

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 1978

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

TUESDAY, 28 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:—

Margarine Act Amendment Bill;
Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act Amendment Bill;
Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act Amendment Bill.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

REFERRAL OF ALLEGATIONS BY MEMBER FOR WOLSTON AGAINST FIRM, KITCHENS BY "KATHIE"

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to advise that I have received the following letter from Messrs. Seymour, Nulty & O'Connor, solicitors, dated 27 November 1978:—

"The Honourable J. E. H. Houghton,
"The Speaker,
"Legislative Assembly,
"Parliament House,
"Brisbane.

"Dear Sir,

"Re: Kitchens by Kathie

"Re: Frank & Kathie Motley

"We have been instructed by the above-named Frank and Kathie Motley the partners in a firm trading under the business name of 'Kitchens by Kathie' of 131 Wellington Road, East Brisbane to write to you in connexion with certain statements made by R. J. Gibbs the member for Wolston in the Legislative Assembly on the 23rd instant. They have been shown a transcript (unedited) of Mr. Gibb's speech.

"Our clients contend that such statements are largely untrue, misleading and create a completely false impression of our clients and their business. We mention that our clients are presently acquiring a dwelling house property situate at 23

Bodella Street, Norman Park. They instruct us to make an official complaint that the statements referred to constitute an abuse of parliamentary privilege. There can be no doubt but that the statements are defamatory—indeed grossly so, of our clients but Mr. Gibbs as the maker thereof, is protected by the provisions of Section 371 of the Criminal Code.

“We detail below portion of the Statements made by Mr. Gibbs and the true and correct position in relation to the matters he raised:—

“1. Mr. Gibbs says that our clients are directors of the company ‘Kitchens by Kathie’.

“There is no company involved in our clients’ present trading. They are the proprietors of a registered business name ‘Kitchens by Kathie’ and so do not have afforded to them, the protection of any limited liability—such as the formation of a company would provide.

“2. He continued:—

“The two of them were Directors of a company in New South Wales, “Kitchen Discounts of Bankstown”.

“Again, there was never a company registered by the name of Kitchen Discounts during the period our clients or either of them were connected with it. Mr. Frank Motley was a sole trader, trading at Bankstown in New South Wales under the business name of ‘Kitchen Discount House’. That business never went into liquidation. The only trace of truth in the statements made by Mr. Gibbs would be that when so trading, our clients got into some financial difficulties. As a result of this, in March, 1977 they called a meeting of their creditors and the result of this was that one F. Nemeth purchased the business and Frank Motley was kept on as Factory Manager. Not one customer who had ordered a kitchen supplied from this business lost a cent; all had their kitchens fully supplied and installed. Trade Creditors whose debts had been incurred previous to the meeting of Creditors referred to, were paid 25c in the dollar on the amount of their outstanding debts as at the date referred to (March 1977). Subsequently of course, trade creditors and suppliers were paid in full during the period from March to December 1977. The fact that our client was kept on as Factory Manager shows the confidence his creditors had in him.

“3. Mr. Gibbs said:—

“At Christmas 1977, came the grand finale. A convenient fire broke out. The premises burnt down and all stock inside was supposedly burnt. A claim was made on the insurance company and the company paid out on the factory and contents. Lo and behold, Mr. & Mrs. Motley came to Queensland, and established “Kitchens by Kathie” in Wellington Road, East Brisbane and the identical stock from the

showroom in New South Wales was available for purchase. It is still there today. I am told by very reliable people that it would be absolutely impossible to duplicate that kitchen material in Brisbane.’

(a) In December, 1977 our clients were in Brisbane on holidays when about New Year’s Eve, a fire broke out and destroyed certain premises then owned by Mr. Nemeth or one of his companies. Our clients had no interest whatsoever in insurance in relation to the subject premises. They did return to New South Wales on hearing of this fire to assist for a period. Subsequently and since July last they have traded as “Kitchens by Kathie” at Wellington Road, East Brisbane.

(b) The only logical inference and/or innuendo that one could draw from that statement was that our clients obtained stock from premises in New South Wales, then burnt down the premises and criminally removed such stock to Brisbane. This is completely incorrect. All of our clients’ stock in their showroom in Wellington Road, East Brisbane and indeed all of their products made since they commenced business in Queensland on their own behalf (July, 1978) is produced from material purchased in and about this city. A number of their suppliers are:—

Laminex Industries
Formica
E. Jones & Co.

“4. Mr. Gibbs continued saying:—

‘At the present time the company is taking sizeable deposits from people and banking them at the National Bank at the Fiveways, Wooloongabba. They are not being banked in a Trust Account but in a trading account which I understand Mr. Motley draws on from day to day.’

“It is correct that our clients bank at the National Bank of Australasia Limited, but they do operate a Trust Account as well as a business account with that Bank. We enclose for your information, copy of the letter of the Bank dated the 24th November, 1978. They did so, to comply with the provisions of the Contractors’ Trust Account Acts 1974 to 1978.

“5. Mr. Gibbs continues that he understands that our clients obtain a deposit of 60% and 40% of the purchase price on finalisation. In fact our clients’ standard procedure (subject to variation in individual cases) is to accept payment for orders as follows:—

- (a) 33½% on order
- (b) 56½% on delivery, and
- (c) 10% seven days after completion.

"The taking of a deposit is necessary in this type of business because once an order is placed, materials have to be purchased and cut to a specific size.

"They will not necessarily fit any other premises and accordingly can lose their value if a purchaser defaults. Our clients do not construct in their Brisbane business any modular kitchens, but rather tailor make them.

"It is the submission of our clients that this is a classical case of abuse of parliamentary privilege. It is their intention to challenge Mr. Gibbs to make any and all of the statements outside of the House. If he will take up this challenge they will sue him in an appropriate Court of law. No doubt he will decline their invitation.

"Our clients would make available their Bank Statements for audit by any accountant who can verify the foregoing statements. They would further authorise any suitable person to discuss their business with the Manager of the National Bank of Australia Woolloongabba.

"Statements of the type made by Mr. Gibbs tend to bring the whole Parliament into disrepute within the community. We respectfully suggest that this is a suitable case for examination by the Parliamentary Privilege Committee."

The following letter is attached:—

"The National Bank
of Australasia Limited
Woolloongabba: Fiveways Branch.
"P.O. Box 11,
"Woolloongabba. Qld. 4102

"In reply please refer to AVW:RE

"November 24, 1978.

"Messrs. Seymour, Nulty & O'Connor,
"Solicitors,
"9th Floor,
"I.A.C. Building,
"Cnr. Queen & George Streets,
"Brisbane. Qld. 4000

"Dear Sirs,

"This is to certify that on the 20th July, 1978, an account No. 148 1712 was opened at The National Bank of Australasia Limited, Woolloongabba, styled 'Kitchens by Kathie Materials Trust Account'.

"This account has been most operative since that date, and remains current in our records.

"Yours faithfully,

"A. V. Watson,
"Manager."

I believe that this material should be referred to the Committee of Privileges for any further action and for it to make any report to Parliament that it considers desirable.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Land Administration Commission, including reports of the Superintendent of Stock Routes and the Brisbane Forest Park Advisory Planning Board, for 1977-78.

Registrar of Friendly Societies, for 1977-78.

Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies, for 1977-78.

Comptroller-General of Prisons, for 1977-78.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

Torres Strait Islanders Act 1971-1975.

Aborigines Act 1971-1975.

Orders in Council under—

Electricity Act 1976.

Harbours Act 1955-1976.

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959-1974.

City of Brisbane Market Act 1960-1978.

Co-ordination of Rural Advances and Agricultural Bank Act 1938-1969.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1976.

Stock Act 1915-1976.

Wheat Pool Act 1920-1972.

River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1977.

Water Act 1926-1976.

Metropolitan Transit Authority Act 1976.

State Transport Act 1960-1972.

Regulations under—

Queensland Marine Act 1958-1975.

The Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937.

Brands Act 1915-1975.

Meat Industry Act 1965-1977.

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1976.

Co-operative Housing Societies Act 1958-1974.

Audit Inspector's Report on the Books and Accounts of the Metropolitan Transit Authority for 1977-78.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return showing all payments made by the Government to barristers and solicitors in the 1977-78 financial year, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received, separately.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

ADVISORY COMMISSION'S REPORT ON STATUTES
AND POLICIES AFFECTING ABORIGINES AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

Hon. C. R. PORTER (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.11 a.m.): An advisory commission, comprising representatives of reserve and urban Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders, and South Sea Islanders, was set up some 18 months ago to advise the Minister in this portfolio on policy matters in general, and in particular on what should be done as regards the relevant Acts affecting the Aborigines and the Islanders of the Strait's communities.

This commission has now presented a report to me which reflects the unremitting and dedicated effort they have put into ascertaining a consensus attitude, representing the views of all the communities on what is best for their future well-being.

The report makes a document which should be required reading for every partisan journalist, every land-rights oriented politician and every radical who has tried with might and main (supported by massive funding from mysterious sources) to paint a lurid but utterly inaccurate picture of the relationship between Queensland's indigenous people and the State Government.

The media reporting at all levels that has obtained for most of this year pictured a Queensland system which outrages the requirements of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and is personified as a combination of Simon Legree and Idi Amin. We have been painted as viciously repressive, holding down by brutal official power a cowed indigenous community that wants to escape from our clutches at all costs. This is a monstrous distortion, and the report clearly discloses it is in fact the very reverse of the truth.

The report whole-heartedly endorses Queensland policies, and says they are wanted by the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal and Islander peoples. The peoples plead for continuance of the Queensland policies as administered by my department and see in them the best prospects for their own present and future well-being.

This commission of Aboriginal and Islander representatives specifically rejects calls for land rights, mineral rights and other measures which the indigenous peoples recognise would, in the long term, deny Aboriginal and Islander citizens the right and opportunity to participate fully in the general society.

The commission recommends the substantial continuation of existing State legislation, but with progressive changes to further promote the constantly increasing role which these citizens are already playing, and ought to be encouraged to play, in determining their own future within the broad Queensland society.

The commissioners' report, which is the result of over 15 months of work and extensive consultation with Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and South Sea Islanders throughout Queensland, is the most comprehensive and objective inquiry ever undertaken by indigenous peoples themselves to determine the wishes of their own people.

I would remind the House that this commission has been recognised by the Commonwealth Government and by the organisations it funded; by State instrumentalities, political parties, other organisations and by individuals. All of these made extensive submissions to it.

The commission has asked that its report be presented to Parliament. Although in strict terms it is a report to me as Minister, nevertheless I am taking the unusual step of tabling the report in this Parliament, so that it will then become a public document, and open to fullest scrutiny. In doing so, I want to stress that this report places on record, for the first time ever, the expressed consensus wishes of the peoples it most concerns—and this is vastly different from views expressed by minority radical groups and by various white persons who purport, on casual knowledge, to speak on behalf of these Queensland citizens.

Following its tabling, the opportunity will be taken to send this report to all major media outlets throughout Australia, asking them, as a matter of elementary fair play, to give the true story coming from Queensland's indigenous peoples themselves some space, as a modest redressing of the intemperate imbalance that has appeared in most of their reporting hitherto.

Mr. Speaker, I table a copy of the report and have arranged for further copies to be made available to the Clerk for those honourable members who desire one.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the report on the table.

LAND DEALINGS AND BUSINESS INTERESTS OF
THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND MAIN ROADS

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (11.16 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table certain papers and documents and to make some further specific comments to rebut allegations made in an article in last week's "National Times", and by the member for Archerfield (Mr. Kevin Hooper) in respect of land transactions involving me and my family at Coomera.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston. Anybody who interjects will be dealt with under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. HINZE: They have claimed that I have received certain public lands at Coomera for nothing, in some sort of contrived conspiracy or special deals with the Albert Shire Council and the Land Administration Commission.

I already have denied these scurrilous allegations publicly and I seek now to table certain material to show further that this article, and the simultaneous and following statements by the honourable member for Archerfield, presented a deliberately distorted and incomplete picture of transactions involving the subject land, as part of a contrived effort to smear and publicly discredit me and my family.

The inferences and allegations made by "The National Times", and by the honourable member, were that two blocks of land (one of about one acre owned by the Albert Shire Council, and the other involving a public road reserve area of about 10 acres) were transferred to me at no cost; in other words, I allegedly was given public land for nothing.

I now proceed to table documentary evidence to prove that these allegations are completely false on both counts—evidence that both "The National Times" and the honourable member could have availed themselves of, and presented to the public, if they had chosen to have any regard for the truth. Firstly, however, I table a map similar to that featured in "The National Times" article of 25 November, but showing the facts in relation to all of the land, and all the transactions involving the Coomera area in question.

I table this map as Appendix "A" to my ministerial statement.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the map on the table.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I hope they don't bounce like your cheque.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member does not behave himself, I will bounce him out.

Mr. HINZE: Other documents that I will table will prove conclusively that Block B on this tabled map (which "The National Times" and the honourable member have alleged that I was given for nothing by the Albert Shire Council) was in fact exchanged for Block E on the map. This type of land exchange between landholders and local authorities is commonplace throughout Australia, of course. It happens almost everyday; there is nothing either unusual or irregular about it.

In my view, the land I transferred to the council (Block E, which is a riverfront parkland area) was at the time (and I believe still is) more valuable and usable land than the council land transferred to

me in exchange (Block B). So rather than getting something for nothing, it could be said that I lost on the exchange.

I now table documentary evidence from the files of the Albert Shire Council to substantiate what I have said.

I table these documents as Appendix "B".

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the documents on the table.

These documents also refer to relevant land transfers and road closure procedures to which I will refer later.

In relation to Block C on the tabled map (again, land which "The National Times" and the honourable member have claimed that I received for nothing), I will table evidence in the form of a document from the files of the Land Administration Commission to show that in fact I paid the amount of \$5,500 for the land, at the rate of \$500 per acre. This land includes a former road reserve, which I understood at the time had been transferred to me previously in exchange for other land resumed from other parts of my property for Albert Shire Council road purposes (land marked G on the tabled map).

This proved not to be the case, and I subsequently initiated an application for closure of this former road reserve and negotiations to buy this land, to consolidate my land holdings in the area, as per the tabled map.

After all the necessary advertising, objections, and other procedures involving myself, the Albert Shire Council and the Lands Department were undertaken, the road closure was subsequently approved. The purchase price that I paid, \$500 an acre, was recommended by a Lands Department valuer, endorsed by the then Lands Commissioner, and passed by the then chief assessor of that department.

Land Administration Commission records further show that, at the time, the views of the Main Roads Department and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland were taken into consideration also, as well as the requirements of the Albert Shire Council.

The closure of this former road reserve, in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act, was published in the Government Gazette of 6 April 1974 (before I became a Minister in this Government). A new deed of grant for the land, including the closed road reserve and containing an amended area of 4.758 hectares (or about 10 acres), was forwarded to the Registrar of Titles, Brisbane, on 23 May 1974 for enrolment.

I tender, as proof of the fact that I did not receive the former road reserve land (Block C on the tabled map) for nothing, a document from the Land Administration Commission files showing that I bought it at

the rate of \$500 an acre—the valuation set by that department itself. I table that as Appendix “C”.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the document on the table.

I refer the honourable members' attention also to the fact that the tabled map shows a thin strip of land (Block G), which I surrendered to the Albert Shire Council for road purposes, and another parcel of land (Block F), which was given by the Hinze family to the Church of England (and, in fact, a church still stands there). I would point out that, apart from the inaccuracies in respect of the other blocks of land to which I have just referred, neither of these parcels of land or transactions was referred to or featured in “The National Times” incomplete map and story, in its attempts (with the honourable member for Archerfield) to manufacture some sort of bogus land scandal controversy.

At this juncture, Mr. Speaker, I table a public statement (Appendix “D”) made by the chairman of the Albert Shire Council (Councillor H. D. Muntz) on behalf of the Albert Shire Council and issued to the media on Thursday last, 23 November, and I ask that its contents be incorporated in “Hansard”. I believe this statement sets out the situation accurately and fairly.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the following statement on the table:—

Appendix “D”

“Statement—Albert Shire Chairman, Cr. H. D. Muntz—November 23rd, 1978

“I take this opportunity to reply on behalf of this Council and myself to a story appearing in the latest edition of the national newspaper ‘The National Times’ dated November 25, 1978, to clear the name of this Council, its members, myself and its officers.

“This article sets out to compromise the Minister for Local Government, this Council and the Land Administration Commission in an alleged illegal, ‘shady’, or special deal involving transfers and other transactions concerning land at Coomera owned by the Local Government Minister (Mr. Hinze), and his family.

“Let me say at the outset that I completely deny suggestions of any impropriety of any sort in any part of the transactions involving Mr. Hinze, this Council and the Land Administration Commission in respect of the land in question.

“Every aspect of the negotiations and transactions concerned in dealing over the subject land extending from the 1950's to the mid 1970's is completely in accordance with standard practices and procedures.

“Contrary to suggestions in ‘The National Times’ article and since by the Member for Archerfield in State Parliament (Mr. Kevin Hooper), Mr. Hinze received nothing

for nothing from anybody—and certainly not from this Council as the article and Mr. Hooper have alleged.

“Mr. Hinze has received no special consideration or treatment either by this Council or by the Land Administration Commission in respect of these transactions.

“The history of the Hinze family's involvement in this land extends back many generations.

“The map featured by ‘The National Times’ article in fact is incomplete and did not cover all transactions and transfers within the area—only a distorted picture which the newspaper set out deliberately to present.

“I resent and abhor the tone and the trend of this article, and simultaneous and subsequent allegations by Mr. Hooper (inside Parliament under privilege, and outside it), alleging some sort of crooked conspiracy involving Mr. Hinze, this Council and the Land Administration Commission.

“My association with this Council extends back to the 1950's and I am fully conversant with every aspect of the transactions and negotiations involving this land since then and beyond, from the time the Albert Shire Council notified the Hinze family that it required portion of the land for road purposes.

“The allegations by ‘The National Times’ and Mr. Hooper suggesting that this Council (and the Land Administration Commission) have been party to some special deals or treatment to benefit and abet Mr. Hinze in some type of shady deals are completely scurrilous, baseless, and unwarranted.

“As a long-standing member and now chairman of this Council, I most strongly resent this and I ask ‘The National Times’ and Mr. Hooper for an unqualified retraction of these allegations and aspersions—and a public apology.

“The background to the Coomera land transactions to which ‘The National Times’ refers in its article is as follows:—

“On 9th February, 1973 Council received a letter from Mr. Hinze in which he referred to a verbal agreement made between himself and the late T. E. Peters, Shire Engineer, for the return of the old roads to him in exchange for the area resumed from him for new road purposes.”

“It appears that the new road was dedicated but the old roads were not closed nor transferred to him.

“The road closure would be a matter for the Lands Department.

“At the same time he offered to exchange an equal area of land on the Coomera River for the land shown as B on the plan of ‘The National Times’, owned by the Council.

"This exchange was approved by the Council on 22nd February, 1973. The area on the river bank was subsequently surveyed and transferred to the Council and it holds title to it at this time.

"To my knowledge 'The National Times' has at no time contacted the Council to check the facts before making its allegations.

"I reiterate that there is no foundation whatsoever in 'The National Times' statement that the land was transferred 'in return for a promise to perform certain duties for the Albert Shire Council'.

"Council's records clearly disclose that the land transferred to Mr. Hinze was in exchange for an equal area of land better suited to Council's public purpose."

Mr. Speaker, the facts that I have just outlined, and the documents that I have tabled, provide irrefutable proof that the attacks on me and my family by "The National Times" and the honourable member for Archerfield are completely without foundation, and are both malicious and irresponsible. I suggest that these attacks must now be seen as just another politically motivated, baseless and contrived attempt by the Labor Opposition in this House, and by this newspaper, to smear and discredit me and my family, personally and politically.

I believe that both parties—the newspaper and the honourable member—deserve the strongest rebuke for these unsubstantiated and unwarranted attacks, and I call on the new Opposition leader, Mr. Ed. Casey, to censure the honourable member for Archerfield for these tactics. Personally, I expect, and demand, an unqualified public apology from both the honourable member and "The National Times".

In respect of the newspaper report, I can only describe it as one of the worst examples of journalism that it has been my misfortune to encounter during my 27 years in public office. I deplore the unethical manner in which the authors of the story went about gathering, manufacturing, distorting and featuring their alleged facts for "The National Times" article, a story which, at best, can be described as containing only an ounce of fact among a ton of malicious misrepresentation and distortion.

In this regard, it might interest honourable members to know that, as far back as 12 months ago, the author of "The National Times" article of 25 November, Mr. Denis Reinhardt, was hawking around suggestions of a so-called land scandal at Coomera involving me. At that time, he failed to convince his employers of the moment, the "Nation Review" newspaper, that it should feature the spurious story, which now has come to light in "The National Times". Mr. Reinhardt also attempted to smear me in a similar fashion in an address at Queensland University. So this article in "The

National Times" came as no real surprise to me; in fact, I was warned, a couple of weeks before the article appeared, that such a contrived attack would be made on me, through this newspaper and the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with an undertaking that I gave last week, I also outline to the House the following list of undertakings in which I have a business interest:—

- * The South Coast Co-operative Dairy Association, of which I was chairman for a number of years, and in which I hold 610 ordinary shares and 1,859 bonus shares;
- * I.C.I. Australia Limited in which I hold 53 ordinary shares;
- * A dairy farm at Upper Coomera (operated by a family company) which supplies the metropolitan milk market;
- * Gravel extraction on portion of the family property at Upper Coomera, under a family company receives royalty payments on material extracted by an independent company, Farleigh and Lewers Pty. Ltd.;
- * A rural/residential subdivision on portion of the land referred to this morning and in "The National Times" article of 25 November and shown on the map tabled in this House;
- * Land in Stanley Street, Burleigh Heads, on which I propose to build a block of home units, through a private company, previously referred to in this House;
- * Trotting horses owned either solely, or in partnership.

Mr. Speaker, this provides a summary of what I believe to be all of my business transactions or undertakings in which I have an interest. Members opposite have made a great deal of noise about my revealing my business affairs—

Mr. Burns: Family trusts?

Mr. HINZE: Sure, and family trusts.

Mr. Burns: Are they in there too?

Mr. HINZE: Everything is embodied here. If it is not in here, I will give the honourable member the opportunity to peruse them whenever he likes.

Mr. Burns: I want to see the family trusts.

Mr. HINZE: That's O.K.

Mr. Burns: And milk quotas.

Mr. HINZE: That's O.K. There is nothing to hide, and then I will be having a look at the honourable member's.

Members opposite have made a great deal of noise about my revealing my business affairs and indeed, each of the business interests I have outlined has been the subject of numerous questions, innuendos and false allegations, from time to time, from the

Opposition benches, and from some sections of the media—so they certainly could not be said to be secret.

I have challenged members of the A.L.P. opposite to make a similar declaration of their pecuniary interests. It is significant that to date, despite a lot of huffing and puffing and political propagandising, they have not done so. I repeat the challenge to them, now, to lay their cards on the table, as I have done.

PETITIONS

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM PORNOGRAPHIC CHILD-ABUSE MATERIALS, PUBLICATIONS OR FILMS

Hon. S. D. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Welfare) presented a petition from 170 citizens 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.

QUEENSLAND HOUSING COMMISSION RENTALS

Mr. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) presented a petition from 1,675 citizens of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take the necessary action in the current session to change the policy of the Queensland Housing Commission in relation to housing rent.

Petition read and received.

PROTECTION OF BAT COLONY; CREATION OF MT. ETNA NATIONAL PARK

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) presented a petition from 3,000 citizens of Queensland praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take steps to revoke the mining leases over Mt. Etna/Limestone Ridge to prevent further damage to the caves and bat colony and create a Mt. Etna National Park to include Mt. Etna itself, Limestone Ridge and adjacent areas.

Petition read and received.

LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (11.28 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that I have been elected Leader of the Opposition. I also advise that I have appointed Keith Webb Wright as Leader of Business in the House for the Opposition.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Treasurer): 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 Land Tax Act 1915–1976 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

NURSING STUDIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

HOUSE-BUILDERS' REGISTRATION AND HOME-OWNERS' PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICE

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware of problems created in the School Health Service because it is grossly understaffed?

(2) Is he aware that many School Health Service rooms are far from suitable as they are built under stairs or packed into unused storerooms, etc.?

(3) What is the reason for the removal of fans, heaters, etc., from standard equipment provided in these health rooms?

(4) Have any tests been undertaken into the effect that these hot, cramped conditions in summer and the cold, cramped conditions in winter that exist in many of these rooms have on young pupils?

(5) Has he received any complaints from the service in relation to these conditions, especially as they apply to hearing tests?

(6) Are women members of the service forced to carry up to 70 lb. of equipment when they visit these schools, when the Royal Australian Nursing Federation has told them they should not carry more than 35 lb.?

(7) Is the service able to visit or complete visits to schools determined in the programme each year?

(8) What programme is devised on school health visits, and on how many occasions should a pupil receive a visit from the service during his or her primary schooling?

(9) What was the reason for requiring school nurses to work during the school holidays, thus revoking a privilege held by this service for approximately 60 years?

Answers:—

(1) I am advised that there are three vacant positions for trained nurses.

(2) There has been considerable improvement in facilities for school health staff and discussions have been held on a number of occasions between officers of my department and other relevant Government departments.

(3) Because of the varying climatic conditions in Queensland, it is not practicable to issue an overall list which would be appropriate to all areas of the State. Fans and/or radiators have not been removed from health rooms where these have already been installed.

(4) No.

(5) Yes. A pilot study is being carried out in a school where some of the health room has been treated with acoustic tiles.

(6) No. There is a small collection of central items of equipment and charts which the staff use in their day-to-day work. Other items are used by the staff of their own volition.

(7) No.

(8) The programme consists of examining pre-school children for vision and hearing only, full medical examination of Grades 1 and 7 and seeing reviews and referrals.

(9) Conditions of service are the same for school health sisters as for other nurses employed in the Public Service. For some years they had the privilege of school holidays but only while they could not be gainfully employed during that period. With the growth in school health services, that situation does not now apply.

2. OVERTIME PAYMENTS TO PARLIAMENTARY OFFICERS

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

(1) What provisions exist for the payment of overtime to the Clerk of the Parliament and the various Clerk-Assistants who sit at the centre table when legislation is being passed in the early hours of the morning?

(2) What payment did these officers receive for overtime when the Iwasaki legislation passed through the Parliament and the House adjourned at 6.32 a.m.?

(3) Which officers within the precincts of Parliament House receive overtime payments for work that they perform?

68280—99

Answers:—

(1 & 2) The officers to whom the honourable member refers are employed under the Parliamentary and Reporting Staff Award—State. The award makes no provision for the payment of overtime to such officers. In determining the salaries of these officers, due regard has been taken of the nature of the duties and spread of hours worked.

(3) Parliamentary attendants, refreshment room employees (other than the manageress), clerks and other general staff receive overtime payments. The Speaker's aide receives an allowance in lieu of overtime.

3. REFORESTATION PROGRAMME, RAVENSHOE AREA

Mrs. Kippin, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

(1) In view of the decision to reduce the quotas of timber for individual timber mills now that the Forestry Department has established the sustainable yields for northern forests, will he have his department instigate a reforestation programme in the Ravenshoe area?

(2) Will he further approach the Federal Government to have funds channelled into the reforestation programme, as it will provide considerable employment opportunities for the unemployed and for workers who may be disadvantaged by the reduction in timber industry operations?

Answers:—

(1) Commercial forest types in the Ravenshoe area consist of rain forest and wet sclerophyll hardwood forest. Sound management of these types is being achieved by selective tree-marking, which progressively increases productive capacity of the forests over an extended period. Investigations to date suggest that more intensive management by silvicultural treatment or plantation establishment would be difficult to justify on economic grounds.

(2) Some years ago a case was put to the Commonwealth that funds should be provided for the development of a number of improvement programmes in native forest areas. One area specified was North Queensland rain forests. Although currently rejected, it is anticipated that these proposals will be raised again with the Commonwealth.

4. CANCELLATION OF DRIVERS' LICENCES

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

(1) Is he aware that numerous people in Queensland, such as taxi drivers, truck drivers, plant operators, rural workers and

graziers, many of whom drive in excess of 150 000 km per year, are entirely dependent upon their drivers' licence to make a living and that many of these people are being thrown on the unemployment rolls and are suffering tremendous hardship because of the "nine points and lose your licence" syndrome at present prevailing with regard to traffic offences in Queensland?

(2) Is he also aware of one case in North Queensland where a young man has lost his job as a plant operator because of a series of ridiculously petty offences and that, because of lack of employment opportunities in isolated rural communities and the cost of living in these areas, his family has suffered an actual shortage of food?

(3) In the light of these facts, will he not reject out of hand proposals for a work licence and a more acceptable form of policing traffic offences that will take into account an appeal to the courts and consideration of the annual mileage travelled?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) At the outset I feel I should stress that a drivers' licence is a privilege and not a right, the holding of which depends upon the observance of the traffic laws, which are directed towards greater safety on our roads for all road users.

The honourable member refers to taxi drivers, truck drivers, plant operators and other persons, many of whom drive considerable distances during a year, and in this respect could be regarded as professional drivers. If we look at the professional driver in relation to the rest of the driving community on the basis that he derives his living from the use of the road system as distinct from the so-called "private" driver, who uses the system for domestic or private purposes, then it can be validly advanced that the professional driver has a serious obligation to himself, his dependents and other road users to ensure that his driving habits conform to the code of traffic behaviour which is designed to give the best protection to other road users.

I know it is often argued that, because of the greater time spent in driving, the odds against the involvement of the professional driver in breaches are increased. However, this greater time spent in driving should make him an experienced driver, fully appreciative of the necessity for observing road rules, and better equip him by virtue of driving experience to avoid hazardous practices which create potentially dangerous situations.

From time to time my attention has been drawn to particular cases where it is claimed that the offences committed are of a petty nature but, unfortunately,

the driving history of the person concerned does not necessarily support such a view. I feel I should say that under the demerit points system no action against a drivers' licence is taken arbitrarily. As points are accumulated by a persistent offender, he is first warned and only when it is evident that the warning has been disregarded by the commission of further offences resulting in the accumulation of further points is a show-cause notice issued. Such a notice gives the driver concerned an opportunity of stating his case why the licence should not be suspended or cancelled.

Due regard is given by the adjudicating officer to the nature of the driving carried out and the effect a suspension or cancellation of a licence may have on the person concerned. As a further safeguard, any person who is aggrieved by the decision of the adjudicating officer to suspend or cancel a licence or by the imposition of a condition on a licence may appeal to a Magistrates Court against such suspension, cancellation or modification. The decision upon the appeal of the court is final and binding.

In many cases where such action is not prejudicial to the safety of other road users, a drivers' licence may be modified to allow him only to drive for the purposes of his employment and not otherwise. Again, of course, the period of suspension or cancellation varies according to the traffic history of the offender.

As I stated in the Transport Estimates debate on the 24 October 1978, show-cause actions were instituted against 6,569 drivers, or approximately .065 per cent of the driver population of some one million people. Of these 6,569 drivers, 43 showed cause, 540 had their licences modified to allow them restricted driving for employment purposes, 3,802 had periods of suspension and 2,184 were cancelled.

Some examples of modifications imposed on drivers in provincial cities and towns are—

(a) Restricted to driving between 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, for one month.

(b) Restricted to driving a particular vehicle between 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, for one month.

(c) Restricted to driving between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 7.00 a.m. to 12 noon Saturday for one month.

In case (a) above, the driver had been warned and had committed three separate offences in 11 months. In case (b) above, the driver had received two warnings and committed three separate offences in 21 months. In case (c) above, the driver had been warned and committed four separate offences in 22 months.

As chairman of the Queensland Road Safety Council, I am aware of the responsible attitude to driving displayed by the majority of professional drivers because of the increasing numbers who have been nominated and have qualified for the annual safe-driving awards of the council.

The demerit points system, which has been operating in Queensland since 1963, has met with general public acceptance particularly by the motoring public and it is recognised by responsible members of the community, who have welcomed it as making an important contribution to the objective of improving safety on our roads.

Experience has shown that the quantum of points allocated in respect of each type of offence is appropriate to the degree of danger involved. In no way could I agree that the accumulation of nine points in a period of two years would be for petty offences.

In balance, what might be regarded as hardship to a particular driver or his family must surely be looked at in the light of the greater hardship that would be caused to him or his family, apart from other road users, if a continuation of his disregard of the law resulted in at serious traffic incident causing death or injury.

5. EFFECT ON SOFT-DRINK MANUFACTURERS OF POLICIES OF A.C.I. LTD.

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

(1) Is he aware that the monopolist glass company A.C.I. Ltd.'s restrictive policy towards small soft-drink manufacturers has forced one northern manufacturer out of small soft-drink production and forced many smaller manufacturers to recycle non-recyclable bottles?

(2) Is he also aware that this company's supposedly non-returnable bottle has a slightly lower explosion rate on recycling than its returnable bottles and that, whilst this situation might considerably help this manufacturer's glass sales, it is creating a dangerous and costly litter problem as well as inflating soft-drink costs, discriminating against country people, who have to pay rail freight charges on all new bottles, and is slowly destroying the small soft-drink manufacturers in the country centres of the State?

(3) In the light of these facts, will he look favourably upon proposals being considered to rectify this and related problems?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I am not aware of the policies of Australian Consolidated Industries towards small soft-drink manufacturers and

in this regard the honourable member may care to take the matter up with my colleague the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services, who may be able to institute inquiries. So far as the explosion rate on recycling of supposedly non-returnable bottles is concerned, I would advise the honourable member that the Inspection of Machinery Act requires all bottling machinery to be adequately guarded and, in the event of an explosion of a bottle at the bottling stage, the operator of the machinery would be required to be protected.

If the honourable member is aware of any instances where employees operating bottling machinery have been injured through bottle explosions, I would be grateful if he would supply details to me, whereupon I will have the matter thoroughly investigated.

As I indicated to the honourable member in this House on 19 April 1978 when he asked me a question regarding the clean-up of cans and bottles on the Flinders Highway adjacent to Charters Towers, any matters relating to the litter problem because of bottles are ones which he should direct to my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

In summary, I suggest that the honourable member should initially raise this matter with my colleague the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services and if subsequently I am able to assist in any aspect which comes under my ministerial control I will be pleased to do so.

6. PROMOTION OF CLERKS OF THE COURT TO MAGISTRACY

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

Will he assure the clerks of the courts throughout country areas that recent moves to open the door to magistrateship to private solicitors are rumours only and that their chances of promotion after many years in outback places are not jeopardised, as they would be if Brisbane seat-polishers who have no experience beyond the Brisbane line were appointed to the positions of magistrate, which would usually go to one of the clerks of the court?

Answer:—

At present there is no intention of appointing solicitors in private practice as stipendiary magistrates. I would draw the honourable member's attention to my answer to a question from the honourable member for Rockhampton on 10 October 1978.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MAREEBA MEETING OF EX-CRIMINALS AND A.L.P. PARLIAMENTARIAN

Mr. TENNI: I ask the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police: Is he aware of a meeting held in Mareeba at the week-end? Is he also aware that present at this meeting were prominent A.L.P. members, six ex-criminals from Stuart Prison and a prominent North Queensland Labor parliamentarian? Is he also aware that free food, beer and drugs were consumed at this meeting? Is he also aware that one of these ex-criminals was a fellow named Burns, who, I am reliably informed, signed a statement claiming that I am involved in the trafficking of drugs in North Queensland? Will the Minister institute an immediate inquiry into these allegations, and advise the House of the following—

(1) Who is this fellow Burns? (I am not referring to the former Leader of the Opposition.)

(2) Is he from the Atherton Tableland area, and is he on bail awaiting trial for drug offences?

(3) Is he a financial member of the A.L.P.?

(4) Has he any previous convictions and, if so, what are they?

(5) Are any other members of his family involved in drug trafficking?

(6) Who was the prominent North Queensland A.L.P. parliamentarian who attended this meeting?

Mr. CAMM: I am aware that members of the A.L.P. do attend political meetings and other meetings throughout Queensland, and I am also aware that following a number of these meetings—I am not able to say whether there is any connection or not—there has been instituted in the region in which the particular meeting was held a scurrilous campaign of innuendo and accusation against the local member. If the honourable member has information that a meeting was held last week-end, I commend him for bringing it to the notice of the House so that we can see whether, following it, there are the same sort of scurrilous and scandalous attacks that have followed previous meetings of members of the A.L.P. throughout Queensland. If this does occur, it will only be a confirmation of our suspicions. It would be a shame if the A.L.P. were to degenerate into a political party that engages in character assassination rather than considered criticism of the present Government.

I will have the remaining parts of the question examined in so far as my ministerial responsibility is concerned, and answer them as a question on notice tomorrow.

TRINITY BAY HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. TENNI: In directing a question to the Minister for Works and Housing, I note that money has been set aside in the Budget for

additions to the Trinity Bay High School. I now ask the Minister when will construction of the first-year centre commence?

Mr. WHARTON: The honourable member would recall that I visited Cairns and district earlier this year in company with him and the honourable member for Cairns. I went to the Trinity Bay High School and observed the need for a first-year centre. At that time funds were not available to proceed with the work, but I did assure those present that I would endeavour to have the centre included in the 1978-79 works programme. Accordingly, I have indicated that tenders will be called in February 1979.

AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION INFLUENCE IN AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

Mr. LANE: As the Premier is absent, I draw the attention of the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police to the unique phenomenon that has occurred this morning in the election of the honourable member for Mackay to the leadership of the Parliamentary A.L.P. Opposition in this House and ask: Does this indicate a significant increase in the influence of Mr. Edgar Williams, the mentor of the honourable member for Mackay in the A.L.P. machine since the A.W.U. reaffiliated with the A.L.P.? If so, will he congratulate Mr. Casey on his appointment, and Mr. Casey and Mr. Williams on their success here this morning against the Trades Hall officials who surround Mr. Casey in the Chamber?

Mr. CAMM: Naturally, being a Mackay boy myself, I congratulate the honourable member for Mackay on attaining the leadership of the Opposition. As the leader of a political party in this Chamber, he is due for congratulations. It has taken him a long time to get there, and I assure him and all honourable members opposite that he will be there as Leader of the Opposition for a long time. I think he has reached the zenith of his career and will have to accept, as the years go by, that being the Leader of the Opposition is more or less the permanent job of the Parliamentary Leader of the A.L.P.

What happened this morning could be, as the honourable member for Merthyr mentioned, an indication that the more moderate element of the A.L.P. is now coming to the fore, or it could be just a subterfuge by that party in an attempt to delude the people of Queensland into believing that the moderate element is taking control of the A.L.P. I believe that, as time goes on, we will see the Left-wing dominated tail of the A.L.P. wagging the Opposition dog.

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—
FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES—IN—CHIEF, 1978-79

WORKS AND HOUSING

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$8,801,785 be granted for ‘Works and Housing—Chief Office.’”

The total amount appropriated under Chief Office is \$648,793 in excess of that expended in 1977-78. This increase is due in the main to the necessity to provide for increased expenditure on salaries occasioned by basic wage increases granted by the Industrial Court during the previous financial year.

Provision has been made for increased expenditure in the Contingencies (Subdivision) over the amount expended in 1977-78. This is necessary to cover payments of cash equivalent of long service leave to officers who might now elect to retire owing to the recent amendment to the State Service Superannuation Act, subsidy payments for capital works undertaken at showgrounds by local authorities and show societies, and a general escalation in costs.

My department's Estimates were last debated in November 1975, and it is appropriate to review its activities since then. Expenditure by my Department of Works on public buildings during these three years increased from \$112,622,840 in 1974-75 to \$169,195,929 in 1977-78, which is an increase of 50.23 per cent. Included in this amount was the sum of \$39,750,380 which the Commonwealth Government made available in 1977-78 for projects at pre-schools, primary schools, special education, high schools and colleges of technical and further education. Expenditure on education establishments continues to account for the major amount of funds available.

