans totalling \$50,000,000 towards the total expected project cost of \$223,000,000. Two debt-restructuring arrangements were undertaken, one in 1975 and another in 1977, for a number of reasons, including the depression in nickel prices and increases in fuel costs.

The Queensland Government has put in considerable effort and expense, both initially to get this project off the ground and now

to keep it operating. The project is still in trouble and unable to meet its debt-servicing commitments. The three major reasons are—

- \* Nickel prices are very depressed and no substantial price relief is in sight for at least a further two to three years;
- \* The project was constructed during our worst period of cost inflation. The total cost was very greatly in excess of feasibility estimates, so that more loans had to be raised, lifting debt-servicing costs higher;
- \* Feasibility showed oil to be more economic than coal as the fuel for the treatment plant. After work had proceeded beyond the point where reversal would have been possible, the price of oil rose very greatly and has now risen further.

All of these factors are beyond the joint venturers' control. The Queensland Government has therefore agreed with the other senior leaders to the project and the joint venturers on the principles to apply to a further restructuring of the project which should ensure—

(a) that the project is able to continue to operate at full capacity in the long term without the continual fear of being placed in default, irrespective of the fact that it will be unable to meet its debt commitments; and

(b) that the joint venturers have sufficient incentive to continue their efforts to achieve the best for the project.

Broadly, the restructuring provides for two main principles—

(a) A substantial reduction in the minimum debt-service amount that the project must meet, thus allowing it to proceed on very low debt-servicing, particularly over the next crucial few years, without fear of being placed in default;

(b) A sharing of the surplus cash generated with the joint venturers before full debt-servicing is met. Relevant figures are—

Surplus Cash	Lenders	Venturers
First \$100,000,000 ..	\$100,000,000	Nil
Second \$100,000,000	\$90,000,000	\$10,000,000
Third \$100,000,000 ..	\$85,000,000	\$15,000,000
Fourth \$100,000,000	\$75,000,000	\$25,000,000
Fifth and subsequent \$100,000,000 ..	\$65,000,000	\$35,000,000

Prior to my overseas visit, the only group which had not agreed to such restructuring was the Japanese lenders. By early October it was clear that little progress was being made in Japan. I then arranged for urgent discussions with the Japanese trading companies involved, namely, Mitsubishi Corporation, C. Itoh & Co. Ltd. and Nissho-Iwai & Co. Ltd., and also had important discussions with the Japanese Ministry for International Trade and Industry to acquaint



them with the seriousness of the position and of the consequences of a Japanese refusal to join the restructuring plan.

While waiting for the Japanese response, I met with other Greenvale lenders in America and Europe and the joint venturers Freeport Minerals Company in New York. In each case there was enthusiasm for the continuation of the Greenvale project and the debt-restructuring proposal.

At a further meeting with the Japanese trading companies on 6 November, an undertaking was given that they would accept the New Orleans proposals and proceed to documentation on that basis. Discussions were at top-management level and the undertaking was given subject only to their boards' and Government approval. In a subsequent telex message to me they have indicated their boards' approvals are expected before the end of this month. This telex was sent in lieu of a letter of advice which was to have been sent to me following my departure from Japan. Because we must move forthwith to secure the necessary passage of the legislation this session, I have recommended that we take this assurance as an indication of Japanese acceptance.

I also had extensive discussions with leading world banks on overseas borrowings by the State generally. In particular, these involved conferences with senior members of four top-level banks in Tokyo, three in Paris, two in Brussels, two in Amsterdam, five in Frankfurt, two in Zurich and six in London. They are all aware of the new Loan Council guide-lines for overseas borrowings by State instrumentalities, and all were keen to be involved, particularly in projects coming forward from Queensland.

I am satisfied that Queensland is now well placed to take full advantage of the overseas loan opportunities, which will mean more capital works capabilities. It will not, however, at least in the short run, mean cheaper money. It is quite clear that when interest rates are lower there is a related real risk of currency appreciation, and when both the interest rate and the exchange risk are considered the costs are just about the same. The biggest risk, of course, is the totally unknown likely exchange movement over the life of the loans.

Offers were sought from a selected few banks for two particular "buyer credit" propositions where funds are urgently needed. These were: \$8,000,000 for the Walkers Ltd. contract for the new urban electric trains, and \$37,000,000 over a period of 12½ years for the purchase of generating equipment for sets 5 and 6 at the Gladstone Power Station. Very competitive offers have been received, and I expect to be able to arrange acceptance of the most favourable propositions by the end of this month. These overseas borrowings will in effect mean that \$45,000,000 of additional capital work can be done throughout the whole State and semi-governmental loan programmes during the period of their raising.

I spent a total of 28 days overseas visiting 10 cities, including Tokyo twice. It is my belief that the results of the trip will ensure employment opportunities not only for the several thousand people involved with the Greenvale project but also in relation to the other matters mentioned.

## PETITIONS

LIBRARY BUILDING, JUNIOR SCIENCE BLOCK  
AND MANUAL ARTS BLOCK, INDOOROOPILLY  
STATE HIGH SCHOOL

**Hon. C. R. PORTER** (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) presented a petition from 251 electors of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will consider the provision of a library building, a junior science block and a manual arts block at the Indooroopilly State High School.

Petition read and received.

## AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND

**Mr. BURNS** (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) presented a petition from 2,137 citizens of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will amend the Constitution of Queensland to incorporate within it an effective and enforceable Bill of Rights guaranteeing the people all the political and civil rights against arbitrary legislative or executive action which are recognised by the United Nations, enjoyed by free citizens around the world, and to which they are democratically entitled.

Petition read and received.

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

**Mr. POWELL** (Isis) presented a petition from 48 electors of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will protect all children and immediately prohibit pornographic child-abuse materials, publications or films.

Petition read and received.

## JURY 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 Jury Act 1929–1976 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

## QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

### 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF CLINKER PLANT, FISHERMAN ISLANDS

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

(1) Did the Adelaide Brighton Cement Co. seek to establish a clinker-grinding works on land held by the Port of Brisbane Authority on Fisherman Islands?

(2) Was this request from a southern-based company wishing to enter Queensland and break the cement monopoly refused?

(3) Has his Government decided that no company, whether interstate or overseas, will be allowed to construct a plant to produce clinker on lands adjacent to the Port of Brisbane Authority that are subject to control by the Crown or statutory authorities?

(4) As Queensland is spending considerable money in both Sydney and Melbourne to entice southern industries to Queensland, why have these decisions been made?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 4) Adelaide Brighton Cement Ltd. did have discussions with the Government in relation to the establishment of a clinker-grinding plant on Fisherman Islands. The company was advised that land on Fisherman Islands could not be made available for this purpose.

The honourable member may be assured that any application which may be received for the establishment of industry in Queensland will be afforded full and careful consideration, having regard to the best interests of the State's overall industrial development.

### 2. BUS-RAIL INTERCHANGES, BEENLEIGH LINE RAILWAY STATIONS

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Scassola**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Are bus-rail interchange facilities planned by the Metropolitan Transit Authority for those railway stations in the southern suburbs of Brisbane on the Beenleigh line and, if so, when will such facilities be built?

*Answer:—*

Bus-rail interchange facilities have already been built at a number of locations, such as Sandgate, Oxley, Darra and Goodna, where transfers of passengers are currently made.

Consideration of other facilities of a similar type is being undertaken in areas

where it will be of advantage to co-ordinate services. This will include stations on the Beenleigh line, subject to the findings of research studies specifically directed towards public transport service rationalisations.

From an initial overview study that looked at potential stations for bus-rail co-ordination, the following sites emerged:—

Woodridge  
Kuraby  
Banoon  
Salisbury  
Fairfield

More detailed studies will be required before final sites are chosen.

Construction of facilities decided upon will be contingent upon the allocation of funds, including those available from the Commonwealth under the current Urban Public Transport Agreement.

### 3. SCHOOL SECURITY

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Scassola**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is he aware that a number of schools in the southern suburbs of Brisbane were the subject of breaking and entering recently?

(2) In the light of those events, will he take steps to improve security in schools so as to reduce the incidence of criminal activity?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) As I pointed out in response to a similar question asked of me on 19 October, thefts of equipment from schools and vandalism of school property are problems common to all communities. I am aware that schools in the southern suburbs of Brisbane have been subjected to thefts and vandalism, in common with schools in other areas of Brisbane.

As I have pointed out, my department, the Department of Works and the police have been, for a number of years, endeavouring to keep this problem in check. Measures that have been taken include the marking of school equipment, provision of secure storage areas and barring of vulnerable access points in certain areas, such as administration buildings and libraries. The honourable member may be assured that efforts to reduce thefts and vandalism will be maintained.

At 12 noon,

*In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.*

## SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—  
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAYS  
(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D.  
Hewitt, Greenslopes, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1978-79

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHIEF OFFICE

**Hon. V. J. BIRD** (Burdekin—Minister for Education) (12 noon): I move—

“That \$8,626,760 be granted for ‘Department of Education—Chief Office’.”

The expenditure provision for the Department of Education in 1978-79 totals \$472,300,000, including Commonwealth funds of \$40,900,000 provided for the purposes of State schools as well as technical and further education. The 1977-78 provision was \$438,600,000, including Commonwealth funds of \$42,600,000. The increase in expenditure provisions is \$33,700,000.

The policy for education funding in the current financial year will be to consolidate and maintain the good standard of services offered in our schools. The main thrust will be in the priority area of technical and further education establishments. These services will be expanded and upgraded significantly.

We will continue in this State with the policy of constant reappraisal of the directions of educational services for students. Improvements will be effected where necessary to offer a service which is in harmony with the changing needs of the community.

#### Technical and Further Education

There has been an acceptance within the community in more recent times that the role of technical and further education is one of growing importance.

Statistics and forecasts suggest that technical and further education is likely to face the greatest challenge in the form of growth and in meeting the changing needs of the community and industry.

In the coming year, colleges of technical and further education will continue to improve their capacity in terms both of capital development and more effective use of available resources. All the new educational spaces being designed or built will facilitate multiple use of space and equipment.

The Queensland colleges of technical and further education are so placed geographically as to serve communities on a district-wide basis, rather than be limited to their immediate environs. Their services will eventually include a programme of post-secondary education along lines much akin to the concept of community colleges, wherever such development is desirable.

Queensland also has a well-developed external study service covering most technical and further education courses and programmes. This service will be extended in the coming year.

An accelerated building programme and periodic surveys of resource utilisation have resulted in more student places and in more flexible programming than ever before. Colleges are open to the general public for 49 weeks a year.

Other achievements are in connection with pre-employment education courses in the commercial/office training/clerical areas, the pre-apprenticeship courses for selected trades, and the trade-based, pre-vocational courses catering for groups of trades.

With the exception of the hairdressing trades, all apprentices attend at colleges under the block-release system of training. The block-release system has proved to be a major success in the educational sense, since it has brought about continuity of study and improved student performances.

There are a number of problems in technical and further education that will need very careful consideration, since the solution to the following will be expensive:—

(a) The major increase in the Commonwealth's financial contribution to technical and further education capital projects has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in Commonwealth recurrent expenditure grants. This disparity has significantly raised the level of demand for salaries and other recurrent expenditure by the State.

(b) Recent technological advances in many course areas covered by colleges of technical and further education pose a serious threat to the relevance of these courses.

(c) In general, there is an urgent need for the establishment of an effective capital replacement programme, to phase out technically obsolete equipment and to compensate for the increased wear and tear of equipment and plant through intensive use throughout the year.

(d) There is an increasing community pressure to further decentralise technical and further education services by means of establishing teaching facilities in the country.

(e) Although education cannot eradicate the causes of unemployment, there is considerable scope and demand for an improvement of technical and further education's capacity to prepare people for work and to improve their chances in the competition for the work available.

The \$31,900,000 provided to meet the total recurrent expenditure for technical and further education represents an increase of 12.97 per cent in absolute terms over the amount expended in 1977-78. The labour-intensive nature of education is reflected clearly when one considers that 83.13 per

cent of the total budget for recurrent expenditure is set aside to offset salaries, wages and pay-related expenses of technical and further education personnel. The total recurrent expenditure includes an estimated Commonwealth contribution of \$3,100,000, representing 9.72 per cent of the total.

In general terms, the State and Commonwealth components of the overall recurrent programme are seen as complementary in nature, with the declared common objective of devising an expenditure programme which accords with agreed priorities and strategies for the implementation and improvement of technical and further education. To achieve this objective satisfactorily, and to leave scope for changes in the emphasis of future Commonwealth-sponsored recurrent programmes, there has been a growing tendency by the Commonwealth to provide funds for meeting the initial costs of new programmes and to expect the State to absorb the annually recurring costs of these programmes into its normal operating expenditure thereafter.

The highlights of the 1978-79 recurrent programme, excluding the inherent salary provisions, may be summarised as:

- \* \$200,000 for the expansion of the trade-based pre-vocational courses.
- \* \$150,000 for the opening, and the first year of operation, of the Mt. Gravatt college.
- \* \$50,000 for the commissioning and opening of a new four-level building at Mackay.
- \* \$70,000 for the commissioning and opening of the new painting building at the Ithaca college for the needs of the vehicle and building industries.
- \* \$90,000 as subsidies for the first year of operation of the Kelvin Grove hall of residence. A further \$40,000 subsidy is allocated to the Maryborough hall of residence.
- \* \$185,000 for the rental of educational space at centres where existing facilities have not met the demand for student places.
- \* \$200,000 to meet the operating costs of existing computer programmes and the establishment of new ones.
- \* \$30,000 for the introduction of an instrument-fitting course at South Brisbane.
- \* \$1,636,000 to offset the costs of consumable materials used during the year by students at colleges.
- \* Equipment and small tools purchases will total \$860,000 for the year.
- \* \$300,000 to be spent on the acquisition and further development of learning resources, such as library bookstock, non-print materials, equipment and library furniture.

The Honourable the Treasurer has already announced that there will be an increase of 8.3 per cent in the number of teaching staff (from 1,085 to 1,175) and a somewhat comparable growth in clerical and other non-teaching staff at colleges.

The technical and further education capital programme for 1978-79, representing an increase of 22.1 per cent in allocations over the previous financial year, includes—

- \* A two-level electrical building for 320 students and a two-level resource materials centre at Cairns.
- \* A painting building at Ithaca.
- \* Completion of a four-level building at Mackay.
- \* Completion of a resource materials centre at Yeronga.
- \* Completion of stage I of the Mt. Gravatt college to allow for student intake in 1979.
- \* Construction of a major college at Bald Hills.
- \* Construction of a technology building at Bundamba for trade-based pre-vocational courses.
- \* Further development of college facilities for the Gold Coast.
- \* A further \$1,660,000 for building, land acquisition and capital equipment.

#### Secondary Education

The balanced expansion of facilities for secondary education has been continued, with special attention to the needs of the more remote areas of the State. The minimum requirement for the provision of classes at years 11 and 12 level has been reduced. These classes are now being established in remote areas in which there are 150 or more students in years 8, 9 and 10. This initiative is consistent with the Government's policy of expanding services in secondary education into areas of the State where formerly they were available only by correspondence.

Separate new high schools were opened at James Nash (Gympie), Kalkadoon (Mt. Isa), Kingston and Springwood in 1977 and at Capalaba, Dakabin and St. George in 1978. The construction of three or four new high schools has been commenced each year, catering for population growth and shift, and improving services generally.

Development is according to cohesive total school plans. New schools are planned as balanced complexes through to their ultimate stage of completion, even before the first sods are turned. The benefits of this planning are felt in the smooth way in which schools operate in their first years, in the way they accommodate progressively increasing enrolments and in the general effectiveness of school administration at all stages.

Very careful research has been conducted into ways of offering a high standard in buildings at an economical price. The result has been very satisfying. Schools are now being constructed to designs which offer more comfortable and quieter environments for teaching and learning and with the flexibility to permit administrators and teachers to use a variety of organisational patterns and teaching methods.

In the early 1970s, a major factor increasing demand for secondary education facilities was the larger student population from which the students were being drawn. This factor is no longer present to the same extent though it will re-emerge as a major consideration in the early 1980s. However, despite the steady-ing of overall population growth, pressure on facilities has been maintained through an increased rate of retention of students, particularly from year 10 to year 11.

A committee within the department has reviewed the curriculum offered to students attending State high schools. Adjustments have been proposed to the organisation of the curriculum to ensure that, in future, the subjects taught continue to provide a sound basis for everyday living, including adequate preparation for employment. Careful consideration has also been given to the question of the standards of education in secondary schools.

In the senior schools, a major challenge is the provision of courses suitable for students of a much wider range of abilities, continuing their education beyond year 10. Many of these students move directly into the work-force rather than to full-time tertiary studies. The school programme is being revised to meet their needs.

In recent years, more generous financial assistance has been made available to parents of students attending secondary schools.

The textbook allowance has been increased to \$170. The per capita general purpose grant to schools has been increased to \$9 per student, relieving parents of an expense which they were obliged to meet in previous years. Further support has been provided by means of student allowances and remote area allowances. The financial burden placed on parents faced with the necessity of sending their children to boarding schools in years 11 and 12 has been lightened by the introduction of the Senior Remote Area Scholarship Scheme. These scholarships will increase in number from 500 to 550 in 1978 and by a further 50 in 1979.

#### Primary Education

The primary division building programme is keeping pace with the needs of fast-growing areas in the State. During the current financial year, new primary schools will be opened at Albany Creek South, Blackwater North, Deception Bay North, Fitzgerald (North Mackay), Hilder Road (The Gap), Buddina (Mooloolaba), Miami, Rochedale South Infants, Symons Road (Sunnybank Hills), Trinity Beach (Cairns) and Warrigal Road (Eight Mile Plains).

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** They're all Tory electorates, every one of them!

**Mr. BIRD:** No, they're not.

The locations of these schools indicate the State's growth areas in terms of population and reflect the shifts in population within the State.

The identifiable population shifts have created a new problem for primary teachers. In the days of economic and social stability, individual schools developed particular characters based on the cultural background of the children concerned. With few exceptions, children attending a school shared a common culture.

Today the picture is quite different. Not only do many schools contain a significant number of children of different ethnic origins, but most schools contain children of differing cultures within the traditional Australian context. Drifts from rural areas to the large cities have brought country and city children into direct contact in learning situations. The rapidly expanding mining communities have brought together children from Queensland, interstate and overseas. It cannot be assumed that teaching-learning programmes appropriate to the social situation of one or two decades ago are appropriate now.

The Primary Education Division is aware of shifts within Queensland society and has budgeted to provide for curriculum development, reading schemes, equipment and materials, library resources and in-service education programmes to meet the challenges.

The development in children of correct reading habits continues to receive a top priority. This department supports the operation of the reading development centre at Kelvin Grove State School by providing staff, accommodation, and some equipment and materials. Programmes undertaken by teachers enable them, on their return to classrooms, to initiate stimulating reading programmes employing a wide range of materials and techniques, to identify reading difficulties being experienced by children and to commence remedial work.

Reading programmes in primary schools are further strengthened by the provision of generous grants for reading materials and library resources. During the current financial year, \$391,000 will be made available for reading materials and \$336,300 for library resources.

Queensland State Primary School activities have, to some extent, anticipated the recommendations contained in Education and the Arts, the report from the joint study by the Schools Commission and the Australia Council. During this year \$75,000 will be spent on music materials, equipment and programmes and \$175,000 will be spent on art.

#### Priority Country Area Programme

A number of educational services has been developed with funds provided by the Commonwealth Government upon the recommendation of the Schools Commission. One of these initiatives of which I should make particular mention is the priority country area programme. This is a joint programme in that the funds made available are provided for use in both Government and non-government schools.

Special education services are carried out in priority country areas on the recommendation of a committee appointed to administer joint programmes in those areas. Members of this committee include officers of my department and representatives of the Queensland Catholic Education Office, other non-government schools, the Queensland Teachers' Union and parent bodies such as the Isolated Children's Parents Association.

To date, two areas of Queensland, in the south-west and central regions, have been designated priority country areas. During 1978-79, consideration will be given to the inclusion of additional areas within the priority country area programme.

A feature of the priority country area programme has been the excellent co-operation among the various bodies and organisations involved. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance provided to my department by the Catholic Education Office in the administration and operation of the programme.

#### Special Education

Mention should be made of two major developments in the special education area. First, an entirely new school concept is being developed at Woody Point and is due to open early in 1979. This school will cater for severely multiple-handicapped children and is being supported by the provision of medical and therapy services by the Department of Health. Second, a pilot project in early intervention for very young severely handicapped children will be trialled in a small number of locations in Brisbane in 1979. It is intended to use the experience gained from these pilot projects to plan the later extension of the scheme elsewhere throughout the State.

There is an increasing involvement of the Special Education Branch in support services. One major support service is provided by guidance officers, who offer educational assessment of children from pre-school age onwards, counselling and guidance services for both pupils and parents as well as vocational guidance and careers-information services to children in schools, particularly of high-school age. In this latter work, a very valuable service is being provided by careers-information teachers.

Another important service, and again one of relatively recent origin, is offered by remedial/resource teachers. These teachers, after specialised training, are located in regular schools where they work with children who have particular learning problems.

Visiting advisory teachers fulfil a unique role. Included in their numbers are teachers of the visually handicapped, the hearing impaired, the physically handicapped, and so on. These teachers visit primary and secondary schools on a regular basis and assist individual children as well as help teachers develop special programmes for handicapped children in their classes.

One support service of particular note is that provided by speech therapists. The demand for this particular service is extremely high right throughout the State, and, while my department makes every effort to provide a coverage, I would be the first to admit that we still have a long way to go in this regard. However, I should point out that parents, in particular, often tend to underestimate the extent to which class-room teachers, given advice and guidance, can successfully assist with the less complex speech disorders that many young children exhibit.

I should perhaps touch on a number of other activities in the area of special education that are worthy of note—first, the development of work-experience programmes for children in special schools. The linkage between class-room learning and practical application in work-type situations has been demonstrated to be of immense importance in assisting the mildly intellectually handicapped child, in particular, to gain both competence and independence. Recently, my department took delivery of a specially equipped caravan which enables small groups of older children, with appropriate supervision, to work and live for short periods in a relatively independent manner. Not only are they able to gain experience of work; they also assume responsibility for planning their meals and performing routine chores. In this regard, the sympathetic co-operation of various employers who have made work available is greatly appreciated.

Second, I wish to mention the work of the Isolated Children's Special Education Unit. This unit provides specific assistance to children with educational problems who live in remote or isolated areas of the State or who attend very small country schools, where the provision of other support services is of necessity only possible on an occasional basis.

Third, the Migrant Education Section forms part of the Special Education Branch. This section provides language programmes for both adults and school-age children. Recent increases in the numbers of refugee migrants have involved a very considerable expansion of services, together with the planning of new facilities for children in schools.

Fourth, the provision of transport to enable handicapped children to move to and from school is a major exercise. In this current year (1978-79), an amount of \$1,000,000 has been provided for this service.

Finally, the Special Education Branch is responsible for administering for the Government the policy of providing assistance towards the cost of educational services provided by voluntary organisations. Currently, some ten organisations, each providing highly specialised services for handicapped children, are in receipt of this assistance. The amount allocated for this purpose in 1978-79 is \$3,225,000.

### Pre-school Education

Government policy to provide State pre-school education for all children whose parents desire it has been pursued vigorously. At 30 September 1975 some 250 units were in operation. There are now 505 units in 327 centres and 71 early-education classes attached to Class IV schools. It is anticipated that the 1978-79 building programme will add 22 units and 17 early-education classes. As well, interim facilities will be replaced and upgraded in a number of centres.

The pre-school by correspondence programme has continued to give a service to children in the remote areas of this vast State.

Many children in Queensland receive pre-school education through community kindergartens. These centres cater for children aged 3-5 years, generally in full-day programmes, with older children attending three days per week and young children attending two. Many of these kindergartens are affiliated with the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, and these affiliated centres receive significant State assistance through grants.

Commonwealth funding to both kindergartens and the State pre-school system comes through the block grant scheme. The Commonwealth's reduction this year of the block grant for pre-school education posed a serious problem for this State. A Commonwealth reduction had also occurred in 1977-78, and it was only through redirection of State funds that the support to kindergartens was maintained at the level it was for that year.

In order to obtain best value for the capital funds available, the design of all pre-school buildings has been the focus of continuing discussions between my department and the Department of Works. This has led to the introduction of a new building design, known as pre-78, which has given rise to significant savings with no loss in quality. Development of new building designs will continue.

A free milk scheme for all pre-school children in the State will be introduced in 1979.

### Provision of Staff

As school enrolments are, in general terms, still growing, it is important to realise that the Government must continue to provide for increasing numbers of students.

In the case of pre-school education, facilities for an additional 3,000 pre-school children were provided during the last financial year, and when the school census was taken in August 1978 almost 22,500 children were attending State pre-school centres. In the 1979 school year, further extension of pre-school services will occur, and it is expected that enrolments will again increase considerably.

Growth is also continuing in primary schools. The school census this year showed that over 5,000 additional pupils enrolled in State primary schools between August 1977 and August 1978. Next year, State primary schools will accommodate a further 4,000 pupils, which will bring enrolments to an expected figure of almost 239,000. However, at the present time, State secondary school enrolments have virtually stabilised at 106,000. Nevertheless, this respite from growth in secondary schools will be only temporary, as increased numbers are expected in secondary schools after 1980.

Increases have also occurred in numbers attending special schools as the Government has continued its efforts to make special education available to handicapped children. A number of aspects of technical and further education have also been extended, and over the last year pre-employment, apprenticeship, and professional-level courses have attracted increased numbers of students. Further increases in numbers in technical and further education courses, particularly those associated with pre-employment training, may be anticipated in 1978-79.

Despite these enrolment increases, the Budget for 1978-79 will ensure the maintenance of the favourable staffing standards which schools and colleges have enjoyed in recent years. To meet these increased demands, the number of full-time teachers employed will be increased at the beginning of the 1979 school year. The Budget provides for a full-time teacher establishment of 21,430 next year.

Generally speaking, changes in teacher staffing for 1979 will be commensurate with enrolment increases. Consequently, it is expected that pupil-teacher ratios next year will reflect the maintenance of standards. By the census date in August 1979, the pupil-teacher ratio for primary and special schools should be in the vicinity of 20.5:1, while that for secondary should be approximately 14.0:1.

When considered in the light of interstate or international comparisons, these ratios must be favourably regarded. As far as the other Australian States are concerned, Queensland's staffing levels in recent years seem to be about average. While some States, notably Victoria, certainly provide teachers on a more liberal basis than Queensland, other States appear to be less generous in their approach. In the present financial circumstances, Queensland's middle-of-the-road position seems both reasonable and responsible. It must be acknowledged, however, that in the present financial circumstances, it is not possible to meet a number of legitimate demands for the provision of additional specialist staff. An important change emanating from the Budget this year is a proposal to stabilise staffing levels. For a variety of reasons, it has not been previously possible to replace all teachers who leave the service during a school year, but from the beginning of next year it is planned

to replace resigning or retiring teachers wherever practicable. This should make a considerable difference to the operation of most schools, as a stable teacher establishment will reduce the disruption normally caused by the loss of a teacher. Frequently, this loss has resulted in the amalgamation or reorganisation of classes, and the rearrangement of timetables. If circumstances next year permit the replacement of teachers lost on a one-for-one basis, such undesirable occurrences will arise much less frequently.

Another factor which must also be considered in conjunction with the provision of teachers is the employment of ancillary staff. What does not seem to be fully appreciated by some sectors of the community is the fact that teachers do not operate in isolation and that team-work is necessary between teachers, teacher aides, laboratory attendants, clerical staff and so on. It is misleading to consider the staffing provision in schools in terms of teacher numbers alone, as all staff contribute towards the improvement of the learning environment in schools. In this regard, a recent report of the Schools Commission is relevant, as it points out that Queensland schools are well provided with ancillary staff. In particular, Queensland makes more use of teacher aides than any other State. Schools engage these people on a casual basis and, at present, the equivalent of almost 3,000 full-time aides are employed throughout Queensland.

From an overall viewpoint, it is quite clear that Queensland schools are obtaining the maximum benefit from available funds through a sensible balance between the employment of professional and ancillary staff. On the one hand, staffing levels for teachers are comparable with those elsewhere in Australia and, on the other hand, the level of employment of ancillary staff, when compared with other States, is quite generous. It should be readily apparent that the establishment of such an effective blend of staff in schools promotes the professional role and function of teachers and at the same time ensures that routine matters are efficiently attended to.

#### Planning and Services

During 1978-79, the various sections within the Planning and Services Branch of my department will continue to provide a range of administrative and professional services to the schools' directorates.

In addition, a considerable proportion of my department's dealings with national education bodies, such as the Australian Council for Educational Research, the Curriculum Development Centre and the Australian Education Council, will be co-ordinated by officers within the Planning and Services Branch. The Planning Section will continue to provide specialised technical and professional services to support the forward-planning activities of my department.

During the coming financial year, curriculum development projects in the areas

of health, science and religious education will receive continued support from the Curriculum Section, as will initiatives relating to early-childhood education, secondary education and the education of indigenous children.

The Evaluation Section will continue work on a number of studies commenced in previous years. These include a range of curriculum evaluation activities, the development of additional standardised tests for use in primary schools and the identification of teaching problems in primary and pre-schools. Research assistance to be provided in 1978-79 will include assistance to committees examining the effectiveness of co-operative school evaluation and the selection of teachers following the abolition of bonded teacher scholarships. The grant in aid of school libraries will again be administered through library and resource services, in consultation with the schools' directorates.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on the production of audio-visual materials for use with isolated children. Increased activity in this regard has been possible because of priority-country-area funds made available through the Schools Commission, and production of the well-received programme *Roctapus* will continue in 1978-79. Plans for the production of a similar programme at the pre-school and lower primary levels are now well advanced.

#### Health and Physical Education

The quality of physical education programmes in primary schools has improved significantly since specialist teachers have been placed in these schools to assist staff teachers. In addition to core programme in physical education for all students in secondary schools, health and physical education is offered in many high schools as an effective subject carrying credit for tertiary entrance.

#### Music Education

Rapid progress has been made in the provision of music education. Music teachers are now provided in 87 Class 1 primary schools. A total of 123 secondary music teachers now staff 90 secondary schools, of which 57 offer the Board of Secondary School Studies course in music. The instrumental programme has had spectacular success. It has grown from approximately 5,000 students in primary and secondary schools in 1975 to approximately 10,300 students in 227 primary and 70 secondary schools in all nine regions of the State.

#### Art Education

New programmes in art have continued to be developed. In 1973, the programme for primary schools was introduced, followed, in 1978, by the programme for years 8 to 10. In 1978, a new senior syllabus was implemented.

Correspondence courses in art have also been developed at pre-school and primary correspondence schools and, for the first time, in the secondary correspondence school.



### Agricultural Education

Agricultural education courses are offered at 27 high schools in Queensland. These courses include subjects such as animal husbandry, agricultural mechanics and agriculture. Each high school is equipped with a field laboratory which includes areas for animals, crops, orchards and farm implements. Agricultural courses were implemented at Roma and Moura High Schools this year.

Class-rooms have been completed at Beenleigh and Beaudesert High Schools to accommodate the agriculture students. Construction of a class-room is under way at Lockyer District High School and plans are well in hand for accommodation at Hervey Bay High School. A network of 12 field study centres has been provided throughout the State. Centres are intended as an integral part of environmental education in schools.

The Agricultural Project Club Branch is responsible for some 360 project clubs throughout the schools in the State. These clubs involve over 10,000 children in various activities. Work done by the clubs includes, among many other activities, fertiliser trials, nature trails, wildlife surveys, resource usage, environmental studies, bird studies and science.

### Rural Training Schools

Provision has been made in the 1978-79 Estimates for grants totalling \$3,053,000 to meet the needs of the Longreach, Emerald, Lower Burdekin and South Queensland rural training school boards. A start has been made on the establishment of the fourth rural training school at Dalby, in the centre of Queensland's granary. Stage 1 of the works is to be ready for the first intake of students at the commencement of 1979.

### Board of Secondary School Studies

One of the more significant statements on secondary education produced in Australia in recent years has been published by the Board of Secondary School Studies under the title "A Review of School-based Assessment in Queensland Secondary Schools". This is the report prepared by a committee of the board chaired by Professor Scott and is commonly known as the Scott report. All members of Parliament have received a copy of that publication.

The importance of the review is that it deals with the major issues of secondary education being debated in the community—in particular, the accountability of the education system with regard to the curriculum and the standards of student performance.

The prevailing social and economic climate of the nation has had the effect of producing a higher retention rate, beyond year 10, of students who are potential school-leavers before the end of year 12. This has focused attention on the need for an appraisal of the effectiveness of the existing secondary school curriculum. The Board of Secondary School Studies has proposed that such an

appraisal is fundamentally a community concern and that it should be undertaken by a specially appointed body truly representative of the community and headed by a citizen of stature in the community.

Further to that, and in the interest of public accountability, the board proposes that the educational programmes contain statements of the competencies that are to be developed in each particular curriculum area so that students, parents and potential employers are able to know what competencies they may reasonably expect from a student who has undertaken a particular instructional programme.

The Panel of Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (O.E.C.D.) examiners who, in 1976, conducted a review of Australian educational policy on the theme "Transition from School to Work or Further Study" stated—

"In our view, the assessment of a pupil's progress and achievements by schools rather than by a single external examination is a critical factor in the reform of upper secondary curriculum".

They added—

"... in view of the need to cater for an increasing proportion of young people in upper secondary education who will not proceed to traditional tertiary education, we feel that schools will function more effectively when carrying out their own assessment and we therefore welcome the gradual trend to shift from external examinations to school-based assessment".

The wisdom of the Government in 1971 to implement a system of school-based assessment is becoming more and more evident and widely recognised. Clearly, in this area Queensland is ahead of the rest of the nation. From the experiences of the last seven years have evolved proposals for a system of accreditation and certification that balances the claims of the community with the needs of the students—the public accountability of the teaching profession with its commitment to the individual student.

### Board of Teacher Education

The Board of Teacher Education and the Board of Advanced Education have brought to a conclusion their joint review of teacher education in Queensland. After detailed consideration of the findings, the boards will be in a position to make recommendations on desirable developments in the preparation of teachers for our schools.

The Board of Teacher Education will pursue its survey of the effectiveness of the training of teachers for the teaching of reading and associated language skills. The assessment of teacher education courses to determine their suitability for academic award purposes and teacher registration accreditation purposes will continue to receive high priority.

### Teacher Bursaries

The abolition of the bonding of teachers has been widely commended. It is a significant step in the continued development of teaching as a profession in Queensland. The way is now open for teachers to leave the profession and students to withdraw from courses without penalty. On the other hand, the common charge that many students enter teaching courses only because of the allowances and remain as teachers only because of the bond can no longer have any substance.

While the Government will continue to meet its contractual obligations of guaranteed employment to those scholarship-holders who have such a guarantee, it is not possible to continue to make new scholarship awards with generous allowances to one section of the community unless the public at large is guaranteed a reasonable return.

A bursary scheme with a limited number of awards and with allowances lower than scholarship allowances will be introduced in 1979 to encourage better students to complete courses of teacher education. This scheme will be kept under constant review. However, the changed conditions will bring teacher education students closely into line with students in most other professional courses.

### Bardon Professional Development Centre

The Professional Development Centre at Bardon is the first State Government purpose-built complex of its kind in Australia. The centre is tangible evidence of the department's commitment to the view that in-service education should be an integral part of teacher development.

Some measure of the success of the department's venture with the Professional Development Centre can be gauged by the number and range of groups that use the facilities. While primarily catering for departmental staff, the centre is used by Catholic and independent schools' personnel and a variety of some 60 professional associations and community groups. At the centre, the staff have hosted both national and international conferences, while eminent speakers from Australia and overseas have delivered significant addresses to audiences from many spheres of professional expertise.

During this year—1978—an average of 1,000 course places has been provided for each week. The centre is operating from 8.30 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day for seven days per week. With such extensive use, in cost-benefit terms the return to the community in general, and the Department of Education in particular, is probably quite significant.

### Select Committee on Education in Queensland

Over recent months the Select Committee on Education in Queensland has met and received written and oral submissions from a vast number of people and organisations.

Officers of my department have co-operated with the select committee in the preparation of position papers and by appearing before the committee.

I welcome the inquiry and I applaud the way it has been conducted. I am confident it will clear the air on a number of contentious educational issues and I look forward to the results of its deliberations.

### University and Advanced Education

From the beginning of 1974, the Commonwealth Government assumed the responsibility for complete funding of university and advanced education. In April 1973, my Government advised the then Prime Minister that Queensland was opposed to the move, but the Commonwealth proceeded with the change. However, the States were worse off under this system, because of reductions made to the general purpose grants to the States.

Since then the States have been contributing in real terms the amount they would have contributed in 1974 under the old matching arrangements of nearly \$2 State for each Commonwealth dollar for recurrent funds, and dollar for dollar for capital funds. The total funds (termed Commonwealth funds by the Tertiary Education Commission) to universities and colleges have been progressively stabilised. The component contributed by the States in the form of general grants forgone has been held constant in real terms under the 1973 arrangements. It follows that the real contribution by the Commonwealth is progressively declining. So, because of these indirect methods, the burden of financing university and advanced education is being shifted by the Commonwealth to the States.

The Commonwealth has also now unilaterally decided to stop further funding of State co-ordinating authorities in advanced education. Queensland's own Board of Advanced Education is an integral and essential part of advanced education here, and the cost of its operation has already been deducted from the State's general grant. I believe that logic and justice demand that the Commonwealth reverse its decision, or make a compensatory adjustment to our general purpose grant.

However, while shifting the fundamental burden for university and advanced education more on to the States, the Commonwealth Government has exerted increased influence on the operations of these State institutions. Therefore, I would say in all sincerity that education is the province of the States, so we should be left to get on with the job of education. I would also ask the Commonwealth to consult with the States before changes in policy are implemented on Canberra's initiative.

But, of course, the Commonwealth must be acknowledged for its positive achievements in university and advanced education. With the support of Commonwealth agencies, some progress has been made in recent years to bring Queensland's participation rates in

universities and colleges of advanced education closer to the national average. The present policy of static funding by the Commonwealth from 1979-81 will almost inevitably see that progress halted, if not reversed. It has been estimated that the present lag in the Queensland participation rate behind the national average represents an amount of \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000 a year in the form of Commonwealth funds forgone to Queensland. I believe that we should now look for a more equitable basis of allocating funds to the various States for university and advanced education.

Education today is under a microscope, from professionals and parents, and from the knowledgeable and the uninformed. It is being dissected and examined, sometimes in minute detail, with advice being freely handed out as to the cure-all for any faults in the system. I believe that all in all there is not much wrong with our education system, and that it has excelled in meeting the demands and requirements of a rapidly changing and highly technical world. The detractors of the education system in this State and of its administrators and teachers could well spend their time in assisting the department and those responsible for educating our children by way of constructive and informative application rather than destructive and pernicious criticism. I reject this uninformed criticism from those who take every opportunity to disparage and deprecate what, on the whole, is a system which has educated and still is educating our children in a manner which produces adults of which any parent, State or country should be proud.

As circumstances and economic conditions change as the years go by and the Education Department has to cut its cloth to suit the situations of the day, so must the various organisations connected with education adjust their priorities and mode of thinking to keep pace with those changes. I acknowledge the unstinted efforts and sustained professionalism of by far the great majority of teachers in Queensland in their genuine and deep-felt endeavours to fit the children of Queensland for a better life.