In the three financial years under review, \$255,872,806 was expended, or a significant 56.79 per cent of the total expenditure of \$450,557,948. The amount spent on police stations increased quite substantially during the last three financial years. This amount was \$14,956,823, or an increase of 127.86 per cent on the three previous financial years. Other amounts expended during the last three financial years were \$29,441,913 on Government hospitals and institutions, and \$13,068,443 on Aboriginal establishments. In our 21 years of office from 1 July 1957 to 30 June 1978, in excess of \$1,000 million has been spent on State Government buildings.

A perusal of the annual report of my Director of Works will show the wide range of activities of the department. These activities include the maintenance and preservation of State Government buildings, the planning, construction, furnishing and equipping of new Government buildings including schools; payment for rented accommodation for Government departments where required; providing services such as cleaning and washing; payment of local authority charges; electric light and power and gas where applicable; grants towards local authority swimming-pools; interest grants to non-State schools; and school improvements subsidies to State school organisations.

My department's overall responsibility is to construct the maximum economic building accommodation possible with the available finance, and within its financial limitations, and to maintain and preserve the Government's capital assets, which are increasing each year with the construction of new buildings required to meet the rapid expansion taking place in this State.

Education

As mentioned earlier, education accounts for the major amount of funds allocated to my department, and one of the main considerations is to ensure that adequate classroom accommodation is available at the commencement of each school year. It is not always possible to provide permanent accommodation because of fund restrictions or time limitations, and this problem has been overcome by the use of demountable class-room buildings. The design of these buildings has been improved, and they are now of modular transportable design, and are well accepted by the majority of teachers.

Since my department's Estimates were last debated in 1975, considerable advances have been made in increasing the effectiveness of the educational building programme. One of the most prominent of these advances was the formation of a joint committee with the Department of Education. This committee reviews the development of new building standards and provides guide-lines for the further development of standard designs in order that the most efficient and economical buildings are provided for the changing requirements of modern education. Facilities at primary schools have been improved, and administration and library accommodation, as well as covered play areas, are now part of every new primary school constructed.

In the three financial years under review, 30 new primary schools and replacement primary schools were constructed. In the same period, nine new high schools were completed. Four new high schools are presently under construction at Burnside (Nambour), Kirwan (Townsville), Merrimac and Dysart.

To meet current educational requirements for secondary schools, a multi-building complex is provided in stages. The first stage

usually comprises a first-year centre, administration block, home economics block, manual arts block and an amenities block.

The needs and philosophies of special education have been closely watched and the term "opportunity school" is now no longer used. These schools, whatever their special functions may be, are now known as "special schools". Design research has continued into the various facilities required, and Woody Point Special School is being developed by the provision of special facilities as a centre for paraplegics and other handicapped students. Nine new special schools have been provided and special education centres have been developed at various places throughout Queensland. Single-room units for remedial purposes will continue to be provided at existing schools, usually by remodelling spare accommodation.

The policy in relation to the siting of pre-schools has altered and every endeavour is now made for the pre-school to be an integral part of the school complex. In pursuing this policy, early education classes are now being provided, by modular buildings, by additions to existing school buildings or by upgrading existing teaching spaces to provide pre-school facilities in areas where separate pre-schools would not be warranted.

The first stage of the Bardon Professional Development Centre for the Education Department has now been completed. This centre is for the reappraisal of educational theories and practices and will assist teachers to accept the challenge of changing society. I am very pleased to say that this centre has been awarded the bronze medal for 1978, which is the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' top Queensland design award. This is the second year in a row that this centre has received an award.

The shortage of technical expertise to the community has led to increased expenditure in the field of technical and further education. Buildings presently under construction or recently completed, are a technology "A" and automotive building at Mt. Gravatt; a resource materials centre and electrical and administration buildings at Cairns; automotive and prevocational buildings at Bald Hills; resource materials centre at Yeronga; administration building at Mackay; painting building at Ithaca; a residential college at Kelvin Grove and a technology building at Ipswich. Master planning is in hand for new colleges at Gladstone, Gold Coast, Redcliffe and the Sunshine Coast.

Whilst educational buildings constitute by far the major part of the building and maintenance activities of my department, other Government sectors have not been neglected.

Court-house Buildings

New court-houses have been completed at Blackwater, Emerald and Moranbah. Work on the Toowoomba Court House is nearing completion and, when finished, will provide

one Supreme and District Court, two general Magistrates Courts and one Children's Court. A registry, all necessary ancillary rooms for the courts and general office accommodation for other departments will also be provided. Final cost is expected to be in excess of \$2,000,000.

On 31 August this year, approval was given for the construction of a new Supreme Court building, which is Stage II of Brisbane's Courts of Law Complex. The nine-level building is expected to be completed in late 1981 at a cost of almost \$17,000,000. The building will contain 21 courts, judges' chambers, a library and other necessary accommodation.

Police Stations

Forbes House, the new Queensland Police Headquarters, has been completed and is partly occupied. This modern air-conditioned building of 14 office floors and four levels of basement parking will provide accommodation for the Traffic Branch and City Police Station, as well as Police Headquarters staff. The air-conditioned two-storey police station complex at Cairns has been completed, as well as new police stations at Alpha, Aramac and Clayfield.

Government Hospital Buildings and Institutions

Considerable work continues to be carried out at Government hospitals and institutions. At Wolston Park Hospital, a new admission and treatment centre has been completed at a cost of more than \$5,000,000. The centre can accommodate 160 patients and will provide admission, medical assessment and treatment and associated therapeutical facilities. In addition, a new hospital ward complex is almost completed. This ward contains an operating theatre, pathology department, X-ray department, and dental clinic, as well as accommodation for 40 patients. Final cost for this building will be in excess of \$2,000,000.

The philosophy of Community Health Services is to avoid the hospitalisation of individuals wherever possible and, with this in mind, the Inala Community Health Services Centre has been completed. This centre, built at a cost in excess of \$2,500,000, is the first custom-designed community health centre in Queensland and is the only centre incorporating primary-care facilities.

A seven-storey detoxification centre and central assessment clinic called "Biala" has been completed. This building provides accommodation for the administration office of the Branch of Intellectually Handicapped Services and is also the centre for the Alcohol and Drug Dependence Service. I am proud to say that this centre is the first custom-built unit of its type in Australia.

A new babies admission and nursing-care unit named "Halwyn" is presently under construction at Red Hill, Brisbane. This unit, when completed, at a cost expected to be in excess of \$2,000,000, will allow for the

admission of intellectually handicapped babies for assessment and placing into other institutions and to nurse profoundly handicapped children and young adults in the 40-bed unit.

Work has commenced on Stage I of the Sandgate "Eventide" home redevelopment. This stage consists of a three-storey section and single wing, containing two 70-bed wards. Final cost of this work will be in excess of \$5,000,000 and allowance has been made in the planning for each ward and day room to have a view of Moreton Bay.

New maternal and child health centres continue to be constructed and new centres have been completed at Chermiside, Ferny Grove and Upper Mt. Gravatt.

The Moreton Bay Nursing Home at Wynnum was officially opened just recently by my colleague the Honourable Dr. L. R. Edwards, M.L.A. This home was built in three stages and provides facilities for the frail aged, confused aged and well aged, together with recreation facilities including a barbecue area. Construction of the home commenced in June 1972 and the final cost will be in excess of \$6,000,000.

The extension of school dental services in Queensland forms an active area of my department's involvement in health services, and to date, 85 school dental clinics have been established throughout Queensland. In addition, training schools for dental therapists have been completed at Yeronga, Holland Park, Stafford and Townsville.

Homes and training centres for children are other areas in which there has been continued development in recent years. A new babies block at "Carramar" home, Townsville, has now been completed, as well as new staff headquarters. At the Westbrook Training Centre, a new gymnasium has been completed and substantial alterations made to the administration building. In addition, a new piggery has also been completed, which was designed on a scientific basis on advice received from the Department of Primary Industries.

Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement

Extensive work has been undertaken in providing accommodation for Aborigines and Islanders, and over 100 homes were planned or constructed in the last year alone. New standard residences were developed for the cyclone reconstruction programme at Mornington Island and Burketown with an aim of improving designs for the tropical monsoonal climate. My department supervised the construction of a new shopping complex at Bamaga and was also involved in improvements in education, social welfare and health facilities for Aborigines and Islanders.

Prisons

Several projects have been carried out at prison establishments during the last three financial years to provide additional adminis-

trative services and detention areas. At Brisbane H.M. Prison, cell accommodation for 422 prisoners was completed as well as a two-storey external administration block. This block is air-conditioned and has extensive security protection in-built. New cell blocks were also commenced at Townsville and Rockhampton Prisons and an administration block at Woodford was completed.

Major work was also completed at Rockhampton Prison, where a services block was constructed at a cost in excess of \$1,000,000. This block contains a kitchen, bakery, boilerhouse, officers' mess, laundry and other accommodation. The new visiting building at Rockhampton Prison provides for both minimum and maximum security visiting and has a play area for children.

Primary Industries

The escalating development of the activities of the Department of Primary Industries has resulted in the construction of major works at various centres. Veterinary laboratories at Onoomba Animal Health Station and Rockhampton have been completed, together with a resources and hydrology centre at Indooroopilly. An entomology office/laboratory was also completed at Indooroopilly, whilst at Mareeba a laboratory complex is presently under construction. The brucellosis and tuberculosis laboratory completed at Yeerongpilly Animal Research Institute is a significant addition to the overall complex.

Public Buildings

The accommodation needs of the Public Service continue to grow, and my department has the responsibility to provide suitable accommodation. To help keep pace with this need, arrangements have been made to occupy another S.G.I.O. lease/buy back building at 41 George Street, Brisbane. This building of some 30 storeys will be known as "Mineral House" and when occupied early next year will provide an improved standard of accommodation for six Government departments.

A new two-storey building for the Department of Main Roads has been completed at Cairns and will allow for an improved service to the public, as well as provide better facilities for the technical and administration branches of that department's northern region.

As honourable members are aware, the new Parliament House building is nearing completion. Work has progressed well since construction commenced on 14 November 1975 and the building should be ready for occupation early in the New Year.

The Queensland Cultural Centre complex has moved a step closer with the recent signing of a \$19,100,000 contract for the Art Gallery building. This contract also includes a restaurant, a multi-purpose auditorium and a car park. Construction has commenced and is scheduled for completion in 1981.

Planning for stage II, the Performing Arts Centre, is well in hand and construction is expected to commence early next year. Planning has also commenced on stages III and IV, the museum and the library, and the total complex is expected to be completed in 1984.

I am extremely proud of my department's involvement with the development of this centre, the design of which embodies all the essential features to make it world class by any standards.

In this review of activities of my Department of Works, I have mentioned some of the major projects carried out since 1975 to give honourable members an indication of the vast range of activities undertaken. Some of the other areas worthy of mention are the Government's efforts to provide Public Service housing and National Fitness camps.

Let me now turn to housing, the other part of my portfolio. The main thrust of my remarks must, of course, be towards the financial arrangements of the Queensland Housing Commission budget for the current financial year. However, I cannot let the opportunity pass without reminding honourable members of the very personal relationship that exists between the commission and those on low incomes who need housing.

Most present here today would, at some time or another, have assisted and advised many families who were seeking assistance of one kind or another from the Commission. There can be no doubt that within the established guide-lines and policy, which are largely determined by the Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement, the commission does everything possible to help those genuinely in need of housing.

Except for certain locational and type problems which are being gradually overcome, rental applicants, I am pleased to report, are being housed after a much shorter waiting period. Unfortunately, the limited finance available for home-ownership is not sufficient to satisfy the heavy demand and some delay is inevitable for many. I will have more to say about rental and home-ownership later.

The new Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement commenced on 1 July 1978 and is current for three years. It heralds another change in public housing policy. It gives the States greater autonomy and flexibility than the restrictive 1973 agreement forced on States by the Whitlam Government. There are, however, provisions which ensure that assistance goes only to those genuinely in need; rents and interest rates move towards the market-place; and rebates of rent and subsidy for home-ownership are available and continue to be so to those who remain genuinely in need. There is full accountability to the Commonwealth taxpayer on State rental and home-ownership operation.

One can only guess the effect that the new agreement will have on housing authorities during the following years. Based on the

knowledge gained through Queensland's gradual movement of rents towards the market-place, my prediction is that all rents will eventually be subsidised. Even now, subsidy applies to over 40 per cent of all general purpose house rents. This represents a cash loss to the commission of \$6,000,000 per annum. The percentage is increasing steadily.

I do not have any such basis to draw on to predict the future of home-ownership finance. For a number of reasons, I believe that the position may never be as gloomy as the rental situation but I expect that there will always be people who will require some subsidy on interest rates.

When reflecting on the new agreement, I believe that the Commonwealth acted in good faith and was (and is) sincere in its efforts to help the needy. It optimistically hoped to quickly establish self-sufficiency within each State housing authority so that it might eventually withdraw from funding future public housing. I believe it now realises that self-sufficiency will either fail or be slow to achieve. Even so, there are signs that the Commonwealth in its move towards its federalism policy may withdraw from funding after 1981, leaving the funding of public housing entirely to the States.

Now, what was Queensland's financial take for 1978-79 under the agreement? The Commonwealth has made an allocation of \$19,000,000, and there is provision for a further allocation of \$13,000,000 if the State, from its own resources, provides a similar amount for specified housing. I am happy to advise honourable members that Queensland has been able to provide that amount, and \$32,000,000 will be available from the Commonwealth.

Even though strong representations have been made to Canberra and firm promises obtained, Queensland again failed to obtain its rightful allocation on a per capita basis of total funds. Instead of the \$32,300,000 received, Queensland should have been allocated \$48,600,000, or an increase of \$16,300,000. Queensland's feelings on this issue have been made abundantly clear. Unfortunately, we have been penalised for our good husbandry, management of our resources, and the demonstrated self-reliance of Queenslanders. Honourable members can be sure I will continue to press the matter.

No doubt most honourable members know the Queensland Housing Commission is a business undertaking. For those who do not know, let me point out that the commission obtains its funds for capital works by borrowings which have to be repaid with interest. The commission receives no—I repeat, no—hand-out from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. With the exception of one small programme, every house has to pay for itself, either through the payments of the tenant or buyer, or through the payments of all the other tenants or buyers.

The commission, therefore, is one of the few Government departments or instrumentalities whose performance is measurable. The annual report of the Commissioner of Housing is an excellent means by which honourable members can form their own opinions on the commission's activities and I recommend it for their study.

Last financial year, the commission spent an all-time record of \$124,900,000 and provided 2,971 homes—easily another record. It paid \$5,600,000 to local authorities throughout Queensland for rates and \$8,500,000 for maintenance, \$3,300,000 through the day-labour force and \$5,200,000 through private contractors. I merely cite these figures as an illustration of the scale of the commission's activities. I have already mentioned rebates, but the actual number receiving this subsidy had increased at the end of 1977-78 to 6,117 and was still steadily increasing.

On the brighter side, however, the number of families waiting for houses fell from 5,838 to 3,493. There is still a downward trend in these numbers and I expect it to continue. As I have already indicated, there are some regional and locational problems and the commission does not have sufficient one or two bedroom units. These problems are being overcome and the picture for persons on low incomes seeking accommodation from the Queensland Housing Commission is far better than it was at the beginning of 1977-78.

Whilst it is difficult to pinpoint any one cause, there are several reasons for the fall in demand. Those that appear to be most significant are: almost zero population growth; the private rental market is now offering alternatives not readily available a year or two ago; commission rents are no longer ridiculously low, encouraging people to seek unwarranted subsidy; migration is almost nil; community uncertainty under present economic conditions cannot be overlooked.

Of course, under the influence of the agreement and the increase in rental to that applying in the market-place, I expect—I have already said this—that the demand for State rental houses will come entirely from those who require subsidised rents. Provided there is not a significant and sudden alteration to the size of this group in our community, I am confident the demand can be contained to a reasonable level. I am sure all honourable members, no matter what their political creed, would agree that no public housing authority can afford to oversupply housing.

A special State Treasury allocation of \$26,000,000 during 1977-78 allowed the commission to provide loans of up to \$18,000 for persons to build or buy houses. The allocation was a tremendous boost to the ailing housing industry at a time when it had over-supplied houses to the market. The industry further benefited by attracting savings and secondary finance, estimated at \$10,000,000. It also enabled most borrowers,

by a mix of low and high interest rates, to purchase a home at a combined interest rate below that available in the market. Briefly, expectations for 1978-79 are continued encouragement of home ownership, further pensioner accommodation from Commonwealth grants, and rental housing of the wanted types in locations where it is required.

The Estimates show that total spending will fall short of that of 1977-78 by \$5,300,000. This is mainly owing to Commonwealth reduction of welfare funds of about \$8,000,000. Honourable members can be sure the commission will continue to provide a housing service to Queenslanders who are on low incomes and in need of assistance.

In concluding my reviews, I cannot let the opportunity pass without expressing my appreciation to the staff and employees of the Works Department and the Queensland Housing Commission. I have been Minister for Works and Housing only since December last year, but in this short time I have come to appreciate their loyalty and efficiency.

It would also be remiss of me if I did not pay tribute to the outstanding career of Mr. David Keith Houston, who recently retired as Director of Works. Mr. Houston retired on 27 July 1978, after serving more than 43 years in the Public Service at various centres throughout Queensland. The last seven years were as Director of Works and permanent head of the department. It is to his credit that the Department of Works operated so successfully throughout these years. I am sure all honourable members will join with me in wishing Mr. and Mrs. Houston a very happy, enjoyable and long retirement.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.27 p.m.): Mr. Hewitt—

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: This will be a verbal treat.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Of course it will be a verbal treat. Every one of my speeches is a verbal treat.

In opening the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Works and Housing, I will make a few comments concerning the Works Department. I am firmly of the opinion that the Premier is using the schoolchildren in Labor-held seats as political pawns. We all know that the National Party, as the party that invented pork-barrel politics, has always wanted the Works and Housing portfolio. Now that it has achieved this, I am sure that the children in the Labor-held seats are going to be the sufferers.

Most of the work on schools is being carried out in seats held by members of the National Party. It seems that if one is a member of the National Party in this Government, one can get almost anything one wants.

Mr. Tenni interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The member for Barron River made some derogatory remark. I suggest through you, Mr. Hewitt, that he should consign himself to drug-running in Mareeba—something he knows more about.

Let us contrast the replies to questions regarding schools received by Labor Party members, and by some of the Liberal members who are in disfavour with the Premier, such as the member for Salisbury, with those received by National Party members, who receive favourable treatment from the Minister for Works and Housing. The letters that we receive are always couched in the vaguest of terms. They include sentences such as, "Consideration will be given in the next financial year." That is always a good one. Another is, "The necessary funds are not available at this time." Yet another is, "This project is noted for further consideration when additional funds become available." That is the verbal hog-wash that we receive from the Minister or from one of his officers who compiles the letters on his behalf. The only time a definite answer comes to light is when it deals with something very minor, such as a belt of fencing, some repainting, new chairs, etc.

I want to make it quite clear, in speaking here this afternoon on behalf of the Opposition, that I think it is a disgrace that children should be used as pawns to protect the fast-shrinking base of the National Party. If anyone is in any doubt that it is on the wane, he only has to look at the results of the Sherwood by-election last Saturday. The Nationals fielded another one of their glamour candidates, and he came in behind the Democrats.

Mr. Hewitt, I can see that you are starting to rise in your chair. I will come to my point very quickly. This is the second time that the Nationals have come a cropper by fielding a Liberal defector. One only has to mention—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member seems to think that by anticipating my move, I will not make it. I am making it now. He will come back to the Estimates.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have two sentences to go, Mr. Hewitt, and I hope that you will be tolerant and bear with me. I was just going to refer very briefly—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that the honourable member return to the Estimates, without the two sentences.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will, Mr. Hewitt.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member should know that he should never telegraph his blows.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I was just going to conclude by saying that it just goes to prove that Yvonne McComb is a lot smarter than her National Party counterpart, Bob Sparkes.

The run-down in the day-labour force of the Works Department and the Housing Commission is a disgrace and a public scandal. It indicates that the Government is hell-bent on emasculating the Works Department. I want to be fair to the present Minister and say that this run-down started under the previous Minister, Mr. Norman Edward Lee, who epitomised the reactionary capitalist thinking of the Tory Government. Mr. Lee was quite open about it and stated on numerous occasions that all the work should be done by contract.

As I have pointed out many times in this Chamber and the Press, this is just not a practical proposition. When one thinks of the numerous small jobs performed by the day-labour force, Mr. Hewitt, it is just plain crazy to suggest that that force be disbanded. It has served the State faithfully and well for three generations. The only reason why the Government is emasculating the Works Department is that it wants to reward its wealthy financial supporters who contribute so heavily to Tory Party coffers at election-time.

Mr. Simpson interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I can never hear the almost inaudible and inane remarks of the honourable member for Cooroora.

Mr. Simpson: How is it possible, with public tendering?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Sometimes they do not even go to public tender. Not only is the honourable member for Cooroora a mumbler; he is also a fool.

Mr. SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. The words are offensive, and I think they are a disgrace to this Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Archerfield to withdraw the statement.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will withdraw. Let me say instead that one could put a pencil between his ears.

Many honourable members will be well aware that on a great number of occasions the day-labour force is called in to bring work up to an acceptable standard after the contractor has left. During the past three years, I have received numerous complaints from employees of the Works Department about having to go out and correct the shoddy work performed by some of the private contractors, and I am sure that my colleague the honourable member for Lytton could tell some stories regarding the Wynnum Nursing Home. The contractors who completed that building performed such shoddy work that water was all over the kitchen floor and the staff had to put down bath mats till employees from the Works Department came down and corrected the situation. The men from the Works Department certainly put in a lot of time at the

Wynnum Nursing Home correcting the standard work performed by the contractor, and it would be interesting to know the name of the contractor who constructed the building.

Over the years, men from the Works Department build up a great deal of expertise. There is certainly a great deal of difference between building and maintaining a home and building and maintaining a school. In my humble opinion, the work performed by the Works Department is far superior to that performed by private contractors. I have received many complaints about the work of private contractors. It is also a common complaint among senior staff in the Works Department that their supervisors have to go out onto jobs and virtually act as unpaid foremen for the private contractors.

The time taken by the maintenance section in the Housing Commission to effect maintenance on a home after a tenant moves out is also deplorable. There is a crying need for homes, yet they lie idle because the maintenance staff is stretched to the limit. Naturally, people become very annoyed when they are told of the Housing Commission waiting list and see commission homes lying idle for weeks. Many people who come to my office seeking State rental accommodation say to me, "Mr. Hooper, I see a number of homes empty in the electorate." When I point out to them that these homes are waiting for maintenance to be carried out on them, they say, "Such-and-such a home in such-and-such a street has been vacant for some six or seven weeks." I do not think that is good enough, and the Minister should do something about it.

In addition, the position is exacerbated by the increasing number of people seeking State rental accommodation through the Queensland Housing Commission. I would urge the present Minister not to adopt his predecessor's attitude to the day-labour force. A change in attitude would have a twofold effect: firstly, it would reduce unemployment among skilled tradesmen; and, secondly, it would speed up the allocation of Housing Commission homes to needy families. As I said earlier, because of the slump in the building industry caused by the Fraser Government's mismanagement of the economy, the demand is increasing rapidly.

I also take this opportunity to refer to the need for departments such as the Works Department and the Housing Commission to take on the maximum number of apprentices. In times of severe economic downturn in the building industry, it is a fact of life that the Government has to bear the brunt of training apprentices. In "The Financial Review" of 4 September this year, the chairman of the National Training Council, Mr. Peter Derham, sounded a loud note of warning. Mr. Derham pointed out that, despite repeated Government calls to industry to increase apprenticeship intakes, the fall in a number of industries is nothing short of

alarming. He cited the building industry as a prime example, with apprenticeship intakes down 20 per cent. This shortage of skilled tradesmen will start to show up in the very near future. Of course, the effect is rising costs and prices, and subsequently galloping inflation under the Fraser Government's mismanagement of the economy. The State Government is therefore duty bound to step up its apprenticeship intake to maximum levels.

It is estimated that at the present time almost 5,000 building workers in Queensland are registered as unemployed. I think every honourable member would agree that that is a scandalous state of affairs in the building industry, an industry that is widely regarded as the barometer of the economy. For every 56 carpenters registered as being unemployed, there is only one job vacancy. In 1974, 2,854 apprentices entered the building industry in Queensland; in 1976, only 807 did so. Since then the building industry has declined sharply. I ask the Minister to give this serious consideration. I realise that there are problems as a result of the economic recession, which is escalating; nevertheless, the State Government should play its fair part in assisting the building industry and commerce generally in Queensland by putting on more apprentices.

I turn now to the housing sector. As far as the Queensland Housing Commission is concerned, the \$64 question is the proposed increase in rents. Honourable members will recall that at the time of the last rent increase in February I scooped the Minister. I forced him to come out later in the day and admit that an increase was in the air. The Minister cannot deny that; I certainly scooped him. I forced his hand, and he admitted that there was a rent increase on the way. Once again a rent increase is in the air for the coming year.

The Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement spells out the procedure quite clearly.

Mr. Akers: Did you get that out of a crystal ball?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I think the honourable member knows a bit about crystal balls. To take it a step further, I could tell what Mrs. Wendy Allison suggested about his crystal ball.

As I was saying, the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement spells out the procedure quite clearly. For the benefit of honourable members such as the honourable member for Pine Rivers, who has not a great deal between the ears, and probably has not even read the Act, I will quote the relevant provisions of the agreement. In Part V, clause 18 (1) states—

"The rates at which rents are payable by tenants of rental housing shall be determined by the State which when making any such determination shall have regard to a policy of generally relating rents to rates of rental on the open market."

Clause 18 (3) provides—

“The rates of rental shall, as far as practicable, be—

- (i) reviewed annually; and
- (ii) adjusted according to the movement of rates of rental on the open market.”

So there we have it. It is set out quite clearly in black and white in the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. When the Minister replies, it will be interesting to see what he comes up with in rebuttal of my allegations.

The last rental increase made by the Queensland Housing Commission was in February, so it is quite obvious that one must be in the pipeline at the moment. I challenge the Minister to deny that a rental increase is in the offing. I call on the Minister to announce the scale of the increase. Honourable members will recall that the last increase in February was \$10 a week. At that time not many tenants of Housing Commission homes had received a wage increase of \$10 a week. That increase caused considerable hardship to tenants, most of whom would have been on a very low income, as that is one of the criteria for obtaining a Housing Commission home. The same will apply again. With the six-monthly wage hearings introduced by the Commonwealth Government, wage rises are few and far between. A quick glance at “The Courier-Mail” this morning shows that the houses to let range in rent from \$48 to \$90 a week. Those rentals are obviously beyond the reach of most low-income earners.

I am pleased to see the honourable member for Caboolture coming into the Chamber. He barked his shins on the lobby door in his haste to come in to hear my speech.

As I was saying, those rentals are obviously beyond the reach of most low-income earners. I will be interested to hear just how the Minister assesses current market values. Another large increase in Housing Commission rentals will tempt many people to fall for the misleading advertisements in the houses-to-let columns of newspapers. Many property companies have become desperate about the continuing and worsening oversupply of houses. They claim in their advertisements that people paying \$40 a week in rent can afford one of their homes. That is a lot of hog-wash; nothing is further from the truth.

When one analyses the figures for the houses being advertised, one finds that the \$40 is very misleading. The total cost of building-society interest, plus rates, insurance and maintenance makes it very difficult for the average wage earner to purchase an average home today. In my estimation the total comes closer to \$55 or \$60 a week. I urge anyone contemplating entering into any one of these deals to check it out very thoroughly.

As I have said on other occasions, in my opinion 99 per cent of real estate agents leave a lot to be desired. When I said that 99 per cent of the real estate agents are doubtful, one of my colleagues said that I was being conservative.

I will certainly be urging tenants who feel that the new rates are too high to seek a rebate from the commission. To my mind the new housing agreement is another example of belting the lower-income earner—the battler; the one least able to fend for himself. As we all know, the Queensland coalition Government consisting of two Tory parties, is committed to helping its wealthy financial backers. The National Party is committed to assisting the wealthy graziers, dairy farmers and cane farmers, while the Liberal Party is committed to supporting big business. The poor old battler gets nothing.

Mr. Tenni interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Barron River talks about the farmers not having any money. Recently he sold his extensive business in Mareeba for a large sum of money. If he sold it for a good price, he must have been getting a lot of money from the farmers in his area, but there again it may have come from the sale of marijuana. I do not know.

Mr. TENNI: I rise to a point of order. I find the honourable member's remark offensive.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

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

To my mind the new housing agreement is another example of belting the low-income earner. It is also interesting to note that the trial system of granting rent vouchers has been discontinued. That is another broken promise by this Government's Tory Federal counterpart. For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that, basically, the scheme was designed to subsidise the low-income earner into a private home. One of the ideas behind the scheme was to stop the spread of large Housing Commission estates on the fringes of the capital cities. One of the benefits would have been the spreading of disadvantaged families throughout the community rather than having them in one spot. The scheme was discontinued before even getting half way.

I draw to the attention of honourable members the fact that millions of dollars have been wasted and that very few conclusions have been drawn because of the shortness of the time of operation of this scheme. Personally, I could see merit in it, but thanks to Mr. Fraser we will never know if it was a workable proposition. I am pleased to see that, in order to counter the proposed rent increases I have

been referring to, the commission is building more of the pensioner-type one-bedroom units. Some excellent examples are to be seen under construction at Inala. I have long advocated more of this type of dwelling.

At this time, I pay a tribute to the Housing Commission. The construction of these one-bedroom flats is something to see. If honourable members have not seen them, I suggest that they go to Inala (the most salubrious suburb in Brisbane) to see them. The only thing I might say is that their construction has been lagging for some time.

We must attack the housing problems from two angles: firstly, as it affects young people looking for housing accommodation, and, secondly, from the point of view of the number of aged people looking for accommodation.

Mr. Powell: I thought you said that these were built only in National Party electorates.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I could not hear the interjection by the honourable member for Isis.

As we know, numerous older people, married couples, widows and widowers occupy a large home after their children leave home. They have quite rightly been very reluctant to leave the suburb in which they have spent many years. All their friends are nearby. I made representations for a lady from West End and got her a pensioner unit at Leichhardt. I am grateful to the Housing Commission for granting her that unit. We have to bear in mind that she had lived all of her life at West End. Relocating her up there was like putting her in prison. She had no friends. She was 24 miles from West End. There were a lot of social problems caused by her transfer. The organisations of which those people are members are usually in the same suburb.

The construction of one-bedroom flats frees the larger homes for families. I have already spoken to the Minister about this, and he agrees. A lot of elderly people in my electorate are prepared to vacate their homes and go into pensioner flats, provided they are in the suburbs in which they have lived for 20 or 25 years.

In the few minutes I have left, I would like to make some comments on the availability of funds through the Housing Commission for home-building. Every time an allocation is made, the commission is swamped by applicants, usually young couples, eager to take advantage of the lower interest rate of 7.5 per cent. Unfortunately, the queue stretches from Adelaide Street to Cape York.

The Minister is on record complaining about the Fraser Government's \$19,500,000 cut in the budget for welfare housing. It seems to me that the only way we are going to get the building industry back on its feet is through such schemes as home loans

through the Housing Commission. It is a fact of life that the high interest rates are inhibiting a lift in home building. It is no use the Government's trying to whistle up the home-building industry.

Quite recently the Australian Bankers Association pointed out that an increasing number of people are renovating instead of moving to a larger home. On Friday the Housing Loans Insurance Corporation reported a massive 74 per cent increase in claims on defaulting home loans in the last financial year. It predicts a larger number of defaulters this financial year. This backs up the argument that interest rates are too high and are penalising young couples.

The days are not too far distant when, if the market forces do not increase rates, the Government will have to consider some form of subsidy on interest rates. The current scheme through the Housing Commission would be a good example.

Mr. GOLEBY (Redlands) (12.47 p.m.): As I rise to speak in this debate, it first behoves me to congratulate the Minister for a job well done. It is common knowledge in this Assembly that the Minister for Works and Housing is one of the hardest-working Ministers. He is very approachable and very helpful. I extend those comments to members of his staff, who also are most helpful and approachable. I know that from time to time members approach them with problems, some of which are rather difficult, but the members of the staff do their best to solve them.

I suppose that schools and education are the most important aspects of a member's electorate and his representation. This particularly applies in an electorate developing as rapidly as Redlands. In the last financial year, home-building in my electorate exceeded 1,000, and in the current financial year the figure will go well beyond that. That is an increase on the period of the building boom. This clearly indicates that there is a growth in house-building in some areas. Contrary to what the member for Archerfield said, not all areas are depressed in house-building. In many Brisbane suburbs there is a glut of houses on the market. There may be reasons for that. Nevertheless, the buyer today has a wide choice of houses and of areas in which he or she desires to live.

I return now to the subject of schools. Any rapidly growing electorate provides a tremendous challenge to its members to ensure that sufficient schools and classrooms are available to meet the increased population. In the last four years, 13 new schools have been erected in my electorate. Honourable members will therefore see what I mean when I compliment the present Minister and his predecessor on their efforts on behalf of members in these developing areas. The new Capalaba High School is a clear example and I am sure it will be a blueprint for many of the new high schools

to be built in this State. I suggest that in the very near future it might be a very good idea if the Minister took members down there in a bus to see that school. It is a new concept in building. The area is completely landscaped. Provision has been made well ahead of schedule to meet the needs of the school. Although it has been built on probably one of the worst pieces of land that could be purchased for a school site, the Works Department has done a tremendous job in rectifying the drainage problem that was so acute. Today we see this new school emerging.

I should like to think that there would be closer liaison with the purchasing section of the department in the acquisition of school sites. Sometimes price is the only matter taken into account. Although the purchase price might be lower initially, when drainage and other factors are taken into consideration the overall cost often far exceeds that of a more suitable site in a better-drained location.

The growth areas in the northern section of the Redlands electorate centre on Capalaba, Birkdale and Alexandra Hills. The Minister has paid particular attention to this area and every endeavour is being made to purchase land for an additional school to be provided in the area between Birkdale and Alexandra Hills. But unless something is done quickly in readiness for the 1980 school year, there will be staffing problems at the two schools that I have mentioned. I do not think any member likes the enrolment at a primary school to exceed 800 students, and that figure will be reached in this area; in fact, next year the Alexandra Hills school will have more than 800 students. I hope that the Minister will make every effort to acquire a suitable piece of land in this area for the erection of a school.

The previous speaker mentioned Housing Commission pensioner units. The Housing Commission has very greatly improved the style of accommodation provided for these senior citizens in our community who, in the main, are in the lower-income bracket. Recently I inspected a block of pensioner units in Cedar Street, Wynnum. The accommodation is equal to that which we are accustomed to finding in community homes and aged persons' homes in the various electorates. I compliment the Minister and his officers on the provision of this accommodation. The sites are chosen carefully. They must be close to shopping centres, and pensioners should also have ready access to transport should they want to travel.

A suitable piece of land has been acquired by the department in Randall Road for pensioner units. Construction was delayed because of its close proximity to some reclamation work that was being carried out by the Redland Shire Council. However, no detrimental effect flows from this reclamation work (the area is actually a

rubbish dump) and, as many requests are made for pensioner accommodation in the area, I suggest that the site at Randall Road be fully utilised. I hope that construction will commence in the near future.

The department, either directly or indirectly, plays some part in the construction of public buildings, such as police stations and schools. Vast sums of money have been spent on education—and I am in favour of that—but I sometimes wonder what would happen if we asked professional officers in some departments to work in the accommodation that is provided for police officers. I believe public funds will have to be made available for the upgrading of many of our police stations. Travelling throughout the State, one finds that this accommodation problem occurs not just in isolated electorates but right throughout the State. The Police Force has expanded, but unfortunately the accommodation provided for its officers has not kept pace with that expansion.

I must make reference to the special education centres that have been and are being provided. The Redlands Opportunity School is probably one of the finest complexes of its type that I have seen anywhere. It is set in natural bushland, with the trees and surroundings preserved. This school would have to be one of the most appealing schools, let alone special schools, for which the Minister's department has been responsible. I want to pay tribute to the staff of the school and also the committee which has carried out its functions so well since the school opened. I also pay tribute to the school principal, Mr. Bruce Lane, who, with his staff, has done everything possible to help the children attending the school. Not only does he carry out his school duties but also, when a student is seeking employment, he accompanies that student to Brisbane, or wherever the case may be, in an endeavour to find him satisfactory employment. This goes to show the dedication of the staff of special schools. The previous speaker, the honourable member for Archerfield—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Are you speaking to the Works and Housing Estimates or the Education Estimates?

Mr. GOLEBY: I thought the honourable member would realise that they are very closely allied. If the two departments do not work closely together, there is no co-operation. I must say that the Minister works very closely with his colleague the Minister for Education.

The Minister made some reference to public works and the way in which his department is carrying them out at the present time. He also mentioned the tendency towards using the contract system. Let me tell honourable members here and now that Works Department employees play a particularly important role, but I believe that, whilst a nucleus of employees must be kept in all

areas of the State for both maintenance and construction work, it behoves the Minister and his team to make sure they get the best value for their dollar. Only 12 months ago, the Government found it possible to let tenders for 12 new schools by using money that had been saved through the use of the contract system. This may be the case now, but as the building industry recovers and tender prices become higher, it may be necessary for the Minister to revert to the day-labour system. But as it is taxpayers' money that is being used, and as there is an urgent need for more public buildings such as schools, it is up to every member of Parliament to endorse the methods being adopted at the present time, which make sure that the maximum gains can be made from the funds available.

Over the past 2 or 3 years, the Queensland Housing Commission has introduced many changes, particularly in the design of Housing Commission homes. For them, too, I would again compliment the Minister and his officers. In the past, a great many identical Housing Commission homes were built. Streets upon streets of never-ending sameness sprang up, and anyone who entered a Housing Commission area gained an impression of its being a depressed area. But that is not the case today. To a large extent, Housing Commission home designs have been changed in keeping with those evolved in private enterprise.

It is a very good idea to scatter Housing Commission homes throughout the community. Everyone realises the need for welfare housing, but as far as the actual siting of Housing Commission homes is concerned, it is better for both those who occupy the homes and the community generally not to group them together, as was done in the past, but to scatter them throughout the community so they become part of the community at large.

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

Mr. GOLEBY: Before the luncheon recess, I was dealing with the Housing Commission. I should now like to refer to Housing Commission rentals. As the member for Archerfield said, these rentals seem to be a bone of contention with many people. Let us look at the matter quite squarely. People may want welfare housing for minimum rental. Housing provided by the Housing Commission never shows a profit, but it provides homes for many thousands of families throughout the community.

I believe that Housing Commission rentals should be based on an ability to pay, which is the policy adopted at present. Anyone in the lower echelon of income pays a minimum rental, which is nowhere near sufficient to meet maintenance costs, let alone the other costs that are necessary, such as rates. What did we find when rentals were raised some time ago? The member for Archerfield was rather critical of that. Many families who had lived in Housing Commission homes for many years moved out onto the open market and

purchased their own homes. They had been living in welfare housing for many years. Their children had grown up and were off their hands, but they were still paying these cheap rents. In many cases, they would have been able to purchase their own homes. When rentals were raised and a number of people in welfare housing moved out and purchased their own homes on the open market, the waiting time for Housing Commission homes was reduced considerably. I am pleased that the department, through the Minister, has adopted the policy of encouraging tenants of Housing Commission homes to purchase the houses in which they are living, because everyone knows that rent is dead money.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: What about the price you charged for homes that your Government built 10 years ago?

Mr. GOLEBY: That is completely irrelevant. I am referring to people purchasing homes on the open market. As I have said, everybody should be encouraged to purchase his own home. There is the old adage that an Australian's home is his castle. The commission's policy at present, which is designed to encourage people to purchase their own homes, meets with the approval of many people.