I also acknowledge the parents who show so much interest and enthusiasm in their children and their schools, particularly through their parents and citizens' associations. In doing so, I would strongly urge all parents to become interested and involved in what their schools are all about and in what their children are doing at school—both scholastically and in other areas such as sport and the arts—for it is in this way that much of the ignorance of the education system can be wiped away. I therefore issue an invitation to all parents to visit their schools as regularly as possible.

I believe that, in the current economic climate, education has done as well as can be expected in its Budget allocation. While it would indeed be an advantage for every worker to have an unlimited budget with

which to manage his affairs, in our private lives we all have a set budget to which we try to adhere. So, just as we as individuals do not have that unlimited franchise, neither does the Education Department, and both the department and the Government have a budget within which they must exist.

I have said before that the interests of the children of Queensland have been and always will be paramount in my portfolio, and I believe that within the boundaries of this Budget, education in Queensland will continue to provide the best that it possibly can for the children of today and the adults of the future.

1978 seems to be the year for retirements in education. The end of this year sees the retirement of the Director of Secondary Education, Mr. J. A. Golding. The Director of Special Education, Mr. P. M. Briody, and the foundation Executive Officer of the Board of Teacher Education, Mr. E. F. Shogren, recently retired. I have also received advice from Mr. C. R. Roberts that he wishes to stand down at the end of this year as Chairman of the Board of Secondary School Studies. These gentlemen have given many years of distinguished service to education in this State. I am sure members will agree that the responsibilities of their positions have been most heavy and onerous. I thank them and wish them well.

I commend to the Committee the allocations made for educational purposes for the 1978-79 financial year.

**Mr. SHAW** (Wynnum) (12.53 p.m.): In rising to speak today, I find myself confronted with two difficulties. First, as a member of the Select Committee on Education, I am very conscious of the responsibilities that I bear in that position. Second, I make the plea to members of the Government that, when next they consider moves to restrict speaking times in these debates, they give some consideration to the time allotted to shadow Ministers to reply to points made by Ministers. One is confronted with the problem of deciding whether to gloss very lightly over many subjects or to endeavour to deal in depth with one.

It is not my intention, or I believe my place, to mention a great deal about what is being done by the Select Committee on Education, as I believe that the committee's chairman, the honourable member for Landsborough (Mr. Ahern), will do that. But I think it is fair for me to say that I believe that because of the decision to hold that inquiry, a great many benefits will accrue to the education system and to Queensland generally.

I congratulate the committee's chairman for the way in which he has conducted all the hearings. I express my gratitude to him for the assistance that he has given to me as the sole member of the Opposition on the committee, with the consequent difficulties

that has created for me. If I had a complaint, it would probably be that the Government has not allocated sufficient funds to the committee to enable it to carry out its very extensive duties. I feel strongly that some sort of clerical assistance is needed, so that the tremendous amount of information available to us could be put into separate categories and filed. I know that other members of the committee would also have felt that need.

I do not think it is out of place for me to reiterate something that I said when the inquiry was set up, that is, that the committee would be confronted with a tremendously wide sphere of activities under the education system. When it comes to make its report, the committee will be confronted with a problem similar to the one with which I am confronted today and will have difficulty in deciding whether to deal with one or two particular aspects in great depth or to make lighter recommendations on a wider range of aspects. There is a need for an ongoing inquiry or some other means of providing a feedback to the Minister over a longer period than that for which the committee will operate.

I agree with the Minister that there is much within the education system that deserves commendation. In the past, there has been a great deal of misapprehension in the community at large about many of the things that are going on, and there is a great need for improved communication between educators, employers and people generally. Many people, including parents, have fears about what is going on within the education system, mainly because they do not fully comprehend all the facts involved.

In recent times, both leading up to the appointment of the committee of inquiry and subsequent to its appointment, many people have voiced opinions about what is the most important aspect of the education system. I do not believe that there is one particular aspect that stands out as being most important, but what probably has the greatest bearing on the standard of education that students in Queensland receive is the ratio between teachers and students. I certainly welcome the Minister's assurance in his speech this morning that that will improve in the future, because there is substantial evidence to indicate that that factor has the biggest influence on the standard of education.

Whenever educators are able to point with pride to a very satisfactory result, there is always a satisfactory relationship between the number of students and teachers. Taking it to the extreme, one teacher to one student would give an even better result; but somewhere along the line, of course, economic considerations come into it and it is not possible to achieve that level. However, I think it is fair to say that we should constantly be striving for the most beneficial level economically possible, and parents have

seen with regret the decline in the student-teacher ratio in recent times. No matter what figures are quoted to show that no decline has taken place, I am sure that all parents, many teachers and most people who have taken an interest in the education system would agree that there has been a decline over the last couple of years.

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

**Mr. SHAW:** Before the luncheon recess I was talking about the importance of the pupil-teacher ratio. I believe that this is the most important factor in the standard of the education system.

The Government has made an understandable mistake in its attitude to cut-backs in the number of teachers over the last two years. It would appear that it looked for the greatest area of expenditure in the Education Department and then said, "It is in teachers' salaries, so that is the most logical place to make the cuts." Although I can understand the Government's reason for that decision—perhaps it had no alternative—it has hit at education in its most vulnerable area.

The imposition of the limit on the number of teachers has caused many problems in schools. The straight ratio of so many pupils to so many teachers in a school just does not work out in practice, and I am sure the Education Department has recognised that fact. It does not take into consideration that a greater number of pupils in a school may be in a particular age group. This is one of the reasons which have led to the establishment of composite classes. Many parents have been very concerned because their children were being taught in classes covering two or three year levels. Experts assure us that there is no reason why in itself the composite class should be a bad thing. But it is surely a bad thing if it is a very large composite class.

The ideal previously referred to by the Minister of up to 30 at the present time and no more than 25 in the future just has not held good over the last 12 months. We still have composite classes in excess of 30 pupils. In such circumstances a teacher is not able to give the necessary time to all pupils in the composite class. The same argument applies to remedial teachers. The Minister referred to the lack of necessity for remedial teachers. He suggested that a great deal of remedial work can be done by the normal class-room teacher, so that it is not always necessary to have special remedial teachers employed. Quite often that is true, but it is not true when a teacher is trying to cope with a class so big that sufficient time is not available to give the necessary extra attention to pupils who need it. Once again I come back to the importance of the pupil-teacher ratio.

Under the system we have presently operating, the teacher is all important. It is probably fair to say that the success of any educational system rests upon the teacher. It is important that the teachers are not only

adequately trained but also happy and confident in their work. That highlights the need for incentives to encourage teachers to work in unattractive areas of the State. I was very pleased to read a Press report denying a statement that the recommendations of a study carried out by the Education Department in conjunction with the Queensland Teachers' Union had been totally rejected. I understand that the results of the study are still being considered.

I was very pleased to see that, because I think all honourable members would agree that there is a need to ensure that adequately trained and experienced teachers are available in all parts of the State. As the Minister said, from time to time stories circulate about some of the outlandish things that teachers are doing and claims are made that teachers are not up to standard. Generally speaking, those claims are totally unfounded. However, some need for placing better qualified teachers in outback and remote areas has been indicated. It is not possible to satisfy this need by a scheme of compulsory transfers.

**Mr. Burns:** Do you support the Teachers' Union's incentive scheme?

**Mr. SHAW:** I support the basis of that scheme. Some sections of it could be improved. For example, I would like to see the emphasis under any scheme placed on encouragement to teachers, particularly experienced teachers, to go to the outback areas and stay there for a reasonable period. I am a little concerned at the suggestion that the inducement to teachers to go to outback areas should be a later benefit, that is, a benefit that they enjoy after they have completed their terms in remote areas and are transferred to more desirable areas. Perhaps the result of that type of inducement would be similar to what occurs now in rare cases when a teacher who is transferred to a country area adopts the attitude, "I am here, I have to put up with it for only a limited time, and then I can be transferred to a more suitable location." The submission made was that the scheme should provide an incentive to teachers to go to outback areas on a voluntary basis.

I suggest that the scheme should concentrate on encouragement to experienced teachers to seek transfers to country schools. At present there is an attitude that, when a teacher has been transferred a number of times to what are regarded as undesirable locations, he should then be given what is known as an upgrading in location and should not be downgraded or sent back to a remote area. There are grounds for arguing that older and more experienced teachers are better suited to teaching in remote areas than younger ones. Some of the social problems that confront young teachers do not confront older teachers, whose families have probably completed their education and are in employment. Perhaps the desire for

social amenities is not as strong in older age groups as it is in younger ones. So it is worth investigating the possibility of encouraging older teachers to move back to some of our remote areas.

The transfer system can also operate to the detriment of schools in city areas. I appreciate the need to ensure that teachers do not become too fixed in their ways and to ensure that a fresh approach is provided by transferring new faces into schools for reasonable periods. However, we must not go to the other extreme and transfer teachers from schools before they have had time to establish themselves and make a worthwhile input into those schools. That occurs sometimes in city areas as well as in country areas. It is important to recognise that the problem of transfers is not restricted to country areas. It should be looked at throughout the whole system.

I notice that, over the last three or four years, auditors' reports have mentioned improvements that need to be made in the system of recording stock losses. I believe that they refer to equipment losses and vandalism in schools. I am not certain that that is correct, because the Auditor-General has not been specific. I mention this because it raises several points. Without wishing at this time to go into the merits or otherwise of auditors, I may say that they do have a particular point of view on the keeping of records. I think it is necessary to recognise that sometimes the cost involved in keeping those records is greater than the loss that might occur if records are not kept to the satisfaction of the Auditor-General. And it must be remembered that teachers are not clerks.

However, this certainly highlights the suggestions made for greater community involvement in the use of schools after school hours. I did not hear the Minister mention this in his speech, perhaps because it has been discussed at some length in the past. Certainly I have heard many members speak about the need for greater community involvement, which I know is taking place on a limited scale. But there is still a long way to go.

Community involvement serves a very worth-while purpose in many aspects of education. It fills some of the communications gap between the community and the schools. It ensures much greater economic use of school buildings. There is a terrible waste when sports fields and school facilities are locked up during school vacations and in the evenings. There is a real opportunity to put them to greater use and, at the same time, to remove the present temptation to enter schools and damage them, or remove goods that have been purchased by parents or the department. Another aspect relates to the compensation available to a parents and citizens' committee that has raised money to provide facilities, only to see them lost through lack of security.

The Minister mentioned improvements in the planning of school buildings. I implore him to see that there is more planning in the provision of school buildings and facilities, and in determining their priorities.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. AHERN** (Landsborough) (2.28 p.m.): The Select Committee on Education has asked me to report to the Committee this afternoon on the various procedures it has used to gather the information needed to comply with the terms of reference laid down for it by the Parliament and also, without pre-empting the report that will ensue from the committee, to talk about some of the peripheral matters that have concerned us during the conduct of the inquiry.

At the outset, I record my thanks to the Minister for Education and his staff for the complete co-operation they have afforded the select committee during the period of its operation. There has been not only complete co-operation but also complete openness by the Minister and his officers and that has been greatly appreciated. No information at all has been withheld. We have spoken to the Minister's officers formally and informally on a great number of occasions. Their desire to help has been exemplary.

At the outset of the inquiry, some concern was expressed by the Queensland Teachers' Union, the Opposition in this place, I think, and some others about the possibility of Crown privilege being invoked in respect of evidence to be presented before us. I said on that occasion that I believed it was not a problem. It has not been a problem at all. In fact, we have been overwhelmed with information from the department and it has seen to it that we have all of the necessary information to commence our deliberations. I thank the Minister and his officers personally for that.

At the start of the inquiry, the committee placed an advertisement in every newspaper in Queensland and one in every capital city of Australia. I had the advertisement incorporated in "Hansard" at the outset of the inquiry. At that time I spoke about it and I had copies of that speech printed. They were made available to honourable members and a great number of other parties who sought them. My speech provided for many people an understanding of what the inquiry was all about, the terms of reference, the personalities and the broad aims of the inquiry. I thank honourable members and members from all political parties who have assisted us with the dissemination of that information.

There was some initial criticism of the terms of reference. In retrospect I believe that they were quite right in the circumstances, considering that it is a parliamentary and not a professional inquiry. When the people as a whole want to know what an inquiry is all about and what sort of information is required, they need to be told a

little about it rather than simply that it is an inquiry generally into the system of education. It has worked out exceptionally well.

We appointed advisers to the inquiry in the persons of Dr. Goodman, Mr. Krebs, Mrs. Herron and Mr. O'Connor. They have provided excellent advice to the committee. It was their role that caused some perplexity. People wondered about the role that those four people might play. Frankly I think there has been some misunderstanding. Some people thought that they would operate as a completely separate consultative committee. That has not been the case. They have operated as personal advisers to the members of the committee. They have sat with us during the information-gathering phase. They have travelled with us. They have helped us on a day-to-day basis. They have helped us in collating the necessary information and organising appearances as well as pointing out to us any weaknesses in the conduct of our inquiry, so allowing us to correct them. This is the first time in Australia's history that this type of approach has been made, with permanent advisers to a parliamentary inquiry being appointed. I think it has worked out exceptionally well.

We have received submissions in multiples of 10, so that there are 10 sets of submissions and research information which will be available, on the completion of our inquiry, as follows: one in the record, one in the Parliamentary Library for the information of honourable members and eight in various locations throughout the State. I feel that there is enormous value in that.

We have received 3,242 written submissions. Of this number, 1,320 were of a form nature and were presented to us by eight separate groups. In addition, we have received hundreds and hundreds of individual communications from people who wanted to help us with research material and background information. It was provided for the use of members in their background research. We have received all of the necessary information to proceed now to the stage of deliberation. We have received an excellent standard of co-operation from everybody in the education business today; not only departmental officers but also tertiary institutions, academics, employer organisations, employee organisations, community groups, parents, citizens and children. While preparing my notes for this speech, I could not think of one group that has not co-operated with us completely and absolutely, which I think is excellent, particularly when we consider the initial cynicism that surrounded the appointment of the parliamentary committee. We have been able to obtain submissions from various professional organisations and everybody else who could be expected to make one, and I am grateful for that.

We have travelled very widely, and today I want to tell honourable members about the way we have tried to gather the necessary information we require and to ensure that

everybody who wanted to make a submission had the opportunity to do so. I record my thanks initially to the members of Parliament, regardless of party, who have assisted us with that organisation. I recognise members of the National, Liberal and Labor Parties who have assisted us with organisation and have chaired meetings for us where it was necessary.

Firstly, we travelled to North Queensland because it seemed to me that in recent times criticism was often made that many inquiries set up by Parliament had not visited North Queensland. We went there first! We went to Townsville and then to Cairns. In both of these centres we held public meetings and received submissions. We also visited institutions. The public meetings were chaired by the local members of Parliament. We then travelled to Mossman and Daintree.

As a committee, we spent two days in the Toowoomba area, where we visited the Gabbinbar State School, an open-area school, the teachers centre, the Toowoomba Grammar School and the Darling Downs Institute of Education, where an exhibition of micro-teaching techniques was specially arranged for us. We received submissions at the North Toowoomba State School, Downlands College and the Toowoomba State High School, and we also received submissions from the Lockyer State High School, Christian Brothers and a great number of other organisations.

At one stage the honourable members for Isis and Ithaca and, for some of the time, the honourable member for Wynnum travelled to Emerald and Longreach and visited schools at Alpha, Jericho, Barcaldine, Winton, Capella, Clermont and Moranbah. They also held public meetings in Clermont and Moranbah.

I personally chaired a subcommittee, which travelled to the remote areas of Queensland. Accompanied by the honourable members for Isis and Ithaca, I flew first to Mt. Isa, and there we enjoyed a unique experience for a parliamentary inquiry of having hearings of the select committee over the School of the Air.

On that trip we also travelled to Cloncurry, Richmond, Julia Creek, Hughenden, Prairie, Torrens Creek, The Homestead, Pentland and Charters Towers, talking to interested people, p. and c. associations, shire councillors, and schoolchildren. In Charters Towers we had an opportunity to talk to representatives of the private schools in that area, which service the isolated communities in the North-west. We received submissions, and at night attended public meetings. On that occasion the honourable members for Greenslopes and Wynnum travelled to Rockhampton and Mackay. They received submissions from a great variety of people and reported separately to the inquiry.

In the Brisbane area we visited The Gap Primary School, The Gap Pre-school and The Gap High School. We also visited the

colleges of advanced education at Kelvin Grove and Mt. Gravatt and the Queensland Institute of Technology.

We tried to talk to as many people as possible, and to attend meetings wherever we could. I attended public meetings at Toowoomba, Burleigh Heads, Warwick and Hannaford. The honourable member for Isis attended a public meeting at Bundaberg and subsequently presented submissions to us. We had lunch with officers of the Education Department at the School of Food.

Separate discussions by way of a public meeting were held with the Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent Schools. We had dinner and also discussions with representatives of the Queensland Teachers' Union. You, Mr. Miller, and I attended a meeting at Ipswich, and other meetings were attended by other members of the committee in an endeavour to provide everyone who wanted to do so an opportunity to present information to us.

At that stage in our inquiry I asked the other members of the committee whether further areas ought to be visited. The representative of the Queensland Teachers' Union at the meeting in Ipswich suggested that we had not visited a high school in an A.L.P. electorate. We asked her where she taught and she said, "Bundamba." That is where we went. We also took the opportunity at that time to visit the Darra State School, which has a great number of Vietnamese children, and to talk to the teachers at that school.

We also visited the Primary Correspondence School. Someone said, "You have not been to a special school", so we arranged a visit to the Special School for the Deaf. Someone also suggested that we should visit the Eagle Farm Technical College to look at the pre-vocational training course that is offered there, and we did that. We made these visits at all times with the full co-operation of the teachers and the Department of Education.

During the past weeks we have offered to 89 parties an opportunity to support their submissions publicly in this Chamber. That was a marathon experience. I believe that we offered people an excellent opportunity to come before us and say whatever they wanted to say and to have their submissions fully publicised. I think that that offer was appreciated. We asked the people the questions that we felt should be asked. People wondered about the questions asked by some members of the committee from time to time, but before they appeared before us we had separate discussions and then we put to them the questions which we felt the community would want us to ask about the particular submissions. A record was kept. There is one copy in the Parliamentary Library for the information of honourable members. It will be available for research purposes in the future, and also for our committee purposes.

On behalf of the committee, I record my thanks to the members of the "Hansard" staff and also to the members of the parliamentary staff who assisted us. I also wish to record my thanks to the Cabinet, which approved of the appointment of a research officer, Mr. John Barnes. He is on secondment from the Parliamentary Library, and he has assisted the committee in the preparation of various papers.

I also extend my thanks to the secretary of the committee, Mr. Ted Newton, who has assisted us enormously, and to Mrs. Annette Graham, our stenographer, who has very cheerfully helped us through an enormous amount of research work.

During the conduct of the inquiry, there was obviously some concern about the standards in our primary schools. So we invited Dr. John Keeves, the Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research, to come before the committee, and his views are on the record. We also invited Dr. Malcolm Skilbeck, the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre, to present some submissions to us at our public hearings. C.D.C. was the author of the SEMP material. That evidence is on the record, and it is very interesting, too. We had an informal meeting with the Curriculum Development Centre for Queensland.

When we began our inquiry, I think that most people believed that we were looking at social education. However, very wide terms of reference were set. They gave us the opportunity to endeavour to isolate areas of concern within the general education community, and to pursue those matters; and that is what we are doing. Of course, we have opened a Pandora's Box. We have been given a very big job to do. At the same time we have researched overseas and interstate experience, and that has been summarised by our research officer and collated for the information of members.

I believe that we have created an enormous amount of public interest in education. Many people have said to us, "Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a say in education decision-making." The major outcome of the inquiry so far has been the amount of gratitude that has been shown by people, particularly in the remote areas of Queensland, for the opportunity that they have been given to be heard.

I thank the individual members of the committee, who have had to approach their task with a great deal of application and organisation. The submissions so far total about six bushels—I think that would be the best way of describing the volume—and the members of the committee, Mr. Hewitt, Mr. Miller, Mr. Shaw, and Mr. Powell, have assisted me tremendously, and I think that some very useful recommendations will come forward.

Submissions have been received from all sections of the community. One that I was

looking at last night said, "Education is something for parents and teachers." Mr. Miller, that is not true. Education is everybody's interest and everybody's legitimate business.

The first reports that we will produce will relate to the secondary school assessment programme and a social education document relating to SEMP materials and other matters, on which we are also working. It is hoped that the report on secondary assessment will be available before the House rises, and that the final report will be available some time into the new year. We have produced a sketch of the form that it will take.

Usually an inquiry of this type, with a broad frame of reference, takes two years. That has been the overseas and interstate experience. Within six months, with application and with an enormous amount of work, we will be producing our first report, and it is my hope that it will be useful and that it will contribute to improvement in the education system generally in Queensland.

It was my hope at the outset that in the operation of this select committee we would produce a model with which we could prove to the people of Queensland, to members of Parliament and to Cabinet how successful a parliamentary select committee could be in informing people, in information-gathering and in bringing people together to discuss a mutual problem and achieve a successful outcome, and, more importantly, to bring Parliament closer to the people. I hope that, at the end, we will have succeeded in doing that and that you, Mr. Miller, together with other members of Parliament, will share my view that the Select Committee on Education has been a tremendous success and that there will be more such committees.

**Mr. WHITE** (Southport) (2.48 p.m.): In speaking to these Estimates, I first congratulate the Minister for dealing very ably with what sometimes is, I believe, a very difficult portfolio. There is no doubt that, although there is room for improvement, the Queensland education system is very much the envy of other Australian States and, indeed, some other countries, which periodically write for details of the system existing in this State.

I believe that over the last 12 months there have been some educational policy decisions, made in Cabinet, that have been made too hastily. I refer particularly to some of the more controversial ones, such as those relating to MACOS and SEMP and the recent incentive scheme to keep teachers in country schools. In my opinion, those decisions were made without sufficient thought being given to them. I make the point that not everything new in the field of education is bad.

What I should like to speak about today is technical education in this State, and I shall concentrate particularly on the role of technical and further education colleges. It is essential that emphasis be placed on them right now. Financial emphasis is being placed on them, as is indicated by the increase of



about \$4,000,000 in the 1978-79 Estimates—from \$28,500,000 to \$32,000,000. This is very good.

TAFE colleges are the key to the training of our youth and the retraining of others who are in employment but whose skills are no longer needed. I emphasise the importance of the role of TAFE colleges. They represent one means by which we can tackle the very serious unemployment problem in this State and nation. TAFE colleges are growing in strength and importance in Queensland. Their primary role is to train and extend the abilities of people in vocational skills. Their secondary role is to provide further education for adults and younger students.

There are 12 such colleges in Queensland. Their most successful attribute so far has been that they have worked on a district basis. Within their respective districts they have taken technical and further education to the people in those communities. Until 1974-75, they received no financial assistance whatsoever from the Commonwealth Government. Even now, direct Commonwealth funding of TAFE colleges amounts to only 20 per cent of their costs. This contrasts strongly with university education, which is completely funded by the Commonwealth. I know that the emphasis is changing, but it is not changing fast enough. I should like to see more financial emphasis placed on the support of technical colleges.

Every day we hear the cry that too many young people are unemployable. In many instances computers and other forms of technology have taken over much of the manual and clerical work that school-leavers could once expect to take up. There is no lower avenue of entry into many jobs, because employers are looking for experienced, skilled people. There is no base grade at which school-leavers can get the skill and experience that employers require. As this is a fact of life, we must look to the training of young people to enter the work-force at a higher level. This is where the TAFE colleges will play their part.

I emphasise the most successful part of the programme of these colleges, namely, vocational training, which is providing young people with marketable skills. It means that when they are looking for jobs and employers ask: "What have you done?", they can say, "I have spent so many months doing a pre-vocational course. I have these basic skills." Such a person would be a more attractive proposition to an employer, who is probably finding it hard to make both ends meet, anyhow.

Pre-vocational training is not the only initiative that has been displayed in TAFE colleges. Pre-apprenticeship training has been, and will continue to be, a most important part of their curriculum. I and others in this Chamber have previously said that the old apprenticeship system is breaking down. Employers are not accepting their responsibilities to train young persons in their particular trade. Labour costs have gone up; leave

loadings have been introduced; economic activities are down. Employers generally are getting a little sick of carrying the can completely for the training of apprentices in their particular trade.

Although the State and Federal Governments have taken initiatives in this field and have provided some incentives by way of the C.R.A.F.T. scheme, obviously employers are not convinced that they should employ the number of apprentices that are required to maintain the skilled manpower of this nation. Statistics will show that the number of apprentices taken on in Queensland and throughout Australia is dropping year by year. The responsibility for this must lie with the Commonwealth and State Governments. The employers certainly are not prepared to accept it, and there are good reasons why they should not. A new-look apprenticeship scheme is required if we are to maintain the skills that are necessary to keep the nation economically viable.

This can be achieved partly by increasing the amount of apprenticeship training carried out in colleges. A start has been made in the TAFE colleges. Trades are becoming so highly skilled that a good deal of the training must be undertaken in colleges. It is not possible to receive adequate training on the job. It is the Government's responsibility to put more training into the colleges and to take from the employers the responsibility for training.

The first step in this programme is the block release training system, which has proved to be most successful. Some people do not agree with all of it; some employers do not like to see their apprentices undertake a seven-week training course. Nevertheless, I am sure that apprentices gain more from it. It is the start of a new-look apprenticeship training system.

A big advantage to be gained from pre-apprenticeship training is that when apprentices go to their employers they do know how to use a hammer; they possess some skills and are not commencing employment merely as students. I believe that we should look at the possibility of introducing a system under which the whole of the first year of apprenticeship training is spent in college. As the years go by, we will find that a greater amount of training is done in colleges and a lesser amount is done on the job.

As the present system has been in existence for many, many years, it will be very difficult to change it. Nevertheless, a start has been made and we must keep the momentum of this change going. The existing system certainly will not meet future demands.

The industrial training Bill that is now being formulated will lead to better manpower training, and also to better predictions of where manpower shortages will occur and where skills have to be acquired. Without better manpower planning than at present, we will not be able to predict where skills

will be required, nor will we be able to get people trained in time to meet the demands of industry.

What is necessary in any apprenticeship training is very close liaison between the Department of Labour Relations and the Department of Education. I am sure that Opposition members would agree that under this close-knit coalition that is very easy to achieve.

I have mentioned pre-vocational training, which has been a great success. I look forward to an expansion of these courses because, in addition to giving young people marketable skills, they provide a most important transition from school into the work-force. They allow students, say, from grade 10 onwards, to leave school and go to places where they become interested in developing their manual skills. In too many instances students remain at school because such courses are not presently available, and this reacts to the detriment of their schooling as well as to the interests of their fellow students. The sooner we provide a broad range of pre-vocational opportunities in the TAFE colleges, the sooner we will get the non-intellectual student out of the school, leaving it to students who are more interested in academic pursuits, and into a place where he can develop and use his skills.

There are various other ways in which TAFE colleges can assist in the reduction of unemployment. The normal courses they are now running upgrade skills in business and commerce. They are training adults who have been in the work-force for some time but who have become redundant as their skills are no longer required. Some of the figures of predicted redundancy resulting from basic jobs being done by computers or other technical means are frightening. Predictions have been made into the 1980s of how many base-grade jobs will become redundant. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that TAFE colleges in particular create courses that will provide for the retraining of adults who, through no fault of their own, have become redundant.

It is the role of TAFE colleges to help such people to cope with improvements in technology, and this is a role that will become more and more important as time goes by. I would hope that each TAFE college's courses would reflect the type of industries that exist in its area. In an industrial area, TAFE college should be running courses that will retrain people for those industries.

Other courses run by the TAFE colleges—and they are run very well, although they are not directly related to unemployment—are the self-development courses, which enable retired people to develop their skills and their hobbies. I refer to courses in, for example, sailing, woodwork and boating. There is no doubt that at a time when unemployment is so high a lot of these courses fulfil a great need for people who are

looking for work and who in the meantime are at least developing some of their abilities. I congratulate TAFE colleges for the support they give to community organisations that have no home, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

I conclude by speaking about the Gold Coast College of Technical and Further Education. The construction of a new college is very good news for the coast. Groundworks for the new college are under way, and it is expected that students will be received in 1981. Stage 1, which will be completed by then, is a \$4,500,000 project. We are hoping that tenders for the project will be called in the latter half of next year. The Gold Coast TAFE college is expected to provide a full range of courses for the area—apprenticeship, vocational, recreational and retraining courses for adults. It is particularly important that courses be developed that attune with industries on the Gold Coast—the building, manufacturing, tourist, fishing and boat-building industries.

I congratulate those responsible for the administration of the present TAFE college. It is working under severe difficulties, with limited facilities and limited staff. I emphasise "limited staff", and draw it to the Minister's attention. Not so many years ago 269 students attended the college. There are now 5,400. For that massive increase, only one additional clerk has been appointed. There are fewer permanent administrative staff than at any other college in Queensland. Their efficient administration is under severe difficulty because of the lack of permanent staff. I ask that a reallocation of resources be made as quickly as possible to ensure that sufficient administrative backing is provided for the college, which is in the fastest-growing area in Australia. In the last 12 months there have been some 3,500 new enrolments in my electorate. I envisage that that rate of increase will continue.

Despite the difficulties that it has faced, the TAFE college has achieved a tremendous amount of success on the Gold Coast and enjoys a very high reputation. It uses the high schools to a large extent, and in this regard I make the point that, in the development of TAFE colleges, we should be looking very carefully at the greater use of existing schools rather than spending a great deal more capital. However, if schools are to be used, some improvements need to be made. If they are to be used as an extension of the TAFE colleges, parking facilities and lighting must be provided, to name but two. Also, permanent accommodation should be provided at high schools for the use of TAFE colleges so that classes can be held by day and by night. We should look very carefully at the need for resource and reference libraries.

We should recognise the importance and the increasing importance of TAFE colleges in Queensland. They require proper support and proper funding. They are now finding their place and I hope that their role in

reducing unemployment in this State is recognised. In many areas they will act as community colleges. In other words, they will act as agents for C.A.E.s and universities until such time as their areas grow to the extent that they can support their own C.A.E.s and universities. I cite the Gold Coast as a classic example.

We should look very carefully at TAFE colleges as places for adult retraining. In due course this will become a more important aspect of our society in our need to meet our industrial and business commitments. In the development of TAFE colleges, we should look carefully at the provision of child-care facilities for the use of young married and single parents who wish to undertake courses. As an example, over 60 per cent of the children attending two State schools in my area come from single-parent families. If we are to train or retrain those people in TAFE colleges, provision must be made to care for their children. I hope that we will make better use of our high schools to supplement TAFE colleges.

Although I have stressed some of the weaknesses and some of the improvements that I believe should be made in the technical education system, basically the system is very sound and I congratulate the department on its administration of it.

**Mr. WRIGHT** (Rockhampton) (3.8 p.m.): The Education portfolio is one of the more important ones that this Committee deals with. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the Minister saw fit to table the annual report on Education and Cultural Activities only one hour before he rose to deliver his 50-minute introduction to the Education Estimates. It is a vitally important portfolio because every person in the State is somehow involved in education. It is wrong that we, as an Assembly, should get an annual report some 60 minutes before we consider the Estimates of a department, because it gives honourable members no opportunity to consider the report. It gives no opportunity to members to draw comparisons with previous years or make judgments on proposed expenditure. In fact, it leaves us all in great vacuum.

To my knowledge, honourable members still do not have copies of the report. I was fortunate. I asked for one the moment it was tabled and was given one. A colleague of mine asked for one and was told that he would get it in the morning. I restate my view that some honourable members will not have seen the report.

I note that it is the 102nd annual report of the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities for the year ended 31 December 1977. What has the department been doing for the past 11 months because, as it is the report for the year ended 31 December 1977, it has had 11 months in which to compile the report and to bring it to this Assembly? I have never had much faith in the wheels that move the bureaucracy, but this is ridiculous. It either places doubt on

the efficiency of the bureaucracy for which the Minister is responsible, or it is further proof that this Government has a policy of keeping as much under wraps as possible. I have had a chance to look at the report, and I say that the Minister had nothing to hide because it is an excellent report, but it is an important document for us to see and I think it is a pity that he did not bring it forward prior to this date.

Throughout the Minister's speech he endeavoured to portray his department, and the education system in Queensland in general, as being near perfect and, whilst I admit that many aggressive changes and great initiatives have been taken, the picture that he painted is in fact far from the true one. I acknowledge that improvements have taken place but we still have a long way to go. I commend the departmental officers for their desire to bring about change and for the initiatives that they individually show, but it would seem to me that very often those initiatives are not paralleled by their departmental superiors—in this case their political superiors, the Government.

A typical example is consumer education. I do not want to canvass the SEMP issue again, but members should remind themselves that it was this Government's Education Department that prepared the consumer education material, and that it was this Government, before that material was even completed, that banned it. It was obvious that the department realised the vital importance of having consumer education in schools. It has certainly been realised by the Consumer Affairs Bureau, and no doubt by the Minister who is responsible for that department, but it would seem that this Government is not prepared to consider this very, very important aspect of education. We have a virtually ridiculous situation as a result. On the one hand we have the Consumer Affairs Bureau endeavouring to promote consumer education and, on the other, we have this Government frustrating the endeavours to produce modern teaching material for use in schools.

Every child is involved in some type of consumer activity. Every child is involved in some form of contract, and before school-leavers are very much older they will be involved in major purchases involving credit, yet very little is said in the schools about credit law. There is very little understanding about responsibilities, obligations and rights under contract law, and yet we realise that many young people today of 18 and 19—and even some of 17—are purchasing motor vehicles and tying themselves down for years and years of repayments. We know, too, that many young people on leaving school and entering into a job very quickly enter into some sort of insurance policy, yet again not all the students—in fact, a very small group—in our schools today get the opportunity to learn about insurance and credit.

I appreciate the importance of teaching those skills necessary for the occupational

needs of life. I am aware of the dangers of introducing too many extracurricular activities, but surely these things I am raising are basic to life; that if one is going to be involved in any occupation, he or she must have some knowledge of his or her rights in the market-place. He or she must have some knowledge of his or her rights in consumer credit and contract law because all these aspects are certainly vital to every sphere of his or her endeavour. If people do not understand consumer and credit law, then they lose out, and those losses affect their quality of life. I have known of young people who have been put years behind in their development and progress because they have been caught up in some motor vehicle contract that ruined them. They have been caught up in some hire-purchase contract that has cost them \$3,000 or \$4,000 and taken them years to pay off.

So I contend that consumer education should be a part, not just of the studies of a few within schools but of the general studies of students. We should introduce a graded programme from the upper levels in the primary schools right through to Grade 12, but with the emphasis being on those leaving years in the high school, Grades 10, 11 and 12. And if we are going to do this and prepare young people for life, then we must also include in this some type of basic law study.

I mentioned credit law, contract law and insurance law, but I would like to put forward the idea that young people should also know what the criminal law is about. I have heard members present themselves as proponents of the deterrent system as a means of overcoming the criminality of our society. They stress how we need deterrents, and I agree, but for a deterrent to be effective the would-be law-breaker must know what the penalties entail. I think it is important that we incorporate within general school studies a knowledge of what the law is all about; what will happen if one breaks the law, if, in fact, one is involved in some type of crime.

There are additional aspects about which I wish to speak. I refer to the need for a broader citizenship course. I think that it is better referred to as "community studies". I suggest that it is just as important today as languages or sciences or history. A young person should have a broad knowledge of the community in which he lives, and know his responsibilities and his rights within the community. Students today have an inadequate knowledge of the society in which they live. Recently I was at a high school and I asked how many of the 30 or 40 students there read the newspaper every day. I recall that only four said that they read it entirely. It is realised that not everyone reads the newspaper entirely. But the point is that only a very small minority of those young people bothered or desired to sit down to read the daily newspaper. One boy said to me, "It is not worth reading. It is all

bad news." That may be so, too, but unless young people are versed in what is happening in their society they will be disadvantaged.

There is a need for young people to have a knowledge of government. I suggest that for many people visits to this Parliament are a joke. I have spoken to some of the young people who have come here, and they certainly have not learnt very much. They come into the gallery, sit there for a while, hear a few questions and then go. It does not really give them an insight into what the Parliament is all about.

Naturally, courses in government are being conducted in schools today, but they are in a very narrow sphere. One should consider other aspects of the community in which one will become involved when one enters employment. This naturally involves trade unions and trade associations. If one looks at any of the citizenship books today, which contain some hundreds of pages, one sees that only two or three paragraphs are devoted to trade-unionism. In a couple of books, some four or five pages are devoted to this subject, but that is inadequate and certainly does not give a child a knowledge of the trade union system or the system of employer and employee associations of which eventually he will be a part. So there is an inadequate curriculum in Queensland at the moment.

One also should know the court system. Very few people in our community understand the tiers of the court system or judiciary in this State. If a matter is to be taken to court, they think that it is somehow taken to a court in Brisbane. They do not realise that there is a Magistrates Court system and a District Courts system. They just do not know how the court system works. I repeat that this is because of inadequacies within the courses in schools. I realise that not everybody will remember the details, even if they are given in courses at schools.

In primary schools there are studies in local government, State Government and also Federal Government, but they give only a small coverage of the system. They should be extended to the secondary school level because every person is required to know about the law. People should know how laws are made. We have to realise that Australia is not an island, except geographically. We should start to realise, too, that we are very close to other neighbours; but most young people do not seem to be interested in State, national or international events. I have spoken to many of them about issues that are occurring around them, but they have no knowledge of them, unless it is something that has been set down in a textbook.

There is a need to consider these areas, and the most important time to consider them is within the school period. I accept, too, that it is impossible to cover all aspects of the so-called extracurricular activities within a five or 5½-hour day, so I am suggesting that we should start to look at

the rest of the day. In saying that, I acknowledge that there would be transport problems. I realise, too, that there would be some opposition from parents, teachers and even the student body, but we have to realise that it is stupid to use a 5-hour day for educational purposes. When I was in Taiwan, I saw the use of an eight or 10-hour day. When I was in mainland China, I saw the same thing occurring.

**Mr. Bird:** Not the same children.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** No. They had different shifts for the academic disciplines. When we were in China, we found that school finished at 5 o'clock and the children then went to their sporting activities. That is when they were taught cultural activities, such as pottery. The other members of the delegation will back up my claims. The same thing happens in Taiwan. Every ounce of daylight is used for the benefit of the child.

What is done here? They are sent to school at 9 a.m. and they finish at 3 or 3.30 p.m. They catch a bus or ride their bikes down to a cafe, where they sit around and have a soda or a malted milk, or they go and annoy someone. It is a waste of time, and I think time ought to be used more profitably. I state this as my personal view.

If we are going to begin incorporating within the schools in this State all the extra things that the community is saying are important, the period of teaching must be extended. We must ensure that the facilities we have are used. If we think about it, Mr. Miller, we find that schools are used effectively for about 25 hours a week; yet there are millions and millions of dollars tied up in sporting and other facilities in these areas.

Again, I acknowledge that there are moves in certain schools to open the schools to the community. I know that it is happening in Rockhampton and I know that the Minister has been supporting it. I acknowledge that, because I recall a statement that he made encouraging it, which was sent throughout Queensland. But it still has not gone very far. That probably is not the Minister's fault. Maybe it is because the parents are concerned that there is no supervision; maybe it is because the principals are saying, "Who is going to look after the facilities? Who is going to watch over them?", because there is also the problem of vandalism.

So in putting forward this suggestion again—and I have already put it forward many times—and in acknowledging that in some places use is made of rooms, tennis courts and grounds, I say that we need to go a little bit further. Instead of saying ministerially, "Yes, let us use these facilities", it is time that programmes were initiated on an after-school and week-end basis to involve young people. That time could be used to inculcate sporting skills and cultural pursuits.

This will require the use of sporting aides, just as there are now teacher aides in the class-rooms. There is no real hassle here,

because there is already an effective National Fitness organisation throughout the State that could play a very important role. There are many people within the community who have expertise that could certainly be used to benefit the school community. They would be prepared to work on an instructional or supervisory basis. It has happened in other places. It has happened on an experimental basis in some regions of the State; it is happening in other States. I would ask that it be considered seriously here.

Of course, there is a cost factor, and that also must be acknowledged. However, although costs are involved, the benefits would be enormous. As students and parents came to be involved in the school, they would acquire a new attitude to it. The school would become a truly integral part of the community.

More teachers would be required, and use would have to be made of the expertise of citizens, but it would involve parents, teachers and students in a greater way. It would be part of making the school a complete facet of the child's development, and I would hope that it would lead to greater interest and involvement by parents in the school. I think that all honourable members would agree that the present involvement at a parents and citizens' association level is unsatisfactory in every school at the moment. I would make the point that in small areas with one-teacher and two-teacher schools, parents seem to take greater interest; but in 99 per cent of schools the burden is being carried by a few. In a school with an enrolment of 600, one finds 19 or 20 parents at a p. and c. meeting, if one is lucky. People either are not interested or feel that they have no role to play. They have an important role to play, and it is vitally important that they be made aware of that. I would hope, Mr. Miller, that the inquiry into education that has been proceeding for some months will bring down some strong recommendations on how that aspect might be improved.

I refer briefly to the issue of staffing. I note that the Minister said in introducing the Estimates that the present staffing ratio is 20.5 to 1. I believe that that figure is false, unless the ratio includes all the people involved in the school community.

**Mr. Bird:** No. I am talking about teachers.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** In the class-room?

**Mr. Bird:** Yes.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** Well, that is an amazing statement, because I have recently checked a number of schools—admittedly, only five schools and about nine classes—and not one class had less than 33 children.

**Mr. Bird:** Will you give me the names?

**Mr. WRIGHT:** Yes, I am prepared to do that. Perhaps the honourable gentleman ought to ask some Government members, because I have heard them say the same sort

of thing. We were in Maryborough recently and a similar problem exists there. I know that the honourable member for Maryborough is aware of it. There is a similar situation in many other places. Maybe it is because of sudden transfers. At the Rockhampton High School, for example, 10 vacancies have occurred in the last 12 months. That was part of the principal's report at the recent speech night. Ten vacancies—and not one has been filled! Not one person has been replaced!

**Mr. Bird:** Give me the details.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** I should have thought that the Minister's own department would have been aware of this. Surely the Minister knows that when teachers retire or are transferred they are not being replaced.

At present about 500 teachers are unemployed in Queensland. One estimate that has been made is that by 1985 the number of unemployed teachers throughout Australia will increase to 30,000, and that the number of unemployed teachers in Queensland could be about 4,000. They are only estimates, but they are based on the fact that, because of the bursary aspect of the system that is operating, very few teachers will be graduating.

Students are staying longer at school because of the unemployment situation. We know that fewer jobs are available for young people, so their only alternative to going on the dole is staying at school. More and more older teachers will simply give up by taking advantage of the scheme that allows them to retire before they are 65 years of age. Class numbers will therefore increase. On the figures given to me, the staff-student ratio will increase, because the department will not be employing more teachers. The Financial Statement indicates that the Public Service Board has been asked to start going through all departments with a view to reducing the number of public servants. It would seem that the Minister for Education is doing that in his area.

I was going to speak about community colleges, but I think that matter has been well covered by the honourable member for Southport. It would seem that he has read speeches by me and other Opposition members on this issue. I whole-heartedly agree with his concept.

I wish to make some brief observations on some of the problems in schools. I refer particularly to discipline. I have received numerous complaints from teachers and parents about the lack of discipline in schools at the moment—the erosion of the tone of schools. Teachers have told me of threats; teachers have informed me that they have been called “f. and b. so-and so’s”. Some of them have told me that they have been shaped up to by young students. I have been told of a Black Power type of movement that is developing. I am concerned about it, as are many teachers. I am concerned that students in a class-room will use foul language

in front of young girls or anyone else. I am concerned that they use foul language at all. It would seem that teachers are powerless to deal with such situations.

I don't support the concept of corporal punishment, but I do believe there is an answer to the problem. When I made my maiden speech here almost 10 years ago, I suggested that we start using the suspension system properly. Members will recall that “The Courier-Mail” made a cartoon of what I said—“1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 you're out!”. My suggestion is that we should start involving the parents. One teacher said to me, “We ought to have hidden cameras in the schools. Let a film be made of what goes on, and make the parents come and see it.” I do not accept that, but I do believe a serious situation is developing, and we have to toughen up. We have to make parents realise just exactly what their children are doing.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. POWELL (Isis)** (3.29 p.m.): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Estimates of the Education Department. I have listened with interest to previous speakers in the debate this afternoon.

The record of this Government in education is one of which it can be justly proud. When one considers the history of education in this State, one notices the tremendous additional sums of money that have been spent on education from 1957 onwards. One must also recognise that the morale of teachers has improved to a very marked degree over that period.

I did not teach under the previous administration, but my father did. I know the problems he faced as a teacher under the previous administration; I know the problems that were easily solved under the administration under which I taught. The Government should be congratulated for its attitude to teachers and education generally. It recognises that education is the most important facet of Government endeavour in the State sphere. It is pleasing indeed to note that, in recognising this, the Government appropriates a significant sum for education.

Over the past few months I have been doing some research into the classified positions within the Education Department, and I have noticed a rather disturbing trend that has occurred over the past five or six years. This trend is not the fault of the Government, but it seems to be one to which the Public Service Board is very much inclined. It is the downgrading of senior executive positions within the Education Department. Surely the Director-General of Education is the most important public servant in the State. If we are not regarding him as the most important public servant in the State, we are dealing very lightly indeed with the potential careers of the children under the Education Department's control.

If we look at the classifications of Assistant Director-General of Education and Deputy Director-General of Education, as well as those of the directors of the various sub-departments within the Department of Education, and compare them with the senior classifications in the Department of Health, the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, the Department of Works and so on, we will find that the top positions in the Education Department are not as senior as they ought to be. I would hope that the Minister, in recognising that his senior officers must be regarded highly in the Public Service, takes submissions to Cabinet to rectify a situation that I find unpalatable, and one that is deteriorating.

The Opposition members who have participated in this debate—so far, we have heard only the shadow Minister and the member who preceded me—do not give the Government the credit that it should be given in relation to education. The previous speaker, in lamenting the fact that the Government banned the Social Education Materials Project, spoke particularly about consumer education. I, too, lament the fact that consumer education is not a Board of Secondary School studies subject within the schools. It could well be a board subject.

I have little sympathy for SEMP and for those who promulgated it. The mere fact that the consumer education section of it was devised by officers of the Queensland Education Department is not an argument in favour of its retention in our education system. However, there is certainly a place within education for consumer education, and it is in fact covered in many facets of education in Queensland and in many subjects. However, it could well be a separate subject, especially in Grades 11 and 12, where, as previous speakers have said, many students remain at school. There is a very good argument in favour of making consumer education a subject for Grades 11 and 12. We certainly have the staff to teach that subject.

Speaking about staff—in the Minister's opening remarks he made a statement about the pupil-to-teacher ratio. That has been challenged. And well it can be challenged, because we all recognise that there are classes of more than 20 pupils, to which the Minister referred. People who are wont to criticise seldom look on the other side and seldom recognise that there are classes of much fewer than 20 pupils. In fact, in some of the remote high schools of the State there are classes of only one or two students. That, of course, is most undesirable. The numbers balance out. Anyone who refers to class sizes by dividing the number of students by the number of teachers will come up with a most unsatisfactory answer.

It is true that many classes contain more than 30 pupils. However, it is my experience as a teacher and with teachers that they would rather teach 35 or 36 students in one

class than teach 30 in a composite grade. Many classes contain more than 30 students simply because the teachers have decided for themselves—as is their right—that they would rather teach a single class containing 35 or 36 students than have a composite grade of 30 students. The class-size argument will probably wax and wane in this debate through all sorts of exaggerated sizes; but the plain fact of the matter is that class sizes today are much better than they ever have been. If the Education Minister continues to receive the amount of money needed for his department through Cabinet discussions, staff establishment will be maintained and increased as the population of students increases.

During the sittings of the Select Committee on Education we received a submission by Professor Keeves from ACER that seemed to refute many of the challenges that have been made to the standards of the State education system. Professor Keeves gave us to understand that the literacy and numeracy standard in Queensland is equal to or higher than the rest of Australia. He went on to make another very pertinent point, which I would like to bring up at this stage; that is, that Queensland schools spend more hours on mathematics and English than do the schools in other States.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke about a longer school day. Many people ask for enrichment programmes in schools and for subjects such as music, arts and other cultural activities to be taught. Perhaps there is a very good argument for us to maintain the amount of time we spend on basic subjects and to extend the school day so that cultural subjects are covered. Many people would throw up their hands in horror at such a suggestion, but I am sure that, if the staffing allowed specialist teachers to move into the schools at a time different from that for the rest of the teaching staff, then that could be organised fairly well indeed.

Another criticism levelled at the Government concerns the amount of money spent per pupil on education in Queensland. Just as it is fallacious to divide the number of pupils or students by the number of teachers to arrive at class sizes, so it is fallacious to compare the amount of money spent per head on education in Queensland with the amounts spent in other States. For example, in Queensland the warmer climate does not necessitate large expenditure on heating, and in particular on central heating. Very few places in the State could be suggested as warranting central heating. Queensland has not accepted the necessity for air-conditioning, although there has been a high acceptance of it in South Australia and the Northern Territory. I might add that I believe air-conditioning is a necessity in some Queensland schools. In the Far North and the West, it is fairly obvious that air-conditioning should be provided in school buildings. In western areas of the State—in the

dry areas—the relatively cheap evaporative air coolers are suitable. In coastal, humid areas, obviously refrigerative air-conditioning is required.

In general, the smaller the school, obviously the higher the cost per pupil. Queensland has opted for a maximum enrolment in urban high schools of 1,200 students. In trying to maintain that optimum maximum, the Education Department has been able to produce education in Queensland at a cheaper cost than in some of the other States. For example, in a table taken from the national cost study, it is noted that the cost per pupil in a typical Queensland high school is \$1,739, whereas in Tasmania it is \$5,387 and in the Northern Territory, \$6,019. Such is the difference in the building standards required in those States compared with Queensland.

It can be noted from those figures that the cost of building Queensland's newer high schools is considerably lower than it is in any other State or territory. Later on I will show that this does not result from any comparative parsimonious approach to floor area per pupil, which, in Queensland, is 8.99 sq m overall. It approximates the Recommended National Guideline of 9 to 9.25 sq m per pupil. It can therefore be reasonably assumed that a considerable proportion of the cost-saving can be attributed to economies in construction.

The Education Department undertakes a number of surveys. It is fairly important that it continues to conduct these surveys to work out where schools should be placed. At this stage I shall speak parochially and refer to an area west of Bundaberg in the far north of my electorate. The Bundaberg West State School is grossly overpopulated with pupils. There is a distinct need—in fact an urgent need—for a new primary school to be placed either in the western suburbs of Bundaberg in my electorate or nearby. It is most important that that school be put on the programme as soon as possible.

The surveys that the Education Department has undertaken indicate that, by the year 1983, we are likely to have one secondary school with more than 1,800 students. I find that unacceptable. In addition there will be two with between 1,700 and 1,800, five with between 1,600 and 1,700, four with between 1,500 and 1,600, four with between 1,400 and 1,500 and seven with between 1,300 and 1,400. It is fairly obvious that more money must be spent on the provision of more schools so that the schools in those areas do not have enrolments as high as anticipated.

At this stage I seek leave to include a table in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member did discuss this inclusion with the Temporary Chairman.

**Mr. POWELL:** Yes.

"NET AREA PER PUPIL (from Table 9.1) AREAS ADJUSTED PRO RATA UPWARDS TO ALLOW FOR NATIONALLY RECOMMENDED ITEMS NOT INCLUDED BY PARTICULAR STATES (E.G. QLD IS THE ONLY STATE NOT INCLUDING A FULL GYMNASIUM/HALL STRUCTURE WITHIN ITS COMPLEX).

	m <sup>2</sup>
Wanniassa (A.C.T.) ..	10.66
Kelso (N.S.W.) ..	9.62
Capalaba (Qld) ..	8.99
Parafield (S.A.) ..	9.32
Morphett Vale (S.A.) ..	8.90
Ravenswood (Tas) ..	10.12
Melton (Vic) ..	8.82
Mt. Eliza (Vic) ..	9.39
Hastings (Vic) ..	9.89
Composite (W.A.) ..	9.40
Sadadeen (N.T.) ..	18.77

Recommended National Guideline  
9.25 m<sup>2</sup>."

That table shows the net area per pupil in Queensland compared with that in other States. It is a very revealing table because it indicates that the area in Queensland is 8.99 sq m compared with 10.12 sq m in South Australia, 10.66 sq m in the A.C.T. and 18.77 sq m in the Northern Territory. Obviously the harshness of the climate in the Northern Territory is responsible for the larger area there.

I now turn to the cost of producing buildings. I have a table numbered 9.1 from the Recommended National Guideline showing that the average is \$295 per square metre whilst in Queensland it is \$193 per square metre. It indicates fairly clearly the efforts made by the architects in the Works Department to cut construction costs without making the buildings less than effective.

It is interesting to note that the Works Department in Queensland, in conjunction with the Education Department, has been able to design school buildings which cost, in some cases, less than half of the cost of other schools throughout Australia. So that while the cost per head of education in Queensland is less than it is in other States, the argument is really fallacious considering the importance of education in the attitude of the Government.

I should now like to outline some of the problems in schools, particularly in my electorate. Hervey Bay has three primary schools and one secondary school. It is interesting to note that when I was elected the schools in that area were in very bad condition. They had not been looked after and effective representations had not been made on their behalf. In fact, I found that certain sections within the Education Department regarded the area as something of a retirement village. As I have said before, the retirees must be very active in view of the tremendous number of pupils in the area.

There is certainly a great need for a new administration block at the Pialba State School. The library at the secondary school



in Pialba is in a deplorable condition, as is the library at the Isis State High School. In fact, it was only last Thursday that the Minister for Works and Housing inspected those buildings. So I make a plea to the Minister to look carefully at the priorities being used to make allocations to schools in my area. A.L.P. members constantly tell us that there is no school building going on in their electorates and that it all happens in ours, but somehow or other the Isis electorate seems to miss out fairly regularly because the high schools in the electorate of Isis, particularly those at Hervey Bay and Kepnock, are in a less than desirable condition. It is quite clear that the Government distributes its funds in a very equitable fashion.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr. POWELL:** Those squealers on the left of the Chamber just do not know what they are talking about, and while they continue to confine themselves to the precincts of the city of Brisbane they will never find out.

I would now like to speak about discipline, as did the honourable member for Rockhampton, who preceded me in this debate. It is interesting to note that many people claim that discipline in schools has deteriorated over the last few years and that teachers should be given back the powers that they previously had. But if honourable members look at the facts, they will find that teachers' powers have not changed since, I think, 1946. In fact, if the teachers, and particularly the principals, wish to use the powers at their disposal, then the discipline problem may lessen considerably.

Perhaps the discipline problem is not one that is confined to the schools and the teachers. As the honourable member for Rockhampton said, perhaps it is high time we made parents realise their responsibilities in this area. I read in "The Sunday Mail" of 12 November an article in which somebody stated that parents may not know where their 11 or 12-year-old child is and that they might be drinking somewhere. Any parent who does not know where his 11 or 12-year-old child is at any time is guilty of dereliction of duty. I believe it is high time that not only education authorities but members of this Assembly and other responsible people within the community made parents realise their responsibilities to their children. It is incredible that some parents do not know at all times where their children are. They ought to be made aware of their responsibilities.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. BOURKE (Lockyer) (3.49 p.m.):** I wish to open my contribution to this debate on the Estimates of the Education Department by first congratulating the Minister and his staff, that is, his directors and his headmasters. It has been made very plain to me since I entered this place that a new member is confronted with 18 departments and is very much in need of help from the professional people in the Public Service to enable

him to broaden his understanding of how the Government and the individual departments are run. It has been my understanding that the people in the Education Department are very much—

**Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.**

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BOURKE:** I think the honourable member has misunderstood the advice he received from his leader. He is supposed to sit and listen with an open mind, not an empty one.

The staff of the Education Department, from the director-general down to the school principals, have shown to me that they are only too prepared to help in assisting a member to gain a true understanding of how the department is run. I have a number of very highly qualified principals in my area, including Mr. Sutcliffe of the Toowoomba East State School, Mr. Bob Sperrit of Gatton, Mr. Bob Grieve of Mt. Lofty, Mr. Bob Walker of Centenary Heights and Mr. Jack Thistlewaite, the regional director. It has been very apparent to me, in my relationship with the department, that the department and the whole community are very fortunate to have people of such professionalism and dedication available to work on their behalf. I might add that within my electorate there is a great variety of teaching skills.

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.**

**Mr. BOURKE:** That is typical of the honourable member's whole attitude. This is a very serious matter and, instead of making facetious remarks, he should listen and try to learn something. As I have said, there is in the department a total dedication to the welfare of our children.

The Minister has had a very difficult portfolio to administer over the last couple of years. If we look back at the events in the political and educational fields over the last 12 months, we see that matters have quietened down a lot. There were two major issues—MACOS and SEMP. I have to admit that I think the manner in which the decisions were made on those two issues was rather regrettable. It created a lot of bad feeling among teachers. Personally, I am inclined to the view that perhaps one decision was right and the other only partly right. As I have said, I think that the manner in which those decisions was taken was to be regretted. It has caused a great deal of unnecessary concern among teachers, and rightly so. They are professional people and I believe they should be treated in a professional manner. I cannot honestly say that the manner in which those two decisions was taken reflects much credit on the political process in Queensland.

Since then, the Select Committee on Education has been established, and I look forward to the presentation of its report. But I

think it is worth while to consider the establishment of a committee within this Parliament to review education trends annually. Perhaps the Minister's legislation committee could be expanded to include a couple of members from the Opposition. In that way we could have a true parliamentary committee reviewing education trends on an annual basis.

As I have said, the Education portfolio is difficult and involved. Perhaps no other portfolio within the Cabinet encompasses such a wide field. There is the added difficulty that every other politician and public person in the State feels that he is at liberty to contribute to the handling of this portfolio, irrespective of whether he can or cannot make a valid contribution.

It is my view that perhaps it is too large a portfolio for effective management. It includes the tertiary field as well as the other two fields. Perhaps one improvement would be the separation of the tertiary aspect of education from the other two aspects and the placing of it under a separate portfolio. It has also been suggested to me by people within the education area that perhaps it would be advantageous to abolish the Board of Advanced Education and set up a separate authority to control tertiary education and other aspects of education.

Of course, there is a tertiary institute within my electorate, namely, the Queensland Agricultural College at Gatton. On the boundary of my electorate there is the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, which is involved in teacher training. I commend this as one example of decentralisation in operation. I should like to see more such courses made available outside the metropolitan area of Brisbane. In fact, we should consider encouraging more students from St. Lucia to undertake courses in cities such as Toowoomba, Rockhampton and perhaps Townsville. This is a regional concept. Such institutions contribute much to the cities in which they are situated. Obviously there would be an enrichment of the total district. The same comment applies to the Queensland Agricultural College. It is a source of enrichment, culturally, socially and educationally, to the whole town and area of Gatton.

Of course, there is the problem of costs for students. It has to be admitted that the college at Gatton, being a specialised college with low student enrolments, is more expensive to operate than others, but there are valid reasons for that. The problem of rationalisation is arising in this field. There is a fall in student numbers. There is a need to control costs, and I think that the State will have to look very carefully at rationalising some of these tertiary institutions in the future.

I understand that there is a teachers college as well as a university in Townsville. I think that there would be savings to be made by merging those two institutions. I think

that there is also a teachers college as well as the Griffith University in the southern area of Brisbane.

This is a difficult field and those in it, who have high educational qualifications, are quite capable of speaking out in their own defence. However, we will have to look at rationalising these institutions in the interest of economy. It seems to me that they are under-utilised. They could have a supportive role for secondary schools.

Also in the same area in Toowoomba as the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education is the Toowoomba Education Centre. This faces a number of problems; there has been a deputation to the Minister about them. The director is a State public servant.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

**Mr. BOURKE:** The honourable member should listen carefully to this debate. It concerns the future interests of children. It has probably not occurred to the honourable member that even an educational disaster such as himself can have children who will benefit from improvements in the education system. The fact that the honourable member is a write-off educationally does not mean that his children will not be capable of benefiting.

As I said, the director is a State public servant. He has been seconded to the centre, and he tends to be prejudiced in his superannuation and promotional entitlements. I think that this is a rather unfair aspect of the operation of the centre and I hope to see it remedied.

I understand that a reading centre with a staff of five has been established in Brisbane, at the old Kelvin Grove school. A similar concept originated in Toowoomba, yet the five people engaged in this pursuit are all concentrated in Brisbane. That is to be regretted. The department should, as far as possible, be looking to decentralisation. Centres of this type can serve as originators of ideas, and it is rather unfortunate that they are being hindered by the bureaucratic problems of fitting them into the overall departmental scheme.

I wish to comment on a number of particular educational areas. One is the concept of teacher exchanges. The Minister has made me aware that the State does have a rather low-key system of exchange. I understand that since 1977 Queensland has exchanged teachers with British Columbia and Ontario, but small numbers of teachers are involved. I worked in the United Kingdom for some years and my personal experience is that such exchanges are a source of great benefit to individual teachers and to the State generally. They operate in two ways. Teachers can be brought here to give us the benefit of their experience, and our own teachers can be sent abroad to gain experience that they can bring back here and use for the benefit of the State.

In particular, I cannot understand why there is not a large-scale exchange with other Australian States. Including the Northern Territory, there are now six other States with differing systems of education and differing approaches. Surely Queensland would benefit greatly from large-scale exchanges of teachers. In addition, there are a number of English-speaking nations with a common heritage—New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South Africa—in which our teachers could fit into the educational system, see the different approaches, benefit from them and bring any advances in education back with them. There are other countries with different languages and different heritages—the European countries and the Asian countries—with which exchanges could be of benefit to language teachers and teachers generally. They could gain experience that they could then pass on to their pupils.

I think, too, that the department should be encouraging its staff to take leave to undertake other work and gain experience. It would be to the department's advantage to do that and the education system would benefit from teachers with wider experience in a community sense.

I also wish to say a few words about the union's incentive scheme for teachers in remote areas, which is long overdue. I did argue against the aspect of increased long service leave entitlements. I do not agree with that. I say quite openly that I think teachers receive enough leave and holidays. They are very well served in that regard.

**An Honourable Member:** They are on the best superannuation, too.

**Mr. BOURKE:** Yes, I would agree with that. In comparison with the rest of the community, I think they are well served already. Teachers in remote areas should certainly be paid a higher salary. The problem must be seen in perspective. One approach would be a slightly higher salary and better allowances—for example, better allowances for floor coverings and curtains. The position of other public servants should also be looked at. Anyone who is prepared to go and work in the remote areas of the State should be encouraged. The Commonwealth Government should be looking at the taxation system in that respect, too. Improvements are long overdue and the situation has to be looked at from the point of view of equity. The schools are operating, but I do not believe that the present situation is fair to individual teachers.

While dealing with the subject of the union's incentive suggestions, it seems to me to be a shame that the union deals only with employees of State schools. It is prone to make statements about education in general, but it tends to cover up the fact that it represents only the teachers within State schools.

**Mr. Underwood** interjected.

**Mr. BOURKE:** I am aware that there is an organisation covering teachers in private schools, but I do not see why there should be two unions covering teachers. They are all performing the same task; they are all educating our children. The interests of education generally would be better served if the union was expanded to cover all teachers. There is the problem that teachers in private schools do not receive long service leave provisions and other entitlements. As they are all doing the same job, they should all be entitled to the same pay and conditions.

In August 1977, there were 111,767 secondary pupils in Government schools in Queensland and 39,041 in non-Government schools. In State primary schools there were 233,322 pupils and in non-State schools 53,811. Obviously a very large number of children are not educated in State schools. I bring that point up because it is a habit of Opposition members to refer to State schools as if they covered all education. They try not to antagonise people in non-Government schools but, at the same time, they try to put them down whenever and wherever possible and criticise the Government for doing the right thing and trying to help them.

A continuing problem for Education Departments throughout Australia is the declining number of students. In Toowoomba the numbers will progressively decline over the next four or five years. There is still a need for continued investment, but obviously the cost per pupil will rise. Personally I am hoping to see increased investment in special education. I hope to see a great breakthrough there. It is all very well for the honourable member for Rockhampton to talk about class numbers. It would appear that he is sympathetic to the needs of those who are seeking employment as teachers; however, I cannot concede that we can just go on reducing class numbers indefinitely. I would prefer to see more emphasis given to special education.

I wish to make some comments on the teaching of languages. There has been an obvious decline in the number of pupils studying languages.

**Mr. Moore:** Do you think they should start in kindergarten?

**Mr. BOURKE:** I do not necessarily agree that languages should be taught in kindergarten. In Great Britain there was the theory that languages could be taught to children at a very early age, and that they would benefit from this. I think that recent research has disproved that, and the authorities there have gone back to the idea that it is just as well to confine the teaching of languages to secondary school.

**Mr. Moore:** What about in pre-school?

**Mr. BOURKE:** I think it has been proved that languages cannot be taught to pre-school children. They can learn languages naturally.

Once they have done that, it is an advantage for them later in life. It is not something that can be taught at pre-school.

When I did my senior in 1958 I studied Latin, as did every child in the class at that non-government school. In 1977, in the whole of Queensland only 31 pupils in year 10 took Latin. It used to be a joke at that time that Latin was a dead language, but study of languages is of some worth to pupils. The English education system over the last century has been based on a study of the classics. I feel that it has had a lot to recommend it, although possibly we overdid it. Learning Latin can have many advantages to students today. It is a shame that the learning of Latin has declined to the degree it has.

Migrant languages should receive much more attention than they do. We should have schools that specialise in migrant languages. It is not that migrants should have a foreign education system. They should have the Queensland education system with special facilities available for those children who have trouble with English.

**Mr. Fouras** interjected.

**Mr. BOURKE:** We could have schools specialising, for instance, in Greek. In the past we have tended to allow migrants to lose their language. I am not suggesting that we should encourage them to remain citizens of a foreign country, but we should maintain their culture and maintain their interest in their own language. This would be a national asset.

**Mr. Fouras:** Are you aware that Queensland is possibly one of the last States to give education in various languages in State schools?

**Mr. BOURKE:** I am not aware of that. When I was in Sydney recently, there was quite a bit of heated discussion about it. I think the State Government withdrew from the whole scheme rather hurriedly. I don't think the honourable member does a service to his own electorate by saying things like that. It is all very well for the Opposition to continually criticise Queensland, but usually the criticism is entirely without basis.

Queensland has every reason to be very proud of its excellent pre-school facilities. In my electorate we have four full-time pre-schools, and a number are doing correspondence courses. The State has every reason to be very proud of its correspondence courses for pre-school children. It is a unique course. I have mentioned the problem of children with learning difficulties or special handicaps. The State has come a long way since 1950 when we got back into that field. We made a false start in the 1920s, perhaps we faltered in the 1930s, but we got back onto the track in the 1950s.

In the past the community has discriminated against handicapped persons. That has been carried through to the education system so that children with handicaps have been seen as being not like the normal community and therefore not deserving of a great deal of consideration. Epidemics have done a great deal to alter that situation. Because of such diseases as poliomyelitis, the community has come to realise its obligations. As I understand it, the policy of the Special Education Branch is to integrate these children more and more with the children attending ordinary schools. This has a lot to offer not only to handicapped children but also to other children within the schools. If normal children have at school with them and mixing with them children with handicaps, they will adopt a much more Christian attitude to people with handicaps.

I want to deal with education facilities for specially gifted children. The State has, perhaps, neglected its responsibilities in this field. It offers facilities for children with handicaps and special education needs, but at the other end of the scale are children with an extremely high level of intelligence. They, too, can be said to have special education needs and the State should look more to the provision of special facilities for them.

I have looked at the class at Gabbinbar in Toowoomba, which tends to classify children into one class. That should be the normal procedure followed in every large State school. Children who are above average, with an I.Q., say, of 150—a high I.Q. should not be the only criterion in selecting these children—should have special facilities made available to them. They need specialised teachers and a specialised curriculum. They need to be given special opportunities to allow them to develop. If a breakthrough is made by the community, it will be those children who will lead that breakthrough.

Gabbinbar is the only primary school that provides a facility for such children; others, too, should provide it. However, there is no special streaming in secondary schools. The Darling Downs institute has the facilities and staff that could be used to a large degree to give special tuition to specially gifted children on a support basis.

Recently, certain educationists made statements concerning the education of children for a life of leisure. This is totally harmful. It is not a matter of educating children for a life of leisure; children should be educated for work, and work should be available to all citizens. Someone on a recent television programme said that if we can teach a child to learn how to learn, he will face any future, no matter what it is. I think that is a fair comment about education. We should be educating our children to play a full role in the community.

Some basic principles need to be followed. Firstly, we should recognise excellence; secondly, we should encourage application; and,

thirdly, we should reward achievement. If the Education Department fails to adhere to those principles, it is a reflection more on our society than on the department. If the Education Department does not realise the importance of those three principles, it means that our society at large fails to recognise it.

Finally, I congratulate the Minister and his staff and wish them the best for the year to come. A number of features in the Education Department's Estimates concern me, but I realise that the department's activities are imprisoned within budgetary considerations.

I am concerned to learn that some of the grants to individual schools have been lowered. This fact does not show up in the Budget. It is a matter of the department's making the best use of the funds at its disposal. The equipment grant, for instance, has been discontinued and the library grant and reading grant have been reduced. This is to be regretted. However, the Minister and his department cannot perform miracles.

We must recognise that education will become even more expensive than at present. Equipment will become even more specialised than at present. I hope that such equipment will be made available to children who are intellectually gifted so that they can be given the maximum scope for development and for making a worthwhile contribution to the overall development of the community.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD** (Ipswich West) (4.9 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Education Department's Estimates, I join issue with the honourable member for Isis, who referred to the standard of buildings used by the Education Department. I understood that this debate was to be confined to the Education Department's Estimates and was not to embrace the Estimates of the Works Department. Therefore, I did not prepare a detailed speech about school buildings. However, as the member for Isis sang the praises of the Government, I feel I must refer to the cheap buildings that are provided for schoolchildren.

In any electorate we can see the egg boxes that children are jammed into. There is no room in an egg box for anything other than eggs, and that is about all that can be said for the schoolrooms in Queensland except those in favoured areas.

At the Brassall State School children are jammed into rooms or into temporary buildings. These so-called temporary buildings occupy areas that were formerly play areas in which children could eat their lunch in hot weather or wet weather, sheltered from the sun and rain. The school at Brassall is a typical example of the cheapness of school buildings in Queensland. With the construction of the Wivenhoe Dam, a number of children who reside in my electorate attend the Fernvale State School. Literally hundreds of children have migrated to the area. The department could not even provide new

toilet facilities in time for the arrival of the extra 200 children, who are using the toilet facilities originally provided for 50 or so. That is the sort of cheapness that is seen in school buildings in Queensland.

Let us look at the Amberley State School, where a new school was to be completed this year. The p. and c. out there has done its job by raising money for air-conditioning and sound-proofing. The Commonwealth Government has done its bit by providing a new site out of the sound zone for the big air base. However, the State Government has broken its promise about providing a sound-proofed school. That is the sort of cheapness I am speaking about. They are the costs that have been saved in the provision of decent buildings for our children to be educated in.

It has been said about schools in general that, if they taught children how to use their legs, the world would be full of the lame and the crippled. When one listens to any debate on education, its philosophies and its methodology, one finds that no-one has the full answer to perfect education. In fact, no-one has the correct or perfect definition of what education really is. Of course, the trouble with education is that everyone is an expert, because everyone has been there and nearly everyone has children who are going there or who also have been there.

It might be suggested in summary, however—and probably most people would agree with this—that education is the process of preparing people for a full life in their society. That is the aim for most people, I suggest. I shall speak later about the fringe element. Through education, the standards of the morals and habits of society are moulded, and vice versa. Society moulds the education experiences and thereby the children who are being prepared for adulthood.

Because of these facts, every rising nation—every nation—realises the worth of education and uses the manipulative powers of the education system and its structures and contents to suit its objectives and its model of society, whether it be a new model or a constant model. We only have to look at some examples that are constantly mentioned. When the Russians surprised the Western World by launching Sputnik I, the United States immediately threw hundreds of millions of dollars into its education system to boost its maths and sciences so that it could overtake the Russians in the space race. It is interesting to note, however, that the scientists who put the first United States satellite in orbit were educated under the system operating before Sputnik I was launched.

The new order in China threw out the theories, thoughts and messages of Confucius, because he belonged to a different school of thought—a different society; a different class of society.

In Iran we see the bloodshed, rioting and destruction caused by the new order created through the education system there, whereby the Shah of Iran introduced western culture with great bravado and gusto and to such an extent that it has caused great cultural shock waves in his nation. Those shock waves are now tearing his nation apart.

In Queensland we have similar sorts of things. Firstly, I mention the very petty new order brought in. Honourable members will recall that, after a poll, the Australian Government introduced a new national anthem. The Queensland Government, directed by the Premier—as we know, he is the Queensland Government—immediately ordered that only “God Save the Queen” be played in our schools when the national anthem was called for. For years and years the new national anthem had been played in our schools.

**Mr. Bird:** There is only one national anthem.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** There is the royal anthem and the national anthem. The royal anthem is “God Save the Queen.”

Another issue in the new order is religious education. The Government dillied and dallied and did not have the guts to introduce a more reasonable type of religious education from which children could gain some useful and meaningful experience. The present type of religious education is a farce. I suggest that it turns more people away from God and religion than it turns to them. For instance, there are some schools in which ministers from the Uniting Church and the Catholic Church will give instruction to the children in their faiths, but ministers from those churches will not go to other schools because of the system there and the treatment that they receive. Religious education in Queensland is in a mess, purely and simply because of the people who are manipulating the education system in Queensland. And I am not talking about the public servants: I am talking about the inner group that I shall speak about in a moment.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Are you suggesting that the Government is irreligious?

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** It would not surprise me. They put themselves up as very religious men, but I find that those who publicly portray themselves as great preachers turn out to be the opposite. They are a product of the system.

**Mr. Bird:** We are getting some bright stuff from over here. Keep it up. It is really good.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** The Minister is supposed to be a bright Minister. He maintains that he has the confidence of all of his public servants. He needs to speak to only one or two of them to find out how much confidence they have in him. Earlier this year he appeared on television and did not know anything about the course he had just banned. He is some Minister!

The inner group manipulated the system to have the SEMP and MACOS programmes banned before they were even discussed by the decision-makers. There was also the trivia about the education of children being destroyed because the teachers took industrial action for half a day or a day. However, the Premier or other Minister will go into a school in Queensland to open a science block, a tuck-shop or something else and, to make himself popular with the children and the people he grants a holiday. Where, then, is the substance in the argument that schools were disrupted because teachers took industrial action for half a day or a day? As I said, the Minister will visit a school and give the children a holiday, which will have exactly the same effect on the education of the children. I suggest that there would be very little disruption to their education.

However, a number of children would be exposed to moral danger in such an instance because their parent or parents could be working. In the result, the children could be walking the streets and getting into all sorts of trouble on a holiday granted by a Minister. That has probably been the case over generations. I suggest that that complaint was another petty one raised by the inner group that is trying to manipulate the education system.

I turn now to the new system of teacher selection that has been used over the past few months. Formerly a trainee teacher was guaranteed employment on the completion of his training. Under the new system, he is judged on his first year of training. If he has been a good boy, has not upset the apple cart and has not expressed his individuality, he might be given some assistance. Most probably he would not get the financial assistance he would require to continue his course.

Because a trainee teacher is not provided with financial assistance for the first 12 months, the not-so-well-off people in our community are immediately eliminated from teacher training. It has been said that teacher trainees can get holiday jobs, but they are not available in this day and age. The students who are selected come from the more well-to-do and consequently the more conservative class of society. After the first year of training the trainees who are not conservative, are not prepared to knuckle under, and are not prepared to lose their individuality, are excluded.

Then after their next two or three years of training, depending on the course, they are once again subjected to the same selection system. Consequently the approach and style of teachers leaving teachers colleges and universities in the next few years will definitely have changed to that of a more conservative type of teacher who does not understand the problems of the ordinary person in the street or members of underprivileged groups. This will occur because the trainees will come straight from high school, go through the teachers colleges or universities

and then go straight back into the education system that they left only a few Christmas holidays ago. These people will come from the upper income and more well-to-do groups.

This, unfortunately, ties in with the system being introduced by the inner group, and that is what I want to speak about now. I feel sure that the education system here in Queensland is being taken over by an ultra-conservative Right-wing group. People talk about Left-wing and ultra Left-wing groups, but I suggest that this ultra Right-wing group—this inner core—is more dangerous because it is on the inside and is part of the power base, whereas the Left-wing groups are only fringe groups and, at most, can destroy only small amounts of property and create a lot of noise. The Rona Joyner of Queensland are not isolated people working on their own. They are part of a wider, more powerful and very wealthy and literate organisation that has great world-wide resources. One has only to study material put out by people such as Rona Joyner and Eric Butler, of the League of Rights, and various other front organisations to see this.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** Of course they are both mad, but they are not mad enough to be certified and locked away. They are both mad enough to very calculatingly and cunningly thrust on Queensland society their own particular social model.

**Mr. Gygar:** What is this wicked world-wide organisation Mrs. Joyner belongs to?

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** It is quite easy to see that the honourable member does not follow the education debate in Queensland, because if he did he would be quite well aware of what Mrs. Joyner is talking about.

**Mr. Gygar:** That is a very serious accusation. Tell us about it.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** I am talking about members of the League of Rights, with their frightening policy of white racial superiority. One has only to look at their economic policies, quite a number of which over recent years have been taken up by the National Party and the LILAC ladies, of which the Premier's wife is a member. The LILAC ladies are the Ladies in League against Communism, and these are the sort of fringe groups which should not be allowed anywhere near Government. But in Queensland, because of the conservative group that controls the Government, these people have a voice and are definitely changing the policies of our education system. One has only to look at their incredible success this year, particularly with the banning of SEMP, firstly, and then MACOS.

The value of MACOS is debatable, but I think we should examine the way they destroyed SEMP. Members were shown the SEMP films, which were portrayed to us as part of the SEMP material—at least, that is the way I took it. But further inquiries

revealed that these films were only adjuncts to SEMP; they were made as a second thought. Each film ran for 20 minutes and they were shown to us one after the other over 60 minutes, just as if we were looking at flash cards in a Grade I class-room. At the end of the film showings, we were told that the material that went with them was available for our perusal in the library.

I found this quite objectionable, because parts of an education kit of any type, be it a kit of tapes and slides, reading books and tapes or flash cards and some other material, or a multi-media kit of any combination, must be used together. They must not be isolated, yet this is exactly what happened here. The films were taken in isolation and, because of their nature and the way they were shown, they caused quite a shock to viewers such as myself. I am not putting a case for those films, because I think the value of the material in them was quite debatable, especially when shown as they were. However, if they were taken in context with other material and used by trained, skilled teachers, they might be quite helpful.