I should now like to deal with the new scheme of finance that was introduced only a year or so ago. I refer to the scheme that provides 7½ per cent loan funding, which enables a couple now to receive funding to the extent of \$25,000 to enable them to build a home on their land. This loan is repayable over 10 years. The repayments are so adjusted as to accommodate the needs of the average family which enters into such an agreement. There are lower repayments in the first couple of years as the family settles in and has additional expenses. The repayments peak towards the end of the term.

Mr. Fouras: How many people have obtained homes in that way?

Mr. GOLEBY: Many people in my electorate have received funding under this scheme. They have come to me and expressed their gratitude for the assistance that the Government has provided.

I now turn to building in the primary industry area. The electorate I represent still engages, to a large degree, in primary industry. There is the Redlands experimental station, which has become one of the major stations of its type in Queensland. The new buildings that have been constructed there in recent years, and the facilities that have been provided by the Minister's department, have gone a long way towards meeting the accommodation needs, the office space needs, and the other needs of such a station.

Then there is the artificial insemination centre. It had a small beginning, but now it is a major centre. It is close to Brisbane

and is providing a very worthwhile service to the beef industry. It is something on which I do not want to enlarge at this stage, but I want to thank the Minister and his department for acceding to my request to assist with four buildings and with the work that has been done in this area.

The Cleveland State High School was the first high school in my electorate. It was opened in 1963. Originally, it was the only high school catering for what was then the Redland electorate, which had a population of 60,000 people. The parents and citizens' association set out to build an assembly hall. Because of inflation, it was unable to keep pace with increasing costs. So the Redlands Shire Council, at the request of the parents and citizens' association, offered to help fund this project. I am very pleased to say that this is the first project of this type undertaken on a three-way-funding basis, through the Minister's department, the council and the parents and citizens' association. I only hope that this move will be followed in other areas.

In the main, buildings erected on school-grounds are used only for school purposes. In this instance, the school will use the building during the day and the public will use it at night. The land has been provided by the Redland Shire Council, and the council has the necessary funds and the p. and c. association has the bulk of its funds. It remains only for the legal agreement to be drawn up setting up the trust under which the two bodies will operate. The trust will be administered by the chairman of the council and the principal of the school at any particular time. The agreement is yet to be completed and the building cannot be begun until it is, so I would ask the Minister to make a special effort to have the agreement ratified and signed by the parties concerned in the very near future so that tenders may be called early in the new year.

All honourable members realise that when schools of this size have their speech nights, it is rather embarrassing to have to hold them in the open air, completely at the mercy of the weather. I should like to think it would be possible to call tenders and have the hall constructed by the time speech night comes round next year. I reiterate that it will provide a facility for the school during the day and for the community at night.

Finally, I again thank the Minister for his assistance generally and his readiness to listen whenever proposals are put to him and his officers.

Mr. HANSEN (Maryborough) (2.22 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Works and Housing Estimates because the Department of Works and Housing plays a large part in the lives of Queenslanders by its construction of public buildings. Of course, private contractors are now carrying out

work in this field on a much greater scale than is the work-force of the department, and there seems to be a deliberate policy to move towards contract work and away from day labour. Nevertheless, the department has within it a number of people who are skilled in design, architecture and construction, and this means that, in varying degrees, public buildings reflect the capabilities of people within the department.

Probably most honourable members are in contact with the administration of the Queensland Housing Commission, and I pay tribute to the officers of the commission for the sympathetic manner in which they deal with most applications or inquiries by members. I know that they have their problems in the field of welfare housing, where people sometimes feel aggrieved because they cannot obtain the houses that they believe should be available to them. The needs of such people constitute one of the reasons why the Housing Commission was set up originally. I do not agree with the honourable member for Redlands, who said that a number of people are using the Housing Commission to obtain cheaper rents and that they go and buy homes when the rents increase.

There are a couple of Housing Commission policies with which I do not entirely agree. One is the commission's attitude towards the buying of existing homes. I know of instances in which houses were built for the Housing Commission, purchased, and at a later date offered back to the commission in quite a reasonable state of repair. In fact, because they had been owned privately, they might have been looked after a little better than the commission homes in the surrounding area. I understand that it is the policy of the commission not to buy back homes in those circumstances, and I believe that by adopting that policy it is missing an opportunity to spread a little further the limited funds available for housing. For many years the Department of Veterans' Affairs has implemented such a policy and has financed the purchase of existing homes. It carries out rigorous inspections before purchasing houses, and for that reason, it has not, to my knowledge, ever lost money in their purchase.

Probably officers of the Queensland Housing Commission would shudder at the suggestion that the commission is eminently suited for the building and administration of housing for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Many of the houses purchased by the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement have been allowed to fall into disrepair. They are not inspected as are Queensland Housing Commission houses. Generally speaking, there would be better administration and fewer complaints in this area if the Queensland Housing Commission had the responsibility for these homes. The present Minister for Works and Housing previously had responsibility for Aboriginal

and Islanders Advancement. With a wealth of experience in that sphere, he took over his present portfolio. I would say that in that capacity he was a more sympathetic Minister than the present Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs. As the Minister for Works and Housing is experienced in Aboriginal and Island Affairs, this is an opportune time to transfer responsibility for housing for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to the Queensland Housing Commission.

The Minister is also responsible for the Builders' Registration Board. When the board was set up, quite a few hassles and misunderstandings arose, perhaps because of the over-zealous attitude of some inspectors. Quite a few people got into strife quite innocently because they wrongly believed that buildings they were involved in were being constructed by registered builders. However, I believe that the whole thing has now levelled itself out.

What amazes me is the number of real estate companies that have become registered builders. I can remember making inquiries some years ago on behalf of a constituent who wanted to become a registered builder. That person served some years in the Department of Works as an apprentice and during that time was engaged on various large jobs. Following that, he spent 10 years in the Air Force and was engaged on construction work. When he came out of the Air Force, he applied to become a registered builder, but he was told that he did not have the necessary experience and qualifications. He had to find someone else to work for or alternatively work under someone else's name. That sort of short-cutting does occur.

The minimum value of a building that can be erected by an unregistered builder should be looked at. A person who is not a registered builder is permitted to build a home of considerable value and, as long as he holds it for three years, can then sell it, move on and start all over again. If a qualified tradesman who is not a registered builder wants to carry out work in excess of a set minimum value, he cannot do it unless he does it in someone else's name. Quite a few unregistered builders have adopted the subterfuge of working under another person's name.

I refer now to the diminishing ability of co-operative housing societies to fulfil the role for which they were set up, namely, to meet part of the demand for welfare housing in Queensland. Co-operative housing societies have been operating in Maryborough for 20 years and helping to provide cheap money for the purchase of homes. They play an important part in welfare housing. Unfortunately, funds have been cut back but that certainly cannot be attributed to the Queensland Minister for Works and Housing. This year, the allocation of Commonwealth funds for these building societies was reduced to \$1,288,000. It has been

pointed out that this will mean only 71 homes, at a time when there are 1,945 applications for homes.

The co-operative housing society located in the office next door to mine at Maryborough declined an offer of \$300,000 to establish a new co-operative terminating building society. It pointed out that it was unable to accept the offer because it considered the terms were not practicable at the present time. The society also pointed out that a maximum loan of \$25,000 is necessary to lessen the deposit gap, and that as this results in a loan repayment in excess of the average weekly wage of young local permanent residents, they therefore cannot avail themselves of the maximum loan. With a lower loan in keeping with the income of those purchasing homes, the venture cannot be funded, because of the increase in the deposit gap.

In cities such as Maryborough, where there is no large-scale housing construction, with houses being built in close proximity to help reduce costs, housing is restricted. The secretary of the housing society pointed out that, in view of certain conditions, the society could not see that the offer was feasible under present conditions, but he asked that the refusal be without prejudice to future applications when conditions may allow the society's grateful acceptance of similar allocations. Although a considerable number of applications had been lodged with the society, the society considered that it was unable to accept the allocation. Unfortunately, intending home builders are being starved of funds under the Commonwealth-State agreement and by savings banks and insurance companies that are following avenues of investment more lucrative than housing.

We have passed legislation to protect the interests of subcontractors, and I am pleased to note that this year their failure rate has been reduced. However, it is still so high that the department has become concerned over finding builders to finish contracts. The building industry has a very high failure rate, and the list of bankruptcies discloses that a considerable number of builders have failed.

Because the building industry is very competitive, many builders are encouraged to become subcontractors. Master builders have told me that this means a short-term cut in pricing, but it does not look to the future or the training of tradesmen. Maybe the work is done more quickly when subcontractors are employed, but many of them are cutting prices. Some of them are very good tradesmen, but not good managers. While they may receive a certain amount of money, they fail to provide for sick pay, holiday time, lost time and the like. Within a short time, they get themselves into considerable difficulties. They get themselves into deep water, when they should never have been encouraged to enter the water at all.

Although there has been legislation to protect the rights of subcontractors, the cut-throat competition within the building industry has led many good workmen to ruin. They have been led to believe that they are making big money. But when it comes to settlement, they find that the money is not there. There should be a thorough screening of contractors who submit tenders to the Works Department. Perhaps this is being done, and perhaps it is one of the reasons why we do not see so many contractors on Government projects closing down on the job, causing undue hardship and queues of creditors. I know that I am painting a picture of despair. Nevertheless, it is a true representation, and I know that the Minister must have had some experience of this type of thing.

I believe that much more can be done in the provision of houses. The opportunity is present to do more if the funds are made available. There is a need for the provision of single or double units for housing of the aged. Many people in the latter years of their lives, who are past their prime, are not able to look after a home of their own; but there is a great opportunity for them to look after themselves in a co-operative sense in housing units designed for aged people. There is a great demand for them. It is an area to which I would like the Minister to give some consideration in any future planning.

There always seems to be a need for housing for people in necessitous circumstances—people from broken homes and the like. The rental rebate system helps them to some extent. Particularly in areas where a great number of people are benefiting from the rental rebate system, I feel that there is a need for some type of social worker, from whatever department it might be, to offer advice. In many cases they fall into debt. They are not entirely sure how it has happened. Sometimes they fail to declare additional income. All of a sudden, when the department has found that there is additional income, they receive an account showing they owe \$400 or \$500. They then approach the local member. All sorts of representations are made and some sort of repayment arrangement is arrived at. I suppose that people are entitled to their privacy, but they should know that someone is available to advise them in such circumstances. Women in particular become quite distraught when they suddenly find that they are in arrears to the extent of \$500. They have made no provision for it. They do not really understand the rebate system under which they are paying reduced rental.

I leave those thoughts with the Minister and again make the recommendation that the Housing Commission take over responsibility for the housing of Queensland's Aboriginal and Islander people. The experience and knowledge he gained in his previous portfolio should encourage him to do that.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (2.39 p.m.): I have great pleasure in speaking in the debate on these Estimates. First, let me congratulate the Minister on the splendid job he has done since taking over his present portfolio. I have found him to be one of the best Ministers in the Ministry. The co-operation I and others have received from him and his staff right throughout the State is something we should all be very proud of. I refer particularly to Mr. Harold Young and Mr. Norm Hitchins and also to Mr. Max Baker, who is in the Cairns area. They are three excellent gentlemen who do an extremely good job under an extremely good Minister. Over past years I have found the Minister to be very competent, very capable and extremely good when it comes to getting information quickly.

Mr. Moore: No matter what his portfolio is.

Mr. TENNI: That is right; he is a very capable Minister.

The thing I like about him is that if I want an answer on a matter, I mention it to him in the House and within an hour I have the answer. This is extremely good service. It is how private enterprise operates and makes a profit and it is how we can show our constituents that we get service through having capable Ministers and capable staff backing them up.

When I was first elected to represent Barron River, the electorate was in a pretty bad way. The school buildings were very dilapidated. I found no difficulty in getting the Department of Works to get things going. I refer particularly to the Mossman High School. The first section was built years ago and then nothing else was done. It is now a first-class high school with every possible amenity.

At this stage I thank the only female high school principal in Queensland, Miss Wilcox. She was really on the ball for three years. Unfortunately, she has been transferred to Heatley School in Townsville. I think that the member for that electorate, Dr. Scott-Young, is fortunate in having such a very capable principal. For the three years that she was principal at Mossman High School, she nearly drove me mad so, in turn, I nearly drove the Minister mad. Through our requests and with the Minister's support, it is now a first-class school with not one amenity missing. The latest improvement was a new home—

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. TENNI: Is that the honourable member for Aborigines?

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. TENNI: I cannot hear him. If only he would learn to speak English, he would do much better. He has been out with the Aborigines too much. He is even adopting their sayings and their expressions.

Before I was so rudely interrupted by the honourable gentleman on my right—

Mr. Scott interjected.

Mr. TENNI: I shall accept that interjection from the honourable member for Cook. He has been out of the Chamber for so long that I think it is time I accepted one from him.

Mr. Scott: The Minister whom you are praising was previously Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

Mr. TENNI: And he did a good job, too. I said that a while ago. I thank the honourable member for saying it. I hope the Minister heard it. He did an extremely good job when he had that portfolio. It is only the fellow now representing Cook who is not doing a good job. I spend most of my time cleaning up problems in his area. I do not mind doing that. We do have some good white people there. He seems to look after only the Aborigines. That is his problem.

Before I was so rudely interrupted by the honourable member for Cook I was saying—

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. TENNI: Do I have to take an interjection from the honourable member, too? He is known as "Mr. Big" down here. He is the drug king in this part of the State. I often wondered who "Mr. Big" was. I found out only yesterday.

The primary and high schools in Mossman are extremely good now, thanks to the Minister and the extremely capable men who serve under him.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: When I say that you are known as "Mr. Big", I am told that you have a one-armed nurse.

Mr. TENNI: I have a one-armed nurse? I do not understand the honourable member. Apparently he is talking as the druggies do. Perhaps he is slightly under the influence of a drug and would know what he is talking about. The other honourable members do not know. However, I will accept whatever he is saying.

The schools in the Mossman area, right through to Daintree, Rocky Point and Miallo, are in first-class order and I have the Minister to thank for that.

I should like consideration to be given to the provision of a new hospital in Mossman. In the end, the Minister will be right behind me in that request. There is no great urgency for it, but I will be talking about it to the Minister for Health to try to get it moving because I would like to see it provided.

A new hospital is now being constructed in Mareeba. The honourable member for Cairns and I have put a lot of pressure on the Minister for extensions to be made to the Cairns Base Hospital, and they are now being constructed.

I am also concerned about a problem associated with the Mossman Court House and the Mossman Police Station, which are within the one building. I would like the Minister to have a look at this because the building is pretty dilapidated and riddled with white ants. I know that in the very near future, with the Minister's assistance, a new building will be constructed. I would also like to thank the Minister for his efforts to improve the schools on the boundary of my electorate. Although they are situated in the Cairns electorate, the majority of students attending them reside in my electorate. These schools have now been brought up to scratch. Following representations by the honourable member for Cairns and me, a tremendous amount of work has been done on the West Cairns State School, the Trinity Bay High School and, of course, the Cairns High School. They have been causing me concern for some time; but, thanks to the Minister's efforts, the problems are being overcome.

The Minister is also responsible for the Builders' Registration Board. We all realise that the creation of this board was a must, and I well remember the introduction of the Bill that created it. However, it has brought some problems. After the Act was proclaimed, there was a time limit set for people to be registered as builders and to receive a builders' registration number. Some men who were working with other contractors at the time did not bother to get a number for themselves, and they now find it extremely difficult to do so, mainly because most of them were old-timers who did not actually complete an apprenticeship. But they have had a great deal of experience and they have now become very capable builders. However, I am pretty sure that most of the problems I have brought forward have been overcome.

I have already mentioned this to the Minister, but I would like to make the point very strongly that we are having tremendous difficulties with the architect's office in Townsville. There seems to be a delay somewhere along the line. I do not know what is causing it, but, if it is being caused through overwork, consideration could be given to allowing some of the unemployed architects in Far North Queensland to handle some of the work. This is really something that needs to be dealt with quickly. I am not the only one holding this opinion; it is held by most of the professional people in North Queensland and most of the teachers in my schools.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You've only got three.

Mr. TENNI: I have 23, for the honourable member's information, but we know he just cannot count.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Where did you get that new haircut?

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Kaus): Order! I remind the honourable member for Archerfield that he can interject only from his correct seat.

Mr. TENNI: It would be appreciated if the Minister could look at that problem to make sure that there are no delays in the future. If there is too much work for the staff, I suggest that the Minister give some consideration to letting it out to private enterprise, just as we are doing with the construction of schools in Far North Queensland.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Are you still in partnership with Tom Magro?

Mr. TENNI: I will answer that interjection because I think it is about time that the honourable member for Archerfield realised that Mr. Tom Magro is unfortunate enough to have a young nephew in gaol. If the honourable member for Archerfield had a nephew in gaol, would the honourable member feel that he was equally guilty and should be in gaol? Certain accusations have been made about relatives of the honourable member for Archerfield, and I would not like to bring them forward again, but if he believes that, because one of his relatives is guilty of something, he, too, should be equally responsible, that is a matter for him.

To return to the subject—I congratulate the Minister on his efforts in building new schools in growing areas. A new school is being constructed at present at Trinity Beach, which is a fast-developing area. It was wonderful to see the way the Minister got behind this school, as did the Minister for Education and the Lands Department. The school is now nearing completion. I was out looking at it the other day. The Minister will recall when he and I looked at the land. That was not so long ago. As I say, the school is nearing completion. In the very near future, the grounds will be completed and the school will be ready for students in the new year. It will be situated in very pleasant surroundings.

I also refer to the Yorkey's Knob school, for which tenders have been called. This will be a new school in a new area. The member for Cairns and I will be eternally grateful to the Minister for the Bayview Heights school. This school will be a goer in the very near future.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why are they pouring money into your electorate? It must be very shaky.

Mr. TENNI: My electorate is not shaky at all. The only time it gets a bit shaky is when big fellows like the honourable member get on the ground up there in the wet season. Next time he is up there, he might be lucky enough to fall into one of the holes.

Through you, Mr. Kaus, I ask the honourable member: how it is he didn't get the leadership of the Labor Party today? If he had got it, we would have been in Government for life.

We are very pleased with all the Minister's efforts. I can only say that if I could get on with the other Ministers as well as I do with the Minister for Works and Housing, I would be very happy. He treats all members in the same way, and it is very pleasing. It must be disheartening for him to hear members opposite rubbishing him, as the member for Archerfield did a while ago, when they know that he will do his duty and do the right thing for the majority of the people.

I am happy to have had the opportunity to say a few words on these Estimates. I again say to the Minister: keep up the good work. We are all very proud of you.

Mr. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (2.52 p.m.): Today I presented a petition from 1,675 electors of Queensland asking the Housing Commission to do something about relieving the burden imposed by rent increases. I claim that action that the Chatsworth Tenants' Action Group has taken has prevented the Housing Commission from increasing rents on Housing Commission homes this year. On 27 June, the Minister for Works and Housing was reported as having made it obvious that a rent rise later in the year was virtually inevitable. Because of the action of the Chatsworth Tenants' Action Group, he has postponed that rent rise till next year. I predict now that that rise will occur in February next. I ask that, when he introduces that rent rise next year, he take into consideration the petition that I presented and the pleas from the tenants of Housing Commission homes to do something about rent increases.

Too often we have seen \$10 increases and other large increases in rents. What I would like to see the Housing Commission do—and I have stated this in the Chamber previously—is tie its rent increases to those in workers' wages. I have stated previously that, between the last two rent increases, tenants in my electorate received a wage increase of only \$10 and the Housing Commission has taken the lot. I should like the Minister to do something about that and to stop putting up the rents as much as he has. No-one wants a rent increase of \$10 a week; it is just too much for most people to be able to afford. If one looks at the distribution of wealth in Australia, one sees that 50 per cent of the population has 8 per cent of the wealth and the remaining 50 per cent of the population has the other 92 per cent of the wealth. That shows that 50 per cent of people in Australia are in a very drastic position. They are the people we should be looking after.

I suggest that next year, when the Minister is considering the rent rise, he look at my proposals very closely. He should do something urgently to stop these large, savage rent increases.

Look at the rent increase that was imposed this year. Tenants received about seven days' notice of the proposed rent increase; yet under the Residential Tenancies Act—an Act of the Queensland Parliament—a landlord must give his tenants 28 days' notice of a proposed rent increase. Apparently the Queensland Government does not take any notice of that Act; it can put up its rents after giving only seven days' notice to its tenants. The Minister shakes his head. What I say is correct. I have documents showing the date on which the letter was sent out to tenants and the date of the proposed rent increase. If he looks at the Residential Tenancies Act he will see that 28 days' notice must be given of a proposed rent increase. The Queensland Housing Commission is not bound by the Act, and it ought to be. Probably, all that members of the Opposition have done this year is to create more employment for officers of the Minister's staff. Certainly, a great deal of correspondence has passed between us.

The second part of the petition that I presented earlier today relates to what I see as probably the biggest problem in the Queensland Housing Commission—the system of rent rebates. In introducing the Estimates, the Minister stated that last year \$6,000,000 had been paid out by way of rent rebates. In his annual report, the Commissioner of Housing (Mr. Hitchins) mentioned “a sharp increase in rebated rent costs to a level of \$5,000,000 a year.” Today the Minister told the Committee that the figure is \$6,000,000; Mr. Hitchins, in his report, mentions \$5,000,000. If we look at the overall situation, Mr. Kaus, we see that the Queensland Government will get back from the Federal Government approximately \$2,000,000, which means that only \$3,000,000 comes out of the Housing Commission funds. So the position is not as bad as the Minister made it out to be.

People who live in Housing Commission houses need to be looked after by the Government, and I have asked the Minister for Works and Housing to look at the rent rebate system that operates in South Australia, where a person with an income of \$50 a week pays \$8 a week in rent. In Queensland, a person with a similar income pays \$8.35 a week. Where the income is \$60 a week, the rent is \$9.50 in South Australia and \$10.85 in Queensland. Those figures rise until, at \$130 a week, the rent in South Australia is \$24 a week and in Queensland it is \$32.25 under our rebated system. Officers of the Queensland Housing Commission should go to South Australia and investigate the system there.

I know that when the Minister replies to my contribution to the debate he will tell me that in 1945 a Labor Government of this

State signed an agreement with the Chifley Government. It is about time that we forgot about that agreement and looked at ways in which the Housing Commission can assist tenants. Something must be done. We should forget about the 1945 agreement; no other State in Australia still sticks by it.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: Are you suggesting that the Queensland Government is 33 years out of date?

Mr. MACKENROTH: I would suggest that it is 133 years out of date.

Under the present rebate system in this State, all household income, excluding child endowment, is taken into consideration. In South Australia, the rebated rent is calculated on the tenant's income and \$3 a week is added to the rent for dependent income-earners up to 21 years of age and \$5 a week for dependent income-earners over 21 years of age. In Queensland, the market rental payable by a widow with a 20-year-old son would be \$32.20, and she would not receive a rebate if her son earned over \$80 a week. If she lived in South Australia, she would qualify for a rebate and her rent would be only \$11 a week—a difference of \$21.20.

Surely a young person should not be crucified because he wishes to continue living with his mother. He should be allowed to live with his mother and save money for when he wants to get married, and not be put in a situation of having to go to the Queensland Housing Commission, as people are today. What the present system of rebated rents is doing in this State is ensuring that, in future, people will be forced to go to the Queensland Housing Commission when they get married. They have no opportunity for saving for their own home. I think that if the South Australian system were investigated realistically, we would soon be able to introduce a much better scheme in this State.

Tenants who do receive a rebate are not allowed to have overnight visitors. If elderly pensioners have a son and daughter-in-law who live in, say, Melbourne and they come up for two weeks' holiday, the pensioners have to go and apologise to the Housing Commission and pay an increased rent for two weeks. I do not believe that elderly people should be put in such a position.

Another aspect of the rent rebate system that I have raised in this Chamber before concerns elderly people who are forced to sign a form. The Minister has told me that the Housing Commission does not really force people out of their homes; nevertheless, people are forced to sign that form, which states that if the Housing Commission wishes to move them from, say, Carina to Inala, or from Carina to Mitchelton—

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. MACKENROTH: They get good representation, but it is too far out of town to be in my electorate.

People are forced to sign those forms, and I do not think they should be. If they want to stay in their family home until they die, they should be allowed to do so. There are no pensioner units at Carina and very few at Holland Park.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That is dreadful if it is true. Are you suggesting that the Housing Commission is using compulsion on some of these poor people?

Mr. MACKENROTH: In all Housing Commission houses, it is absolute compulsion.

The Queensland Government Gazette which has just come out shows the quarterly spending for the Queensland Housing Commission. For the quarter ended September 1977, receipts for the Queensland Housing Commission were \$19,597,710 and expenditure totalled \$23,377,442. We need to remember that that was an election year. In the quarter just ended this year, the receipts were \$23,537,281 and expenditure was \$14,688,237. During the September quarter leading up to the last State election, there was a deficit of \$3,779,732, but in the September quarter just past, the Housing Commission received \$8,851,244 more than it spent. Certainly some of that money may be allocated to projects, but I suggest that the Housing Commission is saving money for the next election campaign so that once again it can tell the people of Queensland what a good job it is doing.

I turn now to the annual report of the Queensland Housing Commission. The second last sentence on the first page might refer to me. It reads—

“This ‘needy not the greedy’ emphasis received some criticism, but this was outweighed by the support it received.”

This criticism did come from me, tenants’ action groups and the shadow Minister for Works and Housing (Mr. K. J. Hooper). Certainly I did not see anyone getting out in the streets and supporting the Queensland Housing Commission for putting rents up \$10 a week. I did not see anyone getting out in the streets waving banners to say what a good job the Queensland Housing Commission was doing by putting rents up \$10 a week and forcing elderly people out of their homes. That is the type of thing the Queensland Housing Commission is doing, and that is what needs to be looked at.

I will now give the Housing Commission a miss for a little while and turn to the Builders’ Registration Board. I heard a sigh of relief from Mr. Hitchins. The staff is balanced for a paper war rather than for the protection of home buyers. In reply to a question I asked last week, the Minister indicated that of a total of 33 staff only nine are building inspectors. Of a total of 33, nine are out on the job, while the rest are sitting in their offices passing memos to one another. There is one registrar, one chief building inspector, one senior building

inspector, one administration officer, five clerks, eight stenographers and seven clerk-typists.

I suggest that the Builders’ Registration Board and the House-builders’ Registration Board are more interested in collecting registration fees and insurance fees than in protecting home buyers. Those two boards should be given more teeth to go out and do the job that the Acts are supposed to do. Certainly they are not doing that. We need a consumers’ representative, as well as people associated with the building industry, on the Builders’ Registration Board. What we have is a board comprised entirely of builders who see matters in a one-eyed manner. They see them from one side only. They cannot see what is going on as the consumer sees it. I have had a number of complaints about the Builders’ Registration Board, as I am sure have honourable members on both sides of the Chamber. The subject of most complaints is the attitude of the building inspectors. I will deal with a couple of cases that have been brought to my attention.

The Minister is still investigating one case for me. Unfortunately, it has had to be investigated for the second time. I do not blame the Minister for that. When he passed the problem on to the Builders’ Registration Board, a building inspector wrote a letter to the Minister and the Minister accepted its contents. I went and had a look at the job concerned. It was a house built by Benn Hall Constructions. It is a brand-new house worth probably about \$60,000.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr. MACKENROTH: He certainly would be.

One has only to look at the bathroom floor to see that the bathroom is half an inch out of square in 3 ft. That is not the work we would expect from a registered builder, a so-called competent tradesman.

When I wrote to the Minister he replied to me in these terms—

“I am informed that since the complaint was received on the 4th May, 1978, a total of five (5) site inspections have been undertaken by the Builders’ Registration Board of Queensland. One inspection was attended by the Board’s Senior Building Inspector.”

We know for certain what the senior building inspector does; he goes out when the others are not doing their job. The letter continues—

“On the 28th August, 1978, the owners were advised that no further action was proposed by the Board, as the rectification work carried out by the builder was considered to be satisfactory.

“At the owner’s request, 25 mm by 25 mm floor tiles were used for the walls.”

And so it goes on, without one reference to the fact that the room was a half inch out of square in 3 ft.

The Builders' Registration Board was aware of that fact, but it did not make the Minister aware of it. When the building inspector went out to the home he said to the owner, "You don't want me to persecute the builder? We can't persecute the poor guy." Although the builder had made a mistake, the inspector let him get away with it. If a man spends \$60,000 on a home, he expects a good job to be done. I hope that the Minister will really look into this matter. If he does not get a satisfactory answer, I will invite him out to look at the job and ask him if he would accept such a job in a brand-new house constructed by a builder. I certainly would not!

Recently a woman who was unhappy about an extension being done by a registered builder came to my office. She made 24 individual complaints to the Builders' Registration Board concerning a job worth \$4,500. Before entering Parliament I worked in the building trade. I thought that she was probably a little crazy; that no-one could find so many complaints. But when I inspected the job, I was amazed; I have never seen such a mess in my life.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order!

Mr. MACKENROTH: Thank you, Mr. Kaus.

The front wall of the extension was one inch out of plumb; the wall had one inch bows in it; there were no outside window mouldings; and the existing ceiling had holes in it made by the builder. The building inspector allowed the builder 21 days to rectify the job. Instead of that, he should have ordered him off the job and made him refund the money to the woman. However, she had to let him back on the job. After the first day back on the job, she came to my office in tears. On the first day the builder did not rectify one fault. Instead, he had made three more mistakes. Should people be expected to accept such things?

I rang the Builders' Registration Board, but it was not prepared to do anything. It had to wait until the 21 days had expired. I suggested to the woman that she should ring the builder and ask him to abandon the contract. I got another builder to quote on the job, and it cost her an extra \$1,000 to rectify the faults. Because the Builders' Registration Board would not do anything, it was sensible for her to get out of the contract. I am happy to say that I got her out of the contract with that builder. I feel that he was a little scared of what might happen.

Just this week, another person came to me to complain about being ripped off by a builder. He paid a builder \$3,500 for carpets to be put into his house, but the builder did not pay the carpet supplier.

The home owner was then charged \$3,500 by the carpet manufacturer. When he went to court, the court ruled in favour of the carpet manufacturer. In effect, he paid \$7,000 for the carpets put in his home.

Only a small number of builders are looked at by the Builders' Registration Board. According to the Minister's recent answer, in the past 6 years only 16 builders have been deregistered out of a total of 10,515 registered with the Builders' Registration Board and a similar number with the House-builders' Registration Board. I suggest that there are many more crooks in the building industry than that answer would show.

Another matter I wish to raise in the short time I have left relates to carport and garage manufacturers. In answer to a question I asked on 12 October, the Minister advised me that firms not registered with the Builders' Registration Board or the House-builders' Registration Board were Stella Homes, Wholesale Concrete Garages, Atlas Engineering, Field Industries, Metro Sheds Pty. Ltd., N and D Engineering and Princess Blinds and Screens. That is a total of seven firms out of the 13 that are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone book under the "Carports" classification. In other words, over 50 per cent of those advertising to build garages are not even registered with the board! The six that are registered have to pay their \$30 insurance fee. Perhaps under last week's amendment to the Act the Government will catch up with the seven that are not presently paying the fee. They have been able to get away with not paying in the past. I hope that the Minister asks the Builders' Registration Board to have a look at those seven firms. I would hope that that has been done by now. Surely the Minister must have been aware of the facts when he answered that question. If it has not been done, I ask that the Builders' Registration Board and the House-builders' Registration Board stop those seven firms from operating or else have them registered, thereby giving proper protection to the people who buy garages from them.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (3.12 p.m.): I am glad to have the opportunity to speak in this debate. This afternoon we have heard from a number of speakers nothing but complaints about the Government, the Works Department and the Housing Commission. I hope that my remarks will be regarded as constructive criticism. That is the manner in which they are made.

I take this opportunity of congratulating the Housing Commission on a change of policy in recent years. When the Honourable N. E. Lee was Minister for Works and Housing, the Housing Commission was giving all the contracts for houses built in the Bundaberg area to southern builders. I took the matter up with him and, to his credit, he made sure that, when their prices were competitive, local builders received some recognition and were awarded contracts. The present Minister has carried on that policy, with

one lapse, and it is pleasing to note that builders in the area (which at the moment has a reasonably depressed economy) are receiving equal opportunity with builders from other parts of the State in the construction of Housing Commission homes in the Bundaberg area.

I congratulate the Housing Commission, too, on the attitude it has adopted to contractors who have submitted tenders. When we drive around our electorates, we all recognise the typical Housing Commission home. I often wonder why house after house in street after street should look alike. This sameness makes the suburb look dreary, and I have no doubt that those who go to live in them are less than attracted by the surroundings. I would hope that the Housing Commission in all of its housing estates adopts a similar attitude to the one adopted in my electorate and areas bordering it, where designs of local builders have been accepted so that the houses are not only pleasant to live in but also look attractive. The result is that there is not row after row of look-alike houses.

The Housing Commission has adopted the construction of brick-veneer homes of a standard comparable with that of any others built in the community. That is a positive step taken by the Housing Commission. It shows an attitude that should be maintained. I can imagine that there are builders in this State—some of them in Brisbane—who would prefer to follow the same design time after time because it is much easier to mass produce houses. But the attitude adopted by the Housing Commission—at the suggestion of one of the companies in my electorate, I might add—to change the style of the houses, to put them in different places on the blocks and to adopt a brick-veneer type of home is to be commended.

The demand for Housing Commission houses in my electorate is as strong as it has ever been. All honourable members are constantly bombarded by people seeking Housing Commission accommodation and it is a shame that they cannot all be satisfied with a fair amount of speed. It worries me that people seeking Housing Commission houses have to approach their local member at all.

I know of areas in which people have gone to the local court-house, which is the agency for the Housing Commission, and have been totally dissatisfied with the response they have received. I do not believe that the staff at the court-house are purposely obstructive or deliberately upset people. But they do not have the necessary information at their fingertips. The Housing Commission should do far more to keep the officers who represent it in country areas up to date. In Brisbane a person can, at the cost of a local telephone call, ring the Housing Commission or duck into the office to obtain the correct information. But in a country area, where court-houses are relied upon as agents of the Housing

Commission, the officers are often hamstrung because they do not have the correct information. Government policy changes and improves from time to time and the staff at court-houses are not constantly kept up to date with the information that they require.

One of the things I cannot understand is why people who are seeking houses and who find some empty Housing Commission houses cannot obtain one. I have had such an instance, as the Minister knows very well. This should not occur. Surely if a house becomes vacant it should be inspected to make sure that everything is correct, and it should then be cleaned up if necessary. A family should then be put into it immediately. Housing Commission houses are in such short supply in my area that none of them should be vacant at any time.

I cannot understand the reluctance on the part of the Housing Commission to build accommodation at Hervey Bay. The commission says that it will not build houses if there are no applicants. That excuse is fair enough, but how can somebody apply for a house if, when he goes to the court-house to ask for a form, he is told that he is wasting his time because no houses are available. So it is a case of the dog chasing its tail. I am encouraging as many people as possible to apply for Housing Commission homes so that the Housing Commission might then adopt the attitude that, as there are some applicants, it had better do something about it.

In the housing field, there needs to be more liaison between departments. The Minister for Works and Housing is almost driven mad by members who go to him complaining about lack of housing. He investigates the complaints and finds that other departments have not put in orders for houses. This is sheer stupidity. The liaison between departments has to be improved. There is a serious shortage of teacher accommodation, for example, in Childers in my electorate, yet the Works Department and the Minister knew nothing about it. The Education Department is to be condemned for not telling the Works Department that that state of affairs would arise.

One family, at Hervey Bay, is living under deplorable conditions. There is no other way to describe their house. I drew this to the attention of the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs because I believed he should be able to help in the matter, and since then letters have been going back and forth, but once again it is a case of the dog chasing its tail and people being put off all the time. The problem has to be faced. This family ought to have better accommodation. The house they have is just not good enough and I can see no reason why the Housing Commission could not move in and build a house so that they could be accommodated in a decent manner.

Quite a deal of pensioner accommodation has been built by the Housing Commission in the Bundaberg area adjacent to my electorate. The commission is to be commended for that because the type of accommodation it builds is first-class. The statements of the honourable member for Archerfield earlier in the debate were interesting. On the one hand, he condemned the Government because, according to him, it was spending money not across the board, but only in Government electorates, and, on the other, he congratulated the Housing Commission for the excellent pensioner units it had built in his electorate. The Government does not look at how it is going to spend money electorate by electorate, but rather it spends money where it can be best and most effectively used. It is to the credit of the Government that this type of pensioner unit has been built, but here again I would put in a plug for my electorate by saying that there is a distinct need for pensioner units to be built at Hervey Bay, an area to which many people are retiring, and justifiably so.

It is an area where rates will increase, though I must confess that the local authority has so far been able to keep them down to a reasonable level. But they will increase, and one can foresee the situation arising where, having retired to these most desirable areas, people will eventually find themselves being priced out of their homes because they cannot afford the rates. Therefore the Housing Commission should be looking very sympathetically at these areas to see if it can fulfil a need and eventually prevent suffering, hardship and anguish. I think most of us realise that when people retire they want to do so in peace and not have to wonder continually whether they will be able to afford to keep their homes. If there is an area in which we can assist, I think this is the one.

Earlier, I mentioned something about liaison, and nowhere is it required more than between the Education and Works Departments. I know that the Minister would view that statement sympathetically. It seems very strange indeed to me that the Education Department does not liaise with the Works Department as it ought to do. It is interesting to note that the Railway Department has its own works section to build its own houses, and perhaps the way out of the current problem where we have conflict arising is for the Education Department to build up its own works section so it can build its own schools, teacher accommodation and so on. But that does not happen now. I believe there should be far more liaison between the two departments. The fact that the Education Department has to give the order to the Works Department is a fact of life, but the priorities that the Education Department set seem strange indeed. I would also criticise the design of some of the new school buildings. Again, I do not think that the Works Department

is entirely to blame. It is given a brief, but when a school requests extra accommodation, why on earth does the Works Department, the Education Department, or whoever else is responsible, go ahead and build some fancy building that is totally out of kilter with the rest of the school. That is entirely beyond my comprehension. At one high school in my electorate the department went ahead and built a first-year centre. While the school needed that accommodation, and while everyone involved is very thankful for it, it does not blend in with the architecture of the rest of the school. In addition, it now takes up half of what was a sporting field. The principal and the staff would have been perfectly satisfied with some of the old-style class-rooms, so that they could have kept their sporting field and had some under-school accommodation.

In the new schools that are being built at ground level, children will have nowhere to go in wet weather. This applies to Brisbane as much as it does to North and Central Queensland. This State is well-renowned for the heavy rain that it receives in the summer months. Surely good sense should prevail, and the Works Department and the Education Department should win the battle concerning the architectural side of these buildings which, to put it crudely as some southerners do, are built on stilts.

Over many years, we in Queensland have found that the most comfortable and coolest building is a single-storey one that has an open area underneath. It is just plain common sense to construct that type of building in our climate. It is cheaper. We do not have to worry about installing expensive air-conditioning, nor do we have to worry so much about installing expensive lighting.

Many difficulties are encountered when a building is constructed at ground level. I believe it is high time that our architects got their heads out of the clouds and their feet on the ground, walked around and talked to some practising teachers, and constructed buildings that suit our climate. The type of building that is being constructed at present just does not do that.