In Queensland we have a situation in which a public servant who has spent only a short time in the Education Department fears for his job, because he realises the influence that this ultra-conservative element is having upon the Cabinet and thereby the Government of Queensland. These public servants know that if they do not do the right thing, or if they express their individual opinion which is outside the confines of the conservative thought, they will be disadvantaged, and disadvantaged very seriously, in their promotional opportunities.

I said before that the Minister is weak and incompetent. He presents documents to Cabinet without perusing them properly. Of course, because he does not know how to argue his case, he gets knocked straight over. As an example, one only has to look at the incentive transfer scheme. He presented a submission on it to Cabinet but it got knocked straight over. The matter was covered up; the Cabinet set up a committee to look at it. Fancy wasting Cabinet's time with a thing like that! If that was the only reason why the submission was presented to Cabinet, the committee should have been set up first.

The knocking back of the incentive transfer scheme was just another nail in the coffin of the education system. The children, parents and teachers of the West are crying out for a system that will allow education in the West to be dramatically improved, and that needs to be done.

Of course, all this ties in with the fact that the conservative power-brokers need a conservative, docile society so that their boat will not be upset. They need people untrained in individuality so that they will not take the lead in encouraging others around them, or in the same predicament, to upset the status quo. Such a docile society is easy to

control and manipulate. It allows these conservative forces to maintain their power base in the electorate; thus it allows them to control and profit from Queensland's resources, which are of international significance.

I have nearly run out of time, but in the last minute or so I point out that one only has to look at one of the instruments that are used to achieve this end. I refer to the paltry staff-student ratios. Children who start off in school the wrong way never really recover. They require remedial teachers and resource teachers to assist them to overcome their educational handicap, which has been caused by parents not having enough time to spend with them before they go to school. Teachers are not able to provide assistance because they have so many children to teach in their classes.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. KATTER** (Flinders) (4.29 p.m.): I should like to take up one small point made by the honourable member for Ipswich West concerning the SEMP material. It was rather obvious to anyone listening to his address that he very pointedly disowned the SEMP films. He said that they were shown very quickly and that one got a false view of them. Implicit in what he was saying was the fact that he personally disowned the SEMP material, as did most other A.L.P. speakers who have taken part in this debate and in other debates earlier this year. I should like the people to note that. The A.L.P. was very critical of the Government's decision on SEMP, which has been proved—

**Mr. Underwood:** They are an adjunct.

**Mr. KATTER:** That is what the honourable member is saying. He is saying that SEMP was condemned out of hand. I have said that he has gone out of his way to indicate that he did not approve of the SEMP films. That is most certainly what he has done.

**Mr. Underwood:** They are an adjunct to the SEMP material.

**Mr. KATTER:** The honourable member has disowned the SEMP films, and that is the point that I want the Committee to understand. I am not condemning him for it; I think he is very perceptive.

**Mr. Underwood** interjected.

**Mr. KATTER:** How would the honourable member describe the SEMP films, if he does not describe them in that way? He has not given me an answer, so obviously he does not understand what he is talking about.

**Mr. Gygar:** Aren't they listed in the teachers' handbook with all the other materials that surround them?

**Mr. KATTER:** I do not think that anyone in this Chamber would seriously consider the semantical argument that the honourable

member at the back of the Chamber is trying to make. He has disowned the SEMP material; now he is trying to cover himself.

There has been a lot of talk in this State about civil rights and civil liberties, particularly by honourable members on my right. As I understand the position, what England did to Ireland for three or four centuries was deprive it of education, as far as it is humanly possible for one nation to do that to another nation. If ever there is an effective way to destroy a nation completely, it is to deprive its people of an education. If we cast our minds back some 17 or 18 years in the State of Queensland, we recall a situation in which only cities or towns with a population of more than 10,000 had secondary schools or senior-top high schools. I lived in the small town of Cloncurry, which then was a four-hour drive from the nearest town, Mt. Isa, 100 miles away. That was because of the almost unusable dirt track between Cloncurry and Mt. Isa. To get any sort of secondary education, the children of Cloncurry had to be sent some 500 miles away to the nearest boarding school, which was at Charters Towers. The cost today is roughly \$2,000 a year. Therefore, equating that with the purchasing power of wages in the period prior to the 1960s, the situation was basically one in which only the rich people living outside Queensland's cities and towns had equality of education.

**Mr. Vaughan:** That is a load of rubbish.

**Mr. KATTER:** A member of the A.L.P. has just said, "That is a load of rubbish." I assure him that it is certainly not a load of rubbish.

**Mr. Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr. KATTER:** The honourable member for Nudgee would be the first to know that no-one other than the very rich people in those towns could afford to send their children away. What he might be claiming is that there may have been some poorer families in the towns who sent their children away.

**Mr. Vaughan:** I was one of them.

**Mr. KATTER:** It was possible. All I can say is that it is a great tribute to the honourable member's parents that they were prepared to make sacrifices and go without things to send him away. At present, average earnings throughout Australia are about \$210 a week. Taking the figure of \$2,000 to which I referred earlier, it would mean that a full 10 per cent of their income would have been spent on giving the honourable member an education. In my situation in Cloncurry, 10 per cent of my parents' income would have been spent on sending me away to give me some sort of secondary education. But those people who could not afford to do that—and they would represent the overwhelming majority of people in small towns—did not have equality of education.



I am making a very strong political point on this, because the Government that first introduced in Australia any sort of equality of education was the coalition Government that was elected in Queensland in 1957. I go further than that and state that the people who led the fight for some sort of equality of education were people from the National Party, and some of the leaders of the National Party in the State of Queensland. Three names that leap into my mind are Bunny Pound, who was president of the I.C.P.A. for many years, and Doug and Pearl Logan.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Who are they?

**Mr. KATTER:** They are both very prominent members of the National Party.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Never heard of them.

**Mr. KATTER:** Two honourable members opposite, the honourable member for Archerfield and the honourable member for Brisbane Central, say that they have never heard of them. Of course they would not have heard of them, because they are people who are fighting for equality of education for those who live outside the city. Those honourable members cannot think beyond the limits of Brisbane. The vast bulk of the State of Queensland lies beyond the city limits of Brisbane. People outside Brisbane are appreciative and tremendously respectful of the achievements of persons such as Mr. Pound and Mr. and Mrs. Logan. It incenses me to think that Opposition members have the hide to go out beyond Brisbane and assert that they are members of a party that is making an attempt to look after people in those areas.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Was that \$2,000 tax deductible?

**Mr. KATTER:** At the present time, if a student goes away to boarding-school that \$2,000 is tax deductible to the extent of some \$70, \$80, or \$100. That was thanks to Mr. Whitlam. Prior to his time, the full amount spent was an allowable tax deduction. We lost that concession completely, thanks to the A.L.P. Government in Canberra. That was one of the things that very much irritated us at the time. Mr. Whitlam could not think beyond the people who live in Sydney and Melbourne.

**An Opposition Member:** What about isolated children?

**Mr. KATTER:** I am talking about isolated children. I do not know why Opposition members are interjecting. They should be sitting there feeling very embarrassed at the results of the work of their Government in these particular areas. It came up with a great big nil.

I condemn the statements made by the honourable member for Ipswich West when he criticised the Minister. He said that the Minister was ineffective in Cabinet. Let me point out that the Minister had an extremely

difficult fight to secure an extra 50 remote-area scholarships. As one who knows of five or six people who were not able to secure those scholarships because there were not enough to go around, I personally am extremely appreciative, as are all in my area, of the victory that the Minister had in taking those recommendations to Cabinet and securing approval for those extra 50 remote-area scholarships.

Having said that, I request the Minister in all sincerity to consider the present level of means test applicable to remote-area scholarships. As an example, I cite the case of a head-teacher in the Minister's own department who is teaching in a western school. It would be quite usual for such a head-teacher to have a child of such an age that he has to go away to do Grades 11 and 12. The head-teacher in the Minister's own department cannot get the remote-area scholarship allowance. It is grossly unfair that he should be discriminated against. A person with an income just a couple of thousand dollars a year less than he receives gets the full \$1,000 remote-area scholarship allowance. I cannot see why any people should be discriminated against in that manner.

I am not suggesting that the means test be removed entirely. There are still a few extremely wealthy persons left in the Outback, but they are extremely rare. If the amount of the means test was increased to \$20,000, or \$25,000 a year, the present problems would not exist. I would like to hammer home to the department that an income of \$15,000 a year in a country area is not particularly high. The cost of living in those parts of the State has to be taken into account. The study on the cost-of-living index in the small towns in North-west Queensland carried out by the James Cook University indicates that across-the-board costs are 20 per cent higher in that part of the State than they are in Brisbane. An income of \$10,000 in Brisbane would need to be \$12,000 to have the same purchasing power in North-west Queensland.

**An Honourable Member:** It is owing to freight.

**Mr. KATTER:** Someone just said it was owing to freight. However, what I have just said is most certainly true. I would like to compliment my Government on the fact that there have been no freight increases for almost 10 years. I condemn the previous A.L.P. Government for imposing increases in freight rates amounting to nearly 100 per cent over the three years prior to our assuming office.

I turn now to an entirely different area. I am terribly concerned at what is happening in education. As is my usual practice, I recently had morning tea with some of the senior students at our local high school and others from one of our local boarding schools. I asked these two groups of students, "What

do you think of school? Are there any changes you would particularly like to make?" Both groups of students immediately leapt at the subjective assessment—I use the term advisedly—in Grades 11 and 12 and, for that matter, right through secondary school. They expressed concern because they felt they were being watched constantly and that, unless their thinking was in step with that of the teacher, they would not get good marks. They felt that the only way in which they could move up in their classes was by getting in step with the thinking of the teacher.

We do not want to breed a race of yes-men or sycophants. That is not the type of society we are trying to create. If I were to make a general remark about teachers, I would say that they are particularly good and do not introduce a situation in which students are being watched constantly and are required to get in lock step with their thinking. However, that does not take anything away from the fact that students in Queensland believe that that is the case. As long as students believe that it is the case, and no matter how many times we tell them that it is not so, we are breeding a group of people who believe that they have to be in lock step with the thinking of their superiors. They are brought up not to question any values and not to believe anything other than that achievement in society is related to a person's ability to get his thinking into step with that of his superiors. Such an environment is not a healthy one.

On top of that, I would mention a situation that is the immediate problem not of the Education Department but of the Minister for Education in that he is responsible for education in Queensland. I refer to the situation created by the A.S.A.T. test, which determines in part whether a student goes on to university and what he is allowed to do at university.

I know of two doctors who are tremendously admired for their hard work and dedication to their profession. Anyone who knows them would state that they are exceptionally talented and are the type of men whom the community wants as doctors. Both of these men obtained extremely poor marks in their secondary and university careers. However, both of them wanted to be doctors. We do not want to create in our society a situation in which people are told what they want to be. Surely we want the individual to decide the profession or job that he wants to enter. There is an old saying to the effect that it is not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog that counts.

I do not claim for one moment that, instead of having subjective assessments, we should turn a somersault and revert to the former system. The comments that I have made are limited to secondary education and are not related in any way to primary education. Queensland has made marvellous changes in primary education and has taken a gigantic

step forward. For that, the Government and the Education Department are to be applauded. However, in secondary education, where we have this subjective assessment, tertiary entrance scores and A.S.A.T. tests, it is lamentable that children sit for examinations for which they cannot study—examinations that simply assess their I.Q.—and it is even more lamentable that, because of who a child's parents are and because a computer comes up with an answer on his examination results, he is told what job he should do for the rest of his days. That is a very sad reflection on our society.

**Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (4.45 p.m.):** In the Estimates for the Department of Education one sees a mass of figures, headings and subheadings—but it is virtually a carbon copy of the Estimates of the year before, apart from increases in amounts to keep pace with inflation, with the exception that last year's grant of \$15,000 to the trustees for Newstead House has been taken away completely this year. Over the years we are given a mass of figures on which we are supposed to debate the Estimates. On the information we are given, nobody could debate expenditure. Unless one was within the department, one could not debate the expenditure. Those within the department who know the information are duty bound to keep it within those four walls, so members of Parliament are limited to speaking broadly on the subject of education rather than on the subject of expenditure, which is what the debate is really all about.

The gross amount spent on education this year, \$472,339,493, is a sizeable amount of money. Of course, a very large part of that goes in salaries. I do not intend to make a very long speech on the subject of education. I cannot help comparing education in my day with education at the present time. It would be wrong to say that there have not been some improvements, but there is far too much experimentation—experimental schools and experimental classes. When these experiments are found to be failures, what happens to the guinea pigs who have been used? What price are they paying?

What price is paid by children whose parents are public servants and get transferred from one school to another? For a period they are at a school with one curriculum and then they go 200 miles away—or even 20 miles—to some other area where the schoolteachers have decided on some other curriculum. They are like fish out of water. By the time they have picked up the threads, their parent or guardian probably has received another transfer.

On the other hand, there are schools such as the Newmarket High School, which it was decided to use as an experimental school. The numbers went down and there was a change of principal and a change of ideas. A school of 600 or 700 students was

virtually broken into a two-school system. It was an absolute shemuzzle. This is the type of thing that is happening with education.

I am not wholly and solely a three Rs man—reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. However, when the end product of a school education cannot even add up a grocery order, there is something wrong with the system. I have spoken to schoolteachers who have said, "Of course, you're wrong, you know. It is an electronic age. We are not teaching them to do mental arithmetic any more. It is just a case of knowing how to obtain the information, how to press the button, how to use the calculator or how to use the computer." What about the calibre of teachers? There are members of the teaching profession today who cannot spell and who have to ask the children how to spell a certain word. In many primary and secondary schools students are not taught tables and spelling. They are regarded as being unimportant. It grieves me that they are not taught.

The system of allowing each school to work out its own curriculum has to be stopped. Even though the schools might be allowed some latitude, a basic curriculum must be set for all schools so that when a parent changes his place of abode his children do not find too much difficulty in picking up the threads at a different school.

A problem also exists where each of four or five primary schools feeding a secondary school uses a different curriculum. The principal and the teachers from the high school might establish some rapport with those in the primary schools in an attempt to get as many students from those primary schools as they can and not have them passing their school and going to another one. In their inquiries they find that one school is teaching in one way and that another school is teaching in another way; that they are using completely different curriculums. How then can the high school, unless it implements a re-education course, put those children through their secondary studies? It cannot.

Generally speaking, children read fairly well. However, all children are promoted from grade to grade regardless of how dumb they are. They automatically go right through primary school and head for secondary school. I have seen some children who should be attending an opportunity school, but they get promoted just the same. The high school has to put up with them. The fault lies with the primary school.

I have some grave misgivings about the present system under which we are supposed to be educating children for life and not for work. I will educate my daughter for life and I expect the school to educate her for work. I think that the majority of families like to think that they influence their children to observe their standards and not those of the teachers.

Another problem in schools is the transfer system. I realise that a principal or teacher

who has served in the country for some time likes to obtain a city posting. But the system is wrong when the numbers attending the school decrease and, as a result, the school is given a lower classification. Because of that, a teacher aide, a librarian or somebody else disappears. Then the numbers are further decreased because parents hear that the school does not have the full facilities. The process is like dry rot. The schools find difficulty in overcoming that problem in getting the numbers to increase again.

If teachers are transferred in the middle of a term—and on occasions it has happened to two or three teachers at the one school—the children are not being given a fair go. Recently, at the Newmarket High School, so many principals and acting principals were transferred that it just was not funny. I hope that the present principal will remain there for some time.

The Newmarket High School now has an enrolment of 450 or 470, whereas previously it was about 1,000-odd. Children are travelling past it to The Gap or to Kelvin Grove, and there has to be a reason for this, although I do not know what it is. Perhaps the reason was that it became an experimental school. Parents were not going to have their children attend an experimental school. I do not think it is very experimental at the moment, and I think we should thank Mr. Gilmour because to some extent he has stopped the rot. But how do we then re-establish the school's reputation so that people will feel that when their children attend that school they will come away with an education.

I have already mentioned spelling and tables, and I think this is something upon which real emphasis has to be placed. I still know the things I learnt by rote, but I have teachers telling me, "Oh, you didn't really know it." But I still know, "Nominative I, possessive my or mine, objective me." I learnt that when I went to school. I say to these teachers, "I learnt nominative we; possessive our, ours; objective us; plural nominative they; possessive thy or thine; objective them." The teachers say, "Oh, you are only doing it parrot fashion." I say to them, "But I also learnt parts of the verb to be; am, is, are, was, were, wert, be, being, been, have, has, had, saw, seen, could, would, do, did, done, does." Perhaps they should be saying, "Oh, he learnt that, and he still remembers it."

I am not 21 any more, but the things I learnt by rote I still know. I am told, "Oh, but you didn't know anything about mathematics." Didn't I? I speak to children in grade 9 and say, "What is  $(a+b)^2$ ?" One does not receive the answer, " $a^2+2ab+b^2$ " off the top of their head like one would in my day. They start to pull their shoes off, hiccup and wonder what algebra is all about. There is something wrong with the system when people decry the things one learnt by rote. I do not suggest that everything can be learnt by rote, but what one learns stands

one in good stead. I can recall in the days of pounds, shillings and pence that if one was asked what was 1,000 pence one would immediately say "£4 3s. 4d." One had the answer worked out simply because one knew one's tables, and this is still vitally important.

I recently went to Adelaide and I still have my hotel bill here. In the snack bar section I ordered three meals, one costing \$3.40, another costing \$3.70 and the third \$4.10. The cash register wasn't working and the girl who normally worked it had disappeared, so the girl who served us said "Never mind, I'll work it out on a piece of paper. I think it's \$12.60." I said, "No, it can't be that." She got into a flurry and worked it out again and I said that the second amount she gave was not right and she said, "Well, how would \$8 do?" I said that the right amount was \$11.20 and she said "Thanks very much, I'm not much good at maths." There is something wrong when one strikes that sort of situation. We find the same sort of thing occurring in Queensland where children have to take off their shoes to add up, and this occurs because of new maths.

We have to improve the quality of our teacher training colleges or colleges of advanced education, or whatever unlikely term we like to choose. Student teachers do not receive sound basic training before they begin to teach. There are also those who can teach and those who cannot teach. This is not new, and most members who attend different schools in their electorates would know it. Some teachers just haven't got it. They might be very good academically, but they just cannot impart their knowledge. Some are very good, but they are few and far between.

When I attended school I think I found three good teachers among the various technical instructors. They did the job instinctively. They could not help teaching. They had the ability to go back to the basic principles. They did not assume that everybody knew what they were teaching, and on the other hand they did not treat everyone as though he was a dim-wit. As I say, they simply got back to the basic principles. Everybody went along quite well because the teachers had a real ability to teach, but not many of them today have that.

There has to be a better standard at our teacher-training colleges. If I were given the job of signing up students as trainee teachers and a man with long hair and wearing scuffs and blue jeans applied, he just would not be accepted as a trainee teacher. Unless teachers are prepared to turn up in the class-room neat and tidy, they should not be there. They need to set an example. If teachers are not going to be well spoken and well dressed, they just should not be there. There could well be a tightening up in that area.

Because of the permissive society today, some schools are a damn disgrace. The

honourable member for Rockhampton mentioned his trip to China and how the whole day is used for education. I know that in Singapore and in various other countries in South-East Asia, one group of children attend school from 6 a.m. to midday, and another group attend from midday to 6 p.m., thus using schools to their maximum advantage.

The honourable member for Rockhampton also said that at 5 o'clock children engage in various cultural activities, including calisthenics and pottery. They are under the control of the school and not of their home. There is something wrong with that sort of brainwash. It might be very good in China where, whenever some celebrity turns up, every schoolchild carries a posy and wears similar clothes. I am glad that we do not have that system here. I think that the honourable member for Rockhampton should think further about this matter before he talks as he did.

I come now to religious instruction. I understood that with religious instruction various members of the clergy went to schools to speak about the Ten Commandments, the Scriptures and things of that nature for a certain amount of time each week. But what is religious instruction about now? It is about street marches and the right to protest. Is that what is meant by "religious instruction"? That is what we are getting. I think it is an indictment of the system. The members of the clergy say, "Oh, well, civil liberties is the concern of the church." I think that it is the concern of the church to teach the Gospel. We should look at that matter.

I said that I would speak for only two minutes, but I have nearly taken up all my allotted time. One of the other problems with schools today, in my view, is that there is not enough chalk and talk. When one educates children, one puts down a little dot and starts to develop it—whether it be a sum or a diagram—and the children follow it all the way. The electronic devices, with overhead projectors which suddenly flash something on the screen, just do not get the message across. They do not have the same impact; there is no build-up. When a teacher is writing in earnest with chalk and it suddenly snaps, there is a little bit of light comedy.

(Time expired.)

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Row): The honourable member for Murrumbidgee.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Mr. Row—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I called the honourable member for Murrumbidgee.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I was next on the list.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Not on my list.

**Mr. KRUGER** (Murrumba) (5.5 p.m.): I should like to comment first on the speech made by the honourable member for Isis. He said that he was opposed to SEMP and to those who prepared it. That is a subject to be considered by the Select Committee on Education, and the A.L.P. representative on that committee carefully refrained from commenting on it. In my opinion, it was quite wrong of the honourable member for Isis to make comments of that type at this stage, because it shows quite clearly that he has made up his mind before a report is made. I understood that the committee wished to avoid that, and the honourable member for Landsborough promised when the committee was set up that honest and open opinions would be taken from everybody. When one finds a member of the committee going on in that vein, one wonders how sincere the Government members of the committee are. I believe that the honourable member for Landsborough would be very surprised by the honourable member's statement on that subject.

The honourable member for Isis also discussed evidence presented to the committee by Dr. Keeves. In my opinion, that also is improper at this stage. It leads me to believe that the committee is going to fall down because of some of the members it has on it. Although other members of the committee have been sincere, the honourable member for Isis has not.

I have here a list of some of the problems facing schools in my electorate. I shall not be referring to allocations for works; I shall simply be stating the problems. In order to have good education, better facilities are needed, and in some cases in my electorate, because adequate facilities are not provided, children are not able to get the best out of the education system.

I understand that the Clontarf Beach State School has been asking for a long time for a new library because the present library is not adequate. In today's education system, libraries play a very important part, and as new methods of teaching are extended, more libraries will be required. As my children have grown up, I have found that the younger ones have had to do more research and have needed more books than the older ones did. As the honourable member for Windsor said—I expected him to give a recital of Humpty Dumpty and the ABC, but he did not—in earlier years books for research were not nearly as important as they are now. A balance must be achieved in the provision of libraries so that one school does not have a library with everything that opens and shuts and another school has only a mediocre one that does not cater for the children's needs.

The layout of some primary schools in my electorate leaves something to be desired. A fairly large percentage of the schools in the Murrumba electorate were built many years ago and modern buildings have since

been added. Although the modern buildings are very satisfactory, generally, because of the variation in standards, the schools cannot achieve the best teaching results. The modern buildings are very attractive, and I trust that as time goes on more uniformity in buildings will be achieved.

The school at Dakabin has no sports oval. Again, the provision of an oval is a matter for the Works Department, but the matter is connected with education. It is said that people need a certain amount of relaxation so that they can think clearly when they go back to work or to school. Even though Dakabin is a new school and I do not expect everything to be provided overnight, I suggest that an effort should be made to achieve a balance between teaching facilities and sporting facilities.

We have another educational problem in my area. I refer to the provision of school bus services. Bus services are operated only over certain distances. Many kiddies in my electorate are just inside the specified limit, yet they have too far to walk to school. This necessitates an enormous amount of travelling by parents to and from schools. In many instances it is too far for the children to walk or to ride a bicycle. I say that bearing in mind that we are living in this day and age. When I was a child, such a distance was not considered to be too far to walk each morning and afternoon, and a dozen other times a day if the teacher did not see students leaving the schoolgrounds. Of course, schoolchildren were pretty fit in those days. Unfortunately conditions have altered. It is not the fault of the children, but the whole system has changed.

If the school is more than half a mile away, mum or dad drives the children to school, with the result that there is enormous congestion around the school gates. We ought to be looking at a better system of transport for children to and from school. The present system is not quite working. In the more distant areas, no doubt it works quite well because most of the students are outside the limit and the school bus picks them up. In such areas there is not so much hassle or traffic congestion.

A little further out of Brisbane problems arise on sports days when students from different schools take part in competitive sports. This is another matter that we should be considering on the transport side of the education system. To me this is all part of education. Education is not complete without competitive sport.

On several occasions the library of the Clontarf Beach State High School—and it is one of the best libraries—has been broken into. I have here a list of the items that have been stolen from that library. Each time it is broken into there is a great hassle with police around the place and everybody checking up to see what has happened and where the property has gone. I will not go into all the details, but honourable members

can see from this list prepared by the principal just how many items have been stolen. I point out that they were all marked "Clontarf Beach State High School", yet very little of the property has been traced.

I know that this is a matter for the Works Department, but buildings such as school libraries should have better security. Children should be able to use the school library for the full time allocated by the principal. Their activities should not be marred by the actions of vandals who steal equipment. Perhaps there could be some form of insurance against this type of theft so that the cost of replacement would not be so great for the State. The breaking and entering of schools that has occurred in the last three years must have been at great cost to the State. Apart from library equipment, such items as motor mowers have been stolen from schools.

I recently received a favourable letter from the Minister regarding the establishment of a technical college at Kippa-Ring. I understood that provision for it was to have been made in this year's Budget. I hope that when the Minister is making his next Budget allocation he will keep his promise and make money available for that project. I recently visited the high schools in my area. Clontarf Beach State High School has about 1,600 students, and Redcliffe High is a massive school. We also have the De La Salle College, and the Dakabin State High School is growing very fast. The Minister suggested in his letter that the technical college would possibly be ready for occupation by 1981. It will certainly be very much needed by then. Of course, I am quite aware that money does not just grow on trees, but I hope that the Minister will keep that college well in mind so that we are not disadvantaged in the future.

I bring to the Minister's notice the situation that exists at the Zillmere North hearing-impaired unit and the need for more staff. I think the Minister mentioned this matter this morning and from correspondence that I have had with him I know that he is aware of what is required at the unit. It seems that an attempt is being made to improve the present situation. Recent correspondence that I have received from parents whose children attend the unit indicates that the number of children attending it has changed dramatically. I understand that the Minister is looking at the situation.

Any special class should give the children in it a fair and reasonable chance to attain manhood or womanhood and to enter the work-force in the best possible way. Those children have enough problems without our creating further problems. While we look after those children who are fortunate, we must not hesitate to continue the good work to improve the position of those who are less fortunate. I hope that the Minister will continue to improve the situation in line with what he has been doing recently.

I turn now to agricultural colleges. For many years Queensland has been lacking in the provision of a sensible and realistic course in horticulture. In the colleges that I have visited I found that the agricultural side is covered fairly well. Students learn how to grow wheat and other crops, how to raise cattle and pigs and how to produce beef. No great opportunity is given, however, to those children who are interested in horticulture. It is a science that a lot of young children should be looking at. It is certainly one on which the consumers depend to a large degree in the purchase of fruit and vegetables.

The growing of crops is now a highly technical operation. Although the canneries and manufacturers of agricultural sprays are engaging in a good deal of research into it, insufficient emphasis is placed on it at schools and colleges. Those children who want to study horticulture should be given an opportunity to settle down and learn the fundamentals.

Many of us have been successful in the production of fruit and vegetables and other crops because we were reared on farms. These days, however, not everybody has that opportunity. In fact, the Government's present attitude towards the man on the land is such that most young fellows on farms believe it is much better to move to the towns to work. They leave the farms. They must be given every encouragement to remain on them. Those young fellows who want to become farmers must be given every opportunity at school to learn the fundamentals of farming.

Education must go a lot further than what is accepted as education. It is common practice for a boy to attend primary school until he is 10 or 11 years of age and then attend secondary school for three or four years, after which he looks for a job or, alternatively, carries on with tertiary education. There are those who are unfortunate enough to be in between and are unable to make it. These days, young people who go out into the world must be made aware of the problems that arise in looking after themselves. They must be made aware beforehand of what will confront them when they are looking for a job, when they are buying something on hire-purchase, when they are setting up their homes. The day-to-day problems that confront a man and his wife are not highlighted at schools.

The honourable member for Windsor said that he will teach his kids about life and leave academic education to the teachers. That is possibly the correct attitude to adopt; however, I tend to think that a lot of children do not take as much notice of their parents as they do of their schoolteacher. Of course, sometimes the reverse applies. If children need to receive some education from their teachers before they go out into the work-force, I think it would be great if that type of education was available. I think

that social education in the coming years is going to become more and more a necessity. I do not think we can ignore it. Possibly we should not rush into it; but the opportunity should be available as time goes on and as it becomes apparent that it is needed—it is my opinion that it will be—so that we can immediately slip into action and introduce a curriculum within which it can be taught.

There was a little discussion earlier in the debate about MACOS and SEMP. Possibly social education in moderation is a very good way around the problem. What we are talking about, and what we have always said, is that this is the type of education that is going to be needed. The sooner we get some answers from the committee of inquiry and sort the whole thing out, the better the education system will be. With the changing life-styles, I am led to believe that we will be looking—and looking very seriously—at this type of education.

School staffing is another problem that has arisen in recent years. There has been some discussion about it, so I will not go into it in any depth. I do know that, particularly in new schools and those that are a little light on in numbers, problems are being encountered, because the department has a system whereby teachers must have composite classes. When a school grows a little, it is quite easy to get an extra two or three teachers but until that time, as small schools develop, they face problems.

In order to overcome the problem, we may possibly have to place schools in different categories. Established schools may work on a ratio of one teacher to 30 children, with composite classes only to get a balance. However, when a new school starts, it might be found that there has to be one teacher to 25 children. We might have to have different gradings for our schools, with those in the country having a certain size of class and those in the city having a larger number. That is the only way we will overcome the problem. I do not think it will be overcome by just presenting an overall picture. That will not work. It is not working at present. There are very disgruntled staffs at a couple of new schools in my area. They will be pretty happy next year. So what I am saying is that it is in the first year's operation of a school that we will have to do some grading.

Education, it was said earlier, is a way of overcoming unemployment. I do not believe that education is the answer, in the way mentioned by another honourable member. Overcoming unemployment can only be achieved, as I was saying before, by a form of education that will get people to understand the problems that exist because of the way the country is going at present. I say that because the country is going downhill under the present administration. Unemployment is getting worse and worse. It will continue to do so, even though the other day some apparently encouraging figures were produced just for convenience. I believe that unemployment will reach the stage at which

we will all have to re-educate ourselves, if we are not being educated at school. We will have to look at the country and look at ourselves. The education system could help in a big way. But education at school is not going to overcome the problem. The form of education that exists today is not the answer. Alterations have to be made to overcome that problem.

We heard a discussion before about discipline and the fact that a lot of children need more discipline. From some of the outbursts I have heard from people on my left, I sometimes wonder whether they know what discipline is all about. I believe that some discipline could be imposed on quite a lot of older people as well as on young people. We tend to down young people on the matter of discipline. I believe in encouraging the children of today and giving them a better form of education and some concessions in the way in which they want to work.

A high percentage of students will adapt themselves to what is going on. They will do that whatever way it goes. On the other hand, others do not find it easy to adapt. They are the type of children to whom we should be offering an interesting course so that they will adapt themselves to the principles and policies that might come from education committees. If we do not give them that type of education, we will find more and more need for the rough-house type of discipline. To me, that is not the way to do it. The education system needs to be looked at in greater depth in an effort to overcome the problems faced by those who find it a little hard to adapt.

**Mr. FRAWLEY** (Caboolture) (5.25 p.m.): First of all I should like to apologise to the previous occupant of the chair and the honourable member for Murrumbidgee. I misread the list of speakers and honestly believed that I was next but, of course, it was the honourable member for Murrumbidgee.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You thought you were the member for Murrumbidgee.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** At least I have enough guts to admit that I am wrong. I am not like some other people in this Chamber.

The honourable member for Rockhampton said that he was lucky enough to get a copy of the departmental annual report. He is fortunate because I have not received one yet and I am a Government member.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Mr. Frawley—

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Wait a minute. The honourable member should shut up and listen to this and then I will take his interjection.

I have heard many complaints from that side of the Chamber that Government members are given prior knowledge. This is one case in which I was not. I have not yet seen the report. The honourable member for Rockhampton was damned lucky to get it before I did.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Do you think that because you did not get a copy of the report they are trying to tell you something?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I will not even answer that stupid interjection.

It has been pointed out by previous speakers that \$472,000,000 will be spent this year on education. That is a further indication of the Government's concern for education in this State. That is more than could be said of the Labor Party when it was in power before 1957. I was educated under the Labor Government system and I know the difficulties that my parents had in getting me to a high school.

I wish to speak on several important aspects of education. At the outset I make a plea to the Minister to provide an opportunity school in Caboolture.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Judging by the sound of those interjections, it would have been far better if the interjectors had gone to an opportunity school.

The opportunity school in Caboolture is conducted in two demountable huts located in the grounds of the primary school. There is nothing wrong with demountable buildings. They are quite clean and are well lit. I believe that they are quite good buildings in which to hold classes. About 46 pupils attend the classes in the opportunity school and there are more children in the Caboolture Shire who are desirous of getting into the opportunity school but cannot because there is insufficient room.

Last year the Minister advised that the department had purchased about four hectares of land in Torrens Road, Caboolture, on which to build an opportunity school. I asked the Minister several questions in the House. Because of the difficulty the department was having in acquiring suitable land in Caboolture, a rumour was going around that people were objecting to the provision of an opportunity school in Caboolture. The department proposed to buy two parcels of land and each time the owners objected. One of them seemed to be able to wield political influence because, although the site was ideal, he had the proposal dropped. Finally, in its third attempt, the department bought land in Torrens Road for an opportunity school.

The school should be built as soon as possible because the children in the Caboolture Shire should be given a chance to attend a proper opportunity school. The Minister was good enough in answering the questions I asked him to say that his officers had recommended that the school be built, that funds had been allocated for the initial planning of the special school for children but that it would not be built for some time. I sincerely hope that the Minister keeps this matter in mind and that an opportunity school in Caboolture is provided as soon as possible.

I agree with some of the comments made by the honourable member for Murrumba about sports facilities at schools. Some children from my electorate attend the Dakabin High School. I do not interfere with the running of that school. Because only a small number of children from my electorate attend it, I purposely keep away from p. and c. meetings there. The honourable member for Murrumba will corroborate my statement that I keep right out of the affairs of the Dakabin High School, because it is in his electorate. I do not believe in interference by members in the electorates of others. I issue a warning that anybody—be he a National, Liberal or Labor member—who interferes in my electorate will have a bucket tipped on him by me in this Chamber. Honourable members can keep out of my electorate just as I keep out of theirs. That is more than I can say for the honourable member for Rockhampton, who crept into the Caboolture High School on one occasion, like a big carpet snake, to see what he could there. He did not go too well.

**Mr. Scott interjected.**

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** He could not do a hot dinner. If the honourable member starts on me, he will come off second best.

As I said, I support the comments of the honourable member for Murrumba. It is absolutely disgraceful that this Government and previous Governments—I do not intend to castigate only one—have not provided sports facilities at schools before they are opened. Parents and citizens' associations should not have to provide sporting facilities. They should not have to develop any ovals. They should be installed right from the word go because sport is an essential part of the education curriculum in this State.

One of the recommendations resulting from the independent investigation by Judge Alan Demack and a few other good people of the problems confronting youth in the community was that more sport should be taught at school for children who obviously do not appreciate the academic side. In other words, they meant that there are children who continually disrupt classes but have to stay on at school because of the 15-year leaving age, and Judge Demack recommended that these children be taken down to the sporting field and taught something useful rather than have them disrupting the academic classes. I agree with him; I think it is a good idea. Many people have said that I am too interested in sport. Perhaps I am, but just the same I do not make any excuses for it. I will continue to show the interest in sport that I have shown over the years, and to hell with everybody who says I should not.

I cite the Caboolture High School as a perfect example of what I was referring to. Recently the State and Commonwealth funded the building of a library, but it was built over the volley-ball and basketball



courts even before the courts were replaced. The children had to go without the facilities to play volley-ball and basketball, and the new courts are not finished yet. I finally persuaded the Minister for Works and Housing to expedite their replacement, but this should have been done beforehand. Now another building is being erected at the Caboolture High School. This is all tied in with education. Some people might say it is the province of the Minister for Works, but it is not; it comes under education in the first place. Perhaps the Minister for Works is responsible for erecting the buildings in the first place, but they still come under the responsibility of the Education Department.

**Mr. Prest:** Tip a bucket on them.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I will tip a bucket on the honourable member in a minute if he keeps that up. An administration block is now being built at the Caboolture High School, which is quite commendable, but it is being erected over a hockey field. Owing to my efforts, and those of the p. and c. some years ago, the department purchased some land from Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited, which promised to hand over the land when the pine trees matured. They cut the trees down but left the stumps about 2 feet out of the ground so it will cost a fair bit of money to clear the land. The land has not been cleared so far. A contract was let and the contractor worked for about a week. But he has not been seen for six weeks. He bogged his equipment and then took it all away. I only hope there is not a repetition of what happened some years ago when land was being cleared on the site of the Kippa-Ring school. Getting back to the point I was trying to emphasise, I say that this land that was purchased to take the place of playing fields used as sites for school buildings should have been put into first-class playing order some time ago and not left to the p. and c. It should have been done before any buildings were erected.

People may not realise it, but for many years the standard of sport in Queensland schools has been fairly low. It is only recently that Queensland primary and secondary-school children who go down South have been able to hold their own with interstate competitors. The main reason for that, and I am going to congratulate the Brisbane City Council now, is the new sporting complex at Mt. Gravatt. Since the synthetic track was put down, the standard of athletics has improved because most school competitions are now held on that track. Except for zone championships, which are held on grass tracks at different schools, most school championships are held at Mt. Gravatt. Let us look back. We have never won the Sheffield Shield, I do not know how long it is since we have beaten New South Wales in Rugby League, and in athletics we have won about eight or nine Australian championships since 1896. That shows honourable

members how good we are at those sports, and this all stems from the lack of facilities at schools.

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs:** What about indoor sport?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I want to talk about something decent for a change.

A few years ago I attended a conference at the Caboolture Shire Council chambers. I am going to give the council a bit of credit because even though the chairman is politically opposed to me he does the right thing on many occasions. The Caboolture Shire Council wanted to exchange some land with the Education Department. The land that it wanted for car-parking facilities was situated behind the proposed new shire hall and the land it proposed to give to the Education Department was adjacent to the Caboolture State School. At that time the primary-school children had to cross over George Street, which is a busy street to the east of the school, in order to get to their playing fields. The eastern section of their playing fields was under water for at least half of the year, so I thought it was a pretty good exchange. It would give the council car-parking facilities and the primary-school children a decent ground on which to play. The then Minister for Education, Sir Alan Fletcher, agreed with me.

I said to the chairman of the conference, "I am not going to back this up in any way—in fact I am going to hinder it—unless you agree to put down a proper athletic track because the council is going to provide all the sporting facilities at its expense and all it wants is the other piece of land in exchange." I thought it was a pretty fair deal. The council had a plan drawn up to put down a true 400 m track. Of course, people who know nothing about athletics do not give a hoot, but that is where the thing fell down. Officers from either the Works Department or the Education Department—I am not sure which—came up there to meet this deputation. I can remember distinctly one of the engineers or architects saying, "Oh, we don't care whether it is a 400 m track or not." I jumped on my feet and said, "It is blokes like you who are responsible for the low standard of sport in Queensland."

What happened? The design was changed and a 380 m track was put down at the Caboolture Primary School. It means that if a State track record is broken at that school it will not be recognised. That is what some of these fellows do not seem to understand. Too many of the people who go around planning these things do not know what they are talking about. They do not have a clue. They sit up there in the Executive Building. Half of them could not even run across the road, yet they are responsible for planning some of the sports facilities at our schools. It is no wonder that we have such a low standard of sport in Queensland.