Each year the Works Department subsidises the construction of a number of assembly halls, and I am grateful to the Minister for informing us that this year the Kepnock State High School will receive a subsidy for its assembly hall. It is interesting to note that the construction of the three high schools in my electorate commenced at about the same time, and each has reached the same stage of construction almost simultaneously. At both the Kepnock State High School and the Hervey Bay High School an assembly hall will be constructed within the next 12 months. The Isis District State High School in Childers is too small to be able to afford its own assembly hall, but it is being assisted by the local authority, which is building a cultural complex in the town. A

subsidy for that cultural complex is available from the Cultural Activities Branch and also the State Library Board. The Treasury is providing a subsidy for the construction of the toilets in the complex. I believe that the Works Department and the Education Department should also provide a subsidy for that cultural centre, because the building will be used primarily by children during the day and for the cultural activities that the school puts on at night. I look forward to the Government's adopting a more reasonable attitude and providing a subsidy for that cultural complex through the Education Department and the Works Department.

Much has been said in this debate about the Builders' Registration Board. Along with other members of this Parliament, I have received many complaints about the board—so many, in fact, that I advocate its total disbanding. I guess that in disbanding it the Government would encounter a few problems, but I believe that they could very easily be overcome.

I suggest that we probably need to maintain some sort of accreditation for builders. We need to have an accreditation authority. I believe, however, that the building industry should have its own accreditation authority. I see no reason why the Master Builders' Association, or some similar body, could not be the accreditation authority. Why cannot such a body supervise its own builders and ensure that they do their job correctly? I believe that we would get far more satisfaction if, instead of going to the Government bureaucracy every time we receive a complaint about the way a building is constructed or finished, we went to a professional body and talked to it. It could send its inspectors, who would be practical builders, to investigate the complaint and then to act upon it.

The present situation is impracticable. An inspector who is not a practical builder—he may have been one some time ago, and he may well be a tradesman—goes to look at a building, but he looks at it not as a practical person but as somebody who has a desk job. He may move around a bit, but he still has a desk job. Therefore, his eye is somewhat jaundiced. I believe that the Government would do well if it abandoned the Builders' Registration Board completely and let the industry accredit its own builders. I believe that in that way the quality of workmanship would improve no end.

Of course, fly-by-night builders are a constant problem, and anybody who is silly enough to engage a builder who is not a resident of his area to do some building for him deserves all the anguish that he gets. Surely common sense dictates that if one wants a good job done, one goes to a firm of good repute, one that is well known in the area and against whom the consumer has some opportunity of obtaining redress if a problem arises.

At present, there is an air of resentment between the Builders' Registration Board and the builders in the community, and that should not have been allowed to develop. If the Builders' Registration Board were disbanded and the industry were allowed to set up its own system of accreditation, some sense would come into the situation, the quality of workmanship would improve and, above all, the consumer would receive a better deal.

The future of the building industry is at risk at present because not enough apprentices are being trained. Of course, there are a number of reasons for that, not the least of which is that too many contractors are using subcontractors. Because subcontractors have a job to do and they have to do it very quickly, they are not very keen about putting on apprentices. They cannot afford to pay the high price being charged for apprentice labour; they cannot afford to put on apprentices. In Bundaberg last week, in a submission to the State Government's committee on unemployment, the Master Builders' Association indicated that it took between four and five years for a person with an apprenticeship to become an efficient tradesman.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WILSON (Townsville South) (3.32 p.m.): I suggest that the honourable member for Isis should consider very seriously the suggestion that the Builders' Registration Board should be done away with and that accreditation should be left to the Master Builders' Association. In my opinion, that would be a very retrograde step and would not do anything to protect home purchasers. In the Townsville area, although the Master Builders' Association might fully agree that a shoddy job has been done and that the person concerned should be prosecuted, it will not take any action against him. Handing accreditation over to the Master Builders' Association would be like going before Caesar with a problem involving Caesar.

The Works and Housing Estimates relate to the building industry to some extent, and I believe that an expansion in the building industry could provide the answer to the unemployment problem now facing this nation. As all honourable members are aware, other industries are buoyant when the building industry is vigorous and active.

At this stage, let me quote to the Committee part of a statement made by an organiser of the Building Workers' Industrial Union. He said—

"The economic health of our industry affects many others apart from building workers . . . cement works, timber mills, metal factories, hardware stores, furniture and appliances of all sorts. There is hardly one section of the community not affected . . . not to mention the churches and welfare organisations, who know only too well the social and human tragedies resulting from inadequate housing in the community."

He went on to say—

“It is our hope that all of these community interests will let their voices be heard for a revival of the building industry and for a truly national home building programme.”

I could not agree more. If we are to house the people of Australia—our people—it has to be done in a planned way, an organised way, in the interests of the people generally and not in the interests of those who want to make a quick quid by exploiting young persons who wish to own their own homes. Later I will go into the exploitation of these young people.

Mr. TENNI: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Townsville South is reading his speech. He is holding it in his hand.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I cannot accept that point of order. The honourable member has a right to quote from papers if he wishes to.

Mr. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Miller. There is no doubt that the honourable member for Barron River is getting an object lesson in what affects the young people of Queensland and, no doubt, Australia.

Home construction should be done on a day-labour basis so that the best workmanship is obtained. When it is necessary to let contracts, the contractors should be forced to work on a day-labour basis and pay award rates, not on a subcontract basis or money-in-the-hand situation, which leads to poor workmanship and no apprentice-training. It is in the housing area of the building industry that the best tradesmen are produced. That is where they receive training in all facets of the building industry. If the home-building industry was planned in an ongoing way, we would have people in the industry continually working, and we would have apprentices continually being trained to ensure a flow of skilled tradesmen to meet the future needs in all fields of the building industry.

Although it can be said that the Queensland Housing Commission has done a fair job, it is quite obvious that it has not met the needs of the people. Thousands of young married couples throughout the length and breadth of the State are without houses. Many of them have to live in substandard dwellings. In some areas council ordinances allow the construction of maisonettes. In some instances up to six maisonettes have been built on a 32-perch allotment. The best one could say about maisonettes is that they are glorified horse stables. Instead of running across the allotment they run from the front of the block to the back. Very often the maisonettes are within 3 ft. of the fence on one side, with just enough clearance on the other side to provide vehicle access. If the occupiers of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth maisonettes own a

motor car, they have to park it on their front veranda to allow the person in the sixth and last maisonette to drive in and out.

It is quite apparent that the Housing Commission has not met the needs of aged pensioners for pensioner units. Throughout Queensland pensioners are forced to live in one room in which they eat, live and sleep. Because there are not enough pensioner units, the Housing Commission is unable to do anything for an elderly Townsville lady who is living in one room and has the use of a stove shared with 20 other people.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. WILSON: I do not know. Probably most of them are men and she waits until they go to work before she cooks her breakfast.

I must protest about the number of Housing Commission houses rented by the Army and the Air Force in the Townsville area. Not for a second do I say that the Army or Air Force personnel should not have houses; like other persons, they are entitled to a home. But surely the Army and the Air Force should build their own houses and the Housing Commission should be left to cater for the needs of civilians in Townsville, Cairns, Brisbane, Rockhampton and elsewhere. While hundreds of people in Townsville were looking for houses, I have known Housing Commission houses in Townsville to lie idle for six to nine months, simply because they were on lease to the Army or Air Force.

Recently an R.A.A.F. squadron was transferred from the North (which, it is claimed, the yellow hordes will invade) to South Australia, which meant that 52 houses in the Garbutt area were left idle for a long time. We were told that the houses were under lease to the Air Force and could not be let to civilians. I understand that later on they were offered to the Army. After years in the building industry, I considered that those houses were first class, but the Army claimed that they were not good enough and would not accept them.

A Government Member: They had to do that to get you out.

Mr. WILSON: I suggest to the interjector that he should come to Townsville to try to convince the people looking for a Housing Commission house that he has said something sensible.

I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the great problems associated with home-building. The cost of land represents the very first cab off the rank. To give an idea of the increase in the cost of land for homes in Townsville, I point out that two of my brothers each bought a block of land in the Wulguru area in 1949 for \$60. Similar blocks of land in that area are now priced at \$8,000.

Because of insufficient grants by both the State and Federal Governments to local authorities, land valuers have increased valuations, and so increased rates, to permit local authorities to provide the necessary goods and services. I wonder about these land valuations. I would like to mention a certain case, which is one of many that have been referred to me. A 24-perch corner allotment is valued at some \$9,500. Across the road are bigger blocks of land, ranging up to 40 perches, that are valued at \$7,000. I am at a loss to know how that sort of disparity comes about. Because of high valuations in the area, the high rates are stopping young people from owning their own homes.

If it costs \$300 per house to provide the amenities required by the local authority, rates should be assessed on that basis rather than on a percentage of the valuation. As it is, people are paying 10c in the dollar and the council is still screwing \$300 out of them each year to meet the local authority requirements. If my suggestion were accepted, land valuation could be of some benefit. Young married couples would at least be able to purchase a block of land for use as a down payment on the construction of a dwelling.

Let me deal further with the plight of the young people wishing to become home owners. When they are engaged, a couple work hard and save every penny in order to get a down payment on a house. They continue to do so when they are husband and wife. Then they find that the interest payments are so high that most of them are forced out of the field. If they enter into some of these deals with high interest rates, they have a millstone around their necks for at least 40 years. A house costing \$20,000 or \$30,000 to erect will in the final analysis cost them between \$80,000 and \$120,000 by the time it is paid off. One case reported to me—and there are many in the area—involves a couple who have been paying approximately \$50 a week for two years. When they went to find out how they were going, they were told that they had reduced their debt by \$9! Because the Housing Commission is not planning sufficient houses, the people of Queensland are being exploited by those who are in the real estate business.

It is quite evident that a lot more has to be done by the Works Department. In Townsville we need new class-rooms to replace the demountables in the area. We need pre-schools at the Hermit Park, Oonoonba and Mundingburra State Schools. The one at Oonoonba was promised for this financial year, but it does not seem that we are going to get it.

Further, to offset unemployment, a new and up-to-date police station should be built in Townsville. The present structure is a disgrace to the Police Department and the Department of Works. It is no different today in 1978 from what it was when I

used to pass it on my way to high school in 1934. During that time the town's population has increased from 32,500 to 105,000.

There is a need for an aged persons' home in Townsville because of the size of the city and because, except for those run by church organisations, the nearest home is in Charters Towers. A geriatric ward should be provided in such an aged persons' home. This would be in addition to the one at the Townsville General Hospital where the doctor, through no fault of his own, is under pressure to force people to take their aged mothers and fathers home because there is no room for them. These people need attention 24 hours a day.

So there is plenty of work to be done. The building industry needs a great infusion of money to make it viable. This would tend to uplift the economy and assist other businesses associated with, and dependent on, the building industry.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (3.51 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates. I compliment him and his staff on the excellent way in which they have carried out the day-to-day business of the departments under his control.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member is interjecting from other than his usual place in the Chamber.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member might like to know that the Minister has been to Stanthorpe recently. While there, we sampled Stanthorpe wine and we found it to be very good. He acquitted himself very well while he was there. He inspected many schools and Housing Commission homes and came to grips with the problems in the area; so much so that on his return to Brisbane he was able to approve expenditure which overcame many of the problems that I was able to point out to him on his trip.

Mr. Mackenroth: I had better take him to my electorate.

Mr. McKECHNIE: If the honourable member did that, he would find him just as sympathetic. However, I do not think that the honourable member could put his case very well, so he probably would not get the good result that I got.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield is not in his usual place.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member for Archerfield is the Opposition spokesman on housing. We know he likes to frequent a certain house quite a lot. We hope that he can keep his interjections down, too, because they are never very sensible.

The Minister recognised that, in some of the smaller towns in my electorate, the economic rents were a little higher than market rents. I hope he can come to grips with that problem and can improve the standard of those houses so that they are worth the rent charged. He has pointed out that 40 per cent of Housing Commission tenants in Queensland receive a rental rebate. This is a good scheme. It was instituted by various State Governments to try to help the people who are in great need of rental assistance.

I agree with the honourable member for Maryborough that a better explanation should be given to the tenants who receive rental rebates. I have come across some who do not understand the system. Admittedly it is explained on the form that they sign, but their obligations should be spelt out a little more clearly. I had a case the other day in which a woman, whose two children were living in the house and working, could not understand why she should not enjoy the same rental rebate. I think that some young people have just got to learn to live up to their responsibilities. This woman was a widow, and she was fearful of what would happen if she asked those two young people, who were working, for a share of their wages to put towards the rent. I think it is time that young people, when they have obtained jobs, realised that they have some obligation to help mum pay the rent, particularly if she is a widow.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: Why was she fearful of her own children?

Mr. McKECHNIE: She was a widow and the children got a bit out of hand. The stage has been reached at which she finds it hard to control them. This is what I am saying; we should sympathise with widows on rental rebates because, if they have children who have become a little difficult through not having had a father to use the heavy hand when necessary, it is hard for them to extract some money from the children when the rent is due.

It is also a fact that the Housing Commission does have vacant homes in some areas, particularly in the West, and I think it should be possible for the Government to institute some scheme to make it a little easier for, say, widows or people who may wish to take advantage of these homes to travel to those areas and occupy those houses. I know people in my electorate who would be only too happy to occupy houses in some of these remote areas, but they are a little worried about uprooting all their belongings, finding the money to move to the area, and

then not having any friends when they arrive there. I think we should do a little more to help these people.

The honourable member for Archerfield complained that all the money was spent in Government electorates, and then went on to talk about all the money spent in his electorate. That is typical of the stupid comments made by the honourable member.

The scheme under which young people can borrow money at 7½ per cent interest to help them buy their first home is a good one, and I urge people to take advantage of it. Some Opposition speakers said that high interest rates are damaging the home-building industry. I agree with them. But people who qualify under this scheme should not suffer to the same degree as those who have to borrow money from building societies. I think it is time that we all recognised that if interest rates are to come down across the board, the Federal Government has to get rid of its deficit. I think it is time there was a little more understanding of that problem. If the Federal Government is going to borrow thousands of millions of dollars, it will be competing against private-enterprise borrowers and therefore pushing up interest rates.

I was amazed to hear the honourable member for Chatsworth speak about the haves and the have-nots. I interjected and asked him if, like the South Australian Attorney-General, he believes in a wealth tax. He did not answer my interjection. So, through you, Mr. Miller, I ask the honourable member for Archerfield and other Opposition members whether they believe in a wealth tax.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Of course we do.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I thank the honourable member for Archerfield. It is now written into "Hansard" that the front bench of the Opposition in Queensland believes in a wealth tax.

We must realise just how urgent it is to get the housing industry on its feet if we are going to overcome some of the unemployment problems in Australia. To do this, we must also realise that what business needs is confidence. I know a person who is quite keen to build a home. He has the money, but he is just not sure he is going to keep his job and so he is not going to build that home. How many times is this repeated all over Australia? Yet we hear Opposition speakers advocating a wealth tax. This destroys business confidence.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member for Archerfield knew what I meant. I am talking about a tax on wealth in addition to income tax, and I am sure he is honest enough to say that he is in favour of it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: In all fairness to you, we do not believe in the bunyip aristocracy that you represent in your electorate. You are an old bunyip aristocrat. You come from a long line of bunyip aristocrats.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Through you, Mr. Miller, I would say it is quite obvious that the shadow Minister for Housing believes in a wealth tax. He talks about my coming from the aristocracy. When my father was 21 years of age, he was a very poor man. When he returned from his honeymoon he had threepence in his pocket. I am sure that those members in this Chamber who know my father well would realise that he is a self-made man.

Another suggestion that I make to the Minister is that he should have a close look at the architects in his department. I know that one building in particular in my electorate has cost probably twice as much as it should have, purely because the architects demanded a high standard. One practical suggestion that I offer as a means to save the Government money is that architects in the Works Department should not be so keen to design structures of such a high standard. The particular building to which I refer has a heavy girder to hold up the roof. It is only a single-storey shed. It is too ridiculous for words to think that it could have been designed in this way.

Another thing that I should like to see changed in the Works Department is the tendering system, or the system of calling for quotes. I do not believe that it is really necessary to seek quotes for the provision of such things as a ceiling fan or a power point. I think it should be possible for the Works Department to call tenders, say, once a year for electrical work. An electrical contractor in a town could be awarded a contract and do all the electrical work in that town for the year without the extra paperwork. I know that some steps have been taken in this direction, but I think that further steps should be taken.

Another idea I have, which is probably radical, is that the system of funding maintenance work in schools should be changed. I think that it should be possible to assess the needs of all schools in Queensland, say, every three years on a rotational basis, and to provide a certain sum of money for each school. The work could be arranged locally by the principal or deputy principal and the representatives of the p. and c. committee. In fact I am sure that we would get better value for our money. I have discussed this matter with some of the principals in my area. They are aware of some of the waste in the department. I think that the giving of a little more local control over the spending of money would save the Government a lot of money.

The House-builders' Registration Board and the Builders' Registration Board come under the administration of the Minister. I have nothing but praise for the officers of those two boards. On every occasion I have approached them, I have found them very sympathetic and very easy to get on with. The other day a constituent of mine had a problem. I took it to the Builders' Registration Board, and its officers told me that if they could get the offending builder up there the next day they would try to sort out the problem. Stanthorpe is a fair distance from Brisbane. I think it was a pretty good effort on their part to get that builder from Brisbane.

I agree with previous speakers; I do not see any need to retain the Builders' Registration Board. I think that what the consumer wants is protection during the building of his house. I think that the House-builders' Registration Board could provide that protection. Once a house larger than the normal size is to be built, the shire councils and other bodies have rules and regulations sufficient to cover the situation. Any businessman who wants to build a multi-storey building without employing an engineer and architect should not be in the game. I do not see any need to regulate this section of the industry.

I was interested to hear the member for Townsville South say that certain work in the Works Department should be done by day-labour. I know the results that have been achieved in this area by the Works Department over the last few years. By switching from a largely day-labour system to a largely contract system, the department is getting much better value for money. As a matter of fact, I think that over the last two years the return from each dollar spent by the Works Department has, despite inflation, remained constant by reason of the use of the contract system. That is to be commended. I hope that, if the Labor Party ever gets back into power, the thinking of the honourable member for Townsville South is not typical of the thinking of all members of that party. If it is, taxpayers would have a tremendous burden to bear if there was ever a complete return to the day-labour system. Of course, some contractors abuse the system, and they should be cracked down on very hard; but, in general, the contract system is preferable.

In speaking about the building industry, contractors and so on, I am sure that all honourable members agree that there will be a very serious shortage of tradesmen in the future and that the Government and the Works Department in particular should do everything possible to try to overcome the problem. As many honourable members are aware, a committee on unemployment, composed of members of the Government parties, recently toured Queensland. I point out to the Minister that the committee did not find one small builder who believes in block-release apprenticeship training. I am aware

that apprenticeship does not come within the Minister's portfolio. Housing, however, does. The committee looks forward to his support in endeavouring to overcome the problems of apprenticeship and in trying to convince the Minister in charge of apprenticeship training that a two-tier system is necessary. If the large employer finds the block-release system satisfactory, that is good; let us keep it. But if the small employer is failing to put on apprentices because he does not like the block-release system, we must find a solution to that problem.

At this time of year many school speech nights are held. I was able to speak to a number of school-leavers in different parts of the State. Many young people want apprenticeships but cannot get them. The ones to whom I spoke were interested not so much in earning \$96 a week during the first year of their apprenticeship as in becoming apprenticed. If they go on to Grades 11 and 12, their parents have to keep them, with very little assistance from the Government. If wages for first-year apprentices were a little less, more employers would put on apprentices.

One matter being considered by the Works Department at the moment is the possible change in status of reserve R70 at Stanthorpe. A number of departments are involved, but I understand that the matter is in the hands of the Works Department at the moment. R70 is a police reserve, and I have been trying to interest the Police Department in relinquishing it so that the scouts can get title to some of it, the Education Department can get title to some of it and an area can be set aside as an environmental park under the control of the Education Department. Naturally, the Police Department would wish to retain a small area of it. I hope that it will be possible to reach finality on the matter soon, because the scouts are keen to get on with the job. The proposed change would be very beneficial to the Stanthorpe district.

Another problem that is closing in fast is the shortage of single-teacher accommodation at Inglewood. I know that the Works Department has agreed to shift the vacant schoolhouse at Greenup to Inglewood, and I ask the Minister to do everything he can to ensure that that building is taken to Inglewood and set up there before the beginning of the next school year. Teacher accommodation really is a problem in Inglewood, and it would be wonderful to have additional accommodation for the beginning of next year.

The Department of Works and Housing is aware of the problem relating to subsidy for the Texas swimming-pool. I appreciate the efforts that the Minister is making on our behalf, and I am confident that he will not give up. Between the department, the Minister and myself, we will win the battle, and I am sure that the people of the shire of Inglewood will be happy with the result.

While talking about the land that I would like to see set aside in Stanthorpe for the Education Department, I cannot let the opportunity pass without mentioning the need for a horticultural college. Again this is an education matter in which the Works Department would be actively involved. I would like to promote this idea because horticulture is not adequately served in other rural colleges in Queensland.

All in all, I compliment the Minister and his staff for the way in which the various departments are administered. If every Minister were as keen as this Minister, we would have not a good Government but an excellent Government.

Mr. I. J. GIBBS (Albert) (4.11 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Works and Housing Estimates. In his introductory remarks, the Minister covered a wide range of responsibilities. It is good to have pointed out the various responsibilities that come under the control of the Minister and his senior officers, all of whom do a very good job.

At this stage, I pay a compliment to the previous Minister for Works and Housing (Mr. Norm Lee) for the job he did while he held the portfolio. He did a tremendous job, and I am happy that the present Minister is handling the portfolio in a similar manner.

Early in his remarks, the Minister mentioned that extra provision has been made in several directions, including works undertaken at showgrounds by local authorities and show societies. I am interested to know just what the subsidy is and what use has been made of this subsidy in the past. Perhaps we should be pushing this a little more. In the early days, show societies throughout Queensland were very important bodies. For a time they seemed to lose a bit of their importance, but it is becoming greater as the State grows and there is a renewed interest in shows all over Queensland. Certainly that applies throughout my electorate. It covers the Beenleigh Show area, the Gold Coast Show, held at Southport, and the revived Nerang Show, which is conducted by what was the original show society in that area. I shall be interested in hearing a little more about the subsidies for show societies, how they go about getting them, and how much advantage has been taken of them.

Perhaps one of the most important functions of the Minister's department is co-operation with the Education Department and all other departments in meeting their needs for permanent works. A large amount of money is spent on various Government buildings. In some instances, the amount of money that has been spent on various Government buildings, including schools, is rather frightening. The Estimates reveal the huge responsibilities of the Works Department throughout Queensland and the amazing job that is done.

The planning of school buildings has been upgraded. Over the last two or three years, planning has certainly been given a higher priority. Previously, there seemed to be a tremendous lagging behind in relation to school buildings. To some degree, the Works Department and the Education Department have overcome these problems.

The Nerang State School has been pushing for the closure of Short Street so that the school could be linked with part of the sports ground that it purchased recently. Very little traffic uses Short Street. Perhaps there was previously an argument for keeping Short Street open, but within a few months when the bypass road is completed, there will be no reason for not closing the street. I would like the Minister to consider its closure in the near future.

The building and activities centre at the Biggera Waters School was completed at a cost of \$150,000. Unfortunately, the subsidy is well short of even half the cost. In the light of inflation and its associated evils, we should ensure that subsidies keep in step with increased costs. As the Minister knows, adjacent to the Biggera Waters school is a site that should be purchased to make room for expansion. Indeed, I took him to inspect it. From all points of view, it would be a good investment.

For four years the Government has been trying to purchase a site in the Coombabah area for a primary school and a high school. It is not far from the Biggera Waters school. Although negotiations are well under way, they are not complete. If the purchase is not finalised soon, we could well be in trouble. The next school will not be built in time to cope with the large increase in population.

Tremendous growth is taking place in the Coomera area. The school has plenty of good ground and recently a groundsman was appointed. However, it is hard for the parents to get the necessary equipment together. The schoolgrounds are so large that a tractor and slasher are needed. Perhaps a co-operative effort could be made by the three schools in the area, namely, the Coomera, Pimpama and Ormeau schools. They could share the equipment and get better use from it.

Septic systems at the Pimpama, Ormeau and Carbrook schools have not been completed. I have had several conversations with the Minister about their installation and I know that he has done a lot of work about the matter. The one at Pimpama is under construction and it is to be hoped that the ones at Ormeau and Carbrook will be commenced in the near future.

The Woongoolba school has a problem with its swimming-pool. Some time ago I suggested to the Minister and the Works Department that small schools, with very little growth potential, should be able to build smaller pools. Schools with an enrolment of 200 or 300 children cannot afford a full-sized pool, and a pool 30 ft. by 15 ft. is adequate to meet their needs. A report was to be made

on the matter. I should like to know what stage has been reached. In the light of the knowledge that should be available, a decision in real terms should take about 24 hours. It is not a critical matter. All that is needed is a separate specification, as has been provided in South Australia and certain other States. The necessary decision could have been implemented within a short time.

Most of the problems at the Beenleigh State High School have been overcome, but the one concerning the manual arts section still exists. The manual arts section and the rural section at Beenleigh High School are equal to the best in Queensland. Indeed, the standards at the high school and the management of the school under the principal, Mr. Ian Smith, are extremely high. However, the manual arts block extensions and the new administration block are urgently needed.

The Beenleigh primary school needs a little more land. Negotiations are taking place to allow overlapping use of land belonging to the show society, which is right next door. It seems that trouble has arisen over the best means of using this land and that certain subsidies are necessary to cover the cost of earthworks required so that the grounds will cater for the school needs much better than at present.

The Loganholme School has just been notified that a tuck-shop will be built. That is great news. It is still lacking other amenities, however. For example, it needs a storeroom and storage for the groundsman, who at present uses a small room at the back of the staff toilets. That is not very satisfactory. If those shortcomings were rectified, it could then be said that all the problems had been overcome—and that is rather important.

I believe that a new school site has been purchased in Bryants Road. It is something for which we have battled for years. It is to be named the Shailer Park School and is on the border of the Albert and Woodridge Shires. It will relieve the pressure on the Beenleigh High School. The department adopted a strong, positive stance when it bought sites for a primary school, a high school and a pre-school. The correct planning was undertaken. A survey was conducted in the area. Construction will have to begin very quickly; if it is not, the Beenleigh High School will be flooded with students. It will become another statistic—1,000 students, 1,500 students or even more if action is not taken fairly shortly to build a new school elsewhere.

There are problems with court-houses throughout my electorate. The amount that has been spent on police buildings in the Beenleigh district is an absolute minimum, but at least things have been got under way. A house for the inspector still has to be built. Perhaps the C.I.B. will be moved out of its building and into a police complex. It and other sections of the force there should be housed under the one roof. To

date, some good progress has been made in that direction. However, the court-house adjacent to the police station is so old and inadequate that it is almost a joke. It is congested, substandard and has all the other disadvantages that one might imagine. It has served the area well. Perhaps 30 or 40 years ago it would have been a proud building. Today, in an area with a growth rate of some 20.5 per cent, it is hardly good enough.

Consideration should be given to establishing a District Court at Beenleigh. There appears to be enough land for a new development. Although Southport is not in my area, I believe that it, too, should have a District Court. There has been some movement to this end, but it has been very slow. A new court complex, incorporating accommodation for Supreme and District Courts, will soon be completed at Toowoomba. Certainly a District Court is needed at Southport. Local people now have to travel to Brisbane, which causes further delays in hearings. We must strive to decentralise court sittings so that a better service is provided to the people and so that less travelling is required.

I repeat that the position in the Beenleigh Police District is not very bad now, although there is still quite a deal to be done to get the inspector's house finished and to have the C.I.B. incorporated in the police complex. However, there are problems at Coomera, where the police are operating from a house. Similar problems exist at Nerang, where the police work under very restrictive conditions from a house. The previous Minister for Police (Hon. T. G. Newbery) inspected those facilities and he agreed that they were totally inadequate and that some extensions should be built. There are two or three men stationed at Nerang and two at Coomera. Police should not be put into such substandard accommodation—rooms 8 ft. by 10 ft.

The position is similar in Southport. Although it is not in my electorate, it serves my district. The building there is certainly substandard. It is an old house with a brick skin. The new police headquarters in Brisbane are almost completed, so possibly money can now be directed towards the outer areas. I would not knock the new police headquarters and the academy. I think their provision was the right thing to do. They are now established and money must be allowed to flow to the outer areas.

The Southport Hospital is another item of expenditure. It will serve a wide area. Perhaps consideration should now be given to a hospital of some description in Beenleigh. Beenleigh is approximately half way between Southport and Brisbane and a hospital in that fast-growing district could handle perhaps 50 per cent of the immediate problems in the total area.

It is pleasing to know that the Queensland Cultural Centre is well on the way. It is a feather in the Government's cap. Work on that complex should be continued until it is one of the best in Australia. Queensland has great things to offer in that field. I hope that a subsidy can be made available to provide a cultural centre in the City of Gold Coast or the Albert Shire. A move is afoot to set up a cultural complex in that area.

The Housing Commission is an important part of the Minister's portfolio. It has adopted new designs and attitudes. The new housing agreement is much better than the one signed during the Whitlam period. It is a much more fluid and flexible agreement. It will result in more people having homes and will provide a better type of home-ownership. It gives both the Government and the commissioner greater opportunities and flexibility. The present commissioner is doing an excellent job in all fields. New ideas are coming forward all the time and they will enable people to have greater access to welfare homes and will provide better opportunities for people to purchase homes.

We could build pensioner units as fast as possible but, regardless of the amount of money poured into them, we will never have enough. We must concentrate our efforts on the provision of more pensioner units.

Reference has been made to the registration of house builders. I do not believe that the legislation has been the success it was expected to be. Amending legislation was introduced to overcome some of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the original legislation. We have already overcome many of them. The Minister intends to revamp and tidy up the whole Act. This would be the best move possible to give security to the people who are building houses; but we must make sure that we do not put a rope around the neck of the genuine builder. I have met a number of genuine builders who are said by council officers and inspectors to be good builders but, because of the legislation or the regulations, they cannot be registered. The latest amending legislation overcame many of the problems, but the Act must be cleaned up so that we can overcome all of the problems without being too harsh or stopping progress in the very important building industry.

The more money that we can put into the building industry, the sooner we will overcome the unemployment problem. It has been said by several speakers today from both sides of the Chamber that the building industry is very important. It sets its own standards. Queensland has a very low birth rate. Unless the birth rate grows or immigration increases, the demand for housing will continue to decline. Families create the demand for housing and, unless we increase immigration when we can perhaps see things a little clearer, or married couples decide to have more children, I believe the housing industry will not grow at the rate we would like to see.

I conclude by congratulating the Minister on the attitude he has adopted towards his portfolio. I believe he has the co-operation of all members, and that he is making meaningful progress right throughout Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (4.31 p.m.): I find myself in accord with quite a number of the previous speakers, and I hope that my remarks today will be taken as constructive and in the spirit of the debate on the Works and Housing Estimates. My agreement will become more than apparent as I develop my contribution.

Although I do not do this very often, before I discuss the Estimates I would like to pay tribute to the retiring Under Secretary of the Works Department, Mr. Houston, because he was a very good public servant and a fair man. He was a Cairns boy, and I knew him as "Cookie" Houston. He served his country well during the war, flying Catalinas in our area, and subsequently gave great service to the Works Department in this State. He is to be well and truly commended for his work. I know the Minister did pay tribute to him, and I endorse those remarks.

Housing accommodation is most important to the community. The average Australian citizen is probably concerned about one thing more than anything else, and that is probably the biggest investment he will make in his lifetime. I refer to the purchase of his own home. I think that is the ultimate aim of most working people. However, many are precluded from buying their own homes by reason of their financial situation, and those people have always been catered for by the rental housing offered by the Queensland Housing Commission.

Lately, following the change in Housing Commission rentals, most people find them exorbitant. There used to be an old basic rule in the economics of wage dissection that we learnt very early in our careers. That was that a fifth of a person's income should be set aside for food, a fifth for clothing, a fifth for entertainment, a fifth for saving—I suppose that included rates and taxes, so I do not think there would be very much left out of that fifth—and a fifth for rental. The rents now being charged to the ordinary wage earner are quite exorbitant and would amount to more than a fifth of his income. I think this is something the Minister should have a look at.

While I am on the subject of housing, I want to deal with the problem of officers in court-houses throughout the provincial areas of the State handling Housing Commission allocations, rental collections and so forth. Another member also raised this point. We generally find that this is not a job that is well liked, because it is outside the province of the Justice Department. It is usually allocated to a junior clerk—the new boy

who does not have a great deal of expertise in this area. I think it was stated previously in the debate that we ought to be considering the employment of full-time clerks in our larger provincial areas to handle applications for Housing Commission homes. I know that there are Housing Commission inspectors. Of course, their job is designated. I think that there ought to be full-time clerks to handle applications. So many people become confused. The order of priority changes, and the methods of allocating finance and of providing homes ought to be explained to inquirers clearly and precisely.

Members spend a great deal of time in their electorate offices answering queries about housing. I know that we get good co-operation from the Housing Commissioner, Mr. Hitchins, and his staff. Nevertheless, there are times when one just cannot explain to people the priorities that are allocated. I am sure that the Minister should also look at this area.

For example, there are probably 300 people on the waiting list for Housing Commission rental homes in Cairns. It is nearly an impossible task to provide all of them with rental homes. Even when the Whitlam Government was in office and 90 to 100 Housing Commission homes were being built each year in my area, people in the categories below the E priority, that is, the one relating to overcrowding, were not provided with homes. People in a higher category have a chance of getting a home, but those in a lower category have no chance of getting one, with the rate at which Housing Commission homes are being built at present. Considering the way in which activity in this area is tapering off, I doubt whether people in a lower category will ever be housed.

There are borderline cases, such as the one I had in my area the other day. A man with four children has a two-bedroom flat. His family has outgrown the flat. His eldest daughter is now 14 years of age. She has erected a tent in the backyard in order to get some privacy. That is not the best type of housing situation. How does a junior clerk explain the priorities in that situation? Does a man with four children receive an E52 prior, or does he receive a B priority?

I think that mistakes are being made and applications are being wrongly directed. I think that we should be looking for a little more expertise in this area. Perhaps the clerks handling Housing Commission applications in our areas could do so much more efficiently as Queensland Housing Commission employees. As I have said, the clerks in the Justice Department have their own work to do, and they are more concerned about the priorities in their own department. I cannot blame them for that.

One of the important things to do is to provide a continuity of building activity in my area of Cairns and district. This has been interrupted recently. Companies of good repute and with a good record with the Housing Commission—they have built quite a number of satisfactory homes for the commission—are reducing their staffs. More than 100 carpenters in Cairns are unemployed at present. Because of lack of work and opportunity to tender, these companies are moving away from the area. It will be a tragedy if we reach the situation that we were in about 10 years ago, when local builders were not able to cope with the situation.

Of course, I realise that the payment of progressive payments has now been updated and that it is easier for local builders to cope. However, builders seem to close their eyes when they start to look at Government housing. Because of their previous experience in this area, they are not prepared to tender for Government housing. Perhaps we could provide a re-education programme for local builders so that they tender for building these homes.

Whilst I am dealing with housing, I refer to the provision of pensioner accommodation. This has already been touched on by other members. It is an excellent way of making houses available and of looking after those people who are suffering hardship. But I think we should go beyond that and provide optional pensioner accommodation for all pensioners. The programme should be expanded. Probably the scheme to provide dwellings for aged pensioners has tapered off since the Whitlam Government left office, but I suggest to the Minister that when he confers with other State and Commonwealth Ministers he should press the point that additional Federal funds should be made available for accommodation of this type.

The people of Cairns are fortunate that, because of negotiations that have taken place, there is no shortage of land. When I first became a member of this Assembly, there was a shortage, and I had quite a deal of correspondence with the department relative to the allocation of land. After negotiations, land became available on the Moody Estate, and I know that an approach has been made to the Cairns City Council to provide all the necessary services to the estate. In my opinion, the Minister ought to be acting now to ensure that finance is found to enable houses to be built on serviced land as it becomes available to the Housing Commission. It ought to be developed progressively, and tenders should be called and houses built as the land becomes available. That would enable people wishing to live in that area to obtain homes quickly.

Over the week-end I received the very disturbing news that it seemed likely that Cairns would miss out on its co-operative housing loan allocation this year. Co-operative housing societies provide younger people and

battlers, people who are prepared to put their backs in and work, with an opportunity to obtain their own homes, perhaps building part of them themselves. It is one of the best incentive schemes, and moneys ought to be available for it. I am aware that in previous years moneys have been allocated to only one co-operative housing society in Cairns, and I wonder why they were not allocated to the other society.

Turning to works—I hope that the Minister will be looking continually at the need to provide new school sites. Some time ago I went to the Edmonton area with the Northern Regional Director of Education and had a look at one site there. Edmonton is a big growth area on the southern side of Cairns. It has been indicated that the Bayview Heights-Woree school will be available in 1980, and I think that the Minister should be looking to the future and purchasing secondary school sites in the Edmonton area.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without commenting on the Bayview Heights-Woree school; I am sure that the Minister expects me to comment. I was very surprised and disappointed to read in "The Cairns Post" of Saturday, 11 November, a Press release by the Minister in which, when announcing that he would open the new school for the 1980 school year, he made no mention of the local member. This seems to be a trend. When the new police station was opened in Cairns, the local member was not acknowledged and his name was not shown on the plaque. A similar situation arose in relation to the Aboriginal hostel and several other buildings. Ministers in charge of other portfolios are only too pleased to have the name of the local member on a plaque, and I shall elaborate on that in a moment.

I suggest that it is dangerous to denigrate the local member in that way, and in this instance the announcement appeared to me to be ill-conceived and premeditated. It seemed to be an attempt to mislead the people of the area and to mislead the beneficiaries as to the actual situation. Of course, they were well aware of the state of affairs back in 1973 when we first started negotiations over the Bayview Heights school. I was continually asking questions about it in this Chamber. By deputations, petitions and public meetings we were able to get the Minister to recognise the need of that area because of the escalating numbers at the Balaclava School. In 1972 that school had 782 pupils; in 1975 there were 802 enrolments; in 1976 the number was 834; in 1977 it had grown to 909, and in 1978 to 996. We were constantly told that the priorities had been allocated, and that that school was within the first three or the first 10, but the school did not eventuate.

The method of the announcement appeared to be deliberate and devious. That sort of trend with announcements has been growing.

I don't think it does the Government any good; I don't think it does the local member any good; it certainly does not do the Minister concerned any good. It becomes a big joke in the area. The people are not stupid; they are enlightened and know what the situation is. No Australian likes deception, and this is how such announcements are seen.

The newspaper was realistic enough to contact the president of the parents and citizens' association, who gave due credit to my action in this matter. We know that on political grounds it was held back for a certain period. I suppose that in an election year we can expect that as spoils to the victor. When children are deprived of something because of political expediency, and those children are disadvantaged, then we need to take stock of ourselves as parliamentarians. It is passing strange that we are no longer called "parliamentarians" by the media; we are now termed "politicians", in the truest sense.

Personally, I do not want to see any Minister of the Crown become a laughing-stock; I want to see the prestige of every Minister acknowledged. Having known the Minister for Works and Housing for a long time, I did not think that this would be of his making. It appeared to me that there was some sort of underlying Cabinet direction. It is not wise for Cabinet to underestimate the intelligence of the people; they are not infantile. This sort of thing has become predictable. If the local member has any sense, he can gauge the situation.

I am sickened by this sort of thing, which is contributing to the poor image and prestige of the parliamentary system and parliamentarians generally. The respect of the ordinary citizen is not increased by that sort of announcement. It reflects on the credibility of us all, particularly the Minister. It highlights the extent of the deterioration in the approach of politicians themselves. It shows that the integrity of members of this Assembly is falling—and through our own fault. That is the worst feature of it. This sort of announcement should be directed through the proper channels. The method adopted should not degrade the local member; however, it shows constituents that Ministers of the Crown, as Government representatives, are putting them down. That is the way it has been put to me, and I whole-heartedly agree.

The Government must keep in mind that in denigrating a local member it is denigrating the citizens who elected him. Irrespective of the party to which he belongs, the local member who is denigrated is the representative of the people, and therefore the people themselves are denigrated. That is a shabby deal and I do not think the people like it. It highlights an absence of decency and certainly should not emanate from a Minister of the Crown. I take umbrage at it.

Mr. Yewdale interjected.

Mr. JONES: It has been said to me that the children of the people who vote for the Government in my electorate are being affected as well. It has also been said that they can do no more than vote against me and that they do not see why their children should suffer because they did not get the representative of their choice. That is what is happening.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (4.51 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the way he has handled the portfolio of Works and Housing since his appointment. In my opinion he is one of the best Ministers for Works that we have had while I have been here. I thank him for the great support he has given me on matters coming under his jurisdiction. I also thank the present Under Secretary, Mr. Young, and Mr. Hitchins, who is in the lobby representing the Housing Commission. Both of them have always been very co-operative. I have had no difficulty with them in making fruitful representations.

Over the years I had a lot to do with the former Under Secretary, Mr. Houston, on matters relating to the Works Department. In fact, he was my main contact. I found him and his staff very obliging. I can only shower praise on him and the staff in the office for the service they rendered over the years. The regional officers in the Works Department and the Housing Commission and officers of other departments associated with the Works and Housing portfolio have been very co-operative. Two regional districts based in Townsville and Cairns serve my electorate. I have experienced some difficulties as a result of having regional areas at the two geographical extremes of my electorate, but I have got on well with the officers and, apart from minor difficulties or discrepancies, all is well.

I acknowledge that in my electorate the level of Works Department expenditure is equal to any in the State. Quite frequently, when I consult with the works supervisors, I find that they are engaged constantly on carrying out various projects. I am sure that there is no serious discrepancy in the provision of amenities and works required in my electorate. I again thank the Minister and his departments for that.

As the Minister pointed out, schools constitute the major part of the activities of the Works Department. What he said is common to regional and country areas. I have over 30 schools in my electorate, which require quite a lot of servicing. If I cannot get new buildings, I at least have modifications carried out, and I can think of no instance when my representations on education facilities were not successful. At times the response may have been a little slow, but eventually I have succeeded in bringing to fruition the facilities required.

For the Minister's benefit, I refer particularly to the Ingham State School, about which there have been quite protracted representations and negotiations. The Ingham State Primary School is a large school. The present enrolment is over 700. Extensions have been planned. It requires a new library, which originally was planned as part of a separate complex. As a result of priorities, the availability of space and the need to compromise in materials, the plan was modified. The Education Department and the Works Department have decided to put up a new wing, incorporating a library within the new teaching block. I have asked the Minister to expedite its completion. I understand that he is trying to include it in the early stages of next year's works programme. I reiterate that I am very anxious to see the project finalised.

I have been fortunate in obtaining my share of special schools and pre-schools, which are reasonably modern innovations. The special school at Ingham, which is a very modern and up-to-date facility, should have incorporated in it provision for remedial education. A remedial education unit operating in my electorate is based at a State school in old-style buildings that are not entirely suitable for remedial education requirements, either in size or facilities. Various projects have been contemplated by the people interested in remedial education for the area. Mobility was one matter that was raised. At one stage the teacher in charge of remedial services in the area was looking to the Commonwealth for a grant for a vehicle to transport his equipment and teachers around the district. However, that is a compromise. I feel that we would do much better by establishing a full-scale remedial education centre in conjunction with the present special education centre at Ingham. I recommend that the Minister and his officers carefully consider the representations I have made on this matter.

I am pleased to say that a new pre-school is being opened next Friday by the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police. His northern itinerary includes a visit to my electorate to do several jobs. The opening of the pre-school is one. That will place pre-school education in my electorate on a sound footing. Several early-childhood education centres have been set up at smaller State schools. They are very welcome, but they are something of a compromise. We look forward to the day when pre-school education is properly established in our State. I am impressed with the architectural concept of these pre-schools, particularly in the playing areas. The landscaping is not only functional but also attractive.

One of the things that have worried me in the past is architectural and technical planning. In many instances when a project is released from the Education Department or the Works Department, we find that a building of historical significance

or a 100-year-old tree has to be knocked down unnecessarily just because a person in a department has had a plan put in front of him and has established a building without any consideration for local aesthetics, feelings, opinions or matters of historical significance. After many clashes and arguments with the people concerned, I am pleased to say that we have arrived at a satisfactory resolution. I do not think that it should fall on the local member of Parliament to have to step into these situations. Members do not want to generate hard feelings between themselves and professional and technical people, but, at times, we feel that we must step in and say, "You cannot put that toilet there; it is right on the main street" or "You can't knock that coconut tree down. It has been there for 100 years and the local people think it has some symbolic significance." I am pleased that in recent years much greater recognition appears to have been given to these situations, particularly with the landscaping and planning that is being brought into the general concept of the Works Department's activities. Money spent on this concept is money well spent.

More teachers' flats should be provided. Flats for single teachers have become very popular. Many fairly large towns, and particularly one in my electorate, do not appear to have any teachers' flats provided by the Government. Tully has one block of flats and they are constantly in demand. The provision of more units should be undertaken in the near future.

The provision of such accommodation would overcome many of the problems faced by teachers, particularly young female teachers, who find themselves in incompatible situations. Quite often, they are transferred to small towns and have to find board and lodging. They are lucky if they are able to get in with a good family or are able to move in with other girls. But, in many cases, they have difficulty and have to move around quite a deal before finally settling down in compatible surroundings. In some cases they do not settle down, and a teacher who is unhappy because she is in an incompatible domestic situation is not a good teacher. I urge the provision of more teachers' flats adjacent to schools.

The Minister mentioned police stations. The provision of police facilities is a major project. I have one particularly bad case in my electorate. The Tully Police Station is totally obsolete. A new, modern civic centre has been erected next to the old police station and it makes the police station look like a humpy. I hope that, through the advocacy of the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, the Minister for Works and Housing will provide a new police station in Tully. It is long overdue.

Aged persons' units come to my attention quite often. I have had a fair deal to do with a privately run old people's home in my electorate. It is a rather large home, which services a big area. Although the people

who occupy the units constructed by the Government are in a compatible age group, they tend to get into difficulties unless they have some sort of supervision. In some cases they are not supervised at all. An elderly person could pass away in a single unit and not be discovered for some time. Old people become ill and frequently do not have the means to obtain medical attention. I suggest that units be established fairly close to the services required by their occupants and I refer particularly to medical attention. That suggestion should be considered very carefully.

Housing Commission homes have been mentioned during the debate. I have had the experience in my electorate of the Housing Commission's buying land and then, for two reasons, rejecting tenders for the erection of houses. Either the tenders are too high or the demand in the area is not sufficient. Although there could be 100 applicants for Housing Commission houses, they might not have the qualifications to demand an immediate approval. These matters tend to get shelved, and I wonder whether, when they are shelved in country areas, it is a case of out of sight, out of mind. If it is, we might have a general demand and be caught without the houses.

About 18 months ago, it was proposed to build three houses in Ingham, but the tenders were rejected. Now there are 19 applicants for Housing Commission homes, but I understand that they do not have a great deal of priority. A definite demand for houses has been established, but they are not being built. We should make sure that the situation does not get out of hand.

A number of major hospital projects have been commenced in my area, for which I commend the Minister. I refer particularly to the new out-patients' centre at the Tully District Hospital, which is being erected at a cost of approximately \$1,000,000. It will greatly enhance the public medical facilities in the area. In conjunction with this project a new community health centre has been established. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a community health centre in Ingham, and I hope the Minister for Health will recommend to this Minister that he builds one there very shortly. The Ingham Hospitals Board has undertaken a major expansion programme at a cost of over \$1,000,000. I hope this will be commenced fairly shortly, because we are approaching the stage where we are only marginally capable of meeting the demand for public health services in Ingham.

I was interested to read in the report of the Department of Works and Housing of some of the technical advances that are being used or considered by the department. I believe that these days there is a wide field in which we can use these technical advances to make our money go a lot further than it did in the days when we used only

wood and nails. The Minister also mentioned the new concept of prefabricated buildings. Many have been erected in my electorate, and they are really good and substantial buildings. We look forward to the day when this development in building techniques will lend itself to the more expeditious provision of the facilities that we need.

The Builders' Registration Board has been mentioned. When the concept of registering builders was introduced several years ago, I had some trepidation because I felt that in country areas it would prejudice the welfare of many small but reliable migrant builders. I thought that they would not be big enough or well enough educated in the English language to be able to comply with the technical requirements of the Act. This proved to be the case. Unfortunately, many fell by the wayside, thereby creating something of an impasse in the building industry in some of the smaller country towns. Fortunately, the Minister then introduced legislation setting up the Builders' Registration Board, which alleviated the situation a little. However, the Minister should look carefully at the situation, because it is still far from satisfactory. I believe that many shires have been forced into an embarrassing position with builders because, although they do not want to see the building industry restricted, they have to apply the provisions of the Act. They are getting short of builders. I hope the Minister will keep that in mind.

Finally, I hope the Minister will maintain the pressure on the Commonwealth Government for the continued provision of funds for housing under the housing loan programme. There are many young people in my electorate who wish to lean very heavily on the funds available through the Housing Commission. We do not want to see their position jeopardised in any way. Once again, I thank the Minister for his co-operation in the past and look forward to similar co-operation in the future.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.10 p.m.): I should like to break into the debate for a few minutes to answer some of the queries of members who have spoken, so that I will not have to give a long oration later. I wish to thank those members who have contributed to this debate.

As usual, the honourable member for Archerfield launched an attack against the Government—an attack, I might add, which he trots out every 12 months or so, claiming schoolchildren in Labor-held electorates are being used as political pawns. I want to assure the honourable member once and for all that this is completely false—totally untrue.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: It is true.

Mr. WHARTON: The honourable member would say that black was white.

Here are some examples of expenditure in A.L.P. electorates during the past three financial years:—

Archerfield—\$5,900,000;	Cairns—
\$9,000,000;	Chatsworth—\$6,000,000;
Cook—\$13,700,000;	Mackay—\$5,000,000;
Wolston—\$17,000,000.	

I see the member for Rockhampton looking at me. I do not have here the figures for his electorate, but I will get them for him.

The member for Archerfield spoke about the Works Department emasculating the day-labour force. Let me tell the honourable member that, as a Government, we have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Queensland to get the best possible value for their dollars.

The system of calling public tenders for many projects has been proven time and time again to be the most effective way of getting a satisfactory job done, but let me assure the honourable member that we value very highly our day-labour force and the variety of work it performs in many parts of the State.

The present work-force, in the vicinity of 2,000, enables the employment of some 400 apprentices in various trades, and honourable members will be pleased to note a further 100 apprentices throughout the State will commence with the Works Department early in the new year.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: How many?

Mr. WHARTON: One hundred, and probably more.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Only a drop in the ocean.

Mr. WHARTON: It is a considerable drop, and a valuable one. If the honourable member would only appreciate that drop, he would not be such a big drip.

Turning to Housing Commission maintenance—the honourable member might be interested to know that the length of time for vacancies between “relets” has decreased, rather than increased over the last two years. There has been no reduction in day-labour maintenance staff within the Housing Commission. Any member can see for himself that maintenance programmes have been substantially increased by both day-labour and contract work in recent years, and the commission can point with satisfaction to its attention to painting, refencing and, in particular, to the safety factor of electrical rewiring of its older houses, where the commission has just completed an expenditure programme of almost \$1,000,000.

On rents, the honourable member produced his crystal ball in quoting from the Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement. He quoted last year's rent rise as \$10 a week, with the suggestion that it applied to all tenants. But this is not correct, as

the \$10 applied only to a small proportion. Over 40 per cent of tenants enjoying rebated rents got no rise.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: The honourable member for Archerfield does not like to hear the facts. I can assure him that a rent rise, if it is made in the near future, will not be to \$90 a week, which he quoted as being the market rent for houses in Brisbane. That shows the reliability of the crystal ball that he uses.

The housing agreement, if carried out properly by the States, will result in the poorest section of the community being housed faster than ever, and the evidence is fairly clear in both Queensland and the other States. I am pleased to have the honourable member's praise for some current programmes of the commission to offer alternative life-styles to older tenants whose homes have become too large for them, and also the tribute he paid to the commission for its pensioner programme. As he knows, location is all important for this type of accommodation, and particular attention is paid to this in land acquisition.

The member for Archerfield, with his usual flair for exaggeration, quoted queues from here to Cape York for home ownership assistance by way of subsidised interest rates, and he might be pleased to have the facts. The commission has received inquiries from 1,780 people, and has already given approval for loans to 740 of these applicants. This fast, worthwhile service to the citizens of this State is deserving of the highest praise, not criticism, and I must comment on the assistance received from the State Treasury as well as from other sources of funding.

From his wide experience, the honourable member for Redlands has made a significant contribution to housing citizens in this State, and I was pleased to have his comments on housing styles and other work of the Housing Commission.

Mr. Burns: Why don't you kiss him?

Mr. WHARTON: He knows his “eccer”. He is too far away.

Mr. Burns: Is that the only reason you won't kiss him?

Mr. WHARTON: He represents a fast-developing electorate and he does a very good job in caring for the people there— not just one of them; every one of them.

The site at Randall Road is within forward planning of the commission for the construction of the pensioner units. I am pleased that he maintains his interest, as he was one of the originators of the proposed pensioner-units scheme in that area.

The honourable member made a good point on the effect of the rent policy on poor people. That is something that the A.L.P. Opposition generally is not prepared to accept.

Turnover in Housing Commission houses in the metropolitan area is now 100-120 a month. In the past two years, over 2,500 families have received low-interest finance through the Queensland Housing Commission.

I would also like to thank the honourable member for Redlands for his kind remarks in regard to the number of schools and the standard of accommodation being provided. As I said, he represents a growing area, in which there is a great need for additional schools and school facilities. I compliment him on his activity and on what he has managed to achieve.

My department is fully aware of the need to acquire suitable sites for schools, and continual liaison is maintained with the client department. I am pleased to inform the honourable member that the Land Administration Commission is negotiating with various owners to acquire a site in the Alexandra West area. The Education Department will have to determine when the new school will be provided.

The honourable member for Maryborough raised the question of acquiring rental homes by buying second-hand houses. I appreciate his suggestion, but I must have some regard to the building industry and try to create work for those who are unemployed.

His suggestion on Aboriginal housing has been canvassed many times, but we believe that where preference is given on racial grounds, the department set up to deal with these problems is the best one to supply housing. The Housing Commission does not distinguish between creeds or colours. However, when the question of racial discrimination arises in a particular field, I believe that it is best left to the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

The Burrum Co-operative declined an offer of finance but was the only one to do so. Others sought to take it up and it was re-offered to the other society group in Maryborough. I think that is fair enough. I know that the matter was raised but, because of the limited funds available, they were allocated on an area basis to the best of our ability.

The honourable member also raised prisoner housing. He is no doubt aware of what the commission is doing in this area.

On the employment of a social worker—our experience is that the Division of Geriatrics does a superb job in assisting people with problems, and the commission is a major referral agent to it.

I would like to thank the honourable member for Barron River for his good contribution to the debate. I can assure him that the technical staff in Townsville are doing a good job under difficult circumstances. They are required to deal with clients in that area who do not have planning authority, and each scheme has to be forwarded to head office

for approval by the client department. Nevertheless, they have been able to meet target dates for programme projects, with the combined use of consultants.

Mr. Yewdale: Why don't you thank the honourable member for Townsville West in advance for his speech?

Mr. WHARTON: I cannot get to him for Opposition interjections. I take the point that the honourable member for Barron River made about the need to use outside architects at times. If the work-load of the department becomes too great, it does use outside architects, and the Government wishes to see all architects in Queensland fully employed.

I regret that I am unable to help the honourable member in regard to a new hospital at Mossman, as that is a matter for the hospital board.

The honourable member for Chatsworth again played the same "squeaky tune" on his "welfare violin". I wish he would attempt a new piece. I have listened to him time and time again and told him to give up. I do not, therefore, think I should waste the time of the Committee in repeating the answers to him.

The honourable member asks that rents increase with wages, but he failed to say that for the genuinely poor this is exactly what happens now—their rents are tied to their income. His own colleague, the honourable member for Archerfield, asked him if the Housing Commission forced people out, but he did not answer. Why? Because this boggy man does not exist. The honourable member for Archerfield applauded the programme of offering these tenants small alternatives. The honourable member for Chatsworth seems to have a different view.

I reassure the honourable member for Isis that Queensland clerks of the court are properly advised on commission work and policies. From the many discussions I have had with him, I know about the problems that do exist in this field. Regularly, commission staff visit clerks throughout Queensland and advise on handling of commission work. A very comprehensive instruction manual is issued and is regularly updated. I think another honourable member made the point that perhaps some clerks of the court, in doing justice to their job, have a problem in finding time to handle a large group of applicants.

The honourable member for Isis referred to the standard of new accommodation being provided at existing schools. These standards have been developed as a result of extensive deliberations of an interdepartmental committee with a view to reducing costs and providing buildings conducive to present-day teaching concepts. The need to build single-storey buildings is also conditioned by the stringent requirements of the Fire Safety Act for higher buildings. Sheltered play or recreation areas are being provided, within funds

available, to compensate for loss of under-school space. At the same time, I can appreciate what the honourable member said, because I do know, and have visited, the schools to which he referred.

I assure the honourable member that all Builders' Registration Board inspectors are practical tradesmen of many years experience, and they have been requested to exercise a certain amount of common sense in the carrying out of their duties.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Townsville South say, grudgingly, that the Housing Commission has done a fair job. In his own area of Townsville, the commission has provided 3,013 housing units—not a bad performance, in my opinion. Naturally, I would like to provide more, but I have to be realistic and spread limited funds throughout the State, as all centres have the same need. However, Townsville has 56 units under construction, and this is more than at any other provincial centre.

The honourable member suggested that the Army and the Air Force build their own houses and let the Housing Commission get out of this construction programme. He must be aware that this is entirely separate funding, and the provision of dwellings for the Defence Forces in no way affects welfare housing.

The honourable member for Townsville South also talked about the high interest rates. Of course, we all hope interest rates come down even further. Unfortunately, he neglected to say that the Housing Commission has financed 2,500 low-income families with subsidised interest.

Pre-school centres are provided throughout the State to meet local needs, as illustrated by the expenditure in each of the last financial years—

1975-76	..	..	..	\$8,800,000
1976-77	..	..	..	\$6,200,000
1977-78	..	..	..	\$5,700,000

The need for new police accommodation at Townsville has been under review for some time, and is at present included on a forward planning programme.

The honourable member for Carnarvon raised quite a few matters of interest to me. I will visit his electorate again. We sampled the Stanthorpe wine but we still found time to look at quite a number of his school and Housing Commission problems. I thank him for his kind remarks about me, the Works Department and the Queensland Housing Commission.

The honourable member would appreciate that there is a very conscious effort in my Department of Works to effect cost control in the provision of functional buildings to meet clients' needs. Various factors have a bearing on costs—local authority requirements and the Building Act, wind safety

codes, and the Fire Safety Act. Also, future maintenance is considered in the choice of materials used in the initial construction.

The accountability requirement of the Financial and Audit Act precludes the disbursement of revenue funds to local sources, but the honourable member can be assured that district officers will continue to make regular inspections of all Government buildings.

I thank the honourable member for his contribution. In response to his remarks, I point out that I have gained experience from the various visits I have made to his and other electorates.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER (Townsville West) (5.26 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the Works and Housing Estimates for 1978-79. In doing so, I firstly congratulate the Minister and his departmental heads on the splendid way that they have been able to balance their budget and provide for areas of expenditure asked for by honourable members in the coming year even though the State is under considerable financial restraint. At the same time, I cannot but be critical of the cut-back in funds available to the housing industry in Australia from the Federal Government.

In April this year, when the Minister went to Hobart to attend the annual conference of State Ministers and their Federal counterpart, he was very optimistic and forecast that this year Queensland would get justice in the way of a greater financial hand-out for housing. Unfortunately, Queensland was held to the same per capita allocation as that of the past few years. That was a great injustice. While other States are to get about \$28 per head, Queensland is to receive only \$18. In the long run that will mean a loss of about \$16,000,000 to the home-building industry in Queensland.

Mr. Yewdale: That is an injustice perpetrated by the Fraser Government.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER: I certainly agree, but this started in 1974. That is when the rot set in and the southern States got this concession that we have been unable to win. While I was very keen to criticise the Whitlam Government during its term, I am fair dinkum in criticising the Federal Government's lousy, meagre allocation to all spheres of housing in Queensland, whether it be for welfare housing or Housing Commission homes.

On a brighter note, in addition to the allocation of \$19,000,000, the Federal Government agreed to give Queensland an extra \$13,000,000 if we were prepared to match that sum from our own resources. Because the State Treasurer has been able to get that extra money, we will pick up the additional \$13,000,000 from the Federal Government. The total allocation to Queensland this year will be \$32,000,000 in addition to the \$30,000,000 that the State is providing.

I have no hesitation in saying, as I have said in this Chamber before, that I firmly believe many of our unemployment problems would be solved quickly if the Federal Government revitalised the home-building industry. It is well known that with a buoyant economy home-building and ancillary industries, which supply paint, plumbing, hardware, electrical goods and so on, provide employment for one person in five throughout the country. When I say that, I am not hazarding a guess; it is a proven fact based on research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and is quoted by the Housing Industry Association.

As we all know, the housing industry has suffered a severe downturn in recent times. It has suffered from galloping inflation, high wages and high rates of interest. All in all, it has been sorely affected. In the past 12 months building figures for Queensland have been the worst for 20 years. Whereas in 1966 approximately 71 per cent of Australian citizens owned or were buying their own homes, in 1977 the percentage dropped to 63. The fact that we are not encouraging or making it possible for young people to build their own homes is an indictment of our society. It cannot be said that Australians no longer desire to own their own homes; they cannot afford them. Interest rates and repayments are too high and the deposit gap between the purchase price and the loan is too high.

I am influenced by a recommendation of the Queensland Master Builders' Association about the finance that should be provided for young home buyers. The Q.M.B.A. believes that instead of a home savings grant (which no longer exists, but which was a complete subsidy and was lost to the Government), a second mortgage of up to \$10,000 should be made available to first-home buyers. At a reasonable interest rate, perhaps with a repayment period of 10 years, this additional \$10,000 over and above the normal home loan of \$18,000 or \$20,000 from the Housing Commission, bank or other lending institution—would give so many young people the opportunity to buy their first home. That \$10,000 could be recycled through a central fund. It would help to revitalise the building industry and act as an ongoing stimulus.

In a Press item dated 25 October 1978, Mr. E. Eyers, the chairman of the Commonwealth Committee of Inquiry into Housing Costs, said that the average cost of a 110 sq m home in Brisbane in 1977 was \$29,700, and that Brisbane was the cheapest capital in Australia to build that particular home. That part sounds all right. He did not add, though, that in Townsville, where safeguard standards for cyclones are higher and where freight costs are added to the price of materials, a similar house would cost approximately \$31,370, an increase of about \$2,000. In western areas, of course, the cost would be even greater. Therefore, all lending institutions—the Commonwealth

Bank, the private banks and the Housing Commission—should be prepared to make their loans on that standard home at least \$2,000 higher for provincial cities and country areas. If the loans were made appreciably higher, it would account for the difference in cost of the home. People living in provincial and country areas would then get an even chance with their fellows living in the capital cities. In this regard, we do not see a tremendous amount done for decentralisation and I will keep pressuring the Minister about increasing loans to home buyers in remote areas.

The Commonwealth Housing Costs Inquiry made some interesting recommendations for recovery in the home-building industry. It was critical of the high cost of developing land—a factor that is pushing higher the cost of a new home. This is one of the many recommendations of the committee of inquiry—

“Each State should undertake a review of the planning, approval and development process, for new residential land development and for redevelopment . . .

“Developers or principals should continue to be responsible for internal development works in residential land development, including reticulation of services. All other developer contributions, including head-works and area contributions, contributions for amplification of services and off-site drainage and like schemes, should be removed. The resultant capital deficiency, including any debt services component, should be made up by increases in rates and charges on all consumers so that provision of services at the time of development will not be frustrated.”

I have heard it said many times by our own Minister for Survey and Valuation that up to \$1,000 per allotment could be saved in the development cost of blocks if some local authorities would not be so stringent in their requirements for the subdivision of land in its in globo state.

We can see how the buyer of a home in a newly developed suburb is slugged by the local authority from the word go. Firstly, he pays the full cost of services to his own land, which include kerbing and channelling, bitumen roads, sewerage and possibly underground electricity supplies. For the next 10 years he probably sees no services whatsoever from his local authority. Secondly, he has to pay a general rate on the so-called unimproved value of his land, which after all is a very highly improved block. So he pays a rate on an unimproved value at a most artificial price. Thirdly, in his general rates he pays for money which has been borrowed by the local authority over many years for water reticulation and sewerage. He helps to pay for the interest and redemption on loans that have been raised over many years for improvements in the older areas of the city, after paying for his own in cash before he even starts to build his

house. So the fellow who builds a house in a new suburb today is really getting slugged right along the line.

I am very pleased to see that in this financial year the Housing Commission is to build more pensioner units, of modern brick construction, in the suburb of Garbutt, which is in my electorate. A number of these modular units have already been built. They are particularly attractive and very well suited for pensioners. I cannot understand the criticism of the member for Townsville South.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation from members on my left.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER: They are a great improvement for pensioners. They are close to shops, bus services and the city. I very much welcome the announcement by the Minister that an additional eight units will be built in Garbutt. They will be built on land that has been owned by the commission for many years. Originally, all of this land at Garbutt was occupied by buildings that were used by American servicemen during the war. After the war, they were used as temporary accommodation by the Housing Commission. They have now served more than a useful life and are being demolished. It is hoped that in the years to come Garbutt will contain many more modern pensioner units.

The Minister has been very active in his first year. He has made a very big impact on the schools in the Townsville area. He has taken the trouble to spend a day in the city and have a good look at some of the deficiencies in the northern schools compared with what is provided in the suburban schools in Brisbane. I make particular reference to the school at Garbutt, which has a very good schoolmaster and parents and citizens' association. They have been striving actively for improvements at that school. The Minister was there a few months ago and made them happy with his announcement that he would raise the school. For some strange reason it is only 5 ft. off the ground and anybody of normal height who tries to walk beneath it bumps his head. The school will be raised and painted. In addition, they are pleased with the new pre-school. I hope that the Minister will be able to come to Townsville in the very near future to officially open it. The people of Garbutt would welcome his doing that.

A new library will be opened next weekend at the Vincent State School. The Premier promised this library when he was in Townsville last year. He saw that the need existed at this school, which caters for primary schoolchildren and has special facilities for deaf children. The library was very much appreciated.

Currajong State School is the largest of my State schools. It is getting some attention in regard to painting, floor tiles, etc. An

application has been made for a new library at that school. Although funds are very tight this year, I am hopeful that the Minister will be able to provide funds perhaps some time next year for the construction of a new library at Currajong.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Where is Currajong?

Mr. M. D. HOOPER: It is one of the finest parts of Townsville, an area that I am proud to represent.

The Minister mentioned a new police station in Townsville. As far as the people of Townsville are concerned, that would earn him a knighthood, because a new police station is long overdue. The honourable member for Townsville and I have been hounding the Government for years to build it and it seems that official planning has commenced.

I sound one note of warning: It is to be built on an area of perhaps half an acre in the inner-city area. I appreciate that the Police Department would like it in that location because of its proximity to the law courts and the lock-up, where we could put some of the larrikins on the other side of the Chamber at night-time when they are playing up in Townsville. However, there is a space problem.

A police station is not simply a place for people to work. The Police Department has a large number of vehicles. At present there is not sufficient parking space for its vehicles either on the land or on the streets outside. In a city that will not see another new police station for 50 years, I stress the need for forward planning for parking in the basement for 50 to 100 vehicles or for the acquisition of a few acres of land in one of the outer suburbs, such as Gulliver or Currajong, on which to park all of the Police Force vehicles in future. I am thinking, also, of helicopter pads and a training ground for cadets. Townsville will require a larger police establishment, which will be for the benefit of the whole of North Queensland. I hope these factors are taken into consideration before tenders are called for the new police station.

Another matter that I would like to bring to the Minister's attention is the long-felt need for a State Government building in Townsville to house all departments. The last time I can recall such a building's being constructed was during the depression years. I think that the late Mossy Hynes was the Minister for Home Affairs who opened it.

A modern building is now required to house all Government departments. At the last count, something like 31 Government departments were established in Townsville, with nearly 1,000 employees. A person would need a map of the city to find out where they are. Certainly, if one had to look up the telephone directory it would take a day to find out where they are all located. We need a central Government building to house all the Government departments. If

funds are not available to build it in the near future, why can't the Government proceed with a lease-back arrangement and have private enterprise erect a modern building of 10 to 15 storeys to house all these departments? If the Government cannot pay for it, let it lease back a building, as it does in Brisbane. At least one building is erected in this fashion in Brisbane every year, so why can't the same be done in Townsville? I know there are several developers who would be keen to construct such a building, and if the Minister were to avail himself of their offer it would go a long way towards relieving unemployment in our city.

Reverting briefly to the Housing Commission—it has been more active in Townsville than the honourable member for Townsville South realises. It has something like 50 houses currently under construction in the Townsville area. Of these, 11 are for general rental purposes for low-income families and 39 are for Army personnel. If 39 Army families are being housed in this accommodation, it frees for rental to private citizens an equal number of houses in the city.

At present there is a downturn in the building industry in Townsville. I know that it is anxiously awaiting some word from the Government that, in the new year, funds will be made available on a basis similar to that under which they were made available during the last financial year, when families on low incomes were able to obtain loans of \$18,000 to \$20,000 at 7½ per cent interest. I know that if such a scheme can be introduced again early in the new year, it will go a long way towards revitalising the home-building industry in Townsville.

Progress reported.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1977-78

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1977-78.

Estimates ordered to be printed, and referred to Committee of Supply.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1979-80

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June 1980—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account), the sum of three hundred million dollars;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of three hundred and twenty million dollars;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account; the sum of forty-two million dollars.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES

(Mr. Row, Hinchinbrook, in the chair)

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (5.45 p.m.): In his opening address, the Minister said that it is three years since the Estimates for the Minister's department were previously presented. It is nice to know that in the three years of my enforced retirement from this Chamber I have missed nothing on these Estimates; I am able to take up where I left off.

I must say that I am disappointed with this year's allocation of funds to the Minister's Department. The Minister himself has said that any increased allocation has already been earmarked for increased salaries and other entitlements for administrative staff. So obviously there will be no input in terms of providing housing for those who need it so much. I am disappointed not just in relation to housing. As members know, the building industry—whether it be the construction of schools or other public buildings—is a labour-intensive industry. It offers an excellent opportunity, if funds were available, to inject some employment opportunities into the economically dejected community. In fact, the Government must be falling behind in meeting the demands of the community. But that is to be expected, particularly as the expenditure this year is \$5,300,000 below that of last year.

The Minister says that it is not wise to have an oversupply of housing. I can assure him that, under the present financial arrangements, it is not likely that there will be an oversupply of housing for a long time. In Bundaberg, for example, there is always a lengthy waiting list for commission housing. There is a large area for concern, particularly in the provision of school housing and facilities in Bundaberg.

I do not make any apologies for introducing what the Minister might think is the continuing saga of a new State school at East Bundaberg. This matter has been raised in this Chamber by me and by my predecessor on many occasions. I have no hesitation in saying, without rancour, but factually, that the delay in providing a State school at East Bundaberg would be a lasting reminder of this Government's promises that have been given and broken over a long period. I have no hesitation in saying that, in this instance, the credibility of the Government has been totally destroyed and that, unless the Government honours some of the promises that were given by successive Ministers for Education and Ministers for Housing, its credibility will never be restored—certainly not in Bundaberg.

Ministerial correspondence on the files of my predecessor, Mr. E. D. Jensen, shows that, as far back as 28 August 1973, the then Minister for Education (Sir Alan Fletcher) wrote—

“At this stage it appears that the project may proceed during the 1974-75 financial year.”

On 14 March 1974, Sir Alan again wrote—

“The project has been retained in my Department’s forward planning for consideration in the 1975-76 programme.”

On 14 May 1975, Sir Alan’s successor, the present Minister for Education (the Hon. V. J. Bird) wrote—

“My Department has recommended to the Department of Works that this work be included in the 1975-76 works programme.”

On 4 June 1976, Mr. Bird wrote—

“With reference to your inquiries concerning a new school at East Bundaberg, I desire to inform you that this project has been put forward in my Department’s draft programme with the highest priority for consideration.”

I emphasise the words “with the highest priority for consideration”. That was said back in June 1976. It was to be included in the 1976-77 works programme.

In all fairness, I should say that I believe that tenders were called by the Works Department in 1976 and that three tenders were submitted, but the project was again shelved last year after funds had been provided in the 1976-77 Budget.

In previous submissions to the Minister, I enclosed a copy of a Press statement of a commitment made on 19 October 1977—I might mention that it was election-time—in Bundaberg by the Treasurer, the Hon. W. E. Knox, to make available \$50,000 to enable work to start immediately on the \$300,000 East Bundaberg State School. The Treasurer even detailed that the new complex would consist of two blocks with a 240-pupil capacity. One block would incorporate an administration section, a library and two double teaching areas; the other block would consist of two double teaching areas and staff rooms. Mr. Knox stated on that occasion—October last year—that it was expected that the new school would be completed by June of this year—five months ago.

One would expect that such a long chronicle of promises from senior Ministers of the Crown in this Government would be honoured by those honourable gentlemen, but not so. Although funds were available as far back as 1976, they were scrubbed, and apparently, according to the Minister, they are still not available in 1978-79.

Although the Treasurer promised funds for an immediate start in October last year, no start has been made. When the Treasurer made the promise of an immediate start last year, the secretary of the parents and citizens’

association of the East Bundaberg State School, Mrs. Hamilton, was reported in the Press as saying that she could scarcely believe that after all these years a new school was actually going to be a reality. How prophetic that remark turned out to be!

Let us look now, Mr. Row, at the reasons why this new school has not been built. I am citing the excuses given by the previous Minister for Works and Housing (Mr. Lee) and the present Minister (Mr. Wharton). One of the excuses was that replacement schools did not have any priority while other new schools had to be built. To a deputation of representatives of the school committee that I led to the present Minister, Mr. Wharton said that the plans and the programme that Mr. Knox had brought forward and promised had been postponed while new modular designs that gave more value for the same amount of money were introduced. He added that it was not the policy to build replacement schools while new schools were needed. Yet, in the Treasurer’s Financial Statement this year, even though the highest priority was given back in 1976 to the East Bundaberg school, three replacement schools are mentioned for construction. Therefore, that excuse no longer applies. The modular type of buildings are now a reality, so there is no need to delay while plans and specifications are introduced for a new style of school that provides more value for money. That excuse has disappeared.

The Minister states that no finance is available. I should like to quote from a letter of 15 September in answer to my representations to Mr. Knox, in which he said—

“Dear Mr. Blake,

“Reference is made to your representations concerning the construction of the new East Bundaberg State Primary School.

“The last advice received by me from the Minister for Works and Housing was that the East Bundaberg State Primary School remains on the works programme.

“The statement made by me during my visit in October, 1977 . . .”

that is, his statement in Bundaberg that work would start immediately, and money would be available immediately,

“ . . . was based on information supplied at that time by the Minister for Works and Housing and I would suggest that you pursue your representations with the responsible Minister, the Honourable C. A. Wharton, M.L.A. drawing his attention to the present circumstances relating to the new primary school.”

As the promises made by the Treasurer in Bundaberg were made, as he states, on information given to him by the Works Department, it is hard to accept that there is no finance yet available for the building of that school. The school itself is dangerously situated in relation to traffic and other problems. Back in the days when

the school was first mooted, a senior member of the Education Department made a report to the effect that the area was totally unsuitable for a school. Those records are available. More to the point, a child who attended that school was killed recently at the approaches to the school.

Ground is available to relocate the school. The department acquired that land near the pre-school a considerable time ago. If that land were used, there would be a safe and sensible arrangement, with the pre-school and the primary school in what was chosen as a safe area for a school. In view of all the solemn promises that were made—I take it that they were solemn and were given with serious intent—and in the light of all the evidence available, I seriously and respectfully ask the Minister to try to recapture a little of the integrity of the Government, whose promises were believed by the people of Bundaberg until this series of events greatly disillusioned them.

Of course, there are other school needs in the Bundaberg area. I know that some of them, such as the provision of new school-rooms, depend upon approval by the Education Department. Other matters such as repairs, alterations and the provision of furniture come within the jurisdiction of the Works Department.

As to school requirements in the Bundaberg electorate—I believe that the staff and parents and citizens' associations in the respective schools in Bundaberg would be quite happy if the Government's election promises of last year were carried out before the next election year. As the department well knows, in some schools fans and lighting throughout were promised. Of course, that has not eventuated, unless it has been provided very recently. That promise was made for Walkervale. Fans are very important in schoolrooms that have metal louvres along the bottom of walls. For some reason, there is considerable malfunctioning of these louvres. I am told by school staff that Works Department officers have said that they cannot be fixed, or that they are not worth fixing. When that type of louvre cannot be operated, a fan in the schoolroom is an absolute necessity. A schoolroom that has been designed with louvre ventilation becomes very oppressive if the louvres cannot be opened.

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

Mr. BLAKE: Before the dinner recess, I pointed out that, because the atmosphere became quite oppressive, fans were a necessity in class-rooms where the louvres were not working.

In many instances, the areas under schools in my electorate have been used for a long time as temporary class-rooms. Many of them have bad lighting and the floor covering, which is commonly malthoid, is tattered and torn. These conditions particularly apply

at the Bundaberg North Primary School. Parents of students in Grade 7 complained to me that when they held a meeting at night they had to take their own lights.

When I inspected the school, I found that the Grade 7 class-room was indeed a depressing place for the education of children. The library at this school is the only area with carpeted floors. In many rooms floor coverings are non-existent, or might as well be non-existent. At that time, only four of the class-rooms had furniture of the new type. The library, measuring 30 ft. by 15 ft., was hopelessly overcrowded, as the school has an enrolment of 460. The ladies' staff-room, measuring 15 ft. by 12 ft., which caters for 16 female staff, speaks for itself. The lack of connected water services, and covered walkways to detached buildings, is also a matter of major complaint.

The priority order at this school should be: the provision of a larger library; the replacement of temporary class-rooms by two double-unit class-rooms with, if possible, library underneath; the installation of new furniture; and the provision of adequate staff accommodation.

I am not complaining about the services or facilities provided at the North Bundaberg State High School. The students and parents appreciate the work that has been done there. However, I point out that filling as per specification was put under the temporary class-rooms, because water used to lie there. Unfortunately, that only moved the water from one area to another. No drainage is provided. If the Works Department staff looked at it, I am sure that they could find a relatively simple way to remove the water that lies there during prolonged wet weather. That is the main cause of complaint, and I believe that the solution to the problem would be relatively cheap.

The shortcomings at the Bundaberg West State School have been acknowledged by the Minister for Education. However, he said that a balance must be maintained between what is needed there and the new school that is being considered to cope with the development in the western area. I will not go into great detail about this school, but I believe that a new administration block would cure the worst of the overcrowding there.