Also, I believe that some more assistance should be given to blind parents. I have a case in point in Caboolture. I will not mention the man's name for fear of embarrassing him. His son is in Grade 5 at school. The man is blind. His wife left him, so he is a deserted husband. This is a special case. This man could not afford to buy any of the books that his child required in Grade 5 at primary school. On 17 March 1978 I wrote to the Minister but, of course, under the rules no assistance is available to blind parents of children at primary school. I am not blaming the department for this state of affairs. In its reply it said that the situation would be discussed with the principal. I had discussed it with him.

As a matter of fact, the Rotary Club was quite prepared to pay for the books, but the father of the child said, "No, I do not want any assistance like that. I believe that the Government, either State or Federal, should pay"—and I agree with him. In this case the man was a deserted husband battling along on his blind pension. He had been put out of work. He had worked for years at Glendale Caravans in Caboolture, so he was not a bludger. He was a blind worker, but he was earning good money and paying tax on his earnings. When he wanted some assistance to buy books for his child in Grade 5, he could not get it.

Maybe this assistance should come from the Federal department. However, I then contacted the Welfare Association for the Blind, which I thought might be able to do something for him. As a matter of fact, the cost of the books was about \$6.80. I would have brought the books myself, only the principal said to me, "If you do it yourself, somebody will find out about it, and everyone around the place will want you to buy books."

As I have said, the Rotary Club was prepared to buy the books, but this man would not accept the assistance; he thought that he should receive it from a Government department. I contacted the Welfare Association for the Blind, but it could not help. It said to refer the matter back to the Education Department. I just got the runaround and could not do any good. I think that this matter should be looked at so that some assistance is given to blind parents.

Now I come to the matter of assistance to non-government schools. I am pleased that such assistance is being provided because I believe that non-government schools play a pretty important role in the community. I am a product of a non-government school. I went to many non-government schools, and I also went to many State schools. I found them all quite O.K.

I think that some years ago a Minister for Education here said that, if all the non-government schools closed down, it would cost the Education Department \$20,000,000 to provide the facilities to cater for all the students in those schools. The department

could not cater for those students; it could not provide the facilities straight away.

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** It was \$20,000,000 at that time; maybe it has gone up since then. Non-government schools, no matter which religious body runs them, still do a good job, and I think they should be supported. I have nothing but the utmost contempt for those D.O.G.S., as they call themselves in Victoria—the Defence of Government Schools committee; those rotten, black mongrel D.O.G.S.—for some of the things that they do to try to denigrate private schools of all denominations.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** How do you know they are black?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** As I said when I spoke in the Matters of Public Interest debate on the Films Board of Review, I have always associated black hats and black horses with the baddies, and white ones with the goodies. When I say "black", I am using merely a figure of speech.

**Mr. Prest:** You are a racist; that is what you are.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I am not a racist.

I should also like to draw the Minister's attention to a statement by the Queensland Manual Arts Teachers' Association, in which it suggested that external examinations should be reintroduced because it felt that at the present time students are progressing from kindergarten to high school without any form of external examination. I myself believe that public exams measure the performance not only of students but also of teachers. There is a complete lack of teacher accountability in the present system, which has led to a loss of teacher credibility. Of course, this suits the loafers, who do not care whether they teach or not. Good teachers certainly would not object to the reintroduction of any form of external examinations. I think it would be a good thing to have them. I believe that public examinations played a very important part in the education system.

Recently in Brisbane, Key Personnel claimed that it had to implement a back-to-basics move in education. It had to teach Grade 4 maths and English to 140 teenage girls because they could not spell and could not add up; in fact, their English was atrocious. I agree with that. I often watch "It's Academic" on television. Some of the children on that programme cannot answer any of the questions. Half of them have not even read a book. It is said that reading has been improved at schools. I spoke to a high school student recently and asked him what books he had read. He said, "From Russia With Love", "Tarzan of the Apes", and I cannot think of the other one.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** "Lady Chatterley's Lover"?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** No, he did not read that. That was the extent of his reading. People may think that reading has been improved in schools, but I certainly do not think it has.

I turn now to the subject of study leave. I spoke about it once before and said that study leave is a straight-out racket. Some of the academics at the university who get a year's leave on full pay after six years are nothing but bludgers on the community. Even their wives and children are paid.

**Mr. Prest:** Tom Aikens.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** Tom Aikens is not here, so I am going to take his place on this matter.

Recently the Federal Government introduced new guide-lines for study-leave, and it is about time that Government woke up to itself. It is called sabbatical leave or study leave, and academics will have no more than six months' leave after the beginning of the 1979 academic year, and that is as it should be. Most study leave is being used to upgrade academic qualifications and is not being used for the benefit of the people in the institutions in which these loafers teach. For years there has been a really good racket in study leave.

**Mr. Fouras:** Don't you believe that they become better lecturers?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I agree with that; I am not going to deny it. But these lecturers are going overseas with their wives and children and having a good bludge at the expense of the Australian taxpayer. It is happening in Queensland, too. They seem to think it is their right to have study leave; in fact, some of them have worked out that, because they receive 12 months' leave after six years, they should get six months' leave after three years' work. As I said, it is a pretty good racket. There is no doubt that they are on a better wicket than anybody else. They are on a better superannuation than members of Parliament. People complain about our superannuation, but some of the loafers out at the University of Queensland are on a far better wicket than we are or are ever likely to be. Therefore, I applaud the action of the Federal Government in cutting down on the racket of study leave for academics.

When Costello was secretary of the Queensland Teachers' Union, the situation was bad enough. He openly supported the A.L.P. at every opportunity. Although his position was supposed to be non-political, he used it to play politics in the schools. I have had problems at some schools in my electorate with teachers who obviously are supporters of the Opposition. That is their right, but they should not bring politics into the schools. What right has any teacher in a high school to deal with the profits of Utah in an English lesson? What has that got to do with English? Does she teach the children how to spell "Utah" or "profits"? Why

should an English teacher give a class a talk on the Federal Government? That has nothing to do with English. If it were political science, there would not be anything wrong with it, but I suggest that Opposition-oriented teachers should not do it in English lessons.

The Queensland Teachers' Union has been using female teachers to do these things because it knows that they will not be subject to the same castigation as male teachers would receive. Of course, it forgot about me. I am not frightened to get up and castigate some of the female teachers who are pushing a political barrow. I think it is wrong, and it would be equally wrong for teachers supporting the Liberal Party or the National Party to do it. It never happens in my electorate. If I heard of any person with my political beliefs getting up in a school and trying to ram down children's throats the philosophies of my party or the Liberal Party, I would object, and I object to the Labor Party doing it. I do not believe that politics should be taught at schools; it should be kept out of schools. I am definitely against it.

Of course, the latest thing is that Mr. Schuntner, the president of the Queensland Teachers' Union, thinks that what should be taught in schools should be decided by the teachers and by the union, not by the parents. He seems to think that parents should have nothing to do with it, although the State Government has to foot the bill in all cases. Naturally, it would suit some teachers, but it would lead to chaos in education. If a certain curriculum is decided upon at one school—and this is what the union is trying to achieve at present—and a child leaves that school and goes to another school, he or she is seriously disadvantaged. There has to be some agreement on the subjects taught in different schools, particularly primary schools.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER** (Archerfield) (5.45 p.m.): The matter I wish to raise in the debate on the Estimates of the Education Department concerns the siting and operation of the pre-school at Chardean Street, Acacia Ridge. In my opinion this pre-school centre at the moment is nothing more than a white elephant.

In the normal course of events it is policy to locate pre-schools in the grounds of a primary school. I feel that this policy is a good one, and it has my approval. However, in the case of the Acacia Ridge State School it was not possible to build a pre-school in the grounds.

Acacia Ridge is one of the oldest State schools in Queensland, having been founded in 1869, and at present it has one of the largest enrolments in the metropolitan area. In the normal course of events a school of this age, located as it was in a rural area, would have been expected to have very large and extensive grounds. Unfortunately the reverse is the case. The school has an

exceptionally small playground, and the children attending the school have a lot of difficulty in crowding into the very small grounds.

Acacia Ridge was the site of a large American camp during World War II. After the war the Queensland Housing Commission used the camp for housing, and eventually demolished the camp and built homes. In the rush to provide housing after the war, any pretence at town planning went out of the door, and very little thought was given to future development of the suburb. The school was not provided with grounds commensurate with pupil numbers.

About four years ago I approached the Education Department about the provision of a pre-school at Acacia Ridge. As I had surveyed the parents and the residents generally, I suggested that the pre-school be located in the extensive grounds of the Watson Road State School, about half a mile away. I based my case on three factors—

- (1) Lack of land at Acacia Ridge State School;
- (2) Noise level at Acacia Ridge State School (the school is located on busy Beaudesert Road, not far from General Motors Holden's Ltd.); and
- (3) Ready availability of land at Watson Road.

On 16 February 1976 the Minister for Education advised me that  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres had been reserved at Watson Road for a pre-school. On 23 June 1977 the Minister for Works and Housing advised me that his department had acquired 1 acre 21.7 perches for a pre-school in Chardean Street, Acacia Ridge. I immediately wrote to the Minister for Education seeking clarification of the matter. On 29 September 1977 the Minister for Education informed me that the pre-school in Chardean Street was associated with the Acacia Ridge State School, and that a one-unit pre-school would be constructed in the Watson Road grounds in the 1978-79 financial year.

I am afraid that the Minister for Education has been sold a pup. The Chardean Street Pre-school is a white elephant standing in no man's land. At the moment the pre-school can cater for a maximum of 150 children. This year's enrolment is 94 and next year's projected enrolment is 72. Only half of the pre-school is being used. I feel that it is a disgrace. All that money has been spent on the construction of that pre-school and now only half of the pre-school is being used. There are a number of reasons for this. As I said before, the school is in no man's land, far apart from its parent school. There is a lack of contact with the infant mistress and the infant teachers. Library and film facilities are poor. More importantly, there is a lack of contact with the Grade 1 children. Most honourable members would agree that this contact is very important. It helps to break down the barriers when it

comes time for the pre-schoolers to attend the primary school because they already have a sense of school identification.

The fact that the pre-school is badly sited and underused is bad enough, but the felony is compounded by the fact that the land resumed to build the pre-school was parkland. It was a marching girls' field. Although Acacia Ridge is a densely populated suburb, it has one of the lowest levels of parkland in Brisbane. The Government resumed that parkland even though it could have sited the pre-school in Watson Road. That was a disgrace, and certainly indicated a lack of foresight and planning on the part of the Minister and his officers. The poor old marching girls were given the heave ho so that the white elephant could be built on their former grounds.

In conclusion I want to pose a question to the Minister: Will the fiasco of Chardean Street prevent the building of the pre-school unit at Watson Road, which, in my opinion, is a vital project?

**Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg)** (5.50 p.m.): In introducing these Estimates, the Minister said that these days we hear too much "pernicious and uninformed" criticism. I assure him that, even though some persons might consider my comments to uninformed, they will not be pernicious.

Now that education is under the microscope of the professionals as well as parents—I am a parent—it is only right that we hear comments from the business community, the community at large and the layman. My general comments are based on my own observations as well as on comments made by people in the community, particularly those in the business and commercial world.

I realise that no single aspect of education is indicative of the whole spectrum. Education is a very diverse field and, as our society becomes more sophisticated, it is becoming even more diverse. I do not intend to cross swords with the specialists and experts in any field of education. The general community opinion that I shall put forward, however, is relevant to the problems that confront us today.

In view of the high level of unemployment and keener competition for jobs, it is only natural that the spotlight is focused on job preparation in education and the imparting of job skills. I do not intend to dwell on the controversy surrounding the three Rs, that is, whether the standard of reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic is higher or lower now than it used to be or whether the standard in Queensland is higher or lower than that in other States. The range of necessary subjects in education is so vast that I doubt whether we should concentrate on or persevere with the three Rs above a certain level. If a sound knowledge of the three Rs is necessary in certain vocations and professions, they could be concentrated

on by those who intend entering those avenues of employment. In view of the large number of other essential subjects, however, it is questionable whether we should lift the basic structure of the three Rs above a certain level. Naturally the time and resources that are devoted to each sector of education have to be looked at in the whole context.

Because of economic circumstances and keener competition, employers are demanding a higher general level of application and concentration on the job. It is in this area of application and concentration—or, should I say, the lack of it—that I hear the most criticism of the younger members of the work-force. Of course, this criticism is not limited to young people. Some parents, the media and the general life-style that has developed over what I would term the easier years have contributed perhaps more than anyone else to that attitude among youths.

I have heard many parents criticise what they term the over-emphasis on the philosophy that a child or a student in his formative years should be allowed to develop not only along the lines of his own choosing but also at his own pace. I agree that that type of philosophy is excellent. It is logical and it would be very practicable if we lived in a Garden of Eden. But we do not live in a Garden of Eden and, taken to extremes, that philosophy is neither logical nor practicable. It should be looked at very carefully by the Education Department, particularly in the present circumstances.

While we live in an ordered society, and while we think that an ordered society is more desirable or even more workable than an unordered society, due regard has to be paid to training and discipline. I know that discipline is a dirty word to some people; but in our society we all live by disciplines of one form or another. The tougher the circumstances and the higher the demands, the greater the need for the adoption of, and adaption to, stricter disciplines in competition with the rest of our society.

It is necessary for us to develop beyond the natural pace that flows from the please-yourself syndrome that some sectors of the Education Department like to promote. I think honourable members would agree that, if they had been allowed to develop according to their own inclinations—and, I emphasise, at their own pace—in most cases they would have achieved much less in life than they have achieved under the discipline of having to aim for objectives and attain them.

I know that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, but I also say that all play and no work produces a very dull asset—if not, indeed, a liability to society. Sooner or later the individual has to come up against the realisation that he has to accept certain demands of society, that he must contribute and that, if he wants to receive from that society, he certainly has to contribute. Often

that does not come within the ambit of developing at his own pace and in keeping with his own desires.

In my opinion, the Education system seems to lack sufficient emphasis on this aspect. It is not until students leave school and actually come up against the solid reality of applying for a job that the crunch comes for many of them. Perhaps that is a result of the easier years—a result of the system of education that we have knowingly or unknowingly drifted into or adopted.

I must say that the colleges of technical and further education are doing a tremendous job.

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

**Mr. BLAKE:** Before the dinner recess I was speaking about the fitting of students for the work-force and how, in many cases, the education system leaves that training too much until the last moment, when the students find out whether or not they are acceptable to employers. This is a very important matter. Not only in my electorate but right throughout Australia youth unemployment is devastatingly high, not only in terms of people wanting jobs but also in terms of cost and the psychological damage that is done to these young people who have studied and fitted themselves for useful employment only to find that they cannot get a job. In my opinion, the technical and further education colleges are doing quite a good job in fitting students for entry into the work-force.

For instance, employers in Bundaberg have told me that there has been a great improvement in the attitude of people who have undertaken pre-vocational courses and have applied for jobs. They were referring to people who attempted to get a job in the first instance, were found unsuitable and undertook pre-vocational courses. They said that their attitude and demeanour had changed and that they had become quite acceptable.

This speaks volumes for the staff who bring about this change. It is not easy to achieve in many cases. It is not simply a matter of imparting trade knowledge to these young people. Some of them have psychological problems and they display the same sort of tantrums that they probably did at school and got away with it. Now that they are dealing with people who are used to fronting up and demanding that they meet the requirements of the work-force they find, in a very pleasant way, that they have to adapt to the needs of the community.

I have heard the claim made that those whom I might call the academics in the teaching profession are, in many cases, too far removed from the realities and needs of the community. I am not saying that this is so. I do not even wish to suggest how this problem could be overcome. The demands on teachers in their respective fields are great. However, it would be advantageous if those in academic pursuits could be

given some sort of extension course during which they could go out into the professional fields. They should be given recognition in their qualifications, and perhaps in their pay rates, for becoming au fait with the needs of employers in those fields. The idea is good in principle, but it would certainly present some problems and some cost would be involved in its implementation. But it would be very desirable.

I relate it to what I am saying about TAFE colleges where, in many cases, the instructors have come from the shop floor or the work-force. They seem to establish a rapport with the students and can ease them through what I might call their immaturity problems, without any great trauma, and make them acceptable in the work-force. I think that the way in which these people from industry have established a rapport with students in their pre-vocational training confirms the desirability, if it is financially practicable, of extending it into academic fields. I do not suggest we should cover the whole spectrum of industry; we should confine it to a field that is particularly related to a teacher's academic role.

The Minister spoke about the accomplishments of the Education Department. I think it is only natural that he has tried to play down the fact that no doubt fewer facilities and services will be provided following the reduction of funds for school works and programmes, which I think amounts to about \$17,500,000. I must assure the Minister that I am not saying this in a political sense. One has only to go round to school speech nights and hear the reports of the various principals, without prejudice, concerning reductions in library and other funds and how those reductions will affect schools during the next year, when they just will not be able to afford to continue to upgrade facilities. Despite what the Minister said, this will no doubt also affect the student-teacher ratio. I realise that he might be pretty close to the mark when he says that the overall Queensland ratio is 20.5 students for each teacher. I think it was the honourable member for Rockhampton who questioned that figure. He told me he has done some checking in the interim and he said that in six schools in Brisbane, for instance, in 22 classes the lowest average student-teacher ratio was 27 to 1. Incidentally, I am referring to Grade 7 Classes, because that represents—

**Mr. Bird:** You are talking about one class in a school.

**Mr. BLAKE:** One grade within a school.

**Mr. Bird:** But let us have a look at the overall staffing position in the schools. This will be arranged by the principal himself. Give me the instances and I will have a look at them.

**Mr. BLAKE:** I think the Minister will agree that Grade 7 is a pretty critical area. It is a very demanding and critical class. In

these six schools, the lowest ratio of students to teachers was 27 to 1, the highest was 36 to 1, and the average was 31.5 to 1—if we can have .5 of a student. One school of 900 students has a class average student-teacher ratio for the whole school of 35 to 1. I am not particularly plugging the Brisbane situation; I just cite it as an example. I realise that over the whole State, including one and two teacher schools, the average probably does come down to the figure cited by the Minister of 20.5 to 1, but I know that that figure would not apply in Bundaberg. From my experience in Bundaberg, I know that the great bulk of classes would have a much higher student-teacher ratio than the figure cited by the Minister. Of course, the very small outback schools would bring the average down.

**Mr. Bird:** I think, in fairness to us, you should name the schools, as others have done previously. We often find, where there are supposed to be such big classes, that they are in fact classes with two teachers, or they have support to assist and take a portion of that class. So give me the instances and I will come back with the answers on them.

**Mr. BLAKE:** I accept the Minister's point. He wants me to name schools. I do not think the average he cited would apply virtually anywhere in the Bundaberg area because, although we talk about zero population growth, Bundaberg is growing so fast that new schools and facilities are not keeping pace with this growth.

We talk about zero population growth in terms of children coming into schools. For argument's sake, a certain number of children might be coming into the lower grades, but the number of children leaving the higher grades is much less in proportion. Because of the unemployment situation, some are staying on at school. This so-called population drop might be reflected in the lower grades, but it is not reflected in the higher grades, which are just as important, if not more important. In my area, the numbers are stacking up; they are not declining.

That is one of the reasons for the present situation at the Bundaberg West State School. That is a crowded school in terms of facilities. Perhaps there is a smaller intake of children in the school, but there is a stacking up in the higher grades. I know from representations that I have made that the Minister says the problem will be alleviated when a new school is built at Millbank or in the western suburbs of Bundaberg. But until that happens, the figures there will not be in keeping with those that the Minister has quoted in this place.

(Time expired.)

**Hon. V. J. BIRD** (Burdekin—Minister for Education) (7.26 p.m.): It is not my intention to reply at great length or to touch on all the subjects raised by those members who have already spoken in the debate, but I have

noted some of the points made and I should like to cover them briefly. That, I believe, will cut down the time for which I have to speak at the end of the debate.

The honourable member for Wynnum spoke about the Select Committee on Education, of which he is a member. I should like to extend my congratulations to the members of the committee, including the honourable member, for the work that they have done. The committee certainly was welcomed by the officers of my department and by me and I think it was welcomed by the members of the public generally. In fact, that has been shown by their reaction in coming forward to present submissions to the committee.

The honourable member also spoke about student-teacher ratios. As I have just said in debate across the Chamber, the State-wide average is 20.5 primary students per teacher, and in secondary schools it is approximately 14. I do not doubt for a moment that in some classes the figure will be above that, but there is no reason why there should be unduly large classes. We maintain that schools are reasonably well staffed, and it is up to the principal to decide the actual staffing of the classes within his school. If he has large classes, obviously there is a reason for that. There is certainly no reason why there should be high numbers in composite classes.

The honourable member for Wynnum said that there were some very high numbers in composite classes. I should like to have the figures on those classes because in the instances that we have checked we have found, as I said a moment ago, that there are two teachers in a composite class of perhaps 36 students or more.

The honourable member referred also to the incentive transfer scheme. Of course, this matter is being looked at by my parliamentary education committee at the present time. I think all would agree with the recommendations in the report on the incentive transfer scheme. I might say that the Queensland Teachers' Union was not solely responsible for that report. It was a joint effort by the union and my own department. I do not think that we should take that report as the be-all and end-all of an incentive transfer scheme. We want to look at it, pick out the best parts of it and come up with some ideal recommendations on it. I am looking forward to those recommendations coming back to me in the not-too-distant future.

The honourable member also referred to the number of transfers of teachers and principals. Might I say that we do not transfer principals and teachers simply for the sake of transferring them. Usually there is a very good reason for their being transferred. But if any school thinks that it is being disadvantaged in any way through an unusually high number of transfers, I should

like the information brought to me so that I can have a look at it. All too often one finds that someone desires a transfer because of sickness in the family; a lass decides that she is going to get married; and there are many other reasons. When people seek a transfer, we endeavour to oblige them, but we do not transfer simply for the sake of transferring.

The honourable member spoke also about the need for community use of schools. I have endeavoured to encourage that ever since I became Minister for Education, and I will continue to encourage it. However, I can do only so much. I can say that the schools are available for outside use and hope that the community will then make use of them. As Minister for Education, I welcome community use of schools.

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs:** After hours?

**Mr. BIRD:** Yes, after hours. Any worthwhile organisation can use them. Very definitely they are open for the use of the community.

The honourable member for Landsborough, the Government Whip, paid tribute to the officers of my department for their co-operation with the committee of inquiry. In this instance the reverse also applies. The officers of my department wish to thank the select committee for the manner in which they were received. I should like to add my thanks for the excellent manner in which the select committee of inquiry has conducted all its inquiries and the way in which it has received submissions, both written and oral. I thank not only the members of the committee but also the advisers.

It would have been disastrous if the inquiry had not been conducted in a proper manner, because, as I said earlier, the officers of my department, the people of this State and I want a breathing space, if I might put it that way, to find out exactly where we are going in education. The Select Committee on Education has given us that, and it will tell us in the recommendations in its report what the students, the people of this State and everybody else requires of the system.

The honourable member for Southport showed a tremendous interest in technical and further education, as he has done ever since he entered this Chamber. I know that not only from some of the speeches that he has made here but also from some of the correspondence that he has had with me. Naturally—and I suppose one cannot blame him for this—he has directed much of his attention to the facilities in the South Coast area and has continually asked questions about the new technical and further education college to be built on the Gold Coast. I agree with him and all honourable members who spoke of the tremendous importance of technical and further education in this State.

The honourable member spoke also about pre-vocational training, and this is perhaps one of our greatest successes. As you know,

Mr. Wright, pre-vocational training was introduced into three technical and further education colleges two years ago. It has been tremendously successful, and I am very pleased to be able to tell the Committee that yesterday Cabinet gave approval for the department to extend pre-vocational training to take in over 800 students throughout the State, from Cairns in the North right down the coast to Brisbane and out to Ipswich. The scheme has been so successful that we will be covering the State very widely.

The honourable member for Southport spoke also of problems in apprenticeship training, and I am the first to agree with him that there are indeed problems. The high cost of training an apprentice today is deterring many employers from undertaking the training of apprentices. I know that the Commonwealth Government is assisting financially wherever it can to make it easier for employers to take on apprentices, but that does not seem to be enough. The Committee may rest assured that we are continually monitoring the position to ensure that this State will be able to provide sufficient tradesmen in the future under some training method that will be readily acceptable to all.

The honourable member also spoke about the retraining of persons who had become redundant because their type of employment no longer existed. This is just another one of the sections of training that is carried out in the field of technical and further education. Most people simply think of initial training by the Technical Education Branch. It goes well and truly beyond that. It does in fact retrain people; it enables people to get further training and further education to enhance their employment prospects by being able to move into different types of employment.

The honourable member mentioned staffing at the Gold Coast college. I can only say that we will look at that to find out whether there are problems in that respect.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke of the need for education on consumerism and various aspects of the law. I would certainly admit that there are many other areas into which we would like to extend the field of education, but there are only a certain number of hours in a day. I get all sorts of requests from the general public. They ask, "Why don't you introduce a course on this?" "Why don't you introduce a course on that?" How can we fit them all in? We have to decide our priorities. If we bring in something extra, then we have to decide what to take out. I take pride in saying that officers of my department are continually looking at the needs of today's students and including new courses to meet the demands of the students and the employment areas.

The honourable member spoke about the pupil-staff ratio. I think I have already covered that, and there is no need for me

to go over it again. He also spoke about discipline in schools, and suggested that we should have the right to expel students. I am frequently signing letters giving permission for a student to be expelled from school, but I don't believe this is the answer. If we expel a student because of misbehaviour or something else, we simply shift the burden from the school into the street, and it then becomes the problem of the Police Force and society generally. I wonder whether the problem is with the student or the parents. It is the lack of parents' support of the Education Department that is leading to a breakdown in discipline in schools. I am a firm believer in the old saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child". I wonder on whom the rod should be used—on the student or the parents who are not taking the time to watch over their sons and daughters to see what they are doing and how they are behaving.

The honourable member for Isis spoke about the amount of money expended per pupil in Queensland. He said that what we are doing compares very favourably with what is being done in the other States. In fact that is correct. We are not extravagant, and I don't think we should be, especially in this day and age when the dollar is not easy to come by. I believe that we are getting the most out of our money; I believe we are using it wisely and well. The honourable member spoke about the cost of schools. Without reducing the quality of schools we have endeavoured to bring down their cost. My department and the Department of Works, by working together, have been successful in doing this. We are getting excellent new and replacement schools at a very reasonable cost.

I hope that as time goes on we will be able to build many more of these schools and replace a large number of the old schools that are left over from the early days. I would not claim for one moment that I am totally happy with the type of buildings we have. I will not be satisfied until all the older school buildings are replaced by new ones. Perhaps we will see that in the not-too-distant future when we catch up with the need for new schools in the rapidly growing areas.

The honourable member and other members spoke about the size of schools. The honourable member for Bundaberg referred to the size of a couple of schools in his area. It is very difficult to determine at what stage a new school should be built. If a new school is built too soon, insufficient students attend it to make it a viable proposition. We have to determine at what stage a new school should be constructed to ease the burden on other schools. Usually it is found that students do not leave the school at which they started their education merely to attend a new one. It seems that they prefer to receive the whole of their education at the one school. The problem is a difficult one, but the officers of my department have



been highly successful in determining when a new school should be provided in any area.

The honourable member spoke of the need for a new primary school at West Bundaberg. We will certainly continue to look at that matter to determine at what stage it should be built.

The honourable member for Lockyer complimented the teachers, the principals and the regional director in his area. I believe that if I were to ask all honourable members whether they were satisfied generally—I can only say “generally”—with the conduct and expertise of the teachers and principals in their electorates, they would say that they were satisfied. I know that my departmental officers are not satisfied with all the teachers in our education system. However, as we have over 20,000 teachers, we must expect that a few will leave a lot to be desired.

The honourable member spoke also about special education. From correspondence that I have received from him from time to time, I know that he has a special interest in this field of education. I thank him for the information that he sends forward on the need for additional special education establishments, particularly in his area. I am very proud of the way in which we have provided facilities in special education for those unfortunate children who either are hearing-impaired or suffer from speech defects, blindness or other handicaps that do not allow them to be educated in the normal class-room situation.

He spoke of the need for the teaching of languages in schools. Unfortunately, there is no great demand in any school for Latin or any other foreign language. It is perhaps unfortunate that today's students are not interested in foreign languages, such as French and German. However, if there is a demand for those languages or any others at any school, we will most certainly have those languages introduced.

The honourable member spoke of the need to cater for gifted children. I admit that this is a problem. In fact, it has exercised our minds for some time. These children are given the chance now to take part in other activities. If the teacher is doing the right thing, he will set the gifted child to one side and give him extra work to do so that he can be kept working at full capacity. A good teacher can do that, just as he can sort out the slow learners and give them special assistance to cope with the normal routine in the class-room.

The honourable member for Ipswich West spoke of his opposition to teachers of the future being selected on their ability. Perhaps the greatest problem we have at present is with those schoolteachers who, as I said, leave more than a little to be desired. They came into the education system at a time when we were desperately short of teachers.

We took virtually everybody who wanted to be a teacher. We are paying the price now. We bonded them and then they found that, because they didn't have the money to repay the bond, they could not get out of the education system. They are in the education system. They are stuck with it. We are stuck with them. It is most unfortunate, but I believe that our new system, under which teachers will have to perform or else find there is no position for them in the education system, is indeed going to produce what we want—the best teachers for the students of this State.

He spoke of the difficulty that some young students will have in undertaking teacher-training because they haven't the finance. If they do not have the finance, they have access to TEAS. I am rather surprised that he has not heard of that. There is no reason why any young person should not be able to undergo teacher-training in the first year without assistance from the State if he is unable to finance it himself.

The honourable member for Ipswich West spoke also of the failure of the religious education programme. This is something that absolutely surprises me, because I thought that one of the very good things to come out of the education system in more recent times was our religious education programme. In fact, we are very proud of it. We believe we have done something to get religion back into the schools. Those associated with the churches were finding it increasingly difficult to give any sort of religious instruction, as it used to be called in the schools. We introduced this programme. We have brought in members of the clergy, lay preachers and all sorts of people who are interested in religion. We have trained them to go out into the class-rooms and deal with religious education in the class-rooms in the way that any teacher would deal with normal subjects.

The member for Flinders said that secondary education is now available to greater numbers of students throughout Queensland. This is a fact. In my day very few students went on from primary school to secondary school. It was quite an imposition on parents to send students away. However, now we are able to take secondary education to so many more students throughout Queensland, and I hope that we will be able to continue to do this. As to those to whom we cannot take secondary education—I hope we will be able to bring more and more of them into our secondary schools.

He spoke of the Isolated Children's Parents Association. I congratulate Mr. Bunny Pound, who recently retired after being president of that organisation from its inception. I would like to say how very pleased I am with the efforts that he put into assisting the education of isolated children throughout this State. Indeed, those remarks apply to all those who are associated with the I.C.P.A.

The honourable member for Flinders spoke also about the senior remote area scholarships and, of course, the financial restrictions that are placed by the means test associated with the granting of them. I would dearly love to see the means test taken off altogether, but we have to think of a couple of things. First, of course, is the amount that it would cost. The second would be placing all of those children who would then be able to come in to boarding schools. In the interim, I believe that the method we have adopted is helping those whom it was intended to help—the children of parents on lower incomes. Those parents were the ones who were unable to send their children to boarding school in the past. The scheme was designed to help them. At the present time, that is exactly what it is doing.

He spoke about the ASAT test and how it is stopping young students from going into medicine or other tertiary studies. The ASAT test has nothing to do with that. A quota has been placed on the students who can be taken into the medical faculty and that is the only governing factor.

The honourable member for Windsor spoke about the problems that were associated with Newmarket State High School. I was pleased to hear him say that they have now been overcome and that the school seems to have settled down to a more orderly routine and is meeting the requirements of the students.

He spoke about schools teaching different curriculums. This is not entirely correct. I do not want to go into this matter very deeply this evening. No doubt it has been looked at by the select committee that will be bringing down its report and recommendations in due course.

He spoke about the transfer of principals and teachers. As I said before, we do not transfer them unnecessarily. I understand that unfortunate circumstances did arise at one of the schools in his area. It was regrettable and I hope that such a thing will not occur again.

He spoke about teacher-training institutions and training programmes. Of course, we have been carefully monitoring the teacher programmes and what they have been doing. An inquiry into teacher training has been under way in Queensland and I understand a report has been brought down. The Commonwealth Government is interested in this matter and is setting up a committee to look into it.

I am concerned at his statements about the religious education subjects that are allegedly being taught or discussed in schools. I can only say that my concern is such that I hope he will come forward with information so that I can have the matter investigated and ensure that it does not happen again.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee spoke about the need for a library at one of the schools in his area. I do not blame him for working the parish pump, but I point out that many schools throughout the State need their libraries upgraded. I will not be satisfied until I see all of them upgraded to meet the requirements of the schools and the students. If he is patient, I am sure that he will see the library at that school upgraded.

He spoke of the lack of a sports oval at one of his schools. It is virtually impossible for us to purchase additional land for sports ovals. Perhaps the local authority has a sports field that it could make available for the use of the school. I am sure that we could reach some sort of agreement on compensation for its use. After all, we make our facilities available to the public, and I hope that local authorities will do likewise.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee also spoke about security at schools. This has been of great concern not only to me but also to the Minister for Works and Housing. It is also of concern to our counterparts right throughout Australia. We have yet to find a worthwhile solution, and one that we can finance, to the problem.

He spoke about insuring against losses. It has been proved time and time again that it is better to suffer the losses and meet them from our own revenue than to insure with an insurance firm.

He spoke about the staff of the Zillmere North Unit for the Hearing Impaired. I will be looking to see if there are problems there and how they can be overcome.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee also mentioned the need for a horticultural course. We will be looking to see what demands there are for such a course.

The honourable member for Caboolture spoke about sport and sporting facilities. Of course, I am well and truly aware of the need for sporting facilities at all schools, but this is a responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Works and Housing. I have no doubt that he is endeavouring to provide sporting facilities as quickly as finances will allow.

The honourable member also spoke about teachers who, if I can put it this way, push particular subjects without giving a balanced view. I can only say here this evening that I hate to think that there would be teachers who would be so narrow-minded that they would simply push their own point of view and not give the other side of the story as well. I think such a person would not be a good teacher.

The honourable member for Archerfield spoke about the Acacia Ridge Pre-school and the need for a school at Watson Road. I am waiting on information on that point and will, I hope, get back to him on this matter later this evening.

The honourable member for Bundaberg spoke about educating students for the work-force. Nobody would be more aware of the need to educate students for the work-force than I and the officers of my department. We appreciate the problem is growing and that we have to find other subjects for children to study in our schools, particularly those who are not academically inclined. We have to set other subjects which will not only keep them interested but will also prepare them for entry into the work-force when the time comes for them to leave school. But we have difficulty in ascertaining from employers just what they require. We have heard criticisms from employers that we are not training young people for entry into the work-force, yet when we meet with employers' representatives and ask them what they do require they find it very difficult indeed to tell us.

The honourable member for Bundaberg also spoke about pre-vocational training, and I think I have covered that fairly well. I have told the Committee of the way in which we will be extending the scheme in the very near future. I would be the first to admit that it is highly successful and means that we are now fitting round pegs into round holes. It is definitely preparing young people, not only with their hands but also with their minds, for entry into the trades. As I said, nobody could be more pleased than I am that we have been able to extend the scheme so that over 800 students will be able to enter training next year. Because the honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned the need for students to go from the class-room situation into the work situation, I now want to speak very briefly about the release-to-work programme. This is something that we have tried. I will be introducing legislation to ensure that there are no problems with this programme in the future, and we will see a continuation and extension of it.

The honourable member also mentioned a reduction of \$17,000,000 in expenditure on education this year. I am not aware of a reduction of anything like that amount. We are sure there will be a need for some additional finance for more staff because of our commitment to the bonded students. At this stage we are not aware of the number of resignations there will be after the end of this year, so we just do not know the numbers we will start with in the New Year. We have made some very small cut-backs—very small indeed—but it would amaze me if any principal was able to say at the present time that he was suffering as a result of cut-backs. Funds have not been cut back yet, although they will be in the New Year. We looked at it. We believe that we have made the cuts in the areas best suited for such cuts and where there will be the least effect on the education system.

The honourable member for Bundaberg has again confused class size with pupil-teacher ratio. The pupil-teacher ratio is 20.5 to 1, and it cannot be compared directly with

class sizes in the simplistic way. At 1 August 1978, of the total of 6,702 classes in State primary schools, only some 246, or 3.6 per cent, had more than 35 pupils. These figures exclude one-teacher schools, special schools, multiple-teacher classes and infant classes in schools with early-education classes. I look forward to the rest of the debate and to replying to that debate.

**Mrs. KYBURZ** (Salisbury) (8.1 p.m.): In speaking to the Education Estimates for this financial year, I must say that in fact they are extraordinarily large. One hopes that the containment of the Budget for next financial year will take into account the fact that cultural activities are no longer included in the Education Estimates.

The Minister touched on some matters that I should like to mention later. I have some questions on the Estimates. I apologise if they have already been asked, but I was not in attendance earlier.

**An Honourable Member:** You should have been here.

**Mrs. KYBURZ:** The honourable member might have asked why I was not here.

There are 46 speech therapists for the whole of the State, and I know that many people have been complaining about a lack of speech therapists. There is a rather wide-ranging group of activities under the heading "Guidance and Special Education", and certainly not many children in fact could be suffering from a lack of special education. The fact that there are 46 speech therapists seems to indicate that they could be more widely spread throughout the community. If it is true, as some country members claim, that many speech therapists will not go to country areas, they ought to be either forced to do so or sacked.

An extraordinarily large appropriation is sought under the heading "Contingencies (Subdivision)" this financial year. In fact, it is more than \$75,000,000. For example, the wages of ancillary staff, which I presume includes cleaners, secretaries, teachers' assistants and so on, ranges from \$11,000,000 for secondary education to \$23,000,000 for primary education. Of course, that would also cover janitors, groundsmen and those sorts of people. I think that that appropriation should be more fully explained. I believe that the appropriations sought under the heading "Services and Incidentals" for secondary and primary education are also large—in fact, \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000 respectively. I should like a greater explanation of those two items—services and incidentals for secondary and primary education. The appropriation sought under the heading "Special Education" is not quite as large, obviously because there are not as many items of expenditure under that heading.

I should like further explanation under the heading "Miscellaneous Services (Subdivision)". Firstly, I refer to the contribution

to the full-time secretariat of the Australian Education Council. I do not believe that any State Government has a responsibility to provide full-time secretariats for educational institutions, other than State institutions. If I remember correctly, I know what that secretariat does. Whilst I realise that providing a contribution for such a secretariat might be a nice vote-catching exercise, I would like to know what happened to the money that was provided for this secretariat in 1976-77. An appropriation of \$20,000 is sought for this year.

Under "Grant for Temperance Education", \$51,000 was expended in 1976-77. I seem to be speaking about this a little too often, Mr. Wright, but I say that I totally agree with temperance education. Where on earth is the money going? For the financial year 1977-78, an amount of \$57,000 is listed. If the Temperance Education Council, or whatever it calls itself, is publishing pamphlets, I should like to know why are they not getting into the schools. If they are getting into the schools, they certainly have never been in a school that I have taught in. Which children are receiving them? A wider field of temperance education certainly is desirable, but I do not believe that the \$57,000 is being used wisely. Whether or not the Government has a say in that, I do not know.