I appeal for the extension of the C.I. Branch facilities at the Bundaberg Police Station. At present, two small offices are provided for seven officers. It is hoped, and expected, that the staff will be increased. The facilities are totally inadequate. No interview room is provided to give privacy when matters are being discussed. There can be no delicacy or privacy there. The facilities are hopelessly inadequate. The working conditions for the staff could only be described as shocking, as are the conditions for the public. Therefore, I appeal to the Minister to provide an addition to that building at an early date. Unfortunately, in these times of economic straits we are experiencing an increase in the

crime rate. At the same time, there is an increase in the awareness of the crime rate and a call for an antidote to it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (7.20 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Estimates, I am very conscious of the extent of the Minister's responsibilities. I do not think it will do any harm to include in "Hansard" the fact that his portfolio covers the design, construction and maintenance of State pre-school, primary and high school buildings, technical buildings, Government hospitals and institutions, and public buildings; security and cleaning services for public buildings; planning, construction and maintenance of houses under the State Housing Act and Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements; acquisition and development of estates for housing; granting of loans for home-ownership; and the sale and rental of Housing Commission dwellings. That is a large list of responsibilities, but it covers only part of the responsibilities of the Minister. It would be impossible to refer to all of those that he has in his portfolio.

I believe that the Minister has done a great deal since his appointment to this portfolio, and I commend him for the work he has done. The most important lead he has given is that he is prepared at all times to discuss—and, if necessary, rediscuss—the many aspects of the Bills that he introduces. He is prepared at all times to bring them to his committee and, even if it takes a year to get them right, he will ensure that they are right before he brings them before this Assembly in the proper manner.

The most important part of his portfolio is housing. One of the most important decisions that any family can make these days is that to purchase a home. Seven out of 10 private homes are now owned or being purchased by the occupiers. The encouragement of home-ownership is one of the most important objectives of this Minister's portfolio. There is no doubt that Queenslanders prefer to live in their own homes; but unfortunately financial strictures are still with us, caused in the main by Queensland's failing to obtain its rightful allocation of funds from the Commonwealth.

As the Minister has said, it is unfortunate that sufficient finance is not available to satisfy the heavy demand that exists today for housing. That is indeed unfortunate. However, the department has pursued policies that are aimed at creating the proper environment in which people can buy and invest in housing. Without adequate finance, help is limited. The new Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, which gives the States greater autonomy, is also to be commended. As the Minister said, it gives greater flexibility and contains provisions that will ensure assistance to those genuinely in need. I emphasise "genuinely in need". More importantly, it gives rebates of rents and subsidies

for home-ownership to those who are in need. That these people are forced into any situation, as has been espoused by those in the Opposition, is not true. Those who have made that suggestion should know better than to spread rumours that we are forcing anybody into any situation. Inflation has, without a doubt, had a devastating effect on household budgets and on the building industry in general. Toowoomba is possibly an exception. The building industry in that city is still booming. It is a restricted boom, but is still booming and will continue to do so because Toowoomba has special features that attract building. I do not have to go into them here. But, in the main, inflation has more than restricted the building industry in Queensland and, of course, elsewhere.

These Estimates have not been discussed since 1975; more's the pity. The Minister has had to cover a period of more than five years in these Estimates to give us any sort of idea about what has gone on in those three years. As can be appreciated from his review, his department's activities over the past three years have been tremendous and the commission's home construction programme has been quite spectacular, especially over the last three years. Last year the commission set a 25-year record in providing houses, which included a record in rate payments to local authorities, and I believe also in maintenance and improvement of existing rental houses; and that is not a bad record. As I have said before, the department has shown a great deal of efficiency and good planning, and it is to be commended.

It is also important to comment on the architectural side of housing. At this stage I criticise the portion of the department that continues to build houses that are incompatible with the area in which they are built. Housing which is architecturally designed for tropical climates is still being built in Toowoomba. Two homes built for the Education Department, as principals' residences, would be considered excellent houses in places such as Goondiwindi and St. George and all points north, but certainly not in Toowoomba. They are modular homes and are modern. They are high-set, with lattice enclosing the foundation area. They have louvred windows in the upstairs section. I am asked to point out to the Minister how wrong this type of construction is for Toowoomba. I have done it before and I will continue to do so until something is done about design.

Toowoomba's climate is cold and moist. The prevailing winds blow this moisture into houses of this type. This ultimately causes damage and certainly makes living conditions very uncomfortable for the occupants. What is needed is a low-built brick home, suitably insulated against the cold and moisture, which are the persistent climatic conditions in that area. We have a good deal of rain, mist and cold. I again ask the Minister to look into this matter urgently.

It is also of the utmost importance to recognise that this type of modular home should not be inflicted upon a residential area where the need for a better class of home is recognised. There always will be trouble, and there still is trouble, if this class of home is built in what we call high-class housing areas. The standard must be revised and there is no reason why it cannot be done. I realise only too well that the Minister has a responsibility to construct buildings and accommodation as economically as possible with the finance that is available, but I feel quite certain that the architects should be able to come up with a variety of designs that would be acceptable in the Toowoomba area. The present designs are very acceptable in other areas but, as I said before, they are not acceptable in cold climates.

Turning to another aspect of the Works and Housing portfolio—I refer to the foresight that is now displayed by the Works Department in recognising the need for the purchase of extra land for existing and future schools. It is most gratifying to know that forward thinking is now a feature of planning, and the present Minister, as well as his predecessor, must be applauded in this respect. Several areas of land totalling approximately 15 acres have been bought by the Works Department for education purposes so that schools can be built in adequate grounds where they are needed.

I have been pressing for this for a long time. It is no use trying to acquire land after houses have been built on it, as has happened before, because the department then has to spend many thousand of dollars unnecessarily. It is sensible to buy this land ahead of development. It can always be sold if necessary, and this could be of great financial benefit to the department.

For far too long libraries, pre-schools and other buildings have been built on existing schoolgrounds that are barely large enough to take them. In lots of cases, especially in my electorate, although I am sure it occurs in other electorates as well, the department puts these libraries and pre-schools on the flattest area of the school grounds, which is usually the cricket pitch. In the case of the Glenvale State School, the Works Department put a building on the flattest piece of land, which just happened to be the cricket pitch. There is no other land available for a cricket pitch unless some more is purchased. If the Minister sees that school during the trip he is going to make in the next couple of weeks, he will realise what is going on.

An instruction should be issued that the Works Department should not do these foolish things. The cost involved in buying land adjacent to these schools is prohibitive. In one case in Toowoomba we paid \$180,000 for an acre of land, even though we did not need the whole acre. As I said before, I cannot see why this has to happen. The

Minister should act now to see that all electorates have land available for schools and other purposes in the future.

I have no idea why pre-schools have to be built in primary schoolgrounds. The Minister has said that it is policy that pre-schools should be an integral part of the school complex, but I would have to disagree. What is necessary, in my opinion, is that pre-schools should be built on land away from major traffic areas, and even built-up areas, if possible, so that parents can pick up and drop their children as safely as possible. It is also desirable that provision be made for off-street parking for both teachers and parents. These days teachers have to park their cars in the street, which makes it even more difficult for parents to park in front of the school to pick up and put down their children.

I know the original intention was that children should attend a pre-school in the grounds of a primary school, but it is a fact of life that very few pre-school children go on to the primary school in the grounds of which their pre-school is situated. Therefore, it is a practice that I think can be discontinued. Pre-schools should be built in areas that offer the greatest degree of safety for the children.

Mr. Moore: You should be talking to the Education Department.

Mr. WARNER: I have talked to the Education Department until I am blue in the face.

It is also necessary for us to recognise the importance, when building schools of any kind, of providing off-street parking. I have had a constant battle with the local authorities to have this sort of parking provided, and in some cases I have been successful, but the Works Department or the Education Department should give some sort of assistance to the local authorities. If they are given some assistance, they are quite prepared to go ahead and provide off-street parking areas so that people can safely pick up their children, but I believe that off-street parking should be included in the planning of a school. There would not be one school in Toowoomba that has not come to me at one time or another and asked that off-street parking be provided adjacent to the school. I know it is not the responsibility of the portfolio of Works and Housing, and I say so to the Minister. I am well aware of that, but I am also aware that the department should give some sort of subsidy or grant to the local authority to see that it happens.

Another matter I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister is the cost of buildings erected for the Government by contractors. I am appalled at the cost. Homes that should not cost more than \$16,000 have been built in Toowoomba for approximately \$35,000. The fact that these prices are accepted when superior homes are available

in the area at a lower price indicates that we should be looking at this matter closely. We should be buying these homes in the area and not building modular homes, which cost so much.

Mr. Scott: Are you saying that the contractors are ripping off the Government?

Mr. WARNER: That is what I am saying is happening in some cases. I believe that we should look into this matter urgently.

Some honourable members would know of two railway houses that were built in the same northern city. They were exactly the same type of house, but there was a difference of \$3,000 in the prices. The sites were exactly the same, so there should have been no difference in price. I believe that we should look urgently at this matter. This information was given to me by railway employees who came to my office. I have checked it out and found it to be correct. I repeat that we must look urgently at this matter.

The Transport Commissioner made a wise decision the other day when he bought a brick house in Toowoomba for \$30,000. I believe that it was one of the best houses in Toowoomba. The Minister will see it when he comes to Toowoomba shortly. I am certain that when he sees it he will change his department's building policy in the future.

I now refer to the contracts for cleaning and painting buildings. In far too many cases contractors either overquote or underquote. In many cases, the contractor who overquotes certainly does not do a better job than the contractor who submits a correct quote. The contractor who underquotes usually gets into trouble, and this creates great problems as time goes on.

In bringing this matter to the Minister's attention, I cite one classic example that he knows about, and it is the old court-house in Toowoomba. Local experts, who probably are the best in stone restoration work in the State, were available to do the work but their quote was higher than that of a Brisbane firm. The tender was let to the Brisbane firm, which has now abandoned the building and left it in an unfinished state. It is neither painted nor restored. The Minister now has to get further quotes so that this building can be restored properly. We should give more consideration to engaging local people who have expertise in this work. I bring this matter to the Minister's attention simply because I believe it is my duty to do so. My comments are certainly not meant to be a reflection on the department's tremendous record of achievement.

I pay a tribute to the Housing Commissioner, and to all the other members of the commission. I have noted their loyalty to the Minister, and I have appreciated their help during the last year. I, like the Minister, wish the former Director of Works, Mr. Houston, an enjoyable retirement.

Mr. PREST (Port Curtis) (7.39 p.m.): In speaking tonight in the debate on the Works and Housing Estimates, I should like, firstly, to take the opportunity of expressing my thanks to those people in the various departments who have been so helpful and of great assistance to me over the last 12 months. In particular, I thank those people in the Queensland Housing Commission in Gladstone and also in Brisbane with whom I have almost daily contact. At all times they are helpful and friendly. Although they work under difficult conditions, they do a very good job. They make some very wise decisions on behalf of the Government, and also on behalf of the tenants of the Queensland Housing Commission.

I am pleased to see in the Estimates that staff numbers are being maintained. However, I would be much happier to see an increase in the public work-force, because I am certain that unemployment would decrease if more money was spent on public works. Many public works are needed and money made available for them would flow on not only to the unemployed but also to business people.

At this stage of the year, there is still a shortage of housing, particularly Housing Commission homes, in my electorate. Every day people stream into the Housing Commission seeking assistance and housing accommodation. In view of the publicity given to the development of Gladstone and district, it is only to be expected that many itinerant people will come there in search of work. When they reach Gladstone, they have to obtain some sort of accommodation.

I am certain, too, that if the Housing Commission could see its way clear to build more flats or units for aged people in my electorate, they would be fully occupied by good tenants. Accommodation for single mothers is virtually unprocurable. I should like to see one-bedroom units built in the area, and such accommodation would certainly be fully utilised. Although a young mother with a child is given some sort of priority, usually it is not high enough to give her the accommodation for which she is looking. Although a single mother may have transgressed to some extent, I sincerely believe she is entitled to suitable accommodation in which to look after her child without experiencing any more trauma.

In spite of what this Government or any other Government says, insufficient money is available for housing. It is very difficult to obtain and, when it is available, it attracts very high interest rates. In fact, they are far too high. I know of an instance not long ago of a man who borrowed \$18,000. After he had paid back \$12,000, he wanted to return to the country from which he came. He had to sell the house, and he asked for a pay-out figure. After paying back about \$12,000, he found that the pay-out figure was still in excess of what he had borrowed in the first place. I was sorry

for that man. He was going back to England and needed money. Of course, one Minister in this place would say that because he was a Pom he deserved what he got, but I would not say that.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Mr. Wharton would not say that.

Mr. PREST: I did not say that he would. He is a different type of Minister, and I have the greatest respect for him. I say it is a ridiculous situation when a person borrows money, pays back so much and then finds that the pay-out figure is more than he borrowed in the first place. In another case, a man borrowed \$25,000. After paying \$275 a month for three years, he found that he owed \$27,000 on the loan.

Today, men will sign any form of contract and take any offer that is made so that they can provide suitable accommodation for their wives and families. A young worker might get into trouble through accident, illness or unemployment. I know of a fellow who met with a very serious accident. After six months, his compensation payment was reduced to the minimum amount of about \$90 a week. As he was required to pay approximately \$270 a month off his house, he was left very little to live on. The society from which he borrowed lowered the repayments for six months to \$100 a month. After the six months had elapsed, he had to revert to paying \$270 a month, and also he had to pay an additional amount to make up for the reduced payments. That meant that he was required to pay in excess of what he was receiving by way of compensation.

In all such loans, an insurance policy should have to be taken out so that the borrower, and the lender, would be covered in the event of accident, sickness or unemployment. I do not think the premiums would have to be high. At least such a policy would mean that a man and his family would be covered and the lender would be assured of repayments.

Mr. Bourke: Wouldn't that add to his costs?

Mr. PREST: It would, but at least he would be covered if such a situation arose. A chemist who might as a sideline be a politician does not have to meet such a situation. He is covered because he has two, or even three, incomes. On the other hand, the ordinary worker can get into financial difficulties as a result of an accident or illness.

A previous speaker mentioned the high rents that are charged today. Rents must be kept to a minimum. In fairness to the Housing Commission, I must say that I am very pleased with the rebates that are allowed to those in receipt of some type of pension. Those rebates help no end.

The maintenance of houses is a big problem. In my area Mr. Sawdy does a very good job in maintaining Housing Commission homes. Contracts for the painting of houses should be let to local contractors. In the present unemployment situation, that would ensure that the money was spent in that town or city and, at the same time, help to keep local contractors going.

In June or July this year, representations were made about the upgrading of the Gladstone Court House. That very old building houses not only the clerk of the court but also officers of the Department of Harbours and Marine, Queensland Fisheries Services and the Queensland Housing Commission. We were told that an inspection of the building would be made and action would be taken to upgrade it, but to date very little has been done.

In the February sittings of the District Court, the judge complained about the poor acoustics, the loud noise and the heat. He said that conditions in the building were bad. The building needs to be considerably upgraded. Ultimately a new court-house will have to be built in Gladstone.

Only the other day, I was speaking to a member of the public who told me that the February sittings of the District Court will include three or four cases, one of which could extend over two to three weeks. I am sure that, in the trying heat of February-March, the conditions under which the judge, jurors and staff will be working will cause great difficulties and tensions. Surely air-conditioning could be installed to provide acceptable working conditions. It is wrong that officials should have to go to the local hotel to buy bags of party ice to get a drink of cold water. Air-conditioning must be provided immediately as a stand-by while plans are put in hand for a new court-house. The furnishings provided for public servants in the court-house are not in keeping with those provided by private enterprise or in some Government or semi-government departments. The staff are entitled to something better. I should like the Minister to consider not only a new court-house but also new furniture, and air-conditioning in the meantime.

The local police station is overcrowded. I am sure that, when police officers have to make reports, they have to wait for office space to become available before they can do so. Under such conditions their work must be even harder than otherwise it would be. Because I have spoken on other occasions about the Gladstone Police Station, I will not enlarge on my comments. The Minister should have all the facts before him.

Surely in this day and age, country police stations could be a little more comfortable. Quite often a police officer living in the bush with his family is not provided with office floor coverings. I do not know how people who are forced to put up with such

bare and unattractive surroundings in the country can be expected to do a good day's work.

Because the Minister has been given a report compiled by combined parents and citizens associated with State schools in Gladstone, he must be aware of the lack of adequate school facilities there. During the debate on the Education Estimates I spoke on this matter. As the Minister has a copy of the submissions, I shall not dwell on them. I ask him to study the submissions, as the Minister for Education promised to do, and to try to come up with better education facilities in Gladstone. I repeat that only one pre-school is provided in the Port Curtis electorate. That is a crying shame. It is now some years since the Minister's department resumed houses in Auckland Street for a central pre-school, but each year we seem to lose any priority gained and nothing is done.

I noted in the Minister's report that facilities at primary schools have been improved and that administration and library blocks, as well as covered play areas, are now part of every new primary school construction. But what about the old schools? They are the ones that have put up for so long with trying conditions and lack of amenities. I sincerely hope that we will not have to wait too long for what the Minister proposes should be done at the various schools in Gladstone.

This year, the Gladstone State High School tuck-shop, which was built to cater for 800 children, is serving 1,500 children. Year after year we have been promised that the extension will be made. So far nothing has happened. I would like the Minister to look at this and to honour the promises that have been made.

One thing I wish to refer to tonight is the proposed Gladstone technical college. In introducing his Estimates, the Minister said that planning is well in hand. We in Gladstone are very grateful for that. For a number of years, my predecessor, the late Marty Hanson, had pushed for a technical college in Gladstone. It is only this year that the Federal Government said that it will provide \$300,000, with the State Government's saying that it is about to spend \$2,900,000. Unfortunately, some form of opposition is coming from the Gladstone City Council. In 1971, after approaches made by Marty Hanson and the then Mayor of Gladstone, Bill Golding, there was an exchange of land between the Education Department and the Gladstone City Council. On the department's former land, which had all services provided, a sporting complex unequalled in any other provincial centre of this State has been established. It has been totally funded by Queensland Alumina, the State Government and various sporting bodies. During that period, Queensland Alumina has spent \$1,300,000.

The proposal that was made at the time of the exchange of the land was that the council would provide sewerage, water and

electricity to the exchanged site when the Education Department commenced construction of a technical college. However, the present mayor of Gladstone, who was the National Party candidate at the last State election, says that he will not honour the agreement made with the Education Department. It is an undertaking that was given to the late Marty Hanson in writing. I dissociate myself entirely from that statement. We in Gladstone are pleased to get anything at all from the State Government. At times it may be necessary to put out a sprat to catch a mackerel; but in this instance the National Party candidate of 1977 has said:—

"It'll be the day when I have anything to do with this Council giving anything to the State Government for free."

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Isn't the mayor of Gladstone, as you say, a member of the National Party and a former National Party candidate against you at a general election?

Mr. PREST: That is true.

This gentleman now says that the amenities we would have to provide to the site would cost \$57,000. He does not want to honour an undertaking given by a previous council. The former mayor of Gladstone, Mr. Bill Golding, a gentleman who has been honoured by the Queen on more than one occasion, has himself offered to give \$1,000 towards the provision of facilities. I do not think that that is necessary. I believe that any local authority that is worth its salt at all would come to the party, knowing that the Government intends building a technical college involving an expenditure of many millions of dollars. It is duty bound at any time to provide facilities such as sewerage and water to the boundary of the site.

He is trying to drag a red herring across the trail. He is trying to make out that the previous council said that it would provide facilities by installing electricity in every room, water in every toilet and so on. That is utter rot. We completely dissociate ourselves from that statement. We believe that the Government should go ahead with the planning and get on with the construction of the technical college. After all, great expansion is occurring in Gladstone. This year Q.A.L. itself is putting on another 27 apprentices.

(Time expired.)

Mr. KAUS (Mansfield) (8 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to enter the debate on the Estimates for Works and Housing. I shall give the Committee some idea of the responsibilities of the portfolio. They include the design, construction and maintenance of State pre-school, primary school and high school buildings, technical colleges, Government hospitals and institutions. My electorate does not contain a hospital, but it does contain plenty of fine pre-schools, primary schools and high schools.

The responsibilities also include public buildings, planning, construction and maintenance of housing under the State Housing Act and the Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement and granting of loans for home-ownership sales and rental. Taken over the whole of Queensland, the expenditure would amount to approximately \$1,000,000 a day six days a week. That is a lot of money and big business. The Minister controls the Works Department and the Queensland Housing Commission.

I should like to say a few words about the Works Department and the Minister's staff. I congratulate the Minister and his staff, particularly his under secretary, Mr. Young. I wish him all the best in his new job. I also pay a tribute to the Commissioner of Housing. Any complaints I have had over the years have been well and efficiently looked after. I have had no problems with letters being held up, as has happened in some other areas. I have received very good service and I thank the Minister on behalf of my constituents and myself for that service.

One of the major achievements of the Works Department in the past three years has been the variation in the way in which State Government works have been carried out. I am speaking particularly of private enterprise and the Government day-labour force. At the time the Minister took over from the previous Minister, 80 per cent of the department's work was carried out by its day-labour force. The remaining 20 per cent was carried out by private enterprise. It is very pleasing that this position has been reversed in the past three years.

The overall result of the transfer of work to private enterprise has been a stimulation of the private building industry and the effecting of substantial savings of Government finance by more economical building within the Government works programme. The Government funds saved have been redeployed to provide more buildings than would have been possible under the old, comparatively uneconomical system of day labour. An important aspect of the more economical building by the private sector is that inflationary trends are coped with more than would be the case if the work was carried out by the State Government work-force. More can be achieved by using these skills and funds in a competitive approach by the private-enterprise sector.

I should like to say a few words about the Queensland Housing Commission. The aspects of progress by the Housing Commission include a new look for Housing Commission houses, which makes them more attractive as purchase prospects.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you live in one?

Mr. KAUS: I remind honourable gentlemen opposite, and all my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, that I have 1,200 Housing Commission houses in my electorate.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: And you don't get a vote out of one of them.

Mr. KAUS: I do not do badly. Of the 1,200, only 79 are up for rental. When I was the member for Hawthorne, most of the applicants who came to me for Housing Commission houses were sent out to my present electorate of Mansfield when it was being developed by the Housing Commission. As I travel around my electorate doing my usual door knock, it is very pleasing to talk to people for whom one has done something or, should I say, for whom the Housing Commission has done something, because they never forget that I was responsible for their moving out to Mansfield. Of course, I am now the member for Mansfield. As honourable members know, Housing Commission houses are usually built in a fairly large area and the voting pattern is something like 25 per cent for the Government and 75 per cent for the Labor Party.

I do not believe we should continue to build areas of Housing Commission homes as large as those in suburbs such as Inala. I think it should be Government policy to split these concentrations of Housing Commission homes and integrate them in ordinary private-enterprise housing developments. To see the effect of such a plan, one has only to go to Mansfield and see what people have done with their Housing Commission homes. They are a credit to them, and they not only look after their homes but they also look after their member.

We have also seen the introduction of improved arrangements for the purchase of Housing Commission homes. Most people wish to purchase the homes that they are renting, provided that they are attractive and finance at acceptable rates of interest is available. In turn, the sale of these homes means that maintenance costs to the Housing Commission are reduced, making possible the construction of more homes and the more effective use of the taxpayers' money. Financial ceilings available to tenants wishing to purchase their homes have been raised from \$18,000 to \$25,000, with the balance payable at 7½ per cent interest.

I think that is quite good, because we do not get enough money from the Commonwealth for housing. In fact, we do not receive as much as the Victorians or the South Australians. This is a shame because, if we did receive the amount we are entitled to on a per capita basis, we might be able to reduce that interest rate even further. Minimum cash deposits have been reduced from \$500 to \$200, or 10 per cent of the Commission's valuation. The price of the home is pegged from the date the tenant indicates he wishes to purchase.

Rents in all Housing Commission homes have been raised to an economic level comparable with those in the market-place. For those who cannot meet such rents, and provide the necessary proof of this inability,

rebated rents are arranged. In other words, the original purpose of welfare housing for those on low or moderate incomes is maintained. The needy and not the greedy are those who should qualify for such housing, and there is encouragement for those who want to purchase their own homes. I know that there are people who just cannot afford to buy a home, and I think the Housing Commission is doing a magnificent job in looking after them. At the same time, they have to help themselves by treating the home with some respect by looking after it and keeping it in good repair.

Not so long ago I was looking at one of the new Housing Commission areas in my electorate, and one thing I did not like was the absence of battens under some of the three or four-year-old houses. These are quite distinctive and very nice homes but, with the small extra cost of fitting battens, I think they would fit into the area much better and it would not be realised that they were Housing Commission homes. They are an older type of house, and I think that the architects and the department have to see what they can do to upgrade them. I know that the designs have been improved and that the houses being built now are better than those built previously.

There has been increased activity in pensioner housing. The units are occupied mainly by people who qualify for rent rebate. The other day a lady with a problem came to see me. She asked me about the difference between a flat and a unit. Because of certain commitments, she was not entitled to one, but she was entitled to the other. At that stage I could not work out what the problem was. Letters have been passing between me and the department, and no doubt the problem will be overcome.

For the first time, there has been the establishment of maximum density development estates, providing high quality housing and a maximum of parkland. Much more parkland is being provided than is required by the councils, and that is a good thing. The children are safe because there are no through-roads in the estates. I think that that is an excellent design for that type of housing development.

In this year's Budget we see the injection of about \$39,000,000 to aid the purchase of new or previously unoccupied houses. This scheme has been designed particularly for people in the grey area, that is, those who cannot afford to meet high interest payments but who are earning too much to qualify for welfare housing. As I said before, because some people just cannot help themselves, we have to provide a certain amount of welfare housing. The State has to help these people; it has to look after them. This money is available at an interest rate of 7½ per cent. There is a ceiling of \$25,000. The scheme is designed to stimulate the building industry and help to provide housing for those in the grey area not previously assisted by

the Government. Such purchasers can afford a high repayment over short periods. In this regard, the ceiling of \$25,000 has effectively kept down the price of houses and also brought about an injection of secondary finance from private enterprise, which, in turn, has been injected into the building industry generally.

A combination of primary and secondary finance in this case means that people who are in this grey area receive their finance at a lower rate of interest than is generally available from other sources. I should like the department to continue to look at achieving a more economical cost structure in buildings for the Government. New designs and materials should be incorporated wherever possible. Further steps should be taken to stimulate the private sector, in line with economical operations.

I now turn to a few other problems in my area. I must thank the department for information that I received the other day that the district supervisor of the Works Department will arrange certain things for the Mt. Petrie State School, which is one of the smaller schools in my electorate. I have been informed that approval has been given for the provision of a health room and a staff room and for enlargement of the library.

Mr. Fouras: Is that because—

Mr. KAUS: This is happening only because I have been making representations over a long period. It is good to see that this approval has been given. The school is situated on 35 acres. It has been a very good investment for the department. Only about 84 children attend the school. Many youngsters bypass this school and attend other schools. I have no doubt that with the addition of these rooms and the upgrading of the library, many youngsters who at present bypass this school and attend better-equipped schools will enrol there.

A problem at the Mansfield State School has been drawn to my attention over a long period. I have written to the Minister, and letters have been flowing backwards and forwards between me and the department. The principal complaint is that the library is inadequate for a large class 2 school. In addition, lights are needed in the classrooms. Open-area class-rooms, which are designed for use without lights, are all right, but in other class-rooms lights are needed on dull days. I understand, of course, that it was not policy to provide lights in the days when those rooms were built.

The staff room presents further problems. It was designed originally for a much smaller staff than is currently at the school, and if all teachers desire to have lunch in the room, there is neither sufficient space nor enough furniture. I know that the Works Department architects have planned an extension to the existing administration block, which is awaiting painting. It would be just a waste of time to do the painting

now, so it appears that the painting will not be completed until the extensions are carried out. A free-standing library is also designed for the future—I realise, of course, that its construction depends on the availability of finance—and this would allow sufficient area for a staff common-room.

Mr. Fouras: It looks as if you are getting more than you want.

Mr. KAUS: I am not doing too badly. The honourable member should come out and have a look at my schools. He will then see how a good member operates.

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. KAUS: I am just reminding the Minister of these things. I see that in his introductory speech he said he has provided \$500,000 for subsidy payments to show societies for capital works. No doubt he will be hearing from me in the very near future, either by way of deputation or by letter. I should like to know whether that provision is something new or whether it has been shown in previous Estimates. I shall be having a closer look at that, because problems are being experienced at the Mt. Gravatt showgrounds, and probably an approach will be made to him.

I congratulate the Minister and his staff on the preparation of the Estimates, and I am sure that the State will continue to be well served by the Department of Works and the Housing Commission in the future.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (8.18 p.m.): When I read the annual reports of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission, I become conscious of the enormous tasks that they undertake. I therefore make my comments with a good deal of humility.

Before dealing with the Estimates, I wish to acknowledge publicly the services that have been rendered to me by officers of both departments. I think it is incumbent upon me to say first that I have always had the utmost co-operation from the Minister. I am sure the same can be said of other members. Had that not been so, he would not be a popular Minister. That is, of course, the least we would expect of him as a Minister of this Government, and we have always been proud of his accomplishments.

I have made numerous submissions to the Commissioner of Housing, Mr. Hitchins, on matters affecting my electorate. Needless to say, he has not always agreed with me, but I admire him for his frankness and I hope that, in time, he might see merit in some of the proposals that I have put before him. If he does not see merit in them at the moment, perhaps we will find some common ground in the future.

Once again, I must make special reference to Mr. Keith Houston, who has spent 43 years with the Works Department. He has accomplished a great deal, he has had the courage of his convictions and he has administered the Department of Works very well. I wish his successor, Mr. Harold Young, well in the future. If he is as successful as Mr. Houston has been during his 43 years of office, he, too, will be able to retire very proudly.

It is not my intention to go on complimenting the Minister's departments for their activities. As members of Parliament, we have a responsibility to offer constructive criticism. If what I say is regarded as criticism, I hope it is regarded as constructive criticism. That is my purpose in rising tonight. I did not enter Parliament merely to tell departmental officers and others that they are good fellows and that everything they do is right. If that was all I could accomplish, I would be wasting my time here.

I realise the great responsibility of those who administer the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission. After all, they are responsible for the construction of schools, public buildings and housing from Cape York to Coolangatta. Naturally this is a very complex assignment, and difficulties must be expected. Regardless of what the Minister attempts to do, he must realise that perhaps there are times when modifications in policy are necessary.

I make no apology for specifically referring to my own electorate. In the annual reports we read that hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent annually by the departments under the Minister's control. Without doubt, many thousands of persons would be employed in those departments. After having had only a few hours to peruse the annual reports, members would be foolish to pretend that they could comment intelligently on them. Any person who, without having had time to properly study them and the reasons for the Minister's decisions, thought he could comment intelligently on those reports would be classed as an arm-chair strategist and he would, indeed, be an extremely foolish person.

In areas that are developing rapidly a whole host of complex problems arise. In my electorate, which extends from the New South Wales border to the city of Brisbane, there is a great variety of problems. First of all I will refer to schools. Schools are being closed in some regions, yet within 50 miles of those schools there is an urgent need for the provision of more class-rooms. This is a result of population trends. Rural areas, partly because of mechanisation and the decline in rural industry, are not developing, whereas the peripheral areas in close proximity to Brisbane are developing very rapidly.

Reference has been made to the new Logan Shire. Last Friday night I attended a function that was sponsored by the chairman of the Albert Shire. He said that in the past seven years the increase in population in that region had moved up by 220 per cent. Percentages in themselves are of no great significance. That could well mean, for example, that there was one person in the region seven years ago and that there are three and a bit in it now.

However, in 1971, 22,000 people resided there and now, because of the development that has occurred, 70,000 people reside there. Much of the development is directly attributable to the Queensland Housing Commission. It has a responsibility to try to provide homes for a vast number of people in this region.

It is fair to say that many people who live in Housing Commission homes criticise the Housing Commission administration. Perhaps in some instances their criticism is justified, but I do not support any critical comments. I have informed most people who complain about Housing Commission homes that they have no obligation whatever to stay in them. If they think that they can do better in other than a commission home, they are quite at liberty to try. Some people even criticise something that is given to them or something that is offered at a very low price. The Housing Commission has tried to provide homes at a moderate rental, and has attracted a number of people. I assure those people that, if the terms and conditions are not acceptable to them, the sooner they get out and do something in their own right, the better it will be for everybody concerned.

I am not worried about the Housing Commission's activities in this field. I believe that it is charged with a responsibility by the Government. However, the Housing Commission does not make a direct contribution; it merely administers funds, gained from the taxpayers of Queensland, to provide low-rental accommodation. When I analyse cases, I frequently find that young married people with families who are trying to buy their own homes are making substantial tax contributions. They are subsidising people residing in Housing Commission homes.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. MULLER: A lot of money that the honourable member is contributing by way of taxation goes to assist these people. Is that justified?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You are joking.

Mr. MULLER: I am not joking; I am deadly serious. I have no time to argue with the honourable member on this issue.

We can talk about schools, Commonwealth housing or anything else; but no matter what is involved, the money required comes from only one source, that is, the taxpayer. Regardless of the terms and conditions set by the Housing Commission, it is taxpayers' money. That fact cannot be escaped;

it means that in the final analysis we are robbing Peter to pay Paul. We are prepared to make that contribution to assist people who, regrettably, are a little unfortunate. But if they want to complain about it, they can do what the other people are doing, and I want to be the first person to get that message across to them. In the past, when confronted by irate Housing Commission residents who were very critical of terms and conditions, I have done everything in my power to make the clear-cut statement, "If you are dissatisfied with the terms and conditions, for God's sake pack up, get out, and do something in your own right." It is as simple as that.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. MULLER: The honourable member need not get red in the face. He has had his 20 minutes in which to speak. He can sit down and relax, and cop it for a moment.

I indicated earlier that the Minister is faced with the tremendous problem of closing class-rooms at one end of my electorate and opening others at the opposite end. That is not the fault of the administration. This is a fact of life due to the movement within the community. This must continue to happen. However, it is a fairly expensive exercise, and I commend the commission for its assessment of the requirements in each region. At times I have become a little puzzled about its manner of assessing requirements.

Mr. Fouras interjected.

Mr. MULLER: Just relax, sonny. I will talk to you afterwards.

In many instances people put forward submissions, but they cannot always necessarily be accepted. Assessments are made by persons who should have the capacity to make them correctly, but they are obviously not putting enough time into the task. On occasions schools are urgently required but are not necessarily built. I hope that at some time in the future this may be overcome.

On the matter of public buildings, I was rather amazed to read figures indicating to me that the rental of public buildings for Government departments costs in excess of \$7,000,000 a year. I mention that because I want it documented. I do not feel guilty when I look at the new building that has been constructed not only as accommodation for members of Parliament but also as an entirely new parliamentary chamber. It has cost \$19,000,000, which does not disturb me for a moment. The Press and others have been critical of the considerable cost. However, if they looked at the alternative of renting buildings for the convenience of Parliament, they would realise how much more expensive it would be. I believe that the Works Department has been involved in a very worthwhile project.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Kaus): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. MULLER: I want to be the first to support the attitude of the Government in having that building constructed.

If it is any consolation to critics to make a comparison, they should consider the announcement made as recently as last week that the Federal Government had made a determination on a new parliamentary building, which would cost in the vicinity of \$200,000,000 if it were built now. That is food for thought for the critics. It is absolutely essential that the Parliament of Queensland should have an acceptable building. Some few years ago, in the absence of the Speaker, I was delegated by the present Speaker to make accommodation arrangements for the new members and to help them settle in. That was my modest assignment. I regret to say that in some instances I had the unfortunate obligation of putting some of our newly elected members into rooms with 13 others and saying, "This is your accommodation." In any other public offices in this city, public servants have air-conditioned accommodation and ample space. I am not being critical in saying this; I am merely making a comparison. I am saying that the requirement imposed upon the people of Queensland by the provision of this new parliamentary accommodation block, as well as the new Chamber that has been built for Parliament, is absolutely justified.

I pass now to one or two of my milder criticisms. Where the Housing Commission has an obligation to move people in large numbers into specific regions, it is in fact creating some social problems. The honourable member for Archerfield may come into this if he wishes; but this again is a fact of life. Where a whole host of people are moved into an area quickly, regrettable as it may be, because they are not very financial and have not the capacity to improve their own community involvement, there is a consequent downgrading of the region. This is unfortunate and it is regrettable.

Somewhere, somehow, it is the responsibility of Parliament, if we pursue the method of building vast numbers of homes in any particular region, to look at some form of balanced development. I do not quite know how this can be done. I know that the commissioner, Mr. Hitchins, would tell me that this is not entirely within his charter. I know it is not, but we, as members of the Government, should look at it.

We need to look at parkland for recreation. I know that the Housing Commission sets aside areas of land for recreational purposes, but nothing beyond that happens at this stage. We must see if we can come up with some idea to develop these recreational facilities with a view to improving the

quality of life of local people. Thousands and thousands of people move into some of these localities and there are no public halls. Consequently there is no community involvement. Today, so many people have wheels; they reside in an area and drive out of it. The facilities are not provided for the young people of the future.

I now want to refer to administrative matters that we should look at. This is the responsibility of another department, I know, but surely there should be liaison among these departments. I look at the development and involvement of areas containing many thousands of people and I see that there are no police stations, fire brigade stations or ambulance stations. An area grows up like Topsy. There is no community involvement. We have to do something about it. We have to try to set up these facilities and attempt to improve the quality of life in these areas. We have to give these people a little pride. It does not worry me personally, but some people, regrettably, are not very financial and they are the people who need help. Let us help them in this way. This is what we are asking for.

My people tell me that they lack these facilities. If a house catches fire, the owner has to wait for the fire appliance to be driven from its station many miles away. With all due respect to people in the fire brigades, all they can do is dampen down the ashes over the burnt stumps, and more often than not they leave the owner to clean up after everything has been destroyed. These are the things that we must look at. I again emphasise that this contingency is not provided for within the administration of the Minister's department, but let us have a look at it. I know that we cannot break even and change everything overnight, but these are the things that I would like to see happen.

We should be encouraging home-ownership as far as is humanly possible. I have had discussions with Mr. Hitchins on this point. Any person who is not at present tremendously financial has the right to purchase the house he is occupying at some time in the future. This is what most people want. They take a greater pride in their own home. They should be given encouragement for this type of enterprise.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BURNS (Lytton) (8.39 p.m.): I want to raise tonight the question of greater co-operation between the State and Federal Governments in the spending of money on public buildings in this State. I know that the Minister is aware of this particular matter because he has been most co-operative in respect of it. I refer to a new dental care unit that is being built at the Cannon Hill State School. Through bureaucratic fumbling and lack of co-operation between the State and Federal authorities, a set of

rules has been laid down stating that a new building must be provided for a dental unit.

At Cannon Hill there are 17 empty classrooms. I am told that \$68,000 is to be spent on constructing a brand-new building for a dental care unit when, for \$20,000 or \$30,000, one of the classrooms or one of the separate buildings could be turned into a luxury establishment for the dental unit. The Minister agrees, the department agrees, but the Commonwealth people lay down a set of standards and we have to meet them. I know that the Premier did not want to co-operate with the Federal Government under Whitlam, but it is about time that the Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government was told that people's money should not be wasted in this way. We want the dental care unit at Cannon Hill. We are not prepared to say, "Don't build it there."

The Federal Government's restrictions and decisions are being forced upon our school authorities. They are shifting playground facilities, taking up essential pieces of land where the parents and citizen's association has developed facilities, and erecting this new building on it. It is a waste of public money. It is time the two Governments, State and Commonwealth, got together and did something about it.

I heard the honourable member for Fassifern speaking about problems in housing areas in his electorate as a result of Housing Commission expansion. It is about time the Housing Commission started to buy some land in areas where people want to live instead of pushing people into the far-flung outskirts of the city. There is land available in my electorate and there are real estate agents who would be prepared to develop it. In fact, one is in the gallery above me right now. He made a recommendation that land at Murarrie be purchased by the Housing Commission for less than it would cost the commission to develop it. The Government itself could not develop it for less, yet it rejected the proposal. But the commission still buys land and erects houses 25 miles out of town and people in my area who are seeking homes are sent out there. They then have to buy themselves an old "bomb" in which they drive across the city to and from work day in and day out, cluttering up the roads and adversely hitting their pockets.