Under the heading "Special Assistance to Organisations providing services for Handicapped Children"—something of a sacred cow not only in this State but wherever Governments are supposedly democratic—we see a huge appropriation for 1977-78 of \$2,920,000. Although one cannot criticise those organisations, one can criticise the multiplicity of organisations involved. For some time I have believed that there should be an amalgamation of some organisations because they are duplicating services for all sorts of handicapped people. Very often if two organisations can get together and pool their resources, their swimming facilities and their education facilities, the children are better off. Often one sees splits in organisations, particularly organisations aiding the handicapped. You know the sort of splits I mean, Mr. Wright. Some may be political; then others may occur because of personalities or because little demi-god empire-builders are involved in the organisation. One seems to run into them everywhere. There ought to be a council that has the overriding authority for the expenditure of not only Government funds that are paid into those organisations but also public funds, because I believe that the public really wants more accountability than it is getting.

The appropriation under the section "Colleges of Advanced Education" is not extraordinarily large, because only salaries and contingencies are involved. Fortunately, we do not have to pay for the buildings. They seem to be popping up everywhere, but they ought not to be. The reason why is an

embarrassing question that we are not supposed to ask. The amount appropriated for 1977-78 was \$2,462,000. I have commented previously on colleges of advanced education, and there is no doubt that they not only widening their activities into make-work programmes but now moving into fields far away from teacher education—nurse education, for example. I believe that there will be widespread questioning by nurses of whether that is the place for nurse education. It seems to be far away from the hospital bed; it seems to be far away from the work-face where nurses ought to be. If in fact the role of colleges of advanced education in nurse education is to mature the students, which, having been through a college of advanced education myself, I believe it is, half of it is make-work, a lot of it is good clean fun, and about one-tenth is really teaching how to teach. There is no way that you can learn without getting in with the kids, and I believe that the situation is exactly the same with nursing.

Turning the page, I see the one word heading "Museum", which looks rather lonely and rather dull. We see that the Director of the Museum receives a salary of \$24,000. That is fine, but the total expenditure on the museum in 1977-78 was only \$920,000. I admit that that is almost \$1,000,000, but I submit to the Government that the museum performs a very important role, probably one that is very much underrated in the scheme of things. Could it be that it is not politically sagacious to overrate it or to fund it a little more heavily? The role of the museum in the education of children all over the State probably is one that quietly bubbles away on the outside of the political spectrum, but I suggest that in future funding the Government ought to consider not only that the museum plays an important part in collections and the systematic naming of species but also that it plays an important part in the education of schoolchildren.

Under the heading "Miscellaneous Services" all sorts of grants are listed. As members of Parliament, we ought to be told how associations should apply for grants and whether they will receive any funding if they apply. All sorts of associations are bobbing up saying that they want funding for this, that and the other. Whether one is more deserving than another is not for me to judge. Certainly departmental guide-lines should be put out.

In getting down to the nitty-gritty of the Estimates, I refer to the Bardon Development Centre. In the 4½ pages of the departmental Estimates I can find only one reference to it. It refers to an allocation of \$106,000 for this financial year for equipment and incidentals. Last year I pointed out that the Bardon Development Centre seemed to be somewhat difficult to find in the Estimates. I would like to know how it was funded. Was it funded last year under the Works Department Estimates? I do not

question the \$106,000, but I do question the turning of the Bardon Development Centre into something of a show-piece about which a lot of teachers are becoming quite mystified. When I was in the North last week, many teachers told me that until they visited the Bardon Development Centre they were quite unaware of the applicability of a lot of the equipment being used in that centre to their own class-room situation. Many expressed the opinion that we are moving too heavily into the audio-visual field and away from the face-to-face field of teaching. I know that that is precisely the way the Teachers' Union in New South Wales wishes it to be, but I do not believe it is the way the public of Queensland wishes it to be.

As to the grant for special education—I would particularly like to bring up the question of child migrant education and to refer to the amount of money allocated. A total of \$772,000 is listed for child migrant programmes, and that funding is mainly through the Schools Commission. It is a heartening programme, because usually about one-third of the funds dished out seemed to be used on hot air programmes. Obviously this one is not such a programme. A grasp of English is essential to children, even though a lot of people might think they get it quite by chance. English instruction is extremely important in our schools.

The amount to be expended on teacher and administrative salaries is \$662,000, but the amount for the transport of children to education programmes is only \$5,500. Probably honourable members are aware that there are isolated children who ought to be receiving special assistance, and who are now obtaining it through primary correspondence courses, but whose parents are unable to help them because their grasp of English is limited. I do not know about a reallocation of funding, but some other help in some other way should be given to those children.

The adult education programme under the migrant programme is funded through the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The allocation is for \$486,000. That seems to be quite a large sum. No doubt one of the larger amounts is for the full-time courses under which migrants upon arrival can learn English for three months. That is rather a long period of time, and unfortunately the drop-out rate is quite high.

It would be remiss of me if I did not mention a few matters I have previously mentioned in debates on the Education Estimates. The Minister referred to religious education, which is a lovely euphemism and one which I am sure we all enjoy. I would like to know if comparative religions are ever discussed. I have brought this up before. I know that in schools it has been a difficult, if not touchy, subject.

In answer to the honourable member for Bundaberg, the Minister said that we are not educating children to join the work-force. I do not believe that that is the role of any

State education system. In fact, what is lacking is discipline if children are not now prepared for the work-force. I do not believe that any industry can expect a child to be educated particularly to join its work-force. I do not know how we educate for an assembly-line mentality or how we educate for a pilot mentality. We prepare a child roundly and well for life. We cannot educate for precise industries. That is the role of pre-vocational training. If a child wishes to go into a craft of some sort, that child ought to be prepared for that in pre-vocational training, which ought to come after formal education has finished.

I also mentioned nurse education programmes. I know that in the next few months they will be a very big issue, because we are already receiving letters from nurses in relation to them.

The Minister mentioned community use of schools. I know that some schools in Brisbane are being widely used. Not only is the space being used, but also parents are coming back after school and at night and going through the paces of the primary course. This is excellent, because a great many parents gain a great deal from it. I hope that those schools that are doing this publicise more widely precisely what they are doing.

The Minister also referred to the lack of demand for classical languages. This lack of demand is due to peer-group pressure and the Ocker image. It is no longer *de rigueur* to speak French to one's friends, whereas once upon a time one who was able to rattle off half a dozen words was really "in". Nowadays, if a person is not Paul Hoganish, with a beer bottle and T-shirt, man, he's "out". It is this Philistine approach that we Australians have to our own cultural activities that is to blame for that situation. However, I believe that the pendulum will swing back. I only hope and pray that it will swing back quickly, because the Ockerism that we are seeing now is spreading not only to the tattooed punkahs among the 13 and 14-year-olds in both sexes but also to the middle-aged "mutton dressed as lamb" group.

Earlier I referred to the Bardon Development Centre and the fact that audio-visual paraphernalia is becoming so important in our schools. Libraries have to be built to accommodate those nice little machines that very few people know how to use. It is a sad state of affairs when face-to-face teaching, caring and backwards-and-forwards emotional feelings are being replaced in the class-room by audio-visual equipment.

As a finale, I want to mention the fact that in New South Wales an education unit, known as a social development unit, has been established as a unit of the Education Department. It is concerned with anti-discrimination on religious, cultural and ethnic grounds. That organisation has done a great deal in educating not only young people but also parents. Such a unit is needed in this State, because so many schools have their own

little problem areas. They might be ethnic areas—they might concern Aborigines or a large Vietnamese component—or they might be other areas. Such as unit would be well received in Queensland, so I hope that the Education Department will consider funding one.

Lastly, the Federal Minister for Education was reported in a recent Press release as saying that a significant number of young people in high schools were turning off education. That comment is made very often to me by school principals, particularly in relation to discipline in schools. All of us have had parents come to us with complaints about the lack of discipline or over-discipline in schools. The question that I usually ask is, "Have you approached your school principal?" and so often they answer that they have not. This turning-off process occurs in the home. The Minister made this point. Perhaps it has not been made loudly enough to the public.

When young people—or even older people—are switched off, there is an emotional or intellectual reason for the switching off. A great problem faced by educators today is the complete lack of motivation in so many pupils. Many pupils seem to be at school purely to distract the class. It is indeed a big problem. I do not know the answer to it. However, I do know that it is exacerbated (a) by peer group pressure (b) by lack of parental discipline and caring and (c) by television. No-one will convince me otherwise about television. There is no doubt that what is seen is what is felt and what is experienced. When one's experience is as limited as a television set, then one's knowledge of the corrective application for thinking and feeling otherwise is totally limited.

I close by saying that the Government's story on education is a very good one. While the Estimates are very wide-ranging, I believe that there is always a need for assessment and subjective criticism.

**Mrs. KIPPIN** (Mourilyan) (8.21 p.m.): I was particularly interested in the closing remark of the previous speaker, the member for Salisbury. That was a very pertinent point. I do believe that the Queensland Education Department has a very good story to tell. When I first became interested in politics, one of the things we stressed whenever we campaigned was our story on education. That story has not changed. However, I do think that a number of us have become complacent. We are so used to it that we do not realise what a good system it is. It only remains as good as it has been over the years because of constant and careful assessment and criticism.

My main criticism of this Government is probably that we did not instigate the Select Committee on Education two years ago when the groundswell of opposition to the Radford scheme and the assessment programme in

secondary schools was at its highest. We let that criticism run away before we moved to do something about it. That is my main criticism of our attitude to education as a collective Government. When the committee was set up, it received a lot of opposition and criticism from the media, the Teachers' Union and the Labor Party as being merely a committee that would eventually endorse the thoughts, probably of the Cabinet, and certainly of the Premier.

**An Honourable Member:** And Rona Joyner.

**Mrs. KIPPIN:** Very well, and Rona Joyner, too.

I am quite sure that it will be seen that nothing could be further from the truth. The committee received well over 3,000 submissions. We heard its chairman, the honourable member for Landsborough, give a very good run-down on the committee's activities. I am sure that, when the committee's report is released, there will be a lot of interest in it. For that reason—and I am sure the committee realises this—it would be a very good idea if the committee compiled a number of interim reports on different facets of education. Out of 3,000 submissions, they will have obtained a volume of information and thinking on education.

If teachers are interested, they will go through the full report, but it will be very difficult for the lay person, p. and c. associations and the community generally to wade through a very thick report of the committee's findings. Therefore, I do hope that the committee will see its way clear to release a number of interim reports on matters of interest to the general public, such as the Radford scheme and assessments associated with it and social education in schools. There are a number of facets of education that people generally are very concerned about.

My criticism of the Education Department is that it undersells itself. I started by saying that we have a very good education system and I emphasise that statement, but I feel that over the past couple of years the Education Department has been underselling itself. Sometimes I wonder if that has been a deliberate action on the part of some officials. The failure to pursue an issue of importance is as bad as stating that issue incorrectly and giving the general public the wrong idea about it.

The groundswell of opposition against the Radford scheme is a perfect example of a poorly informed public becoming very dissatisfied and critical of the system. I firmly believe that had we taken more time to sell the Radford scheme to the general public we would not have seen the groundswell of criticism against assessment. I do not mean that we should have taken time to introduce the scheme. We could have introduced it when we did but, in my opinion, the teachers should have been much more familiar with

the whole scheme and how it worked. We should have made more effort to impress it upon parents.

Change will always be painful to the general public. They will find a change difficult to understand if they have not been involved in it. I find now that parents of secondary-school children who were not familiar with the old A, B and C grading are accepting the Radford scheme and assessment much better than parents who had to face the transition from the old form of public examination and A, B and C grading to the Radford scheme and its form of assessment.

On consideration of this whole problem I think there is a need for the creation of a permanent public relations section in the Education Department. Because I dread the thought of another section in the department, I do not say this lightly and I can see the Minister smiling because he feels the same. If a section is not set up, we need a number of people who are devoted to getting across to the general public just what our Education Department is doing, particularly with the introduction of a new form of education. I suggest that a news-sheet be issued. It need not be a very formal document, but it should set out the policies of the department and policy changes more than anything else. That would be a big help. After all, the Queensland Teachers' Union has a very effective communication service. I feel that it plays a much more effective role in indoctrinating teachers to its way of thinking than the Government or the department does. Money spent in this way would be money well spent because it would lessen a good deal of criticism before it gets out of hand.

The Minister was being rather generous when he expressed disbelief in the idea put forward by the honourable member for Caboolture that teachers give only one side of an argument. I have found this to be so particularly in my own town lately. Teachers push their own points of view. This is another matter about which parents are dissatisfied. I can cite a classic example during the last election campaign. A friend of mine and a man from another party were handing out how-to-vote cards. My National Party friend chided the Labor fellow and said, "You are wasting your time. You will never get into Government in Queensland." The fellow handing out the Labor how-to-vote cards was a teacher and he just looked at my friend and said, "Look, we're looking at the long-term proposition. You forget that I am teaching your children." This is a thing that parents are concerned about.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mrs. KIPPIN:** Opposition members object strongly, but they know just as well as I do that this concerns not only political indoctrination within the schools but also the

indoctrination of children with a certain point of view on certain issues, and the street march issue is a very good example of this.

I make a practice of visiting all schools in my electorate and talking to the children who are studying citizenship and government—

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mrs. KIPPIN:** No, to explain very carefully the methods of government because children in my electorate do not have the privilege of coming down here to watch Parliament in action. Every teacher whose class I have spoken to has complimented me and said that it is much easier for the children to understand a little more about Parliament when they hear it from a person who is actually involved in its operations. I am very careful that none of my talks involve party politics. But getting back to the problem of public relations within the Education Department—

**Mr. Bird interjected.**

**Mrs. KIPPIN:** That is right, the street marches; I was distracted. The thing that upsets me most about the street marches is the feeling that the students have against the Police Force. As has already been mentioned, television is responsible for a lot of this feeling, but in many cases had teachers put both points of view the children would have had a much more balanced attitude to the whole situation.

I now return to the public relations of the Education Department. I am sure many members read the Scott report and looked with interest at its suggestion of a competency-based assessment. At this stage I do not think I should express an opinion as to whether I would prefer the Scott suggestions to the system we are using at the moment of a grading between 1 and 7. But I stress that if there is any change we will have to conduct a very good P.R. exercise about the change because, as I said, parents are beginning to accept the Radford scheme and its method of assessment, and if we change our method of assessment again we will upset a lot of parents. So this is a thing that we as a Government will have to be very careful about and make sure that it is explained properly.

Another change which would probably cause a lot of upset but which I think is very necessary and should be treated as a matter of urgency involves school holidays. Our schools are labouring under the new semester system. I think most schools have now accepted the system but they find it confusing with a semester system and a three-term school year. This has caused a lot of problems in the planning of courses because it is very difficult to hold an examination during one week at the end of a semester, have a few days off and then come back and begin new work in a new semester. As we have changed our education timetable, I

think that we will also have to look very carefully at changing the school-holidays timetable. My suggestion is that we have at least a week's break after each semester with possibly a couple of weeks at Christmas and a couple of weeks after the second semester. That is the logical thing to do, but there are other considerations to be taken into account and we would have to give careful consideration to any change.

One other thing that concerns me a little about education and the direction it is taking is the constant call for fringe courses. The call for driving courses in schools has been made for some time. There has also been a call for social education on sex, drugs and that sort of thing. I agree that courses of that sort should be provided, mainly because students need them in addition to their other education. The trouble is that people are thinking up all these side-lines to education in order to occupy the time of children, but children are spending no more time at school. We must accept that the basic reason for sending children to school is to have them educated for a profession or a job in later life. If they learn to drive a car at school, that is all very nice, but it should not be done in normal school hours.

Another thing that concerns me is discipline. Today many parents send their children to school expecting them to be disciplined at school. In fact, a number of parents say to me, "Oh, look, I am pleased now that we have a very strong headmaster. He might be able to pull my child into line." I find that rather disturbing. Those parents have missed their main role as parents.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the back of the Chamber. It is undesirable.

**Mrs. KIPPIN:** Discipline is the responsibility of parents.

I was rather amazed to read in the newspaper this morning about the drinking problem in schools. I was aware that a drinking problem exists in schools, but the thing that amazed me is that only 50 per cent of parents considered that it was their responsibility to acquaint their children with the uses and abuses of alcohol and to do something about controlling the drinking habits of their children. Of course, this is where social education comes into the whole scheme, but in my opinion it is needed purely because a number of parents are neglecting their responsibilities.

I wish to congratulate the Minister on the pre-school programme. It is amazing to see the number of pre-schools that have sprung up all over Queensland. Most Queensland children now have an opportunity to attend a pre-school or to undertake a correspondence pre-school programme. Country people are very appreciative of the Government's initiative in introducing this correspondence

programme. It is an excellent course. I suggest that any parent who cannot get his child to a normal pre-school should consider a correspondence course. Personally, I favour the correspondence course because it gives the parent and the child a year in which to work together on the course before the child leaves for school and ventures off into the world.

It has been brought to my attention that there is much concern amongst parents whose children are in early-education classes, where pre-school classes are combined with Grade 1 classes. Some parents of Grade 1 children are concerned that their children are not getting quite as much teaching as they would in a normal Grade 1 class. Once again, I think that there could be a little lack of communication in this respect. It is concerning parents, and it is something of which we should be aware.

In the closing minutes of my speech I draw the Minister's attention once again to the needs of the opportunity school in Innisfail. I know he is very well aware that this school is housed in very old buildings that were due for demolition two or three years ago. I know that he is doing all he possibly can to improve this school. He has approved plans for new buildings for this school, and construction should get under way early next year. I should hate to see this building programme put back once again, because we have been expecting this school for a number of years.

I have a number of private schools in my electorate, and it is a matter of concern to many people that children attending private schools cannot compete in State school sports. I know that there is a history going back to the time when State school organisations got together and decided to hold State school sports. Probably private schools did not come in at that stage, or perhaps they were excluded; but I should like to see communication and dialogue between State school organisations that organise these yearly sports meetings and private schools. At the private schools there are a number of children who are very good athletes, and these country children do not have the benefit of competing in the private school sports in Brisbane and also are excluded from State school sports.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. PREST** (Port Curtis) (8.41 p.m.): I wish to speak not so much about what is in the Estimates for 1978-79 as about what is not in them for the Port Curtis electorate, which I represent. If we go back over the last couple of years, Mr. Row, we find that in 1976-77 additional accommodation was allotted to the high school at Gladstone. However, in 1977-78 no additional accommodation or facilities were provided in the Port Curtis area and none were provided in 1978-79.



I do not wish to think that children in Labor-held electorates are being discriminated against, because I believe that the Government and all members of this Assembly should be working in the best interests of children and giving all children in the State equal opportunities. However, because of the inadequate accommodation in the Gladstone area, in particular, at present, the combined parents and citizens' associations of the four primary schools and the State high school in Gladstone compiled a 20-page document and forwarded copies to the Department of Education, the Premier and the Minister for Works and Housing. I should like to believe that all their requests will be met. The people concerned have assured me that everything in the report has been carefully documented and has met with the approval of all parents in the area, and it was because they felt so strongly that they banded together and presented the document to the Government.

The facilities are inadequate at present, and in the light of what is expected in Gladstone in 1979, the number of classrooms will be completely inadequate. That is taking into account only the enrolments that are now expected, and we are told that even greater industrial development will take place early in 1979. At present there is the \$26,000,000 development by B.H.P., Central Queensland Lime will be spending in the vicinity of \$90,000,000, and Comalco has on the drawing board a \$500,000,000 job. This must be kept in mind because many children will be brought into the area by the itinerant workers who will come to Gladstone to work on these projects.

Let us look at the enrolments at the State schools in Gladstone. They are—

Central	..	..	..	440
South	..	..	..	930
West	..	..	..	880
Clinton	..	..	..	600
Total				2,850

There is only one pre-school in the electorate of Port Curtis. It is at Clinton school, where there is accommodation for 50 children.

This year, in Gladstone alone, we have approximately 485 children going into Grade 1 in State primary schools. Of that number, only 50 were able to be accommodated in pre-schools. For years we have been promised pre-schools in the area, but unfortunately those promises have not been kept. Smaller schools with lower enrolments are getting pre-schools on a priority basis over schools with high enrolments. I don't think that is a fair go to the children of Gladstone. That applies not only to Gladstone. Calliope, which has a fast-growing school, has been crying out for a pre-school, even if it is only a demountable building to accommodate the children in the area. I sincerely hope

that something will be done to enable children to take advantage of pre-school education in preparation for Grade 1. I believe that the foundations of education are laid in pre-schools and primary schools. If the foundations are not properly laid, what is the good of trying to educate children through secondary and tertiary levels? Let us see something for the Gladstone area.

A number of years ago the then principal of the Gladstone State High School started a scheme for the building of an assembly hall. About \$100,000 has been raised for that project. At times the scheme seemed to be given top priority by the department, but then it appeared to slip back again. Application has been made for permission to commence the construction of the assembly hall. The escalation in costs is reducing the value of the amount already raised. Departmental permission to commence construction has been requested in anticipation of a subsequent subsidy payment. I sincerely hope that this matter will be given very serious consideration so that the p. and c. association can get on with that important project. It is worthy of favourable consideration. If the Minister can do anything about it, we will be very grateful.

Sporting facilities are referred to in the 20-page report that was prepared. I shall not go right through the report. The Minister has a copy of it, as have the Premier and the Minister for Works and Housing. Parents are concerned because lots of facilities are not available in State schools in Gladstone. I refer particularly to covered walkways and proper library facilities. Janitor/grounds-men are inadequately accommodated and equipment generally is scarce. There are many areas in which we require something to be done.

I praise the work done in special schools. Last Friday, the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources opened a workshop at the Gladstone Opportunity School. That workshop will be of great benefit not only to the pupils of the school but also to many organisations in Gladstone. Mr. Ken Lindley, the principal, has done a marvellous job. I commend him and his staff. I sincerely hope that Ken Lindley is going to have a very long stay in Gladstone. I do not know what those slow learners would do without a person such as Ken Lindley looking after their interests at that school.

At this workshop Ken has a scheme that will allow children to gain some practical experience, for example, in the recycling of glass, paper and cardboard. The children wear protective clothing, such as glasses and gloves, and they are learning to become responsible members of the community. At the official opening of the workshop I could not put into words the pride that I felt as the representative of so many children whose behaviour was excellent. This is a tribute not only to the children but also to the teachers.

The workshop was established with funds made available by the Education Department and by the various service clubs in the city of Gladstone. In the first instance, they donated \$500 each. Later, over week-ends their members erected the building. It is now fully equipped with tools so that young children can be properly trained. Furthermore, the workshop contains a motel unit fully set up so that girls can be taught motel work. After all, the city of Gladstone offers a considerable number of opportunities in motel employment, and I am quite certain that it will become an even bigger tourist centre than it is at present. The Minister's department must be congratulated on the work that it did in setting up this workshop. The people of Gladstone were pleased to see departmental representatives present at the official opening performed by Mr. Hewitt.

The Minister said that he would like to see the introduction of a scheme in which employers would tell the Education Department exactly what their needs are in relation to students. It was only a short time ago that we had a meeting at the Gladstone State High School with Mr. Gehrke and other departmental officers. As a result of that meeting the recommendation was put forward that those children who, on the completion of their secondary education, are unable to find employment and therefore return to school waiting for a job opportunity to present itself—they may be at school for the full 12 months—should be allowed to take manual training, such as mechanical or electrical training, in addition to the board subjects.

It is also proposed that next year the Gladstone State High School will teach girls office procedures. Instead of taking six subjects of this kind, students must take four board subjects and two extra subjects. This will be a wonderful innovation. We have been assured by the Q.E.G.B., Q.A.L., the Gladstone Harbour Board and other employers that such a course would not react to the detriment of an applicant for a position but rather could be an advantage. Children who are not interested in academic subjects such as biology will be able to attend these classes to fit them for employment in the trades.

One of the things I am concerned about—and I do not know whether it comes within the Minister's responsibilities—is the discontent expressed by teachers in isolated areas. In fact, the ones to whom I refer are not exactly isolated, being only approximately 50 miles from Gladstone. At the present time, teachers in Gladstone receive cost-of-living allowance of about \$3.50—I do not know the exact figure—whereas teachers in places such as Builuan receive an allowance of approximately \$1.50 because they come into a different zone—perhaps Bundaberg.

**Mr. Bird:** That one is outside my control.  
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**Mr. PREST:** I think it is. I wrote to the Premier on it and I sincerely hope that something will be done about it. It does cause a bit of discontent. They travel into Gladstone to do their shopping and, instead of receiving at least as much as the teachers in the city, they are getting less.

After such a long wait, we are very pleased to see that something may be moving on the provision of a technical college in Gladstone. For this, \$300,000 has been allocated by the Federal Government. Press reports indicate that \$2,900,000 will be spent on the first stage of a technical college in Gladstone. At present we have approximately 250 apprentices. If the opportunity existed for technical training to be done in the city itself, other employers could be induced to take on more apprentices. With the amount of new industry being attracted to the city, a new technical college will be a great boon to education—and also to apprentices and employers. I sincerely hope that the technical college, now that it is on the drawing board again and figures are being bandied around, will become a reality and that Gladstone will not again be fobbed off, as it has been in the past with pre-schools and the assembly hall.

Catholic education plays a very important part in my area. We are very pleased that the Government has seen fit this year to increase the allowance for private schools. With inadequate facilities provided in State schools, the Catholic education system now has to expand. Private schools in the area—we have one Catholic high and two primary schools—are catering well for the situation and are doing a good job.

I would hate to feel that children in my electorate were being discriminated against. I do not want to see it that way and I do not like people saying to me that this is the case. However, the parents and citizens' associations of the various schools have made that claim. I would like to think that education is handled on a priority basis; but it is very hard to accept the fact that, although we have 2,850 schoolchildren, we have only one pre-school. I sincerely hope that the situation will be rectified before the end of the financial year.

**Mr. HARTWIG (Callide)** (8.59 p.m.): First, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Education.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** We expected that. Why don't you say something new?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** And the honourable member wonders why he doesn't get any work done in his electorate!

The previous speaker went to some lengths to try to intimidate the Minister by saying that Labor seats were being victimised. That would be so much hog-wash that it isn't funny.

Let me firstly express my appreciation for the tremendous co-operation I have received from the Minister.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Why wouldn't you? It's because you're a Tory member.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** Now that the honourable member has admitted that, he should see the light and become a member of the National Party. Then he will probably get something done in his electorate.

Since he took office, the Minister has displayed a tremendous amount of zest and dedication. The Education portfolio is one of the most difficult portfolios to administer. This is mainly because Queensland, unlike South Australia and New South Wales where there are Labor Governments, is the fastest-decentralising State in the nation. That cannot be taken away from us. So we have growing pains, and we have a tremendous job in educating the children right from the New South Wales border to the Gulf of Carpentaria and Mornington Island. It gives me a good deal of pleasure to see the great advances that we have made.

On looking through the Budget, I noted a few things. Firstly, I should like to congratulate the Minister and his department on increasing the allowances to bus operators who travel over dirt roads. For many years I have fought for something like this. I have pointed out that if there are two school bus runs, one on bitumen and one on gravel, the bus travelling on the gravel route suffers a great deal more wear and tear and damage and requires more maintenance than the bus running on bitumen.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** You wouldn't need to be Ironside to work that out.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I do not think the honourable member could work anything out. He has nothing between the ears.

**Mr. Bird:** He is the fellow they describe as having a head like a Condamine bell.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** He would have to be the greatest nincompoop in Parliament.

Student-teacher bursaries and payments to foster parents have been increased considerably.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row):** Order! There is too much frivolity in the Chamber.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** From January next year, pre-school children will be provided with 150 millilitres of milk daily. Whitlam took it away from all the children in Queensland. The Labor Party will never live that down.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! There will be only one interjection at a time.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** The \$472,300,000 allocated for education this year represents 24.6 per cent of total Budget expenditure.

The honourable member for Port Curtis said that some things were needed in Gladstone. The people of Gladstone must be lacking in something or they would vote for a member of the Government. Then they would do better. Why doesn't the honourable member resign and let the National Party take over? If he were fair dinkum, he would do so.

**Honourable Members interjected.**

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Chair will not tolerate cross-firing in the Chamber. There will be orderly interjections or none at all.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** In August 1977, there were 659 Government or Government-assisted pre-schools and child-care centres in Queensland. That is a pretty fair effort. The people of Biloela have welcomed the pre-school centre and the new unit provided there. It is very pleasing that a progressive area such as Biloela has been given a pre-school centre and an opportunity school. These things have been provided since this Minister took office. We cordially invite him to open the new pre-school centre at Yeppoon, which is a very good one. It is appreciated in that area.

In Queensland a child stays at school for 12 years—seven years at the primary level and five years at the secondary level. It is interesting to read the number of children enrolled. The latest figures I have been able to obtain show that 437,941 children are attending school.

**An Opposition Member:** So what?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** If the honourable member listens, he will learn something.

That figure comprises 223,916 boys and 214,025 girls. This will present a problem for 9,891 boys! In the years to come, some of those young fellows will be missing out. But if we look at the number I just cited, 437,000-odd children, and look at the Budget allocation for education of \$472,000,000, in round figures this represents approximately \$1,100 a year for every student attending primary and secondary schools throughout Queensland. That is a fair amount of money in anybody's language, and that is what this Government is doing in that regard.

Even up in the Aboriginal and island communities we find that some 3,400 children are attending Aboriginal community primary schools, with some 478 students attending secondary schools. That is a pretty fine record.

With a student population of over 400,000, in 1977 there were 1,205 primary schools, 155 primary and high-top schools and 194 high schools throughout the State.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr. HARTWIG:** If we were to look back on Labor's track record during the time it was in office in this State for 20

years, I do not think we would find that there were even 50 high schools in the State. Of course, that was a long time ago, and it will be a long time before they take over again.

After discussing the number of students attending school, let us now look at the 23,152 teachers in Queensland schools. That number represents an average of 21 students per class, which gives the lie to all the talk which went on here earlier today and the suggestions that teachers were teaching from 40 to 45 children per class.

We provide not only pre-schools, primary schools and high schools, but also special schools. I might say that these special schools are doing a tremendous job throughout Queensland because, unfortunately, many children have physical disabilities. This Government is assisting greatly in that regard by providing approximately 585 teachers for these special schools. With a staggering figure of approximately 4,293 of these children in the State, we have to provide specialised training and teaching for them. I refer to the blind, the visually handicapped, the deaf, and other physically handicapped children who need to attend special schools.

I know figures are boring, but there is one interesting thing that comes out of all these statistics. If we study the peak attendances at primary and high schools, we find the highest number of enrolments is in the 13 to 14-year-old group, where there is an average of 39,550 students. When we get to the 15-year-old group, the number drops to 31,000. The 16-year-old group numbers 18,623. When we get to the 17-year-old group, the number drops by 50 per cent to 8,877.

**Mr. Fouras:** What does that mean?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** It tells a story, and if the honourable member waits a while I will tell it to him. I never disappoint the honourable member who interjected.

For some reason or other it seems that children today are leaving school at an earlier age than they did five years ago. I do not know whether that is because parents are working or because there are financial problems. I do not believe that figures lie. What I have said can be proved. During a period of high wages, if children leave school at 15 years, provided they can get a job, they can earn up to \$100 or \$110 a week. Unfortunately, many children who left school without finishing their education cannot find work today. They are not skilled in any trade.

It is fairly difficult now for a young person who has lost his last two years of schooling in Grades 11 and 12 to find employment. In those years children blossom out. They show the benefit of those last two years of education. It fits them for the wide world that presents so much frustration to our young people today. It is sad when one sees young

people with plenty of talent walking the streets, and there are young people with plenty of talent.

Recently it was my pleasant task to attend two speech nights: one at Biloela last Monday week and one at Yeppoon last Tuesday. Mr. Ron Barnes, the principal of the Yeppoon High School, who, I regret to say, has been transferred, has done a magnificent job. Mr. John Mallon, the principal at Biloela, made the point that attendances at many of our country schools are falling because of a decline in the rural sector.

**An Opposition Member:** It is your Government's responsibility.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I have just told the honourable member what our Government has done. If he wants me to tell him what his Government did, I can do so—nothing! It even took the milk out of the kids' mouths. It's a pity that the honourable member is not still on milk. If he were, he would perform better.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I will take that interjection. That is a good point. I left school at 12 years of age and earned 19s.4d. a week. The Labor Government took 8d. out of my wages. I have never forgotten that. I would rather cut my throat than vote Labor.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr. HARTWIG:** That would be the greatest misstatement of the year. As a matter of fact, if you don't get off—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row):** ORDER! The honourable member will address the Chair.

**An Opposition Member:** What have you done?

**Mr. HARTWIG:** I have worked hard and honestly, and that is more than the honourable member has done. In my electorate new schools have been erected at Cawarral, Joskeleigh and Mt. Chalmers, while the schools at Gogango and Emu Park have been renovated.

There is a new administration block at Yeppoon. We have acquired extra land at Biloela State High and Yeppoon State High. I am pleased to see that Yeppoon is due for extensions this year. We need pre-school centres at Gracemere and Thangool. If we make representations in the right direction, we might even get one of them this year. There is a great need for an addition to the library at the Biloela High School. We need a better library facility at the Biloela High School for the 502 students who attend that school. Also we want a library at Farnborough. Libraries are a tremendous source of information. The libraries that this Government is building are easily the best rooms in the schools. The new libraries are a credit to the Government. The 300 libraries that

we have built throughout the State over recent years are a tremendous asset to the schools and to the furtherance of the education of our young students.

I conclude by saying that in my opinion it is a shame that young people do not get a little bit more homework than they are now getting.

Mr. Prest interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: The honourable member for Port Curtis did not do any homework; he still does not do any. He would not work in an iron lung.

Today, television is a distraction. With parents working, children return home and immediately switch on the television. I do not know whether that is good or bad, but I believe that young people, particularly high school students, could be given a little more homework to keep them occupied.

Mr. Moore: What rot!

Mr. HARTWIG: It is a pity that the honourable member did not do a little more homework.

I agree with the Minister when he said, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Although I do not advocate a return to the caning that we got when we went to school, I tell the Committee that I got six cuts many times and it did not affect me adversely.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: I think that the kids of today can swear just as well as we could at the same age. I do not think that they have improved in that regard.

Great credit is due to the teachers throughout the State. They do a very fine job, and that is evident from the progress that children make in State schools. I think it was last year that three students from the Biloela High School in my electorate won the State and Australian debating title, and I think that is indicative of the standard of teaching. The team was composed of Chris Bongers, Sue Thomson and Heather Borchard. The teachers do a great deal of work. It is often said that teachers do not do this and do not do that, but I have great admiration for them. As a member of the Opposition said, it is very difficult to control children today, and I believe that the teachers do control them.

I wish the Minister well, and I hope to see more pre-schools in the Callide electorate.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (9.17 p.m.): I wish to raise in this debate matters pertaining to my own electorate. After listening to Government members speaking about new libraries and new facilities that they are getting at schools in their electorates, it

becomes obvious to the Opposition—and it will become painfully obvious to the people of Queensland—that those electors who had the foresight to elect Labor members to this Assembly are being blatantly discriminated against.

Mr. Prest interjected.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: That's for sure. He is probably the worst blight on the education system in Queensland today.

As I said, I wish to mention a number of matters pertaining to the Wolston electorate, and I begin by mentioning problems that are being experienced at present at the Riverview State School. Probably this is one of the few times that I share in this Chamber an opinion expressed by the honourable member for Caboolture, who spoke earlier about the need for additional sporting facilities to be provided at schools. The Riverview State School, which was opened about two years ago, is in an area that has very drastic socio-economic problems. It is in an area in which there are many deserted wives, people who have experienced broken marriages, single mothers, and so on. Naturally enough, in an area of that sort there are problems peculiar to it. When the school opened it had no facilities whatsoever to meet sporting and recreational needs. An area has been set aside for the construction of a sports oval, but to date there has been no indication from the Works Department or the Education Department of when such work will take place.

A few months ago in this Chamber I referred to the fact that the ad hoc attitude of the Government had almost caused a fatality at that school. A young child was bitten by a snake, and it was only the prompt action of the staff that saved the life of that child.

Parents in that area are required to raise in the vicinity of \$20,000 to have a proper sports oval built at the school. In an area of deserted wives, people from broken marriages, single-parent families, etc., it is absolutely impossible for the p. and c. to raise that amount of money. It would seem to be a stupid exercise to construct schools without the necessary facilities being provided at the outset.

I wish to mention the specific problems being experienced at the Bundamba High School. A number of weeks ago the special committee of inquiry visited the Bundamba High School as a result of a request from the teaching staff and me. I express the appreciation of all involved. Having seen the shocking facilities at that school, I would think that that committee would share my concern. When the school was opened some 10 years ago, the library consisted of one very small room that was completely inadequate for the needs of today's modern education system. A number of the teachers took it upon themselves to cut a partition

out of one wall so that the library facilities could be extended. Subsequently members of the teaching staff were rapped over the knuckles by the department for taking that initiative. That initiative had to be taken.

Despite constant and frequent requests to the Government, tenders still have not been called for the construction of a new library, even though about a year ago an undertaking was given that tenders would be called and construction would commence in about 12 months' time. At the present time students and staff are required to work under most inadequate conditions. I am sure that the committee of inquiry shares my concern.

I now turn to the provision of sick-room facilities for pupils. There is no sick room at the Bundamba High School. Pupils who become ill are put out on the veranda, which is windy in winter and hot in summer. Because of the shortage of class-rooms and space generally, absolutely no facilities are made available for sick pupils. This is something that would not be tolerated in a school outside a Labor electorate.

The sporting facilities at that school tie in with a number of things that the honourable member for Caboolture mentioned this afternoon. The sporting facilities are completely inadequate. They consist of one very small oval for almost 1,000 students. Because of the lack of suitable sporting facilities, the students cannot participate in inter-school competition. The only competition in which they can take part is among their own grades at the school. It is completely impossible to carry out a suitable training programme for football, athletics, basketball, hockey, and so on. They cannot all be on the oval at the one time to do the necessary training.

Close to the school is a disused mine. I understand that the school made approaches to a department some time ago—I should imagine it was the Works Department—for the Government to purchase that property with a view to providing these much-needed sporting facilities.

The first approach in relation to that matter was made approximately four years ago, and last week I was up there again. It would appear that absolutely nothing has been done by the Government to try to satisfy that urgent need.

As I have mentioned, the library is probably the most desperately needed facility in the school, and I ask the Minister to consider the possibility of establishing a library at the Bundamba High School as a matter of urgency. As I said, in my electorate things occur that would not be tolerated in electorates represented by Liberal or National Party members.

I turn my attention now to something that is relevant not only to my electorate of Wolston but also to the electors in your area, Mr. Gunn, something in relation to which I know you share with me a common concern.

I talk about the urgent need for the construction of a high school in the Goodna area. In an article in the local newspaper circulating in my area, "The Satellite", the Minister expressed the opinion that we needed additional high school facilities. What I am suggesting is that because of the present population in the area held by you, Mr. Gunn, which takes in Redbank Plains and comes into the West Moreton area—which everybody knows is the fastest-developing region in Queensland—the population in the Redbank Plains area could not presently justify the construction of a high school. However, as students in the area have to travel either down to Brisbane or to Ipswich, there is an urgent need for the construction of a high school at Goodna. On previous occasions I have spoken about this, and early this year I asked the Minister if he would give consideration to an appropriation in the 1978-79 Estimates for the construction of a high school. It is unfortunate that we missed out. Again I implore the Minister to give serious consideration to the proposal in next year's Estimates.