It is time the Housing Commission started to consider buying land in areas where people want to live. In my area the Government is developing a new port and many people who work there want to live in the general area. It is true that the Housing Commission, as a result of a little prodding, has purchased some land, but there are a large number of land developers on the south side who would be prepared to sell developed land at prices that I believe the Housing Commission should not knock back.

I do not agree that the Housing Commission has even planned some of its expansion. I do not feel that it has consulted properly with local authorities. If one goes out to some of these new areas, one finds hardly any facilities at all. In many cases the Housing Commission refuses to comply with local authority regulations, or tries to get around them as much as possible.

Now that the Government has reduced the number of people waiting for Housing Commission homes, it is time it considered the purchase of isolated blocks of land, not just large areas, and integrating more and more Housing Commission homes into the general community. As I said, there is suitable land for sale, but there is too much concentration of pensioner units in inner-city areas. For some time now my area has been occupied mainly by middle-aged people. In fact, it has got to the stage where enrolments are dropping off in the schools in the area because children have grown up and left. But Mum and Dad still want to live there. What does the Government offer them? It offers them pensioner flats at places such as West End, Mt. Gravatt or Holland Park, somewhere right away from where they want to live. If they have lived in an area all their lives and have reached the stage where they are on their own and want to move into a pensioner flat, why not make it possible by constructing more and more of them in such an area? We are providing the money, but we are shifting people away from the environment and area that they have grown to know and where their friends live.

On the Gold Coast and in other such areas more and more problems are being encountered with old people who have moved to those places and thus isolated themselves from their own communities. They have shifted up here from Victoria for our sun and the other advantages of our beautiful resorts, but when they arrive here they find they have lost contact with all of their friends and the Government then has to set up more and more facilities such as community-care centres and employ people to look after them or involve them in the community itself. I cannot understand our planning in this regard. When the land and facilities are available, it seems a waste of money to build the same facilities in areas where they are not wanted.

I thank the Minister for coming down to see the Wynnum North High School. For a moment, I shall become a little parochial. Again I relate this, in many ways, to a lack of planning within the Minister's department. Somehow or other some schools seem to get fair treatment and are looked after while other schools seem to be sadly neglected. As the Minister would know from his walk through the Wynnum North High School, it contains furniture that has not been repaired for years, and broken windows and doors. It is obvious that walkways are needed. The facilities are far from adequate. For example, an electric

hacksaw has been provided in the metal working shop, but because the room in which it is installed is not big enough a hole had to be cut in the wall and another door installed so that the lengths of steel and other material that were available could be cut up. No-one can explain to me why such a facility was installed in a room in which it cannot be used, and the argument over that piece of equipment continued for two or three years.

The school is situated on about 16 acres of land. I heard the member for Mansfield talking tonight about a school, with 84 children, being situated on 35 acres of land. There are 1,000 young men and women at this school, which, as I say, is situated on 16 acres of land. There is a lack of land and a lack of facilities.

At the same time, the ordinary maintenance of the school has been sadly neglected. The paintwork is shocking. The mould on the verandas has to be seen to be believed. Complaint after complaint has been made by headmasters, parents and citizens' committees, other members of Parliament who represent the area and myself, yet little or nothing has been done. At other schools, even without a letter being written, a member of the staff of the Works Department comes to the school and decides that something should be done. It is time that we had a close look at the reason why this school is being neglected and how, in the bureaucratic system, it has been left out of the recommendations that have been made by the departmental heads.

The same comments apply to the pre-school at Tingalpa. I heard the Minister talk about pre-schools. I know of pre-schools with double units, one of which has been closed down. I know of other pre-schools that cannot fill their numbers. Yet in areas such as Tingalpa, where pre-schools are needed, they are not provided. I would be grateful if I could get some advice on this matter, but I understand that tenders have been called for a pre-school at Tingalpa. We will be grateful for anything that is done in that area.

I cannot understand pre-school planning. I should like the Minister to explain to me how a double unit came to be built at a pre-school in one area, one unit of which is hardly ever open, while no pre-school facilities are provided in another area which needs them. Obviously we are spending money on building double units and in training teachers to handle a second unit. How come we are putting these facilities in areas where they are not needed, and are not putting them in areas where they are badly needed?

The same comment applies to libraries. I cannot understand the State and Commonwealth agreement about libraries and the development of the Commonwealth library scheme. Don Cameron, who was the local Liberal member of the Federal Parliament

for the area, announced five or six years ago that the Commonwealth would provide money for a library at the Balmoral State High School in my electorate. The announcement was made, the money was allocated, but the library still has not been provided today, five or six years later. After all the ballyhoo and the headlines, the young men and women in the area are still missing out.

Libraries are most necessary in working-class areas. If one goes to many of the so-called Liberal areas, or the richer areas of this State, one sees flash libraries in the schools there. When one goes to the working-class areas, where there are the sons and daughters of meatworkers, wharfies and others who should be provided with library facilities to help them to improve their education, one sees there are no facilities there. I have two high schools in my electorate, one at either end, attended by about 2,500 young men and women, and neither has a library. When I was Leader of the Opposition, I visited schools in other areas throughout the State and saw schools that had fewer children but better facilities paid for with public money.

It is time that we asked the Works Department to consider providing facilities not only in new schools, because in many of the older schools it is often very difficult to get carpet on the floor or some of the things that are put into new schools as of right. When my little daughter started at the Cannon Hill State School this year, she was asked to bring along a square of carpet. All the children brought along a piece of carpet on which they could sit while listening to stories, because their teacher quite rightly did not want them to sit on the rough timber.

At other schools, without any request being made, every room is carpeted. I must say that since I raised that matter with the Minister, carpet has been provided for the floor at the Cannon Hill State School. But the matter should not have had to be raised in that way. We ought to have a planning system for installing these facilities in schools. It ought to be Public Service planning to provide those facilities.

Mr. Gygar: Talk about biting the hand that feeds you.

Mr. BURNS: With due respect, it is the system; it is not just a matter of saying, "Thanks, mate. Give me a carpet in my school and I will shut up." It is a matter of improving the system so that all schools get carpet in their turn and we do not have hand-outs with some looking after their friends.

Whilst I am talking about looking after one's friends, I say that it is time that the Minister had a look at the subcontractors who are painting the schools in this State today. At one school in my area a couple of years ago a contract for painting was let to one firm. It subcontracted the job to another firm, and a couple of 17-year-old lads

finished up doing the painting. The standard of painting was bad. The teachers could not open the windows. The paint was running all over the walls.

The same applies to Housing Commission homes in the Murarrie area, where people have complained that painters have been slapping paint on after going round the outside walls with a feather duster. Inspectors have been out and told me that the job was O.K. In one case opposite the Murarrie school, at least something was done about it; but it is still not of a standard that an amateur painting his own home would find acceptable. It is time the Government had a look at the type of people who are obtaining contracts from it.

While I am speaking about maintenance, I suggest that it is about time more men were employed on regular maintenance of schools. It is far too difficult at present to get people to repair a window, a step-rail, or a piece of fencing. The Government has cut back on such maintenance in its desire to assist the subcontractor and, as it calls it, private enterprise. In essence, it has created an inefficient system, and the old system of regular maintenance and people being available to do minor jobs has virtually disappeared.

Finally—and because I know that other members want to take part in the debate, I do not wish to take all my time—I wish to talk about the “Taj Mahal” at the back of this building, the new Parliament House—the \$20,000,000 extravagance that we have been very quiet about. I wish to raise a matter on behalf of the new Leader of the Opposition. In answer to a question in this Chamber in relation to my staff, the Minister said that not one other Leader of the Opposition in Australia had his staff in Parliament House. That is not so. Every Leader of the Opposition in this nation, other than the new Leader of the Opposition when he goes into the new Parliament House, has his staff in Parliament House. A total of \$20,000,000 has been spent on a Parliament House to last for the next 100 years. Now, after all the time that this present Parliament House has been in existence, the staff of the Leader of the Opposition are to be kicked out of Parliament House and shifted to Watkins Place. I know that, because I had gone to the Press, orders were issued to members of the Minister's department not to talk to me in relation to this particular matter. It is an extravagant waste of money to put three floors of V.I.P. suites in the building. The Premier and the Deputy Premier stood over the parliamentary committee and told it that the additional floors, with their plush suites built in, had to be put on and, at the same time, said to the Opposition, “For the first time in the history of this Parliament, you won't be allowed to have your staff in Parliament House with you.”

An area had been set aside in the new building. The Minister's officers told me that an area was set aside for the staff of the Leader of the Opposition. Facilities were provided; the Telecom people came to see me; members of the Works Department staff came and saw me. I am told that the Premier then said, “We don't want the staff there. We are not giving the facilities to Burns; we are not giving the facilities to the Opposition.” As a result of that, a decision was made that I would be given ministerial status and shifted to Watkins Place. The plain facts of the matter are that, after the Government has spent all that money on the new building, the only Opposition Leader in this country who will not have his staff in Parliament House will be Ed. Casey, representing the Labor Party in Queensland. The Government ought to be ashamed of itself.

Mr. SIMPSON (Cooroola) (8.54 p.m.): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to support the Honourable Claude Wharton in his Works and Housing Estimates debate. I do not think that any Cabinet Minister is more obliging or hard-working than the Minister for Works and Housing. He listens intently to the problems of members in their electorates and sincerely and constructively does something about them.

The Department of Works would be one of the greatest organisations in the State. It selects the sites for many public buildings and many departments, and it is only fitting that it should do so, because the choice of a suitable site, the cost of drainage and the provision of services are an essential part of the construction of any building. It also has an oversight of major buildings in local government areas as well as of schools, Housing Commission homes, hospitals, etc.

Although many places in Australia are not in such a fortunate position at the moment, it is interesting to note that in the Landsborough, Maroochy and Noosa Shires on the Sunshine Coast figures show the tremendous boom in the building industry. This is very encouraging, but we still have an unemployment problem and many people in the building industry are seeking jobs. Of course, a lot of people come from interstate to Queensland to seek employment.

The Works Department has settled down to a balance between work done by private enterprise on a contract basis and work done by day-labour. On the Sunshine Coast, we are very fortunate in having a very able team of Works Department workers and apprentices which maintains and keeps an eye on public buildings in the area. It does a number of worthwhile projects quite apart from maintenance.

In such a rapidly growing area, a great number of schools have to be built. When I first came into Parliament, I could see the need for the planning of future schools sites

and the extension of schoolgrounds as existing schools increased in size. The acquisition of extra land is a long, slow process, even if the land required is vacant. That is the position at the Coolum school. It seems to take years before title to the land can be obtained so that the school can extend its building and playing areas.

A small plot of land has been set aside in Yandina, where we hope to get pensioner units constructed. Planning for those units has been done, but the matter just does not seem to go any further.

I note that the layout of the Chamber that we will temporarily use in the new building at the rear of Parliament House is semicircular. I hope that there will be adequate provision for persons in the public gallery to see what is going on in the Chamber. Schoolchildren should be encouraged to come to Parliament House to see how Parliament operates, but it is a pity that in this Chamber they cannot get a clear view of everything that is going on. I hope that that will be considered when renovation of this building takes place. Closed-circuit television should be installed, under the control of Mr. Speaker, so that members and others in the Legislative Council Chamber can see and comment on proceedings as they take place in this Chamber.

Brisbane's new cultural centre should be a great credit to the State. I am a little disappointed that the complex will contain no major hall to hold 4,000 or 5,000 persons. Every city needs an auditorium in which a substantial number of people can meet. I am not talking only about the viability of any type of entertainment that is provided. Such an area is required to take up the ground swell at popular functions, not just specialised ones that require particular acoustics such as musical concerts and the less popular cultural pursuits—I am not denigrating them—of ballet and opera.

The schools in my area have been looked after very well by the Works Department.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Of course they have been; they're in a Tory electorate. Why wouldn't they be?

Mr. SIMPSON: They have been well looked after, because the needs in the area are well presented by the local member.

I have found the Minister and his officers very receptive to representations made to them. We have experienced problems in getting an adequate water supply for the school at Kin Kin. We are pressing for a new pre-school centre at that school. The Kin Kin Junction School gets regular care and maintenance. The Cooran School has experienced problems with bees, and other visitors in its walls, that have caused the department a few problems, but with perseverance they have been overcome.

Last week-end the Federal School held its "Back to Federal" celebrations. It was interesting to see a photograph of the first school built there 68 years ago, and the correspondence from the Education Department to the effect that when the locals had made a contribution to the building it would go ahead. The department said that because the locals had raised £41, the department was very happy to go ahead and build the school, which cost £200. A one-fifth contribution was expected by the local residents. I could not help but think that a lot of children today would wait a long time for a school if the locals had to make a one-fifth contribution.

At Pomona, we have a new school and a new school oval. We were very fortunate to get this well-thought-out oval provided in a very difficult situation. The terrain did not lend itself to an extension of the oval. New class-rooms have been provided to cope with the growing number of students. The pre-school is now established in some of the remaining class-rooms of the old Pomona School. That means that the buildings are to be put to a worthwhile use. The other suitable buildings have been used at other schools.

Because of the great growth of Tewantin, a new pre-school has been provided. New class-rooms and new covered ways are also being provided. The new tuck-shop will be provided early next year. The ladies' auxiliary, which raises so much of the funds to help the parents and citizens' association provide teaching aids and other amenities, will then operate in more pleasant conditions than it had before. It had to cater for 700 students in a tuck-shop where the walls were so close together that a person with outstretched arms could touch the walls on either side.

A new school is proposed for the Noosa-Sunshine Beach area. I am trying to develop it as a community school, with the co-operation of the local council and the joint use of playing fields and an assembly area. We hope to develop this concept in other areas such as Imbil, where the need exists to develop a swimming pool in conjunction with the local authority.

I bring to the Minister's attention the desirability in smaller areas, where the local authority is prepared to assist, of not over-designing swimming pools and putting them completely beyond the reach of the local community. When a local authority is prepared to accept a certain standard under its by-laws, the design standards should be looked at with a view to encouraging local authorities and the community to join in the funding of the project. By now the committee should be ready to report on the involvement of the community and local authorities in school situations, whether they relate to pools or playgrounds.

We hope that we can get the Coolum High School project off the ground by 1982. If

that does not happen, the reduction in numbers at the Nambour High School will not be achieved. At Nambour, the high school, primary school, pre-school and special school were all situated on some 15 acres. Over 3,000 students and staff were working in those crowded conditions. This has gradually been improved with the opening of the Burnside pre-school, special school and primary school. In addition, a new high school is presently being built. The Works Department has run into some problems. Nature does not always co-operate. There is rock very close to the surface, and it has been necessary to build artificial platforms on which to construct the high school. The department is working to a very tight schedule to have it opened for the 1979 school year.

Further up the road is the site for the new Sunshine Coast technical and further education college. We look forward to that being built in 1980 and opened in 1981. Two other private schools are to be built in the area, as well as a special education school. A tremendous educational complex will develop on the Sunshine Coast, centred on Nambour, which is already attracting a lot of people who place special emphasis on education. Expansion at Bli Bli made it necessary for new schoolgrounds to be acquired there. The parents and citizens' association is anxious to see some drainage work done on the new land. Coolum has inherent problems with drainage in its schoolgrounds, because it is low lying. It is not far above sea level.

The range schools at Montville and Mapleton are growing, but they have no room to expand. I hope the Minister will keep an eye on that problem. I am sure he is aware of it. As the area grows, more grounds will be required for those schools. The Kenilworth school has often won the beautiful school contest. People ought to take a drive to see that school. What is virtually a rain forest has been created between the new library and one of the school buildings to complement the already beautiful schoolgrounds. The school is a pleasure to behold.

At Eumundi, the people are very appreciative of their new school oval. Formerly the primary school could not host sporting events for other schools. The pre-school and primary school at Yandina need more land. Land is available next door, where the industrial estate has any amount of land. Some of it should be ceded to the Education Department so that the school can grow in the future.

I congratulate the Minister on the work he is doing in his portfolio. I also congratulate the previous director, Mr. Houston, who did a fine job. His position is now filled very ably by Mr. Young and the capable architects and engineers in the Works Department. I commend the Minister and his whole department for the work being

done. May he continue to give co-operative assistance to members in the course of their electorate duties.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (9.9 p.m.): I will continue from where I left off with my replies to honourable members. I will comment on the remarks of the honourable member for Cooroora by paying a tribute to him for the work he has done in his electorate. The things he has achieved were not accomplished merely by the flick of a finger. He has worked in his electorate, and I compliment him for what he has achieved.

He raised the matter of the cultural centre. All I want to say about that at this stage is that when it is finalised it will be the best in Australia. I pay tribute to him and others who have made contributions to the debate.

I was heartened that the honourable member for Albert has recognised the flexibilities and options introduced in the supply of housing. Most of the rigidity in the method of supply has gone and, as far as is possible, qualified home owners have a degree of personal choice which reflects their own taste within their budget capacity.

He also touched on the low population growth of the community. With the changing demand patterns, this is a problem facing all service suppliers.

The honourable member raised the matter of payment of subsidies for show society capital works projects. I am pleased to advise that last financial year subsidies totalling \$354,000 were paid and this financial year an amount of \$500,000 has been appropriated. Societies are required to submit eligible projects to the Land Administration Commission so that a programme can be approved and subsidies allocated.

In reply to the honourable member's inquiries on educational matters, I can inform him that a notice for the closure of Short Street, Nerang, was inserted in the Government Gazette on 11 November 1978; that additional new sites are being investigated to relieve the Biggera Waters area, which I hope to visit on the 11th; that planning is in hand for septic installations at the Ormeau and Carbrook State Schools and that a manual arts block and administration block at the Beenleigh High School have been included in forward-planning programmes. The same position applies to the erection of a new court-house at Beenleigh.

The honourable member for Cairns seeks Housing Commission officers in all centres. Of course we would like this, but we have to consider the cost. One junior clerk costs us half a house a year and a more senior officer deprives a family of a house for a year. So although odd problems do arise within the clerks of the court, generally they do a superb job.

I am pleased to have the honourable member's support for pensioner programmes. Naturally we would all like to do more and I can assure him that I will do everything possible to seek more funds for this worthy purpose.

The number of tenders from all builders does not support the honourable member's view that tenderers do not like working for the departments. The old reputation for nit-picking has disappeared and I am sure that an inquiry would confirm this.

Local people who seek loans from co-operative societies can borrow from the Housing Commission on the same terms as those available through co-operatives, and the honourable member is well aware of this fact.

I would suggest that the honourable member for Cairns invest in the purchase of his local newspaper or "The Courier-Mail" each Saturday. If he did so, he would see that tenders have been called recently for numerous jobs in the Cairns area.

I should like to comment on the honourable member's remarks about a Press statement that I made concerning the Woree School.

Mr. Jones interjected.

Mr. WHARTON: Why doesn't he listen?

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You gave me nothing in Archerfield.

Mr. WHARTON: Does he deserve it?

As I told honourable members this morning, I was in the Cairns area earlier this year. I visited part of the electorate of Cairns and part of the Barron River electorate. I visited the Cairns West School and the Trinity Bay High School and College. I went to the Bayview Heights School. I confess that I was pressed for time. At that time I was short of funds, and the honourable member for Cairns knows and appreciates that. Since then I have received many deputations from the Mulgrave Shire Council concerning the Woree-Bayview Heights area. The council is developing land there and obviously wants to know what is going to happen.

I had been Minister for only a short time and was referring to my time as Minister. I admit that the honourable member presented many petitions and made a number of statements in the House during the time of the previous Minister, but I was dealing with my time as Minister. What happened resulted mainly from representations by the Mulgrave Shire Council, which is concerned in the development of the area, and from my concern to overcome the overcrowding at the Balaclava School.

I apologise if I left the honourable member's name off the sheet. I did not intend to do it. The list was compiled hurriedly. I acted on behalf of the Mulgrave Shire Council. I apologise for not including the

honourable member's name. At the same time, I point out that he would not be entirely entitled to get it. I appreciate his help.

Mr. Jones: All I want is—

Mr. WHARTON: That is all right. I apologise for not putting the honourable member's name on the sheet.

I shall not discuss at length what went on when I visited the Trinity Bay High School or the inconvenience the honourable member caused me when he brought along a lot of people who were not invited. I did not think that was the way for him to get some things done. But the school is getting painted and the windows are being attended to. The toilets have been fixed up at the Cairns West State School.

As I told the honourable member, we are going to do something at Trinity Bay, so he is really not faring badly, especially when he remembers that \$6,000,000 has been spent in the area. The only fault of honourable member, and he does not have many, is that he does not seem to appreciate what is done for him by the Government. He has technical colleges and other facilities up there. A total of \$6,000,000 has been spent there, yet the last thing the honourable member would know is how to say "thank you" for anything.

Mr. Jones: A lot of that is Federal money.

Mr. WHARTON: I have said that I do not need to worry; I am one who likes to state the facts. Some Commonwealth money was received for the technical colleges, but a lot of State money was involved. Over \$2,000,000 came from the Commonwealth for the Cairns technical college, but the balance came from the State. The Government has been a kindly one to the honourable member and, indeed, to some other members.

Mr. Jones: You can't balance technical against primary education like that.

Mr. WHARTON: I am not trying to, but I am making the point that, of \$6,000,000 spent in the honourable member's area, only \$2,000,000 came from the Commonwealth.

A total of \$5,900,000 was spent in the electorate of the honourable member for Archerfield; \$9,000,000 in the electorate of the honourable member for Cairns—I was wrong when I said \$6,000,000, so the honourable member really got a lot of money which did not come from the Commonwealth; \$6,000,000 in the electorate of Chatsworth; \$5,000,000 in the electorate of Mackay and \$17,000,000 in the electorate of Wolston. In a moment I will refer to the amount spent in the electorate of Lytton. Let Opposition members be fair. I have tried to do what I can. I appreciate the problems faced by the honourable member because he represents a growing area, but if it is outgrowing his ability, I cannot help that.

In his usual thoughtful way, the honourable member for Hinchinbrook highlighted one of the most important points in providing Housing Commission pensioner units—the question of location. The honourable member for Redlands touched on this, as indeed did the honourable member for Archerfield. With the assurance of those two gentlemen, I feel that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook can rest easy that it is well considered.

The other point raised by the honourable member was the use of local contractors. We do try to have them do the work, but they have to tender because we follow a policy of competitive tendering. I appreciate the honourable member's viewpoint, but some of his local contractors are just not quite good enough. But we hope that they will improve because we want to encourage local employment.

The honourable member for Townsville West rightly touched on the poor per capita funding from Canberra. I raised this matter at both of the ministerial conferences I have attended. It does not sit easily with me that South Australia gets 2½ times what we do on a per capita basis, or that Tasmania gets three times as much. While the problem arose under the Whitlam Government, I cannot help saying that the present Federal Government has done only a little to correct it.

The honourable member touched on the housing costs inquiry and he may be pleased to learn that Cabinet only this week has issued certain directions to enable a more detailed study of the report and formulation of the Government's attitude. A look at land development standards is part of this study.

The honourable member will be pleased to know that planning is in hand for a new library building at the Currajong State School. A constant review has been maintained of the accommodation needs for Government departments in Townsville, and with the leasing of space all departments have been catered for.

The honourable member for Bundaberg appeared to be worried that money would go to staff costs and not to housing in the Housing Commission operations. If the honourable member had looked closely he would have seen that \$4,470,000 is provided this year against \$4,390,000 last year—a nominal increase, and it is not likely to be spent. The honourable member may also be interested in knowing that, of 435 staff authorised in the Estimates document before him, the commission employs only 384. On figures I gave another member of one clerk costing half a house, it means that 26 families will be housed on staff savings alone.

The honourable member for Bundaberg again is pressing for the replacement of the Bundaberg East School, which is a soundly built building providing adequate accommodation. He must be fully aware that the developing area of Bundaberg is to the

west, and we are at present looking at a site in Avoca Heights with a view to erecting a new school to open in 1980. I have had a look at the East Bundaberg school. I have received deputations about it. I wish to refute the suggestion that I, as Minister, made a solemn promise about the East Bundaberg school. I appreciate the other things that the honourable member said.

Mr. Blake: I did not claim you did.

Mr. WHARTON: Fair enough. I think we have to be fair and say that the school is a solid one. The area is not growing. I have tried to have some better facilities provided at the crossing where children cross the road to get to the school. As I will say later, funds are always our problem. We have to decide which areas are growing and which are not. It is a major problem. There is a changing situation. Maybe it was not so bad that it was not done when the honourable member expected it. The population perhaps was increasing in another area and we believed that work should be done there. I am sure that the honourable member appreciates what I am saying.

The honourable member also referred to the North Bundaberg school and to other schools. We have tried to do as much as it has been possible to do. As I say, it is a matter of funding. I would have been one of the happiest men in the State if I had been able to come to Bundaberg, because my electorate is near there, and say, "I can do this and that." However, I have limited funds to spend throughout the whole State. These are problems of which the honourable member is aware.

The honourable member would appreciate that the completely flat site at the Bundaberg North State High School presents a difficult problem for drainage, but every attention is being given to this matter.

It was refreshing to hear the comments of the honourable member for Fassifern. He maintained his usual high standard in contributing to this debate. It is a shame more members opposite could not be as positive and constructive, and give their knocking a break.

The honourable member, with considerable wisdom, pointed to one of the problems—the flow of subsidy to the undeserving. He correctly highlighted the fact that many people in Housing Commission houses are living on others—on the taxpayer and other commission clients. We have a duty to assist those in genuine need, and for as long as they continue to be in need. We also have a clear duty and a responsibility to those who pay. We do not neglect either need.

I agree with the honourable member for Toowoomba South that inflation is a basic cause of all of our problems—and, in particular, in the building industry. That is why, in general terms, I must support the thrust of Commonwealth policy to reduce inflation.

I do not think, however, that a slight turn-up of the volume knob would not do a great

deal of harm. I told State and Commonwealth Ministers this 10 days ago, and I still hold the view. We do not want to open the floodgates, just turn up the volume a little.

The honourable member for Toowoomba South has raised the matter of suitable residences being provided for climatic conditions in Toowoomba. I take his point and I will have the situation examined.

He should have a talk with the Minister for Education and get the updated policy of integrating pre-school facilities with primary schools. I would also draw his attention to the authority of the principal at each school in regard to vehicles being permitted in schoolgrounds. My department provides for an excision of land from schoolgrounds to enable local authorities to provide set-down areas for pupils arriving by bus transport.

The honourable member for Port Curtis mentioned one serious social problem facing all welfare services including housing—the high incidence of single-parent families, deserted wives, unmarried mothers, etc. About 45 per cent of people on waiting lists are in this category. The community costs in housing, pensions and all other forms of welfare are astronomical.

The honourable member for Port Curtis has expressed his concern for the schools in his area, so he will appreciate that tenders are at present under consideration for the provision of further science laboratories at the Gladstone High School. He will be pleased to note that I propose to visit Gladstone at an early date. I expect that will be on Thursday, when I attend the Miriam Vale school speech night. I hope to call at the Gladstone High School and have a chat with the representatives of the parents and citizens' committee and see the school and some of the problems there.

The provision of court-houses is a matter for the Justice Department. The Works Department is a building authority. We build for the Education Department, the Police Department, the Justice Department, and so on.

I return to what the honourable member for Bundaberg said about the Bundaberg Police Station. The extension to which he referred has been approved.

The honourable member for Mansfield obviously spent considerable time and effort preparing his comments, and for this he should be congratulated.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why do you only praise Government members? Why don't you do the right thing and praise the brilliant orations from this side of the Chamber?

Mr. WHARTON: I always like to give credit where it is due. If I stick to that policy, I will not err in this Chamber.

The honourable member for Mansfield spoke of social integration—the idea of small groups of welfare housing as part of the

general community. I am sure that all honourable members would agree with this deliberate policy of encouraging social mix. Other States are dedicated to the development of large areas of welfare housing, and in my view they are building disasters for the future. I say this against a background of 45 per cent of Commission applicants being single-parent families.

The honourable member for Lytton made what he thought was a severe criticism of the location of Housing Commission houses and pensioner units. What he was really doing was applauding what the Government is achieving. Our current programmes are designed to do just what he suggested. We are buying land and building houses close to the city. We are changing from our policy of building far out and coming to more settled areas and trying to build houses where the greatest need is, close to transport, shops, and so forth.

The honourable member spoke also of the location of pensioner units, and I draw his attention to units in the area near him. I do not know whether they are in his electorate—the Commission does not keep records by electorates—but there are units at Bulimba, Hawthorne, Manly, Wynnum and Morningside.

He also raised the matter of a dental clinic. The Commonwealth Government finds the funds for that, and it stipulates that the building shall be detached. Obviously, it has made the decision, and we have to decide whether we are going to have the money or the box, the money and the box, the money and the dental clinic, and have it where the Commonwealth Government says it should be rather than where we want it.

The honourable member for Lytton referred also to the lack of facilities at schools in his electorate and, by implication, indicated that funds were being expended in Government electorates. It is worthy of note that in the last three financial years a total amount of \$6,500,000 has been expended by the Department of Works in the Lytton electorate.

In conclusion, I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I have listened intently to all the issues that they have raised. In most instances they have been pushing the parish pump. Naturally enough, members have been requesting additional works at schools and other Government buildings in their respective electorates. I will consider all the requests and submissions that have been made. I have visited extensively throughout the State, and I will continue to do that. I remind the Committee that the Department of Works is not master of its own destiny. The other departments are our clients, and when they find the funds we erect the buildings. However, we must all be aware of the fact that a Government department is the same as each of us in our private lives when it comes to expending funds. If an individual's expenditure

exceeds his income, he soon gets into economic difficulty and unless he takes appropriate action, he soon is insolvent. It is the same with a Government department.

The funds allocated to the Department of Works over the past few financial years have been considerable, but they are not sufficient to undertake all the work that honourable members feel should be performed. Sufficient funds never have been available to any Government to undertake all the work it considered desirable. However, our coalition Government has an outstanding record of overall expenditure for the Department of Works and Housing. This will continue.

The works detailed in the annual reports of my departments indicate that, although some work may remain to be done, a vast amount of building has been achieved. I also remind honourable members that since we have been in office more than \$1,000 million has been spent on State Government buildings.

As long as there is a National Liberal Government at the helm, Queensland will continue to prosper, continue to forge ahead as the fastest-growing State in Australia and not stagnate like A.L.P.-controlled States.

VOTES PASSED UNDER STANDING ORDER
No. 307 AND SESSIONAL ORDER

At 9.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 11 October, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to—

	\$
Works and Housing—	
Chief Office	8,801,785
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	318,842,393
Executive and Legislative, Balance of Estimates	4,066,513
The Premier	9,485,854
The Treasurer	186,630,717
Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement	15,841,765
Culture, National Parks and Recreation	16,027,900
Health	277,932,128
Industry and Administrative Services	15,443,700
Lands, Forestry and Water Resources	31,736,928
Mines, Energy and Police	105,809,594
Survey and Valuation	13,558,692
Welfare Services	48,040,473
The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations	308,142
The Auditor-General	2,449,980
Trust and Special Funds Estimates, Balance of Estimates	1,345,497,620

68280—101

Loan Fund Account Estimates, Balance of Estimates	85,976,000
Supplementary Estimates (Consolidated Revenue), 1977-1978	85,353,019
Supplementary Estimates (Trust and Special Funds), 1977-1978	76,321,106
Supplementary Estimates (Loan Fund Account), 1977-1978	27,917,228
Vote on Account, 1979-1980	662,000,000

Resolutions reported, and ordered to be received on Thursday next.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND
AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (9.37 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 in certain particulars.”

The Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, which came into operation on 1 July 1978, provided a modernised and consolidated body of law with respect to—

The financial administration of moneys paid into or out of the public accounts of the Treasurer or the departmental accounts of the accountable officers of the several departments; and

The audit of the public accounts and departmental accounts.

The Act has already been recognised as a very progressive piece of legislation and its implementation has provided a challenge to those engaged in public administration in Queensland. However, some difficulty has been experienced in the implementation of some of its provisions. In the light of experience, the Government proposes, therefore, that the Act be amended to clarify the meaning of those provisions and to overcome some insufficiencies therein in order to facilitate its implementation and to ensure that its objects and purposes are properly achieved.

The Act was based on three underlying premises, namely—

- (1) The Executive is accountable to Parliament for the use of public moneys, as it only receives those moneys in trust for purposes specified by Parliament;
- (2) The administration, acting for the Crown, in accepting that trust, accepts the responsibility for reporting to Parliament as to how it has managed those moneys; and

- (3) An independent person, namely, the Auditor-General, must assure Parliament that the accounts and financial reports of the administration are true and give a fair, objective and accurate picture of whether the given responsibility has been satisfactorily discharged.

These premises are firmly rooted in history and tradition. They developed in earlier times when the relationship between the Crown and the Parliament was different from that existing today. However, the basic premises still stand and, because behind the Parliament are the people who elect the members of the House, they remain valid. What is reported to Parliament becomes a matter of public record and the news media ensure that what is so reported becomes known to all.

The amendments that the Government proposes should be made to the Act are mainly of a technical nature and do not introduce any new principles, nor do they disturb any of the principles on which the Act is based.

The proposal which I believe will be of most interest to honourable members is that the Premier should be deemed to be the Minister responsible for the proper financial administration of the public moneys appropriated by the Parliament for the running of the Legislative Assembly. No question is raised by this proposal as to the supremacy of Parliament with respect to the determination of the purposes for which public moneys are to be appropriated.

There is a clear distinction between the Parliament, which appropriates public moneys, and the executive arm of Government, which spends the moneys so appropriated. Indeed, the Act makes it clear that there is an accountability relationship between the Parliament and the Executive. Parliament confers a responsibility on the Executive and the Executive must answer to the Parliament in respect of that responsibility. Two basic principles underlie that relationship, namely—

- (1) The Executive can have no income that is not granted to it or otherwise sanctioned by Parliament.
- (2) The Executive can make no expenditure except that approved by Parliament in ways approved by Parliament.

The scheme of the Act is that an accountable officer is appointed to be responsible for each separate appropriation of public moneys and is required to prepare and submit to the Auditor-General an appropriation account giving an accounting for the expenditure of the moneys so appropriated. Further, the scheme envisages that the responsibility of each such accountable officer will, of course, be subject to the principal responsibility of a Minister. Our system of Government requires that a Minister be

responsible for the financial administration of each appropriation and be prepared to answer for that responsibility in this Chamber. Indeed, Parliament turns to a Minister and not an official with regard to principal accountability for financial administration.

The Clerk of the Parliament is specifically designated by the Act to be the accountable officer responsible for financial administration of the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly. He, therefore, is subject to the duties that are imposed by the Act upon an accountable officer. He is, of course, under an obligation to ensure that expenditure relative to the Legislative Assembly is properly made in accordance with the appropriations made by Parliament. However, his role is administrative. He cannot answer directly to Parliament and therefore cannot have principal responsibility with regard to the management of the appropriations under his control. In accordance with the overall scheme to which I have referred, Parliament must be able to hold a Minister responsible for the proper discharge of the duties imposed upon the Clerk of the Parliament by the Act.

Now, Parliament, in its act of appropriation, does two things: firstly, it authorises the Treasurer to issue sums out of the public accounts and to apply those moneys towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty; and, secondly, it appropriates to particular services the sums so authorised to be issued and applied. Honourable members will note that the appropriations are made to Her Majesty. Consequently, it is Her Majesty, by means of her Executive, who has the responsibility of applying the moneys appropriated for the purposes for which they have been appropriated. In other words, the moneys, once appropriated by an Act of Parliament, are moneys of the Crown. They are not moneys of this Assembly. It is the Crown only that can expend the moneys and this is done by the Treasurer acting on behalf of the Crown through the accountable officers. In the case of appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly, the Treasurer so acts through the Clerk of the Parliament. As the Speaker and honourable members are well aware, it is not open to the Speaker or any other member of the Parliament acting on his own account to devise a scheme by which those moneys are to be spent.

It is seen, therefore, that the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly should properly be under the control of the executive arm of Government and in particular under the control of a member of that Executive charged with responsibility in that regard. The Speaker is not such a member of the executive arm of Government. The pertinent responsibility must rest with a member of the Crown's Executive Council and any insufficiency in providing for this should be corrected by legislative action. This is the purpose of the proposed amending Bill.

It is the Premier who is charged by the Governor in Council with administration of Acts concerned with the constitution and regulation of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: That's what worries me.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Is it because of the Peel report that the honourable member is worried?

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: No; it is because you are the Premier.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member should have his go later on. I am waiting to have a second go at some members of the Opposition.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: All good things come to those who wait.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will come to some of his mates, too, pretty quickly. I would hate to be in his shoes.

It is the Premier who, as leader of the Government, is the essential link between the Assembly and the Crown. It is he who must have the support of the Assembly if the Government of the day is to survive. The Government considers, therefore, that the control of the financial administration of the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly should properly be under the control of the Premier, whoever he may be.

Members are well aware of the necessity for an amendment to be made to the Act to remove uncertainty by specifying the member of the executive arm of the Government, that is, the "appropriate Minister", who is to be "deemed" responsible for the financial administration of the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly and its administrative organisation.

Other proposals for amendments to be made to the Act are of a technical nature. My colleague the Honourable W. E. Knox will advise the Committee regarding them.

It is essential that administration of the State's financial affairs should be above reproach. The Auditor-General is the watchdog set up by law to ensure that accounting systems for the collection and expenditure of public moneys are as proof against fraud or error as human ingenuity can make them. The Financial Administration and Audit Act is the law under which he operates. It follows that this Act must be made as efficient and certain in its operation as possible.

I commend the Bill to the consideration of honourable members.

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Leader of the House) for **Hon. W. E. KNOX** (Nundah—Treasurer) (9.48 p.m.): I should like to apologise for the absence of the Treasurer. He has been delayed. He has asked me to present his thoughts on this matter.

First, I wish to indicate my support for the proposal that the Premier should be deemed to be the appropriate Minister in respect of the financial administration of the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly. (The sound reasoning for that proposal has been explained at some length by the Premier.)

Secondly, I wish to comment on proposals that relate to technical amendments required to be made to the Financial Administration and Audit Act. Difficulty has been experienced in the implementation of some of the provisions of the Act relating to financial administration, particularly the provisions relating to banking arrangements. The Government's banker holds certain views with respect to the interpretation of the pertinent sections that conflict with the intention of the Act and the opinion of the Solicitor-General. The Government concluded that the only practical solution to the impasse with the banker was to clarify the meaning of the provisions in question.

In that regard the Government makes proposals for amendments to the Act—

- * To clarify that the Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that withdrawals of moneys from the public bank accounts are authorised by Governor's warrants and that no duty in this regard is imposed upon bank officers;
- * To clarify that the Treasurer has power to authorise officers of the Treasury Department to withdraw moneys from the public accounts and to perform such other duties as the Treasurer thinks fit, in the name of and on behalf of the Treasurer; and also
- * To remove from bank officers to accountable officers of the several departments, responsibility for ensuring that departmental bank accounts are not operated on an overdraft basis without the approval of the Treasurer. The imposition of this duty on bank officers was found to be impracticable.

Opportunity is being taken to propose amendments to other provisions of the Act relating to financial administration for the purpose of clarification of meaning or correction of deficiencies or omissions. In summary it is proposed—

- * To make good an error of omission inadvertently made in incorporating the provisions of the repealed Treasury Funds Investment Acts in the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The proposed amendment will provide for short-term investment by the Treasurer, in accordance with past practice, of moneys standing to the credit of departmental bank accounts in addition to moneys standing to the credit of the public bank accounts;
- * To ensure the application of the Act to the management and control of all public moneys paid into or out of the public accounts of the Treasurer, whether

by Government departments, bodies corporate, or instrumentalities representing the Crown or other bodies corporate or instrumentalities howsoever constituted;

- * To provide for cases where it is expedient for one department to process expenditure and abstract moneys from the public accounts with respect to an appropriation for which the accountable officer of another department is responsible;
- * To delete from the Act the prescription relating to the person who may bring an action in a court of competent jurisdiction for the recovery of moneys or the value of property from an officer or employee of a department. Such actions, which are for the recovery of debts due to the Crown, can be recovered only by the Crown and this is adequately covered by the Crown Remedies Act.
- * To repeal two obsolete Acts relating to the salary of the Auditor-General; and
- * To clarify the meaning of the Act with respect to certain other minor matters.