Reliable figures put out by various p. and c. associations in my electorate show that approximately 1,000 students travel daily to high schools outside my area. Some go to the Bundamba High School. It was constructed originally to cater for 700 to 800 students. Its present enrolment is slightly in excess of 1,000, which means that it has 200 students more than it was designed to cater for. Consequently, all types of problems arise at the school. We have the ludicrous situation of 1,000 students travelling every day to various high schools in Brisbane or having to pass the Bundamba High School to attend high schools in the Ipswich area. The problems that that causes are virtually indescribable. These children are required to leave home by half past 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning and travel by public transport to their schools. They have to leave at that early hour to be sure of getting to school on time.

In the winter months, which have just passed, it is quite a frightening experience for a number of those young people, particularly the young girls, to arrive at the platform in the early darkness of the evening and then, because of lack of public transport facilities, or lack of vehicles to pick them up or the problems experienced from time to time with train travel, make their way home through dark streets.

Recently I was told of a woman who moved into my electorate after she had enrolled her two children at the Brisbane State High School. One was in attendance at the high school and the other had been accepted for enrolment, her uniforms and textbooks had been purchased and she was ready to go to school. The woman is a widow and lives in a Housing Commission home. When she applied to the Railway Department for a concessional pass for the second child, she was told, "Because your

daughter is not attending the high school in closest proximity to you, you won't be given a railway pass." After I made representation on that woman's behalf, fortunately she gained a pass for her second child.

I am only giving the Committee one instance. I have had approaches made to me on many occasions about the same problem. It is completely ludicrous because, as I pointed out, through lack of appropriate high school facilities in the Goodna area, travelling to and fro for these children is totally unavoidable. I have written to the Minister on a number of occasions about this. He has written in reply, but certainly the replies I have received to date would not encourage me to say that we look like having a high school by 1980, although that has been intimated from time to time.

I have previously invited the Minister to attend a public meeting on the matter. I am advising him again this evening that I have called a public meeting for 9 December to discuss this most important issue. I can assure him that the issue of a high school is catching on like wildfire in my electorate. It would be the singularly most important issue to people in the Wolston electorate—and not just in my electorate. It spreads down into the electorate of Somerset, out at Redbank Plains.

**Mr. Bird:** I can assure you that we are well aware of the position. I have pointed it out to you. If I asked every member here to tell me what he wanted and give his priorities, you could imagine the dogfight there would be if the members were invited to work it out amongst themselves. Every body would like those additional things—

**Mr. R. J. GIBBS:** I appreciate that everybody would like additional things. However, I am saying, as I have clearly spelt out this evening, that I am firmly of the opinion—as are my colleagues on this side of the Committee—that in the Labor-held electorates throughout the State at the present time there appears to be some inequity in the amount of money spent and the number of high schools, primary schools and pre-schools constructed.

**Mr. Bird:** I am sorry that you adopt that attitude.

**Mr. R. J. GIBBS:** I expect the meeting on 9 December to be very successful. I certainly hope—and I expect—that it will be patronised by many members of the voting public from the electorate of Somerset.

Finally, I want to speak about a number of the particular and peculiar problems being experienced at the Darra State School, which, because of the high content of Vietnamese migrants who have been fortunate enough to be given accommodation at the Wacol migrant camp, has a unique problem. Whilst I have directed some criticism at the Minister this evening, I am not above recognising that the same gentleman has endeavoured to

assist me on this matter. I wrote to him a number of months ago pointing out the peculiar problems of the Darra State School. I was successful in having an additional modular unit added at the school. A number of bilingual assistants and also a number of extra teacher-aides of Vietnamese origin have been appointed to the school. However, this appears to me to be not completely adequate. I read in the paper today or yesterday that another boatload of Vietnamese has arrived in Darwin. If the usual procedure is followed it will be the first of a number to arrive over the next couple of months.

The problem at the school is that the teachers are finding it extremely hard to cope, because many of these Vietnamese children, whose ages range from six to 12 years, have not attended school at all. Consequently, they arrive here with very little or no knowledge of the English language. They are put through a crash course for three to four weeks. They are then put into classrooms according to their age groups.

This results in quite a chaotic situation in the class-room. It means that the teacher has to devote special attention to the Vietnamese children. Consequently, on many occasions the teacher has to neglect the needs and wants of the other children in the class. Alternatively, if the teacher devotes the greater part of his attention to the English-speaking children, the children of Vietnamese origin suffer.

It would appear to me that the Government should be considering a scheme for these people so that when they arrive they could be put into an area—I do not suggest a confined area—that could be provided at the Darra State School and specially set aside for the use of these children for a number of months to enable them to be given a better grounding in the English language. This education would be furthered by intermingling at recess times with the other children and learning the different cultures and mannerisms of the schooling system in Australia.

The Select Committee on Education came to the Darra State School. I am pleased it did, because it was able to look at this problem first hand. I hope that when the interim and final recommendations are made the report will cover this specific problem in a more definite way. I believe that the Darra State School at the present time has quite a unique problem. It is important that the Government accept its responsibility in this area. It has accepted the responsibility for allowing these people to come into our country and must therefore accept the responsibility of ensuring that the schooling system is adequate and fair and will meet the needs of these particular people.

**Mr. BOOTH (Warwick) (9.38 p.m.):** It is my intention to make reference to only one or two matters of local interest in my electorate. The Minister, in his introductory remarks, said that he was proud to say that

the department has been able to consolidate and maintain the standard in our schools. I think he was able to say that with a great deal of sincerity and conviction. Most of us are proud of the standard in our schools. I would like to highlight one or two matters in my electorate in which we perhaps lag a little and need some assistance, and also to make reference to the field of remedial teaching.

My first point deals with technical education, as Warwick, a town with over 10,000 people, has no technical college. This is wrong. It was a great mistake to close the technical college in Warwick. It meant that apprentices, and others who want technical training and knowledge, have to travel to other towns to attend college. One of the first priorities in my electorate is the re-establishment of a technical college. I will be endeavouring to get the project off the ground in the next 12 months.

In the field of remedial teaching, I want to speak principally about speech therapy. Experienced teachers have told me that it is quite impossible to make much headway with a child and teach him to read if he is unable to speak with reasonable clarity and to absorb educational material. I think the Minister might be getting a little misled by some of his advisers on the subject of speech therapists not being willing to work in country areas. I have found that some therapists will do so, including a goodly number of those who complete their training this year.

I think one mistake that the Educational Department makes in the recruitment of speech therapists is waiting too long into the new year before inviting applications. These advertisements are sometimes not placed until half-way through the year. By that time many speech therapists have said, "Hang it all, I can't get a job in Queensland; I'll go elsewhere." So I would urge the Minister to endeavour to have advertisements for speech therapists, particularly those for country areas, placed earlier. I have forwarded to the Minister's guidance officer the names of five speech therapists who are quite prepared to take country appointments, so at least we have made some headway there.

I am hopeful that the Minister will be able to recruit the necessary speech therapists, particularly one for Warwick, because, just as with every other town, we have a problem with children who, if their speech problem could be overcome, could probably be educated quite easily. I make an urgent plea now to have this shortage of remedial teachers looked at in a different light and attempts made to recruit the necessary teachers.

I would like to commend the Minister on his attitude to special classes, because I think they have made great headway with problem children. The special classes operating in Warwick are going very well. I agree with the Minister's comments about practical

training in special classes being probably the best training that could be given, and in that regard I think the Education Department has done an excellent job. As time goes on, I think the only thing we want is probably a little more help for special classes. There is no doubt that the teachers are excellent people who are doing a magnificent job and are certainly an asset to our schools.

The only other subject I want to discuss is music education. In trying to get more people interested in music, the Education Department is probably doing the best thing it can do, because I think one of the basics of human enjoyment is the appreciation of music. If people are taught a little music appreciation at school, their opportunities to enjoy life throughout the years will certainly be increased, and I am certainly pleased to see the Minister putting that subject high on the priority list.

Art appreciation is something that a lot of us missed out on over the years, and I am glad to see activity in that area stepped up.

In conclusion, I would just like to say I was pleased to see the Minister present his Estimates. I believe he wore a look of pride when he made his remarks, and I think if I had been in his shoes I would have done the same. I believe he had a good story to tell and he told it well. I would draw the Minister's attention to the great need for technical education in country districts, particularly in my city. The problem of the shortage of speech therapists is, in my opinion, the chief one to overcome in the field of remedial teaching if we are going to make any headway in the future.

**Mr. BERTONI** (Mt. Isa) (9.44 p.m.): We often hear a lot of criticism of the Education Department and those who administer the education system throughout Queensland. Tonight, however, I would like to pay tribute to the Minister's staff for the tremendous job they have been doing, particularly the director, Mr. Clive Gilmour. The Minister and the director have done a tremendous job in my area. We have quite a number of up-to-date schools and all the facilities and amenities that we need. The Minister and the director were directly responsible for the setting up of the high-top at Cloncurry. I would also like to pay tribute to Keith McCarthy, who has done a tremendous job. I quite frequently ring him and he is always sympathetic to the demands I make.

Because we do not have much time, I will move straight on to the three matters that I think are of importance to my area. I cannot understand why the Education Department allows the regional director, Dennis Long, to travel by road, from Longreach to Mt. Isa three times a month for 10 months of the year. If this is not a waste of manpower and facilities, I do not know what is. I have spoken on this matter before. It is about time that the Education Department looked at this matter and allowed the regional



director to fly into these important areas in order to save his time. I will continue to bring this matter forward, because I believe that it is one area the Education Department should look at in order to alleviate these problems.

At the Doomadgee Mission there is a problem concerning leave and travel concessions. It appears that the Public Service has allowed leave and travel concessions for officers in isolated areas, such as Mornington Island and all the Aboriginal missions up and down the Gulf of Carpentaria—I will not name them—but, for some reason or other, it does not put Doomadgee into that category. The leave concessions that are granted to officers in isolated areas allows them to have eight working days off to do private business, which is normal within these areas. I cannot understand why the same system is not allowed to operate at Doomadgee. We must look at this matter and allow the officers at Doomadgee the same concessions, because they are as isolated as are officers in other areas.

I commend the Minister for the terrific job that he has done in education in my area. I am certain that the people of Mt. Isa appreciate the tremendous assistance that they have received from his department.

**Hon. V. J. BIRD** (Burdekin—Minister for Education) (9.47 p.m.): Earlier the honourable member for Rockhampton mentioned what he considered to be staff deficiencies in one of the schools in his electorate. I said that I would like to have the name of the school so that I could do some checking. I have information back from my regional secondary inspector, who says that no school was understaffed. The Rockhampton High School was overstaffed at the commencement of the year. Quite a few pupils left, and some additional teachers who had been sent there in anticipation of a heavier enrolment at the commencement of the year were then transferred. That is how incorrect information can be given.

He also mentioned the delay in the presentation of my report. Firstly, the statistics in the report refer to the calendar year, while the finances refer to the financial year to 30 June last. The Government Printer then has to print the report. As we all know, the Parliament has been in recess, and today was the first opportunity I had to present the report since it was printed.

The honourable member for Salisbury mentioned nursing education and the problems that she could see confronting it if it was taken out of the hospital situation. I refer her to the Commonwealth committee on nursing education, which was chaired by Dr. Sax. I am prepared to give her some information on that. I am sure that after she has read it she will be greatly relieved and will realise that the position is not perhaps as desperate or serious as she thought.

The honourable member for Mourilyan mentioned the lack of public relations in the Education Department. I have always said that perhaps the most serious deficiency in the Education Department is its lack of public relations. We undersell ourselves. I have constantly said this to my staff, and I hope that in the future we might be able to keep the public more informed. Of course, we have to have the co-operation of the media and other people. The greatest access that we have to the people is through the media.

She also mentioned the need to alter the timing of school holidays. Cabinet gave us approval to give consideration to altering the school programme during the year, and we will be looking for public reaction to this suggestion later.

The honourable member for Port Curtis mentioned what he considered to be a lack of pre-schools and other facilities in his electorate. I did receive the report from the combined parents and citizens' associations in his electorate. I am presently having the claims checked, and I will look very closely at them.

The honourable member for Callide mentioned the additional allowances given this year to school bus operators. I appreciate the wonderful job that these people are doing. We cannot afford to underpay them; we must ensure that they receive their just rewards. If they do not, the maintenance of their buses may suffer and, as a result, accidents may happen. Because of that, I have always kept a very close eye on the allowances paid to them, and I thank the committee that I set up some time ago to look at the allowances paid to school bus operators for the work that it has done.

The honourable member mentioned also the free milk scheme for pre-schoolchildren. It will also include children attending affiliated kindergartens. Somebody questioned me about that a little while ago.

The honourable member for Wolston referred to deficiencies in educational facilities in his electorate, and I do not blame him for raising these matters in the Chamber. As I said earlier, from time to time members will raise matters of that type both in the Chamber and by correspondence and in other ways. I suppose that every member feels that he has deficiencies in the field of education and in other fields in his electorate, and I point out that the department endeavours to meet the requirements of every area as quickly as finances will allow. I should hate to think for one moment that anybody thought seriously that the Government was jeopardising in any way the educational benefits to children in any area simply because they were in a Labor electorate or in an electorate held by a particular person.

The honourable member for Warwick referred to speech therapists. He has continually been in touch with me on that matter, and I thank him for his interest in

speech therapists and in all other sections of education, both in his electorate and throughout the State.

I thank the Director-General of Education, Mr. Clyde Gilmour, all the directors and all the officers of the Department of Education for the assistance they have given me throughout the years. One member of Parliament said earlier that the Education portfolio is probably the most difficult Cabinet portfolio to manage. I should say that probably it is the most difficult and most demanding; but it is also the most rewarding portfolio because one can see something for one's efforts. When a Minister knows that he is working for the benefit of the young children, the not-so-young children and the older people of this State and enabling them to further their education, he gets great satisfaction from his job.

I also thank my private secretary, Mr. Keith McCarthy, and the other members of my private staff for the assistance that they have given me over the 3½ years that I have been Minister for Education. It is mainly due to their efforts that I have been able to continue to administer my portfolio and, at the same time, manage my electorate in North Queensland.

My thanks go also to the members of my parliamentary education committee for the assistance that they have given me over the years, for the way in which they have looked into problems for me, and for the way in which they have helped me to solve problems.

I also thank all members of Parliament for their co-operation over the years, particularly in the last 12 months, and I thank those who have taken part in this Estimates debate for the interest that they have shown in education.

At 9.55 p.m.,

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Row): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 11 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Education.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Education—

	\$
Chief Office . . . . .	8,626,760
Balance of Estimates, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds	652,963,170
Progress reported.	

## MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### SECOND READING

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.57 p.m.): I move—

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

As I indicated in my introductory speech, the proposed amendments to the Margarine Act are designed to update certain provisions to meet current manufacturing and marketing requirements, and to conform to overall provisions of the Food and Drug Regulations and the Weights and Measures Act. Of specific importance is the provision to redefine table margarine to include only margarine made from vegetable oils and to ensure that such products are correctly and accurately labelled.

Apart from the aspect of consumer protection, this provision also pays due regard to the responsible attitude of Queensland table margarine manufacturers who for years have produced table margarine only with 100 per cent vegetable oils. Thus I agree with the honourable member for Bundaberg in his support for the local margarine manufacturing industry, which is producing a wholesome product that is accurately and fairly described to consumers.

In relation to the metric specifications referred to in the Bill, I am confident of the support of honourable members for the units proposed. An allowable range from 125 grams to two kilograms for margarine packs will cater for all consumer needs from the pensioner to the large family. As to the labelling of cooking margarine—the Bill will ensure adequate information to the consumer as to the composition of the product.

Although I would agree with the honourable member for Mackay that the margarine industry has made substantial inroads into the dairying industry, we must be realistic and recognise that both are valuable Australian primary industries that are competing on the consumer market. I would emphasise that the policy of the Government is not to favour one industry against the other, but to ensure fair and honest competition. This type of policy tends to strengthen both industries, and allows the consumer free choice.

Although there has been a substantial decline in Australian butter consumption over the past 10 years, I would advise the honourable member for Mackay that the actual decline for the period 1967-68 to 1976-77 was in fact 44 per cent.

Although specific figures are not available at this time, I understand that the decline in butter consumption in Queensland is lower than the Australian average, owing in no small part to the effective promotion of the product by the Queensland Butter Marketing Board.

Overall, I believe that Queensland margarine legislation has led the field in Australia for many years. Similarly, I consider the rationalisation policies of the Queensland Government towards the dairying industry have been most effective.

I do not accept the comment by the honourable member for Mackay that there has been head-in-the-sand legislation in the past. Let the record speak for itself. Queensland

now has a strong and viable oil-seeds industry, as well as a stabilised dairying industry. Queensland also possesses an effective margarine-manufacturing industry that is producing a quality product.

The amendments proposed are rather basic and will ensure that Queensland margarine legislation will continue to meet the needs of the community.

**Mr. CASEY** (Mackay) (10 p.m.): Very few members of the National Party appear to be interested in this rural legislation, which affects our primary industries and is of great importance to them.

As the Minister said, the Bill contains quite a number of machinery measures. The Opposition believes the Bill to be an improvement on the Act.

In taking note of the point I made regarding the decline in butter consumption in Australia over the past 10 years, the Minister quoted 44 per cent. I would point out to him that at the introductory stage I quoted a 62 per cent per capita decline in consumption. That percentage is a more valid one to work on, because it shows that the popularity of butter has declined considerably and that in many fields margarine has taken over and, with the emphasis placed by the butter industry itself on various blends, will continue to do so.

The Opposition has no objection to the legislation and believes that it is a step in the right direction.

**Mrs. KYBURZ** (Salisbury) (10.1 p.m.): It would be remiss of me if I did not repeat the points that I raised at the introductory stage. The Minister has stated that the majority of the amendments are of a machinery nature. The most important amendment is the one to section 13, which provides that larger quantities of margarine can be packaged. The Minister said that packs of up to 2 kg can be sold. That would have particular application to tuckshops, large families and probably large country customers.

The Opposition spokesman is burying his head in the sand when he bemoans the fact that the consumption of butter is dropping. It is a fact of life that margarine is taking over from butter because (a) it is more usable from the consumers' point of view, (b) it has a pleasant taste, and (c) it has in the past been cheaper than butter. There is no doubt that people buy products according to their price. So it is silly to say, "Poor old butter. We will not buy it any more. That is sad, isn't it?" Butter is almost in the luxury price bracket. In fact, the cost of a kilogram of butter is the same as the cost of 1½ kg of margarine. It is as simple as that. On top of that, it is very difficult to tell the difference in taste between butter and margarine.

As Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Mackay would have to complain about the decline in the consumption

of butter. In the past the dairying lobby has been fairly large, and it is now becoming attenuated sharply. The dairying lobby will probably be taken over by the seed-growing lobby, which is the sunflower lobby et al. It will probably take over from the dairying lobby. So the honourable member for Mackay should not be running down the margarine manufacturers; they will probably be the industry of the future. I am not saying he did run them down. He should not waggle his hands in denial. He should listen to me more carefully.

By providing that margarine that is labelled table margarine has to be of vegetable origin, the Minister is taking an important step. At times it is difficult for a housewife to choose from the supermarket shelves the margarine that is best suited to her purposes. The reason that it is so difficult is that the labelling is at times shoddy, at other times funny and at other times again of no help in telling the housewife to what use the contents can be put. If a housewife buys cooking margarine, she begins to think she can only fry with it. In fact, it can be used as table margarine at times. If the amendment provides that the label is to stipulate that the contents are of vegetable origin, it is a worthwhile one.

In the joint party room I brought up this legislation because I immediately thought, "Ah, ha, margarine versus dairy lobby. Which side do we take?", which is obviously what the honourable member for Mackay thought. I must say that the Minister was aware that it was not going to be that. He stipulated to all members of the Government parties that it was not that and that it was equitable and fair to both sides. It is refreshing to see that. After all, politics is a tough, hard dairy lobby or seed-growing lobby. So I do congratulate the Minister for his amiability on this matter.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.6 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Mackay and Salisbury for their ready acceptance of this amending legislation. As I indicated, it is something that I considered would be acceptable to members on both sides of the Chamber. It is certainly acceptable to the industry and, I believe, to the consuming public. As the honourable member for Salisbury has said—and I commend her for her vigilance in watching the interests of the consuming public—there is no longer a conflict between the dairying industry and the margarine-manufacturing industry.

I suppose I can speak with some authority on this, having been a dairy farmer for many years of my life and, in more recent times, being involved in the growing of oil-seeds. If there were any conflict, I think that I would perhaps be a little bit on the side of the dairying industry, because the people engaged in that industry in most parts of Queensland or Australia have played a

very major role in the development of those areas. This is the reason why there was conflict in the early days. The interests of those people had to be protected. However, the point today is that a very big majority of the people who are producers of oil-seed used in the manufacture of margarine are people like myself who were dairy farmers and have shifted their farming operations into grain production or oil-seed production. As we are not self-sufficient in the production of butter—we are importing butter from the southern States—there is no longer an argument for protecting the butter industry against the margarine industry.

The honourable member for Mackay made the comment that there did not appear to be any interest by the National Party. That is far from the truth. I have just walked through the Legislative Council and there are a number of National Party members in there with the honourable member for Landsborough.

**Mr. Casey:** The Legislative Council closed down in 1922.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** The doors are still open and the Chamber is available to those who are considering very important legislation that is being prepared and developed. National Party members know that when matters under my jurisdiction come up, they are in pretty good hands. They have every confidence in me.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### PRIMARY PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.10 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act 1923–1978 in certain particulars.”

This Act provides for the establishment, registration and means of operation of our many rural co-operatives throughout the State.

The most recent amendment to the Act was the urgent legislation introduced earlier this year to provide for the conversion of a co-operative society to a primary producers' association. In addition, however, there were a few matters which had arisen over the

years that needed tidying up and could not be included in the urgent legislation. They will now receive attention in this Bill.

The first amendment to which I direct the attention of honourable members deals with objects that may be adopted by primary producer associations. The problem is that recent legal opinion is to the effect that associations are restricted to pursuing the objects listed in the Act.

Those particular objects have remained largely unaltered since the introduction of the Act in 1923 and are much too restrictive to allow associations to keep pace with changing conditions. The amendment will allow associations to adopt additional objects appropriate to their operation, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council.

Another proposal contained in this Bill will alter the maximum rate of dividend which an association may pay. At present, the maximum dividend rate which an association may pay is pegged at 7½ per cent unless otherwise determined by Order in Council. It has been decided that a primary producers' co-operative association should be permitted to pay the same maximum dividend rate as that paid by a co-operative society registered under the Co-operative and Other Societies Act.

The new maximum rate will be 2 per cent above the ruling Commonwealth loan interest rate. Honourable members will understand that the new rate will be the maximum that may be paid. An association may pay a lesser rate or even no dividend at all if it so wishes. The provision for variation of the maximum rate by Order in Council will remain.

An amendment that the co-operative movement has sought provides for the conversion of a company registered under the Companies Act to a co-operative association registered under the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act. To my knowledge there are no impending conversions of companies to associations. However, as we already have legislation providing for the conversion of an association to a company, an association to a society and, as I mentioned earlier, a society to an association, the present amendment will tidy up the position by providing for the conversion of a company to an association.

Honourable members will notice that the amendment provides also for the conversion of a society into an association. In fact, legislation providing for that type of conversion already exists. It is included in the present amendment merely to streamline the procedure to be adopted when an application for conversion is being made.

A further amendment deals with amalgamation of societies and associations. The purpose of the amendment is to alter the procedure to be adopted when making application for amalgamation. There is no change proposed in the intent of the legislation.

There are two other minor amendments. One increases from one month to two months the period during which an association must apply for registration of amendments to rules following a meeting of its members. The other provides that a certificate of registration of an association or a copy thereof certified by the registrar as a true copy shall be admissible as conclusive evidence in any court proceedings. This will remove the necessity for the registrar to appear personally at such proceedings.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

**Mr. CASEY** (Mackay) (10.15 p.m.): This is a very important Act on the statute-book, and right at the outset I would remind the Committee that it was originally introduced by a Labor Government in the 1920s. It was as a result of good Labor legislation in those years that this Act has done so much for various primary industries in this State through the co-operative movement. It provides special provisions for primary producers over and above those available under the normal co-operative Acts of the State.

I suppose it could be said that easily the most successful operators under this Act have been the co-operative sugar mills. In my own area six out of the eight sugar mills are registered under this Act. They have been responsible for making the sugar industry Queensland's greatest agricultural industry and probably one of the most sound and prosperous industries in Australia. But in recent times many of these co-operatives have run into trouble and it has been necessary to amend the Act from time to time. In fact, it was only in the previous session that the Act was amended in order to get the Babinda mill out of the financial trouble in which it found itself.

Many of the co-operative sugar mills now find themselves in severe financial difficulties because of a drop in income in the sugar industry caused by failure to get the International Sugar Agreement off the ground, the drop in prices caused by the world sugar surplus, the way in which the E.E.C. is trading throughout the world and the renegotiation of the guaranteed sugar contracts we had with Japan and other countries. Because of all those factors, mill incomes have definitely declined this year and a lot of mills have found themselves in severe financial trouble. But they will find themselves in worse trouble if they do not get together and do a little bit more thinking about the future. There is a tendency for the shareholders in co-operative sugar mills, and they are the farmers themselves, not to reinvest. They endeavour to get as much money as they can out of the mill and into their own pockets.

In some ways I am a little disappointed to see that the Bill amends the provisions of the Act relating to the percentage of return to the shareholders by lifting it from the maximum of 7½ per cent to a figure

which is 2 per cent above the Commonwealth bond rate because this will be a further encouragement to certain mills to continue their current method of operation and take more out of the mill and put it into the pockets of the shareholders. In some cases where there are a lot of blind shareholders, depending on the articles of association, this occurs quite frequently. The same remarks apply to co-operative dairy factories. I think sugar mills should be looking at reinvesting their funds and doing something by way of diversification because it could well be that in the future they might be even worse off. We have already cut back peaks within Queensland and a lot of mills are finding it a little hard to keep going even with the situation as it is at present.

Most forecasters within the sugar industry, and I refer to Czarnikow and many other leading sugar brokers throughout the world—not just those within the Queensland industry—are stating that sugar will not return to the boom period of the 1970s. This means that the industry has to consider diversification either within the industry itself or outside the industry. Such diversification will require considerable amounts of investment capital. Investment capital will not be easily obtained by co-operatives unless they have within their boards and within their activities a policy of reinvesting their finance or putting it away in sinking funds that they can use for such measures.

Recently I raised the matter of the introduction of research into the technology that is required for the construction of chemical plants in association with sugar mills. This is already being done in some countries. Tait & Lyle in England has successfully proven a method whereby it can manufacture biodegradable detergents from sugar. So many other by-products of that chemical industry off-shoot of the sugar industry could replace the petrochemicals that seem to be so much on the market these days in supermarkets throughout Australia and throughout the world.

Everybody seems to be forecasting a big decline in the production of oil in the future. If such is the case, the manufacture of chemicals from sugar will in the future, I believe, become a major industry. Unless Queensland sugar factories are prepared to get into this at this point in time, or to start getting ready for it, they will miss out, and miss out rather badly.

It is not only that. It is only a matter of a few years since the Department of Industrial Development endeavoured to bring about the construction of a plant in Queensland for the manufacture of paper or pulp from bagasse. Quite a deal of work was done on that by a number of companies and organisations involved within the sugar industry and by the Department of Industrial Development. When it came to the crunch and the co-operative mills and some of the other mills were consulted about the supply of bagasse,

the thing seemed to fall down. At that stage those sugar mills should have been looking at the project from the angle of not what they could get out of it, but what they should put into it in order to become partners in the consortium that was looking at this project. That is what has to happen in the future with co-operative mills, and proprietary mills, too, for that matter.

I give credit where credit is due and say that many of the proprietary mills owned by companies such as C.S.R., which I have criticised in the past, Pioneer Sugar Mills and the Bundaberg Sugar Company—just to name a few—are already looking at ways in which they can diversify their industry. Unless the co-operatives start to do the same and use the auspices of the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act, they will be left behind, and left behind rather badly.

They are already being left behind on one aspect, and that is the way in which the proprietary mills have formed themselves into their own association. One can easily see the strength that they have gathered by joining together through that association and through the mutual actions that they are able to carry out through that association. If one looks at the sugar peaks in Queensland one sees that the total of sugar peaks under the control of the proprietary mills in the last two expansions has increased considerably compared with the total of the peaks under the control of the co-operative mills.

I think it is about time that the co-operative mills formed themselves into their own association along exactly the same lines taken by the proprietary millers, so that they can help one another to become stronger and create a separate entity of strength within the sugar industry. If they do not, they will find themselves being left further behind.

This Act provides a considerable opportunity for those mills to take action of this type to get together within their own association. It gives them an opportunity to look at ways by which they can reinvest or set up their special standing funds or investment funds within their own industry so that they have finance available to cover diversification into some of the manufacturing proposals that I have mentioned. That is why perhaps I have certain misgivings at this stage about licensing most of these co-operatives to enable them to become a dividend-producing set-up for primary producers. That was not the intention of the original legislation. Its intention was a small return so that they could build up into a fairly viable force.

Leaving sugar aside for the moment, I point out to the Committee that this could be an incentive for producers of certain dairy products and others in a restricted field—for example, ginger growers' co-operatives—to place a higher price on commodities, and in the long run the consumer will have to pay for a major rake-off by such

co-operatives. I suggest that that should be looked at very carefully under this legislation.

In speaking about co-operatives and primary producers' co-operatives under the Act, there is another point that I wish to make. I believe that we are going to see in the next few years in Queensland, and in agriculture generally in Australia, an extension of co-operatives as we now know them into such things as machinery co-operatives.

As the Minister would well know, Mr. Gunn, the price of harvesters in the grain industry is becoming astronomically high, and the stage is being reached at which the farmer will be unable to purchase the modern, up-to-date machinery that he would like to have on his farm. In a very minor way, there has already been a movement in the direction of machinery co-operatives in some areas. It is very common in Europe, where farmers bind themselves into co-operatives for the purchase and operation of farming machinery. If you go on to farms in the Central Highlands and on the Darling Downs, particularly in the grain belt, and up in your area in the Brisbane Valley, Mr. Gunn, you will see a great deal of farm machinery that is becoming very old and outdated. In mixed farming areas, because of the prices for cattle, and in the wheat and sheep belt, it has been very difficult for farmers to replace equipment with modern, up-to-date machinery.

Use has already been made of the Act in recent years to establish co-operatives for the purpose of purchasing certain items, and I think that we will see an extension of that practice in years to come. I would actively encourage it, because I think it is the only way in which many farmers are going to be able to remain on the land and maintain viable family units. Instead of having the "get big or get out" concept, with big enterprises moving in, we may be able to retain families on a number of separate farms and have them bind themselves together in co-operatives for machinery purchases. We must ensure that in future the Act covers organisations such as those that I have mentioned.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.29 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Mackay for his comments. He indicated that what is proposed in the Bill is acceptable to the Opposition.

He expressed some concern about the increase from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to 2 per cent above the Commonwealth loan interest in connection with payment of dividends. In co-operatives, the boards are elected by the members and usually are composed of responsible people. They do not have to pay the maximum; they need not pay any dividend. There have been a number of requests for an increase from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to the figure that I have mentioned. It has not been plucked

out of the air; it is the result of representations made to the department. It is for an organisation to determine what dividend it will pay.

The honourable member for Mackay spoke at some length about the importance of the co-operative movement. He claimed, as is normal for him, that the Act was originally brought into being by a Labor Government in the 1920s. That is true, but it does indicate that in comparison with the Labor Government in Canberra in the early '70s, the Federal Government in the '20s, had concern for people in the rural sector. The performance of the Whitlam Government—

**Mr. Yewdale:** Why can't you—

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** What is the honourable member worrying about?

**Mr. Yewdale:** You have nothing to talk about unless you raise that.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** Let us be factual and say that it is good to know that one day a Labor Government did have such a concern. From its performance in the '70s it is obvious that that Labor Government had no concern whatsoever for the rural sector. Let the honourable member think about it, and perhaps his party will get back into office one day.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

### AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS DISTRIBUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.33 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966–1972 in certain particulars.”

The original Act was introduced in 1966 and resulted from consultations between the States concerning the damage caused by drift from the distribution of agricultural chemicals. It was intended at the time of those discussions that all States would introduce comparable legislation for the purpose of controlling both the aerial and ground spraying of agricultural chemicals. Not all States took the initiative at that time, but Queensland proceeded with legislation, and a board, The Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board, was constituted for that purpose, licensing both aerial and ground operators and registering aerial and ground equipment.

Inspectors were appointed and given powers to enter, search and take samples of crops believed to be damaged by spraying operations. Operators were required to make records of sprayings undertaken and to produce those records to the standards officer should he so demand. These records could form the basis of civil actions in negligence for loss or damage should chemical drift occur.

This system has worked extremely well now for a number of years and, in view of the amount of spraying carried out and the nature of the operation, the number of complaints received could only be described as minimal. However, it is now considered appropriate to upgrade the safeguards written into the Act. This should ensure that the commercial agricultural chemical spraying industry continues to operate within accepted safety limits for some time in the future.

This amending Bill proposes to alter the method by which records of spraying are kept and the manner in which the standards officer is advised of spraying undertaken. The changes will have the most significant effect on aerial operators, though changes for ground operators in some areas will also be effected. Whereas previously all operators were required to make records available to the standards officer on request, aerial operators will now be required to submit details of sprayings as they are done. This requirement could also apply to some ground operators. For most ground operators, however, the system remains unchanged.

It is envisaged that the proposed change will dovetail in with normal commercial accounting procedures and little inconvenience should be experienced as a result of these new methods of reporting.

The most important proposed change is the change in the powers granted to inspectors. I would point out to honourable members at this stage that it is not the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act that controls the usage of chemicals. The Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act deals basically with the licensing of operators and the machinery they use. It contains the power for inspectors to enter properties and take samples after spraying has taken place and it is these powers that it is intended to increase.

The proposed increase in powers is mainly directed to the taking of samples of chemicals before usage and from spraying equipment. This is an area which is not adequately covered in the existing Act. The powers of entry and search and the power to take samples generally have been increased. However, as honourable members know, aircraft and all associated matters are controlled by the Commonwealth Department of Transport and it is not competent for this House to legislate in that field.

The proposed amendments, however, do go as far as is possible to ensure that aerial

equipment operates efficiently, that the correct agricultural chemicals are used and that they are used at the correct concentration. The powers to be given to inspectors ensure that these objectives will be met.

Other changes proposed are of a mechanical nature to facilitate the above proposals. A general restating of some of the expressions used relating to loss and damage has been incorporated and this is merely for the purposes of clarification.

Included also is the right for operators to use chemicals in any manner and for any purpose approved by the board.

This Bill, I believe, should ensure that standards within the commercial agricultural chemicals distribution industry are maintained, and I commend it to the Committee.

**Mr. CASEY (Mackay)** (10.39 p.m.): Although the Minister has endeavoured to convey the impression that the Bill merely upgrades certain provisions in the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act, it must be accepted that it will have serious implications for the major primary industries of the State, particularly the sugar industry and the grain-growing industry. In recent years, because of the cost factor, both those industries have enjoyed a very high degree of chemical use—weedicides and pesticides—by aerial spraying companies. We have also seen larger aircraft with bigger payloads moving into this field. It is something that has become quite a worry to the community. Community awareness of the spraying of these chemicals by aircraft has increased.

I agree that the Bill does not cover the registration of particular chemicals. It would be quite easy for this debate to degenerate into a discussion on the controversial issue of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. As the Minister has pointed out, they are registered under various health Acts and are not covered by this Act. However, it must be accepted that, even if these agricultural chemicals are approved under another Act, in many cases they are not being properly applied. I refer to three categories of user. First, there is the ordinary householder. Certainly the quantity used by householders is not large. The average householder obtains a small pack of chemical spray, mixes up a quantity and says, "We will put in another handful or shake in some more." That results in an incorrect application of the chemical. Many farmers tend to do exactly the same thing. It is no good saying that they do not. I know of fellows in my own area who have done it. The Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation would be aware of some acts of farmers in his area. The Minister for Primary Industries would be aware, too, of farmers who are a little on the heavy side in their application instead of applying the chemical in accordance with the directions of the manufacturer. The rate of application is given by the company at the time the chemical is registered.

In exactly the same way, incorrect application has been occurring in aerial spraying. The aerial sprayer is no different. He has been spraying at times when, under the Act, he should not have been. More than anything else, he is making a quid out of it. The householder is trying to get rid of pests. If a farmer using it on his own property mixes too much of the chemical and mucks things up, he is more likely to suffer than any other person. He is more likely to be harmed by the toxic effects. However, the aerial sprayer is more likely to harm other people or their property.

As I said before, I do not want to go into the argument about 2,4,5-T or 2,4-D at this stage, except to state that, if those two chemicals had not been used in recent years in the agricultural industry, not only in Australia but also in other countries throughout the world, we would have had a very severe shortage of food indeed. I think that the Minister and most of those closely associated with primary industries would accept that point.

In saying that, I do not mean that anybody should be enabled or licensed to spray it or apply it willy-nilly without having some knowledge of the harmful effects it may have on human beings. When all is said and done, I think I would rather be starved to death than poisoned by some of these pesticides and weedicides. This is something we have to consider. People must come first in our considerations. Before any chemical is registered, the harmful effects it may have on people or their property have to be fully evaluated and properly researched—and thoroughly understood by the community. This is an area in which most Governments and chemical companies seem to fall down. Labelling and packaging is very important. However, this Act relates to application, and particularly to application by aerial spraying.

As I mentioned before, there is no problem with the farmer operating on his own property. If he wants to poison himself, he is not harming anybody else. However, when the aerial sprayer goes wrong he sprays somebody else or his property.

Exemptions have been granted in many areas of the State. It is little use talking about tightening procedures of inspection when, in a number of areas in the State, it is quite easy for people to obtain exemptions from the rules and regulations.

There were a few anomalies in the Minister's comments. He said that we must update and upgrade the Act and correct certain anomalies, yet on 1 June this year, in answer to a question asked by me in the House, he stated clearly that the existing controls were realistic. He said that the controls were all that was necessary to handle the situation that had developed, particularly in the Cairns area.

We have been saying for some time as an Opposition that the controls are not realistic. We have been saying that there is a need to



upgrade and update the methods of controlling aerial sprayers in this State. We have been saying this, and I, particularly, have been saying it, because of the number of complaints that I have received from various areas concerning overspraying and drift. These are the two main problems. A pilot starts spraying too soon and hits somebody travelling in a car along a roadway, or he cuts off too late and the same things happen at the other end or the spray goes onto somebody else's property. When it is too windy, drift occurs.

I well recall in my own electorate an aerial sprayer being engaged. He was using a very dangerous chemical on a very windy day. He should not have been spraying. The so-called realistic controls state simply that the decision on the suitability of the weather for spraying lies with the pilot. This has made it difficult for anybody to successfully prosecute a person for a breach of the Act. The Minister knows very well what I am referring to. I do not know if there have been any prosecutions of persons for breaches of the Act. Under the Act, the decision rests with the pilot.

In the case I was referring to, spray fell onto the roof of a woman's house. It looked like rain and she was worried about the chemical being washed into her tank. She was six months pregnant and was faced with the usual problems confronting a woman in that condition. If something like this occurs, it is difficult to convince a pregnant woman that her child will not be deformed. She would worry for the next three months until her child was born. We have to make sure that these problems do not arise and the only way to do it is with controls.

In this case, the woman tried to find out who was responsible for investigating the problem. She contacted the chemical company and was told that it had nothing to do with the chemical company. She got on to the spraying company and was told that it was covered by the Act and was able to do the spraying. She contacted the Department of Transport at the airport to find out if the company was allowed to spray on that day. She was told that it was nothing to do with that department. She got on to the Department of Primary Industries and she was told that it was up to the pilot and was nothing to do with the department. She was going round in circles and getting fairly desperate.

She came to me. I had to contact the Department of Primary Industries in Brisbane before I could get an assurance that the matter would be investigated. I give credit where credit is due. The department did undertake an investigation and the matter was handled from then on through the Minister to me by way of correspondence. It is a devil of a job under the present Act to get something done in such a case. It causes a tremendous amount of worry to people, particularly to a six months pregnant woman who was worried not only about what had happened to her house but also her

health. The spray went in through the open windows and through the house. She was extremely worried about the whole matter.

As I said, virtually no action could be taken against the pilot or the company. The report was that under the particular circumstances nothing could be done because they acted within the provisions of the Act. It simply gets back to having to prove that the pilot was wrong or committed a breach of the Act. Under the Act, there is certainly a compensation fund. Certainly the aerial sprayers pay into that compensation fund, but I do not know of many cases in which they have had to pay out. It is very difficult under the current legislation to prove that something has gone wrong. I certainly hope that is the main provision that has been tightened up in this legislation, because the previous provisions have been unrealistic.

That is not the only problem. We also have the insecticides 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D and these are the ones that cause the greatest worry to women. But, back in 1977, I raised the matter of another chemical that is commonly sprayed as a soil fumigant prior to the sowing of seed, particularly in grain areas. Tests were carried out in the factory in the United States where the chemical was being manufactured and it was shown that there was a low sperm count in male workers involved in the manufacture of this chemical. I know that at one time or other everyone in the Army has wondered about what the cook was putting in the tucker, but the fellows working in this factory suddenly found they were losing their virility and suffering from a low sperm count because of contact with this chemical. Yet it was being sprayed quite freely in Australia. In fact, it was a Shell chemical and they had to turn round and recall unused stocks because of what was happening to the male workers in the United States. I support that action to the hilt.

But this just goes to show the danger when we let aerial sprayers loose in the way I have explained. I know that they do a tremendously good job in many areas, but there are places where the spraying does go wrong and I think we have to impose much tighter controls. I believe we may have to go to the extent of introducing provisions similar to those contained in the Rural Fires Act regarding people lighting fires in the open during a burn-off period, when an inspector from the Rural Fires Board has to be present. I believe we have to place around townships and cities a buffer area in which no aerial spraying at all is allowed. It could be anything up to 30 or 40 chains wide to prevent any drift into the towns or cities, and perhaps an even wider buffer when certain dangerous chemicals are used.

We have to introduce some form of inspection services, with departmental officers on the spot all the time checking and monitoring the form of spraying and the rate of application on the ground itself because, after all, the only way the rate of

application is currently checked is from the pilot's records and log books. We take his word all the way down the line. There is no check and no proper form of inspection, so it is no wonder that people are becoming more and more concerned about the aerial spraying of chemicals.

The Opposition will have a very close look at the Bill because it is important to the safety of human beings to make sure that sufficient has been done to tighten up the controls on these methods of spraying.

**Mr. FRAWLEY** (Caboolture) (10.54 p.m.): I certainly hope that this amendment of the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act does a bit of good because neither the 1966 amendment nor the 1972 amendment is worth the paper it is written on. One could use both of them for toilet paper for all the good they did in my electorate.

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I think they have been spraying the honourable member for Brisbane Central. That is what is wrong with him.

In 1972, just after my election to Parliament, Cropair Aviation Pty. Ltd.—it does not care or did not care then, anyway—indiscriminately sprayed the Australian Paper Manufacturer's plantations around the Caboolture area. It was so indiscriminate that it sprayed 2,4,5-T instead of 2,4,-D. Bees were killed because it used a mixture of 2,4,5-T and dieselene. We in that electorate are not stupid; we knew what was going on. The Minister will remember that I brought deputation after deputation to see him about the matter. The biggest files in my filing cabinet are those covering that aerial spraying in 1972. I was absolutely sick of it.

The Act was not worth a trey-bit then, and it is not worth anything now. It took the farmers in my electorate up to six weeks to get action from the Minister's department. Officers from the department came in and took samples all right, but it took up to six weeks to get back the results. That was a pretty poor service. I cannot remember any farmer getting any compensation, and honestly I think it was because someone was afraid of bucking Cropair and the insurance companies. I do not think that the farmers in my electorate got a fair go from the Minister's department. I am not pointing the finger at anybody. I think the fault lay in the Act; it was not strong enough. It has never had any teeth.

**An Honourable Member:** Who owns the shares in Cropair?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I do not know who owns them now.

In the electorate of Caboolture, around the towns of Burpengary, Narangba, Morayfield and Wamuran, and even in Redcliffe, untold damage was done to the small crops. I saw the damage, and I knew nothing about this crop-dusting at that time. When I went to

Peter Morris's farm, even I could see that there was something wrong with his tomato plants. The Minister will remember Peter Morris. He certainly gave the Minister many problems.

I will say that the Minister did something for us.

**An Honourable Member:** What did he do?

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** It was not a great deal, but at least he did something. Because it will only embarrass him, I will not say what he did.

There were all of these problems in my electorate. It reached the stage where one farmer from Narangba was talking about taking potshots with his .303 rifle at low-flying aircraft. That shows how bad the feeling was. The farmers were driven to the depths of despair when they saw their strawberry crops destroyed. I went to many farms and saw the destruction caused by this indiscriminate spraying. Even down as far as Toorbul the water was polluted and oysters died. We could never prove anything. Every time we sought redress we got the double shuffle.

**Mr. Hansen** interjected.

**Mr. FRAWLEY:** I am making this speech, not the honourable member. I can make my speech without any assistance from the A.L.P.

I was saying that even the water around Toorbul was polluted. Oysters were killed. Nobody did a thing about it. Those doing the spraying just went on their merry way. It reached the stage where farmers got in front of one aircraft to try to stop it from taking off in the electorate of the honourable member for Landsborough. I can well recall that. The honourable member for Landsborough got up in this Chamber and spoke strongly against the indiscriminate spraying of these chemicals. The pilots of the aircraft were not supposed to spray in windy conditions, but they did. They did not care because they were out to make a buck and they did not give a hoot about the farmers in my electorate.

Also, there were ground operators indiscriminately spraying in Redcliffe. I can remember writing to the Minister about one fellow who got a licence in his wife's maiden name. I do not know why he did that. He was running around Anzac Avenue, Redcliffe, spraying hell, west and crooked. He did not give a hoot about anybody. I think it is about time that something was done. I sincerely hope that this amendment will put teeth in the Act. I must be honest and say that I doubt whether it will.

I do not know what is in the Bill. I have not seen it. I do not get an opportunity to see some of these things. I am not as lucky as the honourable member for Rockhampton, who saw the Education Department Report a day before any Government members saw it. Nevertheless, I believe that these things have to be looked at very carefully. I know that 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T present other problems.

As you are well aware, Mr. Row, there were many problems in my electorate. I sincerely trust that this amendment of the Act will do a little bit of good. Although I am doubtful about that, I am living in hope that it will produce something or will put some teeth into the Act.

**Mr. SIMPSON** (Coorooora) (10.59 p.m.): I support the moves that are being made to apply greater control over the use of chemicals under the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act. It appears that this debate is proceeding along the lines of the use of these chemicals rather than the control of the chemicals that are used by both ground and aerial operators.

In my electorate many crops are susceptible to the hormone 2,4-D that is used to control groundsel, mainly in grazing areas. Many absentee owners with difficult terrain over which to get ground cover—very hilly country broken with creeks, gullies and cliffs—call in an aerial operator. To make their function more profitable, aerial operators extend their operations over as long a period as possible. They begin spraying in the morning when the wind is at its lowest, but as the day goes on the wind gets up, and even the slightest breeze will carry spray, especially spray from a helicopter, for miles. That has been proven. I must admit that the officers of the Department of Primary Industries in my area are very co-operative. They will come out and take samples of crop damage and leaf samples that can be used later by the people concerned in court actions against the aerial operators.

The problem has become very serious because so many crops are susceptible. Pawpaws, strawberries, beans, tomatoes and many other vegetable crops are susceptible, and people can have their livelihood wiped out. On the one hand, there are the small primary producers with very meagre financial support; on the other hand, there are the aerial operators who, by virtue of their enterprise, have far more financial backing for their operations and who can get better lawyers to defend them. So there is an unfair state of affairs to begin with. The large operators tend to muscle the small man out of the way, and I am pleased that the Minister is strengthening the Act so that records can be kept of the various chemicals used by the operators and of the equipment they are using and how they are servicing it. To spray in certain areas it is necessary to replace the lines completely or have equipment that can be properly cleaned, because the slightest trace of chemical can wipe out the next crop when selective killing of weeds is being carried out. Many aspects come into it, Mr. Row, and I am pleased that the Minister is looking into them.

Behind everything is the need for closer liaison with the people in industries that are now being abused because they have susceptible crops. I know that this reaches into

the area of the Minister's colleague the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources, and he really needs to look at the legislation under his control to see that it is supported by representatives who will put the case of the people now being disadvantaged. We know that operators look at the cost of controlling groundsel weed in grazing areas, but it is ridiculous to allow other people's livelihood to be wiped out because there is not sufficient control.

Helicopters are very manoeuvrable and were thought to be wonderful for aerial spraying in rough terrain. In fact, they are the worst possible means of spraying. The droplet size is very fine and the currents created by the blades on the helicopter spread the chemicals for miles. Recently at Cooroy in my electorate a helicopter pilot was almost threatened—at least, he was convinced that he should not be operating—and pulled out of the operation. He told the company that he was working for that he would not carry on, and he left. Of course, a few people suggested that he might do just that, but they persuaded him that, because of the susceptible crops in the area that are not always visible even from the air, he should not carry on. They may be just over a ridge, and chemicals can be carried into those areas and the crops wiped out.

Even if the crops are not wiped out completely, the productivity and profitability of areas can be reduced. Sometimes the damage is only marginal and very difficult to measure. We should endeavour to keep variable-winged aerial sprayers out of certain areas. In rugged terrain fixed-wing aircraft have to fly so high to clear the ridges that the drift goes for miles. It has fallen on houses. People get very concerned about the run-off into their tanks and worry about the effect of the drift on children playing outdoors, on animals in the paddocks and on the subsequent products from farming operations. A lot of serious aspects have to be considered. Aerial spraying is not the answer to the control of groundsel. This is a matter that has to be taken up with another Minister.

I commend the Minister for strengthening the legislation. Whether it will work, only time will tell. I certainly commend him for this move in the right direction.

**Mr. KRUGER** (Murrumbidgee) (11.7 p.m.): I would like to give the Committee a bit of a verbal treat on sprays. The honourable member for Mackay talked about the spraying of cane in the northern areas of Queensland. Reference was made to the use of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T and the problems caused thereby. Two members on the Government side have spoken about the aerial spraying of groundsel causing problems with crops.

There are two ways to look at the whole deal. If moves are made to control spraying in, say, cane areas and wheat belts, that would interfere with a lot of people who are trying to produce crops. Possibly another

way of controlling groundsel might be the ideal method, and we would not have the problem we have had in the near Brisbane area with drift onto small crops. The honourable member for Caboolture mentioned the Morris twins, who had damage done to their tomato crops. Similar problems have arisen for many people right through the Narangba area and up into the Burpengary area.

Sprays can be used in many different ways. Having used quite a few of them, I would like to point out some of the other problems that arise. Of course, aircraft spraying causes the biggest problem. What a lot of people do not realise is that if 2,4,5-T is used and it settles on bush, a few days later it can still drift. Once it has crystallised on bush it can still cause damage by being blown around by the wind. We could be doing the right thing by considering buffer zones. The drift will travel only a certain distance.

When considering buffer zones we have to keep in mind the problems that can be caused by householders using exactly the same chemicals that we are trying to control. Such chemicals are readily available to householders. We should not control the application of chemical sprays by farmers to the extent that they find it more difficult to make a living. We need to protect people in towns close to farming areas. If time permits, I will indicate why some of the sprays are not as dangerous as many people think.

The emphasis has been on 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. If we look back through history we find that man's efforts to control pests have extended over a very lengthy period. In about 7000 B.C. farmers practised a crude form of biological pest control. They selected seeds from resistant plants and scientifically tried to control the pests. When I think of pest control, I think of much more than 2,4,5-T.

In the year 1840, possibly one of the first known sprays to control diseases in plants was evolved. It was a mixture of lime and copper known as Bordeaux mixture and it was used in France originally to keep birds away from crops. As was found out subsequently, it controlled powdery mildew on grapes. That was discovered purely by accident, because the mixture was used to keep the birds away from crops.

Today there are over 400 different chemicals on the market and they are sold in 50,000 different types of mixtures. Not all of them are hazardous. Some are hazardous in their raw form, but when they are diluted in water they are not nearly as dangerous as some of those that are not claimed to be hazardous. Quite a number of fertilisers that are used today are hazardous in the long term and some of the very dangerous sprays that are used are not dangerous in the immediate short term. For example, a cabbage that is sprayed today with a certain

chemical could be eaten tomorrow without causing any ill effects. However, vegetables sprayed with chemicals that I used as a child could not be eaten for seven weeks after spraying. Modern techniques have proved that some of the chemicals that are most dangerous in their raw form are not dangerous when used as a spray.

The types of sprays that are used mostly are insecticides, fungicides, and defoliants. Normally, the spray gives surface control. In recent years, however, we saw the introduction of systemics. As the term implies, the chemicals when sprayed onto the foliage go down to the root system and come back through the plant, thereby giving good control over insects that attack the plant. They were designed originally to deal with sucking insects that attack the underneath of the leaf. They could not be controlled with the normal type of spray. Systemics are one of the most effective means of controlling grubs.

Modern-day sprays do not have the residual effects of the older type of sprays. Naturally the person applying the spray runs into trouble, but the person following him does not suffer any ill effects. Systemics are used with misting machines on farms.

These days we see the use of the knapsack type of blower/mister, which is used in horticultural areas, knapsacks and boom sprays. Most types can be used very effectively, but each method is just as dangerous as the other. It would be thought that the use of a knapsack spray would not constitute a danger to anyone. The operator, however, is coping about 70 per cent of the drift on his legs. Admittedly, he is not hurting his neighbour. The small blower/mister that is attached to the operator's back has a coverage of about 2 to 3 chains and it can be very dangerous to neighbours. On a bigger scale, we see tractor-driven implements of the same nature and aerial spraying.

In most cases the need for control does not lie with those on the land. I do not see this as a major problem, provided those people are not abusing their rights. The member for Mackay referred to buffer zones. I believe we have to look at just where we start and where we stop in relation to the application of aerial sprays. He also mentioned that some people up there put a little too much in the tank and that householders use too much. In the horticultural area it will be found that this does not happen. Possibly the member for Somerset realises that in his area the farmers are not well enough off to use much more than is absolutely necessary. If they could use half as much, they would be happy to do it, because about the only way they will survive is by cutting costs.

We see that some of the sprays introduced into New South Wales are very effective for a certain crop or for a certain grub or pest. Generally speaking, those sprays come into Queensland under different names or are sold under the counter. That practice is

followed not because they are any more dangerous than the other sprays, but because in Queensland, unlike New South Wales or Victoria, it has not been proved that they might control, say, white butterfly or fruit fly. If we could keep abreast of interstate operations and do our tests as readily here as they are done interstate, we could possibly achieve greater overall control of the application of sprays.

I went to a local store in Kallangur that sells garden products and that type of thing. Most people would be shocked to learn what sort of sprays are available and how many sprays are being used in the backyards of Brisbane and every provincial city and small town. The store carried on the shelf insecticides and fungicides. There was 2,4,5-T in small bottles, 2,4-D, methyl arsonate, Rogor 40, dieldrin 15, endrin 20, kelthane, lindane, diazinon, lebaycid, metasystox, B.H.C. and others. These particular sprays are just as lethal to the human being, I should imagine, as 2,4,5-T. My whole point is that we are having a look at the people who have to use 2,4,5-T in big expanses of country where there is the possibility of drift, although it is not nearly as great as people believe. I do not think the damage is nearly as great as people believe it is. I will point that out afterwards from some figures that I have here.

It has been recommended that dieldrin be taken off the market. It creates one of the biggest problems with fish when it gets into streams. It has been used for the control of earth-born insects in cane and pineapples. I believe that that spray is pretty dangerous after it leaches out of the soil. I have used it for many years—I have practically bathed my hands in it at different times—and I do not think it is dangerous in that way; but it would have to be one of the worst from the point of view of the environment.

I turn now to fungicides. On the shelf were maned, cuprox and that type of thing. Maned is possibly one of the most dangerous types of fungicide spray that could be used. It is very irritating to the nose and I believe that people have been poisoned from it.

It will be found that most farmers or other people on the land control the storage of their sprays. On the other hand, I have been to people's garages—they say, "Look at this. I have just been doing the car up."—and I have seen sitting on the shelf one small container of 2,4,5-T with the lower end of the can rusted out, and the fluid leaking and starting to drip. A little further along there will be a can of dieldrin. Obviously he has been doing some spraying for grubs on his cabbages. Nine times out of 10, because he does not know how to use the spray, it will not control the grub in his garden.

I believe control is needed. I would hate anybody to think that I believe we should have an open-ended arrangement with sprays. What I am trying to say is that most of the cockies know damned well what spraying is all about. We may find eventually that some

of them should sit for a small test like those who are operating the sprays constantly. I quite agree and the Minister is glancing up this way, possibly thinking to himself that it is not designed to overcome that problem; that it is designed for those people who are contract spraying and that sort of thing. In these big areas being covered by contract sprayers, they are responsible. The farmers are responsible people. The area that I am talking about is the one that we have not looked at. I believe that we must look at it very closely. I do not think that we should control the people who are trying to make a quid off the land if we are going to let everybody in the street go mad.

Earlier in my speech I mentioned strychnine, which can be purchased. It is possibly one of the substances most used by people who decide that their neighbour's dog is not the sort of animal that they want around the place. Anybody who has seen a dog die from strychnine poisoning knows how painful a death it is. If a person wants to poison his neighbour's dog, he can use plenty of other sprays or poisons that would knock the dog over in two minutes, and it would not know that it had been hit. I have been saying that these are the sort of substances that people have been handling in their backyards all of the time and have not known how dangerous they are. I am 100 per cent correct in my statement because these sprays are dangerous in their raw state and people are using them in their backyards all of the time, yet we are now trying to protect the people in the backyards by not allowing spray to drift from a farmer's property. It just does not add up.

I should now like to quote from an article on the tests that were carried out in New South Wales and New Zealand. The Minister will be quite well aware of them. This article shows how dangerous 2,4,5-T is compared with other substances I referred to earlier. TCDD contains dioxin. The article reads—

"TCDD is, without doubt, one of the most toxic chemicals ever discovered. In fact, depending on the species of animal tested, TCDD is between 5,000 and 500,000 times more toxic than 2,4,5-T itself. However, 2,4,5-T contains no more than one part of TCDD per 10 million parts of 2,4,5-T.

"This means that for a person to consume a fatal dose of TCDD he would have to consume, at the same time, between 20 and 2,000 lethal doses of 2,4,5-T.

"An analogous situation occurs with seawater. We know that the oceans contain a lot of mercury and arsenic, both of which are highly toxic to man, but long before we could consume a fatal dose of either arsenic or mercury, we would have died from the effects of the salt."

That explains what I am talking about. For a person to consume the amount of TCDD that would knock him over, he would have to consume an awful lot of 2,4,5-T.

**Mr. Warburton** interjected.

**Mr. KRUGER:** I will mix it properly if the honourable member wants to have a drink of it.

The Environmental Protection Agency has conducted several tests. This article reads—

“The EPA Advisory Committee further concluded that these chemicals were more embryotoxic in mice, producing a low to moderate frequency of a specific malformation, cleft palate. Mice are particularly susceptible to cleft palate when the pregnant female is subjected to a variety of stresses and chemicals. For example, cleft palate may be caused by aeroplane rides on days 12 and 13 of pregnancy.

“Many other chemicals including aspirin and vitamin A cause malformations far more serious than cleft palate. Aspirin, for example, has caused amongst other malformations, defects of the heart in rhesus monkeys, which are somewhat closer to man from an embryological and reproductive point of view than mice.”

The point that I am making is that the sprays I am talking about are very dangerous but, in the main, they are controlled and are mixed properly.

The article then goes on to say that a woman would have to drink a fantastic amount of water to be affected if her roof was sprayed at a full rate of application from an aircraft. No person would drink more than a small proportion of the volume quoted.

**Mr. Bertoni:** Don't you think she would become bloated?

**Mr. KRUGER:** Yes. I would think she would die of bloat long before she would die of the poison. That is quite a possibility. Most women would not like to die of bloat. Anyway, most women who start to worry about this problem are half-bloated. Honestly, the situation is quite clear to me, having gone through these sprays—

**Mr. Booth:** You could have fooled us.

**Mr. KRUGER:** Possibly the honourable member is easily fooled. I have been quite serious in talking about the outcome of the use of these sprays, even though I might have caused a laugh on a couple of occasions.

The fact is that most of the poisons we are worrying about are not nearly as toxic or dangerous as the ones people use continually in their backyards. These are people who do not know how to use or control such poisons and just leave them to leach away. I have seen people in their yards pouring 2,4,5-T out of a watering can. They do not spray it in mist form, as is normal, but actually pour it out of a watering can. They do this because it is very convenient to pour it out of a watering can and wet patches of weed they do not want in their lawns. One can go to many yards around Brisbane and

see little dead patches in lawns. I would point out that they represent not where the female of the canine species has been squatting, but where 2,4,5-T has been used to kill a little patch of weeds. Then as soon as a storm hits, the chemical drifts across into the next yard. People are not too worried about that, but if a farmer sprays a patch of cane next door to some old lady's front yard and it drifts across into the yard, all hell breaks loose.

People just do not want to cop it if somebody else does it. It is the old, old story. As the Minister goes through this exercise of trying to gain some control over chemical spraying, I trust that he is looking at all the right angles. I have seen him nod approval of a couple of things I said earlier, so possibly his intentions are correct. My contribution has been concerned mainly with the chemicals used in a very loose and open manner by people who are not qualified to use them and I hope that this aspect also is looked at.

**Mr. JONES (Cairns)** (11.26 p.m.): Obviously the original legislation introduced in 1966 has not been entirely successful, or we would not be amending it at this time. Perhaps we ought to be looking at comparable legislation in other States, as we did when the Act was first introduced. If the board set up to control the distribution of chemicals by aircraft and on the ground has failed in this regard, perhaps we should look to see whether it has failed in other respects as well. I also wonder about the amount of compensation that has been paid for loss or damage through negligence. The Minister said that there had been a minimum number of complaints and that the purpose of this Bill was merely to ensure the more correct recording of amounts sprayed.

I suggest that the Act has no teeth, and from the Minister's introduction of this Bill I do not see that we are going to improve the situation by simply recording more data. It appears to me from the experiences I have had in my area that the effects of aerial and ground spraying, to use the Minister's words, have caused a great deal of concern to the public and a great deal of heartbreak to people in my electorate and surrounding districts. If we accept, as the Minister believes, that these new methods of reporting and the increased powers of inspectors will in some way control the usage of the chemicals merely by the mechanics of the operation, I feel that we will fail as we did in 1966.

I believe we could make some progress by taking samples of chemicals before they are used—something that has not been done before. We have heard all sorts of stories about the way compounds are mixed on the tarmacs of aerodromes in the heat of the day and how chemicals are not always measured correctly. Maybe this is part of the problem. I do not know; I am merely a layman, and I only relate to the Committee tonight the concern felt by the people of

Far North Queensland. If these sprays are not being properly applied, we ought to do something about it. The practice of mixing them and putting in one extra for the pot is not good enough.

We have heard all sorts of stories about the detrimental effect that 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T have on unborn children. We have heard all sorts of defences of these herbicides from various people, but in other States their use or sale has been banned. The problem that confronts us tonight is that the spraying of herbicides entails too many uncertainties. There have been birth abnormalities and there has been damage to trees, gardens and orchards. Animals have died. Sudden sickness has occurred in both adults and children. Mild and major respiratory difficulties have been encountered. Reports on these matters have come in too often and they are too widespread to be discounted. There are too many uncertainties in this regard.

As I said, the use of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D has been banned in certain towns in Victoria. They are the first Australian towns to outlaw them. Their use has been suspended in the United States and Great Britain while inquiries are made into safety factors. Their use has been completely banned in Holland, Italy and Sweden. As there is some doubt about the effect of the continued use of these herbicides, I believe that there is room for us to say, "Put a ban on them until we are certain that they have no detrimental effect on human beings."

Of course, there has been a continuing use of D.D.T., which was once considered safe. Its use was halted in some countries mainly because of public outcry. The protectors and defenders of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D say that a link cannot be established between the herbicides and human birth defects. What worries me is that nobody seems to be accountable. When a member writes to the Minister for Primary Industries, he refers him to the Minister for Health. The Minister for Health then refers him to somebody else. We are forced into a corner, we get diverse opinions, but still it goes on, and concern is felt by the people.

These herbicides contain TCDD or dioxin which, when subjected to heat, is responsible (it has been admitted) for causing birth defects in laboratory animals. Surely there must be reason for concern in Far North Queensland when the mixing of these herbicides is not supervised in the heat of summer.

The contaminant TCDD is formed in the manufacture of 2,4,5-T, and apparently it is a dangerous dioxin that causes abnormalities in births. There have been examples in North Queensland of certain exotic fruits being affected by such sprays. Papaw trees have died; tomato bushes have wilted and died; bananas have been similarly affected. The damage to these plants has been dramatic when spray has drifted onto them. Trees that have been subjected to the sprays have remained deformed for a long period and deformities have also occurred in fruit. The

official view continues to be that there is no connection, yet the Department of Primary Industries in Cairns warns people against the consumption of contaminated fruit or fruit from trees that are deformed. I do not think that anyone in North Queensland would want to eat such fruit, but the warning must reflect the hazards.

There was quite a furore in Cairns when obstetricians, gynaecologists and local medical practitioners expressed concern about the high incidence of birth abnormalities in the Cairns area. As far as they were concerned, it could be attributed to the use of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D sprays. Charge and counter-charge was made, and the concern still remains and is felt in Cairns. They quoted birth abnormalities as high as 6 per cent in Cairns. That was later denied by the Minister for Health, who quoted other figures.

Again it is the old story about lies, damned lies and statistics. Figures can be used in whatever way one wishes to use them. Whether it is in the Cairns area, the greater Cairns area or the Cape York Peninsula area, people have come to my office and to my home and expressed concern about the situation. People who work in domiciliary nursing positions have come to me and expressed their concern about the high incidence of birth abnormalities in Cairns. They seem to be prevalent in the northern perimeter suburbs, Bayview Heights/Earlville and West Cairns areas, which immediately adjoin a cane-growing area, and if they are not being caused by spray drift, the people of Far North Queensland want to know what is causing them. Should not there be some sort of investigation to find out what is causing these abnormalities, if they are not being caused by 2,4-D or 2,4,5-T?

It appears to the layman, to the people affected, to the parents and grandparents of the children who are malformed, that there is something dramatically wrong with the situation in my area, and I think it is the responsibility of the Government of this State to find out what it is. If these sprays are being banned in Victoria and New South Wales until the authorities are sure about them, if they are being banned completely in overseas countries, and if the use of them is being suspended in Great Britain and the U.S.A., surely it is right and proper for the Queensland Government, through either the Minister for Primary Industries or the Minister for Health, to accept responsibility to investigate the situation in my area.

The same thing has happened in other parts of Australia. Once again the anomalies are the same and the blame is the same. We cannot be convinced otherwise until someone comes up with a scientific solution to the problem in layman's terms. It is not good enough to say that there is not conclusive evidence that sprays have caused the trouble. There is a cause and we must look a little more deeply for it than we have been looking in the past few years.

There are alternatives to 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. I refer to extracts from the "Queensland Agricultural Journal" of July-August 1978, Volume 104, No. 4. A warning is given on page 343 as follows—

"Care must be taken using these chemicals as both can cause damage to crops from spray drift."

That is relevant to an article which states on page 340—

"Lantana . . . stretches from central New South Wales to Cooktown . . . can be poisonous to cattle and can render areas useless for grazing."

On page 341 it states—

"Either of two herbicides can be used—namely dichlorprop and 2,4-D amine. Dichlorprop is available only as 'D.P.60', which contains 60% of active constituent. Several commercial preparations of 2,4-D amine are available, most of which contain 50% of 2,4-D.

"Water is used as the carrier for both herbicides. Dilution rates are 1 part of D.P.60 to 200 parts of water, or 1 part of 2,4-D amine (50% product) to 250 parts of water."

The point I make is that that article, at page 343 and 344, states—

"D.P.60 costs about 60% more than 2,4-D amine 50. However in this trial (meaning the research carried out at the Helidon District on lantana) D.P.60 gave a 10% better kill. Other trials conducted by the Sir Alan Fletcher Research Station on different types of lantana, have given more consistent and much higher kills with D.P.60 than with 2,4-D.

"Overall, D.P.60 has proved to be the most consistent and effective herbicide for lantana control. The better original kill results in less chemical usage and less labour in follow-up spot sprays.

"D.P.60 is available as a direct purchase from the Lands Department railed freight free to the nearest railhead in Queensland . . .

"Alternatively D.P.60 can be obtained from Shire Councils or through District Land Offices. 2,4-D herbicides can be purchased from the same sources or commercially."

So indeed there are alternatives, and the Minister and the Government ought to be looking at them.

Reflected in what I have said, and what I want to conclude on is this: a petition was circulated in my area with the result that 3,560 citizens of Queensland prayed that the Parliament of Queensland would take such measures to ensure that the State of Queensland would ban from use in Queensland the chemical sprays 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T and any others that may cause injury and/or damage to human, animal or plant life. You would know, Mr. Kaus, that it is not an easy task to collect 3,500 signatures on a

petition. Yet on this occasion people swarmed in to sign the petition because of their concern and because they wanted to register a protest. They want to see action taken by the Government in relation to this matter because as they see it, and as I see it, it poses a threat to human life. Tonight I reflect their concern.

I trust that the Minister will take to Cabinet my proposition that, until such time as we can be given definite assurances that these sprays are not harmful to humans and will not affect unborn children, they should be banned. They have been banned in other States and overseas. So I urge the Minister to take my proposition to Cabinet and to ensure that bans are imposed. If he cannot convince Cabinet of the need to apply such bans, people who use these sprays improperly should initially be fined heavily.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. ROW** (Hinchinbrook) (11.46 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill simply because I believe the Act is an honest document based on known facts at the time. In making amendments to the Act in the light of experience gained in this rather new field of application of chemicals in agriculture, the Minister and his officers have shown a responsible attitude.

I can understand quite readily the concern felt by people who fear the effects of the widespread use of mysterious chemicals. Their concern is quite understandable, partly because of the dramatic manner in which agricultural aviation is carried out. Aero-planes swoop at low level in the vicinity of populated areas and in doing so create a dramatic effect. When something is released from such an aircraft, the drama is multiplied. I have no doubt, however, that a lot of the problems that arise in relation to the distribution and control of chemicals and their so-called side effects are psychological.

I have had a long association with agricultural sprayers. I am a licensed pilot and practise flying with agricultural aviators. As well, I am patron of an aero club. I have a close association with some of the most experienced, conscientious and responsible agricultural pilots in Australia. Without fear of contradiction, I can say that those men who carry out these operations have, in a very short space of time, brought the application of safety factors in the spraying of chemicals by air to a most advanced stage. In fact, one of the operators in my electorate, a man whom I regard as probably the leading agricultural spray operator in Queensland, has invented a smoke device that is now being made available and fitted to all agricultural aircraft. It gives a clear indication of the drift propensity of any agricultural spraying operation before it is proceeded with. If a device such as this is used properly, as I am sure it will be, it is unlikely that in the future the problem of drift will continue to be a serious one.



I have found in my electorate, where spraying is carried out extensively in the sugar industry, that it has been an entirely successful project. There must be, of course, some understanding of the general nature of the chemical used. One thing we cannot afford to overlook is that safe foliar translocated selective hormone weedicides represent one of the greatest developments of agriculture in the world. But for the availability of these products, agriculture would be sadly diminished by noxious weeds and other pests that can no longer be expeditiously controlled by labour-intensive methods, simply because of the cost.

I have had a lot of experience with these chemicals. I have used them myself extensively in farming operations. I have accidentally sprayed myself with them. I have not suffered any ill-effects that I can detect. I am not saying that it is impossible for anything to be wrong with them, but I believe that there is a measure of safety far greater than we ever enjoyed with some of the erosive arsenical sprays that were used quite extensively in this country for many years. Probably the residue of some of those is still around in far more dangerous proportions than any of the modern chemicals we are using these days.

This causes me to have grave doubts about the accuracy of some of the statements that have been made about the element of human risk, particularly in relation to child deformity that has been promoted so much by antagonists of agricultural aviation chemical practices. I do not believe that there is any real foundation for these fears. Until those allegations have been proven, I am not prepared to accept that they are major factors to be considered. I know an agricultural pilot's wife who for many years has helped him in his operations. At the same time she has reared a family of children, who are now grown up. That woman has told me herself that she has inhaled, been sprayed by and been closely associated with these chemicals for many years. Neither she nor her family has suffered any noticeable ill-effects. So on the other side of the ledger there are stories equally convincing.

**Mr. Jones:** That is what the U.S. troops using defoliants in Vietnam said, but they are now suffering very badly in America.

**Mr. ROW:** There is another element that can be brought into this. The defoliation of large areas of country in the manner referred to by the honourable member for Cairns could have all sorts of side-effects in altering the biological set-up in those areas. There could be some other biological reason for people suffering side-effects that is not directly attributable to the chemical or the element itself. We have to consider that factor. That is an entirely different type of

operation without the benefits of the regulations we have had and are now proposing. In this type of argument, it is no good trying to compare wartime operations with ordinary civil applications.

One of the things that concern me most about the present situation is that aerial spray operators could be wrongly blamed for damage to crops caused by spray drift when the damage was probably caused by another operator who is not obliged under the regulations to record his operations. This must be considered a major factor in creating some of the fears that are attributed to aviation yet are not attributable to it at all.

I should like greater emphasis to be placed on the requirement to log operations and to have the same conditions apply to all users of agricultural sprays. Spot sprayers are not compelled to maintain the same records as aerial applicators and they could be guilty of contamination. Another factor is that many operators could be tempted to keep false records once they realise that they could be accused of causing damage that has resulted from somebody else's actions. This needs to be looked at very closely so that all operators can be brought under the same provisions.

Certain authorities are recommending buffer zones. If they are created they could prejudice the effectiveness and the economy of crop pest control by making inroads into the economic operation of aerial spraying. We have to watch the creation of buffer zones and not let it get out of hand and cause serious economic problems in agricultural weed control.

Another point that should be explained is the allegation that operators are inclined to make the mixtures stronger than recommended. I do not think that any operator who is tendering and competing in a competitive market could afford to do anything but use the optimum amount of chemicals in his mixtures. Some of the techniques now used by aerial operators, such as the use of superfine sprays, makes the necessity for accuracy so great that they could not divert from the specifications laid down. One of the greatest problems with agricultural chemicals is the impurities that arise from manufacture and are not attributable to the main elements in the chemicals. We should make sure that the factories that produce and sell these substances maintain a high standard of purity.

I do not want to delay the Committee any further. However, a word in defence should be said for the responsible operators who are doing their very best for humanity and the industries that they are required to serve by not polluting the atmosphere.

**[Wednesday, 15 November 1978]**

**Mr. BLAKE** (Bundaberg) (12 midnight): I think that the subject has been very well canvassed but I shall speak briefly in support of the principles of the Bill that strengthen the power of entry and search, sampling and control. I believe that it has been, and always will be, a very difficult operation to supervise and control chemical spraying, particularly aerial spraying. The difficulty also applies to control of the concentrations of chemicals used.

I go along with the argument that probably the best form of control of the concentration of chemical in a spray is the cost factor. I know from my own experience when chemical sprays were first introduced that the cost factor was such that there was a tendency to put a little bit extra in the mixture so that one got a good kill, but the cost factor now is such that I do not think any operator, unless he was particularly inexperienced, would be foolish enough to use a greater concentration of chemical than is necessary because he would put himself out of business very quickly, whether he be a private citizen or a contractor. This applies particularly to the petrochemical sprays because their price has gone sky-high in recent times.

Controls on aerial spraying are very necessary. We have heard people speak about the damage they cause and the difficulty of sheeting home the blame. Because of wind drift and the tendency to use very fine sprays and high concentrations of chemicals, there is no great precision in the placement of chemical sprays from the air. In many cases operators are limited to spraying in the early morning before the wind gets up. I have seen a front move in quite suddenly in the middle of a spraying run and, human nature being what it is, the operator will take the risk of dumping his load before he lands, so it is very necessary indeed that we have regulations that will enable us to sheet home the blame to these people, who can cause very extensive damage.

When I refer to high concentrations, I mean a large percentage of chemical and a small percentage of carrier. Some quite inexplicable damage has resulted from the use of these high concentrations. I have seen chemicals applied quite successfully to crops on the top of a gently sloping hillside with no sign of damage to crops further down the slope. But if there is a heavy fall of rain overnight and it is particularly hot the next day one can smell the vapour rising from the sprayed area and we get what I would call a slide of vapour onto crops that were not previously affected.

Early in the piece I was laughed at for talking about these effects, but now with the practice of spraying high concentrations in the conditions I just described a lot of damage is being caused. In fact, in calm conditions, with no visible wind drift whatsoever, I have seen highly susceptible crops

such as tomatoes and papaws some distance away from a crop being sprayed fold up in what are known as hormonal distortions. It is incredible to think that they have in fact been gassed.

It is very hard to find someone with a detailed knowledge of chemicals and chemical spraying. Even the manufacturers of appliances have to learn from experience. We know that under the existing Act the equipment itself has to be licensed as being suitable. In the early years we used low-pressure high-volume chemical sprays, but then fogging machines were introduced and the instructions issued with those machines stated that it was not the amount of mixture that one put on the crop per acre that counted, but the amount of chemical. So, for the sake of portability, if one needed a pint of chemical to the acre, one needed to mix it with only a pint of water. This sounded like a great idea. It was the manufacturer's recommendation, and that was the manner in which I and other operators started using the fogging equipment.

With fogging, the droplets are very fine particles. One of the faults with this equipment was that one sprayed ahead and then walked through the contaminated area. It is true that it was the amount of chemical per acre that mattered. One literally gassed the plant. One literally gassed oneself as well. I ended up in bed for six weeks with a severe attack of bronchitis, which it was claimed was caused by chemical poisoning.

Although I do not now do this work myself, for the sake of the operators who do it on the farm I have switched over to doing three rows each side with tractor-mounted equipment, which has low pressure and produces big droplets. The spray falls behind the operator. He drives away from the vapour and the contaminated area. This practice is very effective; but, because of the weight factor and the limited dispersion in one run, it is never likely to be adopted for aircraft. So I am afraid that we will always have this very fine misting-type of operation from the air. It is very susceptible to wind drift. As long as these conditions obtain, which they will, we must have stronger controls over the human tendency to take a risk when conditions are not exactly right.

Although I do not know the specific provisions in the Bill, I understand the intention is to have greater control over the use of chemicals and to increase the penalties. It is a very commendable objective to have greater control and greater certainty of placing the blame in the right area when damage occurs to a neighbouring property.

**Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN** (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.7 a.m.), in reply: At this late stage I merely thank honourable gentlemen for their contributions. I think most members would agree that it

would be wise if I were to leave any comments on matters raised by individual members to my speech at the second-reading stage.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 12.10 a.m. (Wednesday).

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