All of those proposals are necessary for the proper administration of the Act and to achieve the objects and purposes of the Act.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (9.53 p.m.): We have just seen one of the most amazing exhibitions in the almost 10 years I have been a member of Parliament. For a number of weeks the Premier has been saying that he wants to take control of the affairs of the Queensland Parliament, yet tonight he was not even capable of fully presenting his own Bill to the Committee, not even capable of presenting the changes he wishes to make to the Financial Administration and Audit Act. He needed the back-up of the Treasurer, the former Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. But what has happened to the Treasurer? Instead of personally using his expertise to assist the Premier because the Premier could not handle the Bill himself, he had his speech presented by a junior Minister in support of the Premier.

The other amazing aspect of the matter is that in all this we see the Deputy Premier looking on, the man who was supposedly going to take over the role of Treasurer of this State, the alternative Leader of the Government. The Premier, as the Leader of the Government, was not able to fully present his own Bill to the Committee. That is a fact and a straight slur upon the Premier's character and his ability to take over the administration of this Parliament.

The Premier referred to the three premises that were mentioned when the Financial Administration and Audit Act was first presented, and upon which the Act itself is based. I accept them, and I have commented upon them previously. But those same three premises apply equally to the

expenditure of the Premier's Department and the departments of every other Minister in this State. We have to be very careful here tonight because we have before us a measure that is designed to take out of the hands of Parliament its control over its own affairs.

Twenty-three years ago the late Frank Green, a former Clerk of the House of Representatives, warned the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association against the spread of Executive Government. His exact words at that time were—

"Sometimes I despair of the future because I can visualise Parliament losing its importance. We are getting nearer and nearer to the managerial stage."

He must have peeped into the future, because that's the very situation we face here tonight. Tonight we are in the silly season. We are getting towards the end of the session and we are starting to look at all-night sittings. At one time it was even suggested that we might go all night tonight to try to push this Bill through all its stages. Between now and sunrise the Assembly, as happened in the case of the Iwasaki agreement, is expected to dispose of this highly irregular, highly contentious legislation as if what is being presented to us is just some kind of bedtime story.

We are asked to make the parliamentary system of this State subordinate to a Cabinet that should be answerable to it. We are asked to strip it of its independence; to, in practice, reduce it in rank to a mere sub-department within the Premier's Department, with the eccentric Premier that we have in Queensland today as its financial master. The Opposition refuses to lend its support to such a betrayal of the rights and principles that Queenslanders in the past were prepared to give their lives in various places to preserve. They did so to preserve the parliamentary system and the democratic system that we have in this State; to follow through in this State every phase of the Westminster system. I say unhesitatingly at this point of time that the Opposition feels so strongly about this measure that we are prepared to oppose it fully in this Chamber.

It has become a tactic of the Premier to save most of these things for the midnight hours when even most of the media representatives have gone home or have gone to sleep somewhere. This happened earlier when the Premier was helping his friend Iwasaki. Again tonight we see a measure brought forward in great haste. Let us not rush blindly into something that Queenslanders as a community will regret tomorrow; let us not rush blindly into legislation that the Premier himself found convenient to defer last week because it was more comfortable to leave it until after the Sherwood by-election.

I suggest that this debate should proceed at this time only to the second-reading stage and then be adjourned so that members of this Assembly, legal and constitutional experts

and Queenslanders generally can sit down and judge its contents. There is no logical reason why it must become law before Christmas or why it must be rushed through in haste. After all, when previous legislation came into law on 1 July this year, it was several months before the Auditor-General himself was sworn in and was capable of actually administering that legislation. It was just one of those little things that were forgotten somewhere along the line. How many things in regard to the parliamentary system here in Queensland have been forgotten under this legislation, which we will regret in the future? Here in Queensland tonight, as in the House of Commons in London, we should be strengthening our independence. Yet we are asked to confer on this Premier powers of parliamentary appropriation that not even Her Majesty the Queen exercises in England.

The Opposition is conscious of the public doubts in present circumstances and supports measures for strict controls and guide-lines on all forms of Crown spending. By "Crown spending" we mean not just the narrow confines of Parliament, which is the smallest departmental budget of all in our expenditure, but Government financial activity as a whole. Departments and Cabinet Ministers, including the Premier himself, should be accountable fully and completely to Parliament for their spending.

Public confidence in the parliamentary system is low. There is no question about that. Every one of us accepts that. Only a fool would argue otherwise. The result of the Sherwood by-election, with a vote against all major parties, is proof in itself of that feeling by the public. But I do not believe that the answer lies in allowing a Premier, who is prone to spiteful dislikes (and we are seeing a further exhibition of that by him tonight), to retreat happily into the secrecy of Cabinet with the parliamentary Estimates in his little hands.

We suggest as an alternative a series of visible measures that will permit Queenslanders to see for themselves just how their Crown money is being spent; that will permit them to judge on evidence presented the economic performance of parliamentarians, Cabinet Ministers, departmental heads and advisers.

I now intend to outline very briefly some of these recommendations, leaving until last a proposal that I believe worthy of investigation in relation to Parliament itself. Firstly, Labor believes that in any reorganisation of financial procedures the authority of Parliament through the Speaker must be meticulously protected, with the Clerk of the Parliament as the accountable officer. We see no objection to the appointment of an accountant to the parliamentary staff. In

fact, when the Financial Administration and Audit Bill was brought before Parliament, the following recommendation was made—

"The Government recognises that, to aid the accountable officer to properly undertake the heavy duties and responsibilities placed upon him by the Bill, he will, in most cases, require an internal audit organisation in his department which regularly monitors performance . . ."

That aspect was the subject of a further commentary when the Bill was brought before the House.

Secondly, the Opposition believes that the learned opinion of Sir Arnold Bennett, Q.C., given to the Government on 10 November 1978, showed that the Cabinet guide-lines upon which a recent inquiry into certain aspects of parliamentary spending was based were not in fact legally enacted. But that is all water under the bridge. Queenslanders are looking to this Parliament to settle down and get on with the job for which it was elected—to deal with the major issues confronting the State today.

To clear up any legal loose ends that may be left hanging, Labor proposes that all Cabinet minutes (or guide-lines) in relation to parliamentary travel and allowances, ministerial travel and allowances, departmental travel and allowances, and operations of the official ministerial aircraft be submitted on Thursdays as Orders in Council to the Governor in Council and then released publicly in their entirety. The same procedure should apply to any Cabinet minutes (or guide-lines) concerning the use of official ministerial or departmental cars. Such guide-lines should then be strictly administered as Orders in Council and only amended as such through the Governor in Council, with all changes to be announced immediately.

If no such provisions already exist—one of the big problems in Queensland today is that it appears that no such provisions do exist—inflexible Orders in Council should be drafted without delay by the Treasurer against the misuse of Crown travel rights, allowances or amenities for other than parliamentary or Government business, particularly where the misuse is for party-political purposes outside the State of Queensland.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen interjected.

Mr. CASEY: If the cap fits, the Premier can wear it. He is the major offender in this, as well he knows—publicly announcing that he is flying off to northern New South Wales in the Government aircraft to campaign for the National Party in an election that had no bearing on any Queensland and in which no Queenslanders were entitled to vote.

Thirdly, Labor recommends the early appointment, through legislation, of joint parliamentary committees for both public

accounts and public works. Similar committees have functioned successfully at Federal level since 1913, and joint parliamentary committees on public accounts exist in all States except Queensland.

The committees I propose would meet regularly, in open session in the case of public accounts, to check all forms of Crown spending and accounting procedures. The public works committee would review all Government projects estimated to cost more than a minimum amount. In Canberra it is \$2,000,000; here it could be \$1,500,000. It would be the safeguard, not just of Parliament but also of the people, against any repetition of the shameful, still-unexplained choice of Tarong over Millmerran as the powerhouse site.

Fourthly, Labor believes that the official aircraft should operate within Queensland, as its title implies. The original Cabinet decision on 12 January 1971 declared that it was for general ministerial use, not a personal plane to ferry the Premier to and from Kingaroy at an average cost of \$500 a round trip.

We feel that, in pursuit of greater economic efficiency and more rewarding productivity, it is essential to dispel the impression, held even in political and Public Service circles, that the official aircraft is the "Premier's kite" and that the State Public Relations Bureau is his personal publicity agency. Labor recommends the transfer of administrative control of the official aircraft from the Premier's department to either the Treasury or the Department of Transport, with the Premier to retain first call on its use. Likewise, we suggest the transfer of ministerial responsibility for the State Public Relations Bureau from the Premier's Department to the Department of Tourism, where it can co-ordinate with other departments engaged in promotional activities on behalf of Queensland, not on behalf of certain individuals in this State.

Fifthly, we propose a new system of detailed, half-yearly reports to Parliament on parliamentary travel and allowances, ministerial travel and allowances and the use of the official aircraft.

In the administrative departments (Premier's Department in relation to ministerial travel, etc.) senior officers should be appointed with the responsibility of preparing these expansive reports.

In the case of the official aircraft and parliamentary or ministerial charter flights, information provided on each individual flight should include:—

- the number of passengers and their names;
- the date of flight, all points of take-off and landing, and times in regard to each;
- the reason for the flight and, in case of charters, the name of the company and cost; and
- the flying time and mileage.

The measures I propose need hold no hidden fears for any Cabinet Minister, member of Parliament or departmental officer who is honest in his or her desire for frank accountability to the people.

In contrast, the Premier's amendment will suppress information from both Parliament and the people. He will become the financial guardian of this Legislative Assembly, able to pamper those who please or crawl and to victimise the others who dare to differ. There have been suggestions of fear being implanted in the minds of some back-bench members of the Government in relation to this Bill. There are those who are fearful of what might happen to them if they were prepared to stand up and follow through their own expressed desires and counter the Premier's requirements.

To recognise the seriousness of entrenching such powers in a man possessed of such hatreds, extremes and petulant manias, we need only recall his statements at the last election when he threatened the withdrawal of Government funds from centres such as Mt. Isa if they voted against his candidates.

The legislation before Parliament does not, as the Premier misrepresents, simply patch over certain grey areas and place Queensland on similar administrative footing with other States. There are not, as his department tried to mislead even Sir Arnold Bennett, Q.C., plans in New South Wales for legislative controls over parliamentary appropriations via the Premier's Office. They do not exist in the form the Premier has suggested.

There are not in the House of Commons similar laws depriving it of the authority over its own appropriations; there are no similar laws in Canberra; no similar laws in any of our States; no similar laws contemplated in New South Wales, as he deceptively implies.

Instead of hustling tonight into this trap set by the Premier, let us form a committee of this Parliament, with senior public servants to investigate the local feasibility of British legislation passed on 27 June this year to appoint a statutory commission to preserve the independence of the Legislature from the Executive Government. This commission would comprise the Speaker, the Leader of the House, a nominee of the Leader of the Opposition—in this case it would be the Leader of Business in the House for the Opposition—and three back-benchers.

Through this historic legislation, the commission would be the sole employer for an independent parliamentary staff, be responsible for the preparation and expenditure of its appropriations and provide an independent source of funding for the services of the Assembly, for other than members' salaries and superannuation.

It is, I believe, ironic that as Britain (the birthplace of Westminster Government) reinforces the independence of its Parliament, this Premier is moving to break it down and

to convert this Parliament into a vehicle for crony-ism for selective favouritism and some of the other things we have seen in Queensland.

We are asked to pass over the integrity, the ethics and the democratic standards of this Parliament into the possession of the Premier, who wishes in this respect to circumvent what have been normal departmental practices, to circumvent established conventions, and even to circumvent, where he finds it necessary, the basic loyalty of a political leader to his parliamentary colleagues.

There is no logical reason and no frantic haste for the changes the Premier asks for this evening.

Already, through either his department, the Treasury or Cabinet, he can control the financial appropriation of Parliament and the staffing in terms of numbers and qualifications. No further proof of this is needed than the Cabinet decision last year—this secret decision—to add two stories to the new Parliament House complex, probably adding at least \$2,000,000 to its cost. Without consulting the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, Cabinet arrived at that decision.

The sum of \$20,000,000 is being spent to provide additional office facilities in this city for various members of Parliament, yet I alone among Opposition Leaders in Australia am to be without staff in the precincts of Parliament House.

Labor questions on nothing more than the track record of the Premier with his administrative control over this Parliament. By his past performances, the Premier has revealed himself as being not prepared to submit himself to democratic exercises in the Queensland Parliament. In the last few years, he has emerged as being very excitable on many matters. He has become very strange in his approach to parliamentary authority and democratic principles. Even without this Bill, he has more than a desirable degree of control over the financial administration of Parliament. That is the situation that we are faced with. To place further control of this Parliament within his hands could be dangerous in many ways, particularly for our parliamentary system.

In 1975, after the last Federal election, the Premier went off on some strange tangents relative to many matters. There was the unauthorised approval of the "Joh Show", which has been seen publicly on television at a cost of about \$200,000, and there were several other matters.

Mr. Jones: What about the Knox show?

Mr. CASEY: It did not last long, but the Treasurer's latest show was fairly good.

In this legislation we are being asked to provide new measures to enable the Premier to control what we cherish under the Westminster system as something that is near

and dear to each of us; something that has existed for a long time in our parliamentary system.

I believe that this evening we are at the crossroads of parliamentary democracy in Queensland. In recent days we even heard that the Premier was threatening to introduce other legislation whereby people would be gaoled for political activity in Queensland. That will be the next move—the next step. When such legislation is foreshadowed we should keep in mind the situation in Northern Ireland, Vietnam and many other countries. I could go on and on, but the fact remains that the protection of our parliamentary system is far more important than the Premier's desire to maintain, and to continue to maintain, his monopoly control over Queensland. The Opposition strenuously opposes the measure.

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (10.12 p.m.): I join this debate on the proposals to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. I was amazed by some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition tonight. Because of his inaccuracies and misunderstanding of the proposal placed before us, it may be better not to comment on them. What I hope to do is outline some of the proposals and comment more fully on what has been foreshadowed.

The amendments foreshadowed by the Premier relate to the clarification and expansion of the provisions of the Act relating to financial administration. No amendment of the audit provisions of the Act is proposed. The amendment foreshadowed by the Premier is indeed one that has created a great deal of discussion in the community, but it is essential that responsibility for the financial administration of the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly be clarified and endorsed by the Assembly. The amendment as proposed does not really introduce a new concept. It clarifies a grey area. The Leader of the Opposition admitted that.

Now, as honourable members are well aware, the financial relations between the Crown and the Parliament has a historical and constitutional background. I propose not to recall that history, but to draw the attention of honourable members to the position as it now exists in this State.

The collection and expenditure of public moneys is made subject to Crown and parliamentary control by the Constitution Act 1867–1978 and the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. The Constitution Act provides for the creation and application of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and for appropriation from that fund by the Legislature. In addition to this principle of parliamentary supervision and approval of operations on that fund, the principle of

Crown control is established by the requirements that no money Vote or Bill is lawful unless recommended by the Governor and that no moneys may be expended from the Consolidated Revenue Fund except on warrants of the Governor. The Constitution Act is administered by the Premier.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 in no way disturbs the provisions of the Constitution Act but rather serves to complement them. It provides the machinery by which the controls set out in the Constitution Act are to be implemented. The whole pattern of that Financial Administration and Audit Act is to govern the financial administration of the moneys appropriated from time to time by this Parliament. In other words, the controls taken in the Act commence only after Parliament—I stress “only after Parliament”—has determined the levels of expenditure and appropriated moneys accordingly. Such controls must pay full respect to the amounts of moneys appropriated and the purposes for which those moneys were appropriated.

The Act is one of the most important measures legislated in recent years, for it goes to the very kernel of the Executive's accountability to the Assembly for expenditure of moneys granted to the Crown by Parliament and the accountability to the Crown of the administrative authorities for the management of those same moneys. This accountability necessarily extends to the expenditure of the moneys granted by the Parliament for the running of the Legislative Assembly.

I concur with the statements made that the amendments proposed to be made to the Act in no way disturb any of the vital and basic principles on which the Act was based. The Financial Administration and Audit Act makes it clear that overall financial responsibility with respect to the collection and expenditure of public moneys begins and ends with the Parliament. This, of course, must always be the case.

Parliament, through Appropriation Acts, appropriates moneys for the services of the Crown and, through the Financial Administration and Audit Act, appoints accountable officers to manage those appropriations and receives an accounting for such moneys through the accountable officers' appropriation accounts and the Treasurer's annual statement.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act does not disturb the responsibility of Ministers in any way. They have overall responsibility for the conduct of their departments and are answerable not only for their own actions but also those of the accountable officers, accounting officers and other officers of their departments.

The Premier has outlined the concern of the Government with accountability and accounting responsibility with respect to the appropriations relating to the officers of the

Legislative Assembly. Particulars of those appropriations are indicated in the approved Estimates of the Government.

The procedure under which Parliament provides the moneys necessary to meet the supply services of departments (and, under the Financial Administration and Audit Act, this includes the office of the Legislative Assembly) involves three distinct stages:—

- (1) First, the Crown, acting with the advice of its responsible Ministers, makes known to the Legislative Assembly the pecuniary needs of the Government by means of the Estimates-in-Chief.
- (2) Secondly, the House, sitting on Supply, is asked to grant to the Crown the supplies required as indicated in the Estimates-in-Chief and provides by appropriation of taxes and other revenue the ways and means to meet the supplies which it grants.
- (3) Finally, in order to give the necessary statutory authority to those grants and to ensure that the sums thus put at the disposal of the Crown may not be diverted to purposes other than those to which they have been specifically demanded and granted, the grants are legally appropriated to the specified services and the authority to issue moneys to meet the grants is confirmed by statute.

Under section 35 (3) of the Act, the Clerk of the Parliament is appointed accountable officer with respect to the appropriations relating to the Assembly. He is subject to the duties which are imposed by the Act upon an accountable officer.

The Treasurer is primarily responsible to Parliament for the establishment and maintenance of proper financial administration in all departments subject to the Financial Administration and Audit Act, and in the exercise of that function it is the duty of the Treasurer to lay down, or require to be laid down, in the various departments—including the office of the Legislative Assembly—such instructions as provide for proper administration.

The Financial Administration and Audit Act applies to the moneys collected or expended by the office of the Legislative Assembly. Particulars of the estimates for services relating to the office of the Legislative Assembly must be indicated in the approved estimates: appropriations of moneys for those specified services must be sought of Parliament: moneys to meet expenditure relative to those services can be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and paid to the Legislative Assembly expenditure bank account by the Treasurer only on the authority of a Governor's warrant and only on receipt of a request (called an “abstract”) made by the Clerk of the Parliament as accountable officer.

In other words, the Clerk of the Parliament as accountable officer is bound by the prescriptions relating to the receipts and expenditure of the office of the Legislative Assembly which have been provided by the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the regulations and Treasurer's instructions issued thereunder. And that Act expresses the intent of this Parliament.

It was the intention of the phrase "subject to the appropriate Minister" in section 35 of the Act to indicate that nothing can be taken away from ministerial responsibility by designating a person to be an accountable officer. But I would agree that under the Act no Minister has been made responsible for the financial administration of the Legislative Assembly.

The Assembly is not a department of the Crown. However, it is funded by public moneys and its annual Estimates and the relative appropriations must be approved by Parliament. This is being debated at this time. Before those Estimates are presented to the Parliament they must be submitted to the executive arm of Government for review and inclusion in the Estimates of the Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure of the Government in the Treasurer's documents.

Now, with respect to the content of the Estimates of the Assembly and to other matters of financial administration, to whom should the Clerk of the Parliament turn for executive support, that is, to whom should he turn apart from the Treasury as the central co-ordinating and controlling authority with respect to all Estimates?

Here we find there is an omission or deficiency in the Financial Administration and Audit Act in that it does not indicate who is to be, or rather who is "deemed" to be, the "appropriate Minister" with respect to appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly. It is proposed in this Bill to rectify that omission or deficiency.

The Governor in Council, by order published in the Government Gazette, has directed that the Acts that are concerned with the constitution and regulation of the Legislative Assembly be administered by the Premier. That has been traditional. The Financial Administration and Audit Act is administered partly by the Premier and partly by the Treasurer. That is why, as the Leader of the Opposition should know, the statements were made by both the Premier and the Leader of the House on behalf of the Treasurer.

Again, it has always been the practice for the Estimates relating to the Legislative Assembly to be submitted to the Treasurer through the Premier.

As the Premier has said, he, as leader of the Government, is the essential link between the Assembly and the Crown. It

is he who must have the support of the Assembly if the Government of the day is to survive.

It seems to me, therefore, to be proper that in terms of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the "appropriate Minister" to whom the Clerk of the Parliament as accountable officer should be subject, or rather "deemed" to be subject, to the extent indicated in the proposed amendment, is obviously the Premier, as is the case in other States.

Now, as has been said, the proposals contained in the Bill in no way disturb any of the vital principles relating to parliamentary fiscal control on which the Financial Administration and Audit Act is based. There must be no question raised by the proposals as to the supremacy of Parliament—and we all must share that view—with respect to the determination of the purposes for which public moneys are to be appropriated. Nor is there any proposal to discuss the standing or authority of the Speaker or the Parliament.

I wish to fully support the traditional role of the Speaker. The Speaker of the House has carried out his duties with dignity and with devotion and it is regrettable that, on some occasions over the past few months, the Speaker has felt that his authority, his reputation and indeed his position have been challenged or indeed lessened in importance. The position of the Speaker is one of dignity, importance and significance and our present Speaker has been ever mindful of his position and responsibility and has carried out his office with dignity and decorum and has the full support, confidence and respect of the whole Parliament. It has been a great strain to the Speaker and his family during the past few months and it is hoped that this amendment will clarify the whole position.

I agree completely that any course that might tend to impair the independent position of the Legislative Assembly is constitutionally objectionable. I would take no part in such a course. However, we are not here concerned with the position of the Legislative Assembly; that is not in doubt or under challenge. But we are concerned as a matter of financial necessity that there should be proper prescription with respect to financial administration of the appropriations made by the Parliament for the running of the Legislative Assembly. The proposed amendment in fact deals only with the financial administration of the accounts of the Assembly and will and must give no additional authority or power to the Premier of the day.

This matter must be clarified and, from advice available, this appears the ideal way to undertake the procedural responsibilities.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (10.26 p.m.): Mr. Hewitt—

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba): Mr. Hewitt—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Townsville.

Mr. Houston: What's that, two Government members in a row?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Townsville called before the honourable member for Bulimba.

Mr. Houston: Break it up!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! In the absence of lists, it is a clear precedent in the Parliament that people who call get the attention of the Chairman. The honourable member for Townsville clearly called before anybody else, and he obtains my recognition.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: The Financial Administration and Audit Act Amendment Bill has been introduced by the Premier with the excuse that the Peel report has shown certain irregularities in the administration of contingencies, for example, air transport of members and travelling allowances of members. To quote the Premier via the media, he said, "I intend to put this matter straight." This apparent frank and honest statement appealed to the public and received great Press coverage, but the public and the media were soon aware that something more was involved in this than just the Premier's concern over public funds.

An article in "The Courier-Mail" of 26 October 1978 stated—

"The Premier also indicated that he was some Members' 'only protection from legal action'."

The article continued—

"The Premier believes also that Cabinet, not Parliament, should lay down the guidelines for spending by parliamentarians."

The article continued further—

"The Premier said 'We want to get it back to the Premier's Department so that we can get close personal supervision. This is so that it doesn't get out of control again.'"

The electorate became aware soon after that article appeared that the Peel report was nothing but a smoke-screen and a means of disciplining the back bench by the Executive and its chairman. For some time the Executive has been disturbed by the constant questioning of its divine right, and questions have been raised as to the legality and wisdom of certain administrative decisions in this State. In fact, it was thought generally throughout the State of Queensland that there was too much arbitrary power being wielded, too little discussion and too

little depth of research on many important Bills that had been rushed through this Parliament.

The real reason for this Bill is not to control the administration of \$99,000-odd which, as far as I can ascertain because no Minister gave me the true figures, is the money spent by members on interstate and intrastate flights during the 1977-78 financial year, but to entrench the power of the Executive and its bureaucracy. It is a very cunning trick to make the financial management of Parliament subject to control by regulation under this Act.

When the Financial Administration and Audit Act was introduced, it was not envisaged that the Auditor-General would be involved in operational or programme auditing. He would carry out financial and compliance auditing only. It was considered that the passing of judgment on political programmes would require political judgment, a matter in which he should not be involved. It sounded clear and straightforward but, by June 1978, we find the Auditor-General involved in a political judgment campaign, cunningly planned with heavy orchestration by the media and inflamed by the virtuous platitudes of our Premier and the inherent dislike of one political body of another. We found the Auditor-General playing the role of accuser, prosecutor, judge and jury and executioner, an extraordinarily complex role for one man to play.

The whole exercise has been one which has caused disruption to this Parliament, destroyed mutual respect and trust between members, and given the electorate the impression that all members had clay feet, including the Premier; that members were dishonest and were not doing their job. It actually denigrated the Parliament of this State.

The only shining angel during this period was the Premier, who flew around the heavens in his plane warning the people of the other States of the evils of the A.L.P. But he forgot to mention the inherent evils of rule by Executive Government, which we will have to face very soon. The citizens of this State have not been completely duped by all this; they realise and understand that Parliament must remain supreme and that members of Parliament must be informed and remain free to speak their thoughts on matters of administration and legislation. Queenslanders are fully aware that there are two types of effective government for large communities—authoritarian or dictatorships and elected democratic governments, the Westminster system of government.

They know also that dictatorships can be absolute or qualified. Absolute power was exerted and exercised by Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin and his followers. Qualified dictatorships have existed in France, Spain and Indonesia in modern times. A

political dictatorship exists anywhere and at any time when one man or a small group of people can turn on and off the flow of executive or legislative power. This Bill could advance the coming of that situation in the State of Queensland.

The Westminster system has checks and balances to prevent this, and it is here in this Chamber today that we are asked to vote away the financial control of the Parliament to the Department of the Premier—to a man renowned for seeing both sides of any question, the side that appears wrong to him and his own. The Westminster parliamentary system has been evolved over centuries. But it is flexible and orientated to the freedom of the individual under the law. The law is an interesting thing when one man is wielding it. It is slow and clumsy in appearance; and as Churchill once said—

“It is the worst system of government in the world, except for every other one that has actually been tried.”

All thinking people realise that a dictatorship can do things much faster and more efficiently than a parliamentary democracy. It can direct men, women and children, build roads, create armies, remove strikes, solve unemployment, but the people under the control have not that personal freedom under the law that is priceless and is valued more than speed, efficiency and economy in government.

For nearly 700 years the English Government has been making laws. The Westminster system has been in existence for 700 years. It is the father of parliamentary democracy and the Mother of Parliaments. But despite its age and maturity, and the huge wealth of recorded wisdom surrounding it, it has remained flexible and resilient to changes and the attitudes of the nation. Despite its age and prestige, it, through its members, despite their party affiliations—remember that—has maintained its independence from outside control. It has maintained power, and does not relegate it to a small group or to a single person, as this Chamber is about to do if it assents to this Bill.

In the Westminster system Parliament is supreme. Recently because of the Peel report and its designers, the honourable role and position of the Speaker of this Parliament has been attacked, and the Speaker's authority has been put to question by the media, supplemented by the remarks of the Premier. I quote this extract from “The Courier-Mail”—

“The Premier is said to have told a National Party meeting this week: ‘I'm running Parliament not the Speaker.’”

He has never denied that.

An Honourable Member: What date was that?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: That was 22 September 1978. This amendment to the Financial Administration and Audit Act reinforces this attack and will place the Speaker in a position where he will have no say in the budgetary control of the House, other than through the Department of the Premier. It is an accepted fact that he who holds the purse strings calls the tune, and this Bill, in my opinion, is a deliberate attempt to annul power of the Speaker and denigrate his position by financial strangulation. Strangulation is something you can do with your hands; but you can do it financially a damn sight easier.

The Bill also places every member of this Assembly indirectly and directly under the control of the Premier's Department and its bureaucrats. Honourable members opposite may laugh now, but they will not be laughing when the bureaucrats can tell them what they can do and where they can go. The Premier of the day will direct what staff, what research facilities and what amenities and facilities are available for members to familiarise themselves with administrative problems in other States and on what terms these can be accepted or utilised. Honourable members can forget about flying interstate.

The State of Queensland has a shocking history of attempts to stifle Parliament, going back as far as 1917 and culminating in 1922, when the Legislative Council was illegally abolished by the Labor Party. They might be repaid a little for that tonight. Every member ought to note the number of amendments to Bills that have passed through this Chamber with the cryptic description by the relevant Minister that it is “a machinery Bill to correct a drafting error”. The poor old draftsman always gets a kick in the pants for the inefficiency of various Ministers.

Mr. Hewitt, to keep our parliamentary system in the Westminster tradition, we do not need the proposed amendment to the Financial Administration and Audit Act. We need a Bill along similar lines to the House of Commons Administration Act, 1978, which gave the control of the House to a commission. In case the Premier has not read that Act, I will give him a few details of it. The commission consists of the following people—

- (a) Mr. Speaker—Chairman;
- (b) The Leader of the House of Commons;
- (c) A member of the House of Commons nominated by the Leader of the Opposition (it gives the Opposition a say, too);
- (d) Three other members of the House of Commons appointed from the floor, none of whom shall be a Minister of the Crown.

After 700 years, the House of Commons realised that it was slipping into the role of Executive Government. Here we are, mere babies, 100 years' old, and what are we

doing? We are jumping headlong into this proposal tonight, and all honourable members are agreeing with it—not a word against it by anyone.

Mr. Casey: I wouldn't say that.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: With the exception of a couple of speakers from the Opposition side. And this is a democracy!

Under the House of Commons Administration Act, it was also arranged that as soon as the financial year was finished, the commission would prepare and present to the House of Commons a report on the exercise of its function in that year and cause it to be printed. When one compares what my leader just said about the provisions of this Act, one sees that it is a lot of balderdash.

Under the House of Commons Administration Act, various departments are set up—

- (a) The Department of the Speaker;
- (b) The Department of the Clerk of the House of Commons;
- (c) The Department of the Serjeant of Arms;
- (d) The Department of the Library;
- (e) The Administration Department;
- (f) The Department of Official Report of the House of Commons.

The commission prepares an estimate for each year of the expenses of the House departments as the commission may determine. The commission appoints one of the staff to be the accounting officer, responsible for accounting for the sums paid out of the money provided by Parliament for the services of the House of Commons.

The commission was also given the power to increase or reduce the number of House departments, allocate functions to any department of the House and, for those purposes, make such arrangements for and in connection with the creation, division, amalgamation or abolition of any House department as would appear to the commission expedient.

It was also laid down that, on the dissolution of Parliament, the person who was then Mr. Speaker should continue in office as a member of the commission until the Speaker is chosen by the new Parliament. What a shocking example we have in Australia. In this instance, Mr. Speaker is even opposed by my own party. Here is a Parliament that has been in existence for 700 years giving us the ideal form and management of administration; yet in this country, with a history of a little over 100 years, we even oppose the Speaker. What is more, some people seem to be proud of it.

An Honourable Member: Who are they?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: The Liberals.

The Act lays down terms for employment of the staff, superannuation rights, salary rights, and that they shall all be controlled by the Commission, not by public servants.

Mr. Hewitt, I consider that the floor of this Chamber is the place where the fate of the Queensland Parliament and the future of our parliamentary system should be debated and decided. Its fate should not be allowed to be discussed in the cloisters of the party rooms and then surreptitiously brought into this Chamber in the form of three or four amendments to different Bills—and this is one of them—with members finally finding that they are faced with a fait accompli that most will never fight to correct, because they are controlled by party machinery.

Someone has objected to my quoting from "The Courier-Mail", but I shall do so again. On 15 November "The Courier-Mail" reported—

"The instruction was contained in a 'pep' talk which Members were given at a special meeting with the party's powerful management committee.

"But on issues such as abortion, they could have a conscience vote.

"Members were also told that it was a cardinal sin to cross the floor in a Parliamentary vote."

That is the National Party. Here they are in Parliament telling us what we should do. They're not going to tell me—a Liberal! No, the Premier will not tell me what I am going to do as a Liberal!

Here is another quotation from "The Courier-Mail"—

"The National Party State president (Mr. R. L. Sparkes) has backed the Premier's Bill and has called a meeting of National Party Members and the party's State executive for November 13."

We all know what happened after 13 November.

In my opinion, the Bill is an insult to the House of Parliament, and the freedom of speech for which my forbears and your forbears, Mr. Hewitt, fought for so many centuries. Anyone who does not agree with or even has the slightest doubt about this Bill and who has the idea that Parliament should reign supreme should vote against the Bill. Let those honourable members show on the floor of the Chamber the courage of their convictions. This is not a party vote; it is a conscience vote. The fate of parliamentary democracy in the State of Queensland depends upon honourable members' being fully aware of the consequences of their decision tonight. It is much easier to reject this wicked and iniquitous Bill now than to endeavour to change it after it has entrenched the Premier and his bureaucrats in control of the Parliament of Queensland.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (10.43 p.m.): I am sure that the people of Queensland and members will thank the Deputy Premier for bringing to light the basis of this legislation. His statement is worth recording again because in that statement he said that the legislation followed the basic principles of the Act. Because that statement is false in my view, then the whole basis of the legislation is also false.

The Deputy Premier said that the Premier is the essential link between the Legislature and the Crown. That is completely wrong. Anyone who wants to create any other situation is going completely against history, and completely against all the legislation that British Parliaments have passed through the centuries to ensure that there was a demarcation between Parliament and the Crown. To suggest that the Premier, the leader of the Government of the day, supercedes that position is completely wrong and false. So I say to the Deputy Premier that we are grateful that he finally in his speech let the people of Queensland know the basis of this legislation. It is his Government's attempt to place the Premier of the State in place of the Speaker as the direct link between the Assembly and the Crown.

Mr. Jones: Above the Speaker.

Mr. HOUSTON: Above the Speaker. He would take over. Honourable members who have been in the Chamber prior to the opening of Parliament after an election would have seen the procedure adopted when the person elected as Speaker is reluctantly dragged to the dais. Reluctance is shown on the part of the person elected as Speaker and force is demonstrated by the two members who conduct him to the dais. He is dragged there knowing that according to history he is the link between Parliament and the Crown. To make sure that tradition is upheld, we go even further. We are speaking not in front of Mr. Speaker in the chair, but in front of the Chairman of Committees, who reports to Mr. Speaker. And so the tradition goes on. Yet the Liberal Party, in coalition with the National Party, has indicated that it wants to change the system, and that is what this legislation is designed to do.

I point out that Parliament elects one person, and only one person—the Speaker of Parliament. Those honourable members who have been here a few years will recall that, when the honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr. Houghton) was first nominated for his present position, another member nominated Mr. Lonergan and members of the House appointed Mr. Lonergan in preference to the Premier's nominee. That showed again the supremacy of Parliament over Cabinet and the ruling parties in the Parliament.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker has the confidence of the House. That was demonstrated by a resolution agreed to in the House only a few weeks ago. Yet this legislation is trying to usurp Mr. Speaker's power by taking over control. Members of Parliament do not elect the Premier, and I venture to suggest that, on a free vote as to who would be Premier, the present Premier would lose his position. I do not think there would be any doubt about that if a secret ballot were to be held. I do not know whether the Deputy Premier would become Premier; that is a matter for him and the member for Nundah to sort out again. The Cabinet is elected by two men. The Leader of the National Party elects, or selects, nine members of Cabinet and the Leader of the Liberal Party elects, or selects, seven.

Mr. Casey: That is not necessarily so.

Mr. HOUSTON: Well, he is influenced a little here and there.

The fact is that there are 18 members of Cabinet, only two of whom are elected, and then by their own colleagues. At present, the Premier is elected by 35 of the 82 members in the Assembly. The leader of the Liberal Party is elected by 24 members. Between them or individually the Premier and Deputy Premier select the other 16 Cabinet Ministers. The Cabinet members are not even endorsed by Parliament.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Don't you operate in that way?

Mr. HOUSTON: We don't try to change the legislation to take away the power of Mr. Speaker over Parliament. That is the great difference. Incidentally, the systems are different. Labor's shadow Cabinet is elected by the membership of the party. We do not rely on the friendship and goodwill of one person. Our loyalty to our leader is given as the loyalty of the party.

To get back to the real essence of the matter—the fact is that Parliament does not elect Cabinet. Why, then, should Cabinet have responsibility for this Assembly? As my leader said, we are not prepared to give away the system that prevails.

Let us consider what is proposed, namely, that the Premier is to take over control of the Legislative Assembly. For years I understood that that was the Treasurer's responsibility, purely and simply relative to finance. The allocation and spending of funds, once it is approved by Parliament, should surely be under the control of Mr. Speaker. I concede to Cabinet the right to look at what is happening when the Budget is prepared, but the Treasurer finally presents the Budget to the Parliament. Although the Government may not allow Mr. Speaker to go into the Cabinet room to take part in

Cabinet deliberations and decisions, the running of Parliament is, by tradition, left in the hands of Mr. Speaker, and, by tradition, that is where it should remain.

As pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, last year \$3,400,000 was spent in the running of the Legislative Assembly. That is quite a large amount of money to many of us; but, when we take it in the context of the total State Budget, it is a very small fraction indeed. The fact is that not only does the Premier want to control members' spending, as he said and as the speeches suggested, but he is also going to control the staff of the Legislature. I do not want to embarrass these gentlemen, but I believe that this State has been fortunate over the years in which I have been in Parliament, and certainly before that time, in having very capable and dedicated Clerks of Parliament. It is a reflection on the gentlemen concerned for anyone to suggest that there has been anything wrong in the past. I do not accept that at all.

An Opposition Member: And on the staff, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: Naturally, the staff, too. According to the Estimates, the Clerk of Parliament is a separate identity and his salary is provided for in the Legislative Assembly Vote. Last year, 120 other personnel were associated with the Clerk. This year, we believe, the number will be 145. If the Premier and the Cabinet are going to control the money, they then control the number of staff. This includes, amongst other people, the electorate assistants we each have in our electorate offices. I suppose the next thing the Premier will want is control over whom we employ and whom we do not employ in our electorate offices.

There are the general assistants associated with the Parliament, the messengers, the clerk-assistants, the sergeant-at-arms, and all the other officers essential to the running of this Parliament. Also, as part of the Vote that the Cabinet would take over—the Cabinet, I repeat, not the Government—is the Parliamentary Library. I suppose the next move would be that a member of the Government could look at certain parts of the library, whereas those not in Government could not. That would simply be in conformity with the Government's policy on ministerial tours and the like—what are reportedly parliamentary visits to here, there and everywhere. On how many ministerial visits to various places of the State have any members of the Opposition been taken? A few years ago that was quite a common practice, appreciated by all in Parliament. However, in latter years under the present Cabinet arrangement members outside the Government parties have not been taken on trips associated with Ministers.

Mr. Lee: I took a party away overseas just recently.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, and the Government limited our numbers. On the occasion before that, we were down to one. The Minister should not talk about ministerial trips. It is more a case of spoils to the victors.

Members of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff come under the Legislative Assembly Vote. In addition to allowances to members, air transport of members and expenses of secretarial assistants, the Premier, through Cabinet, wants to control the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms, the Parliamentary Library and the books that go into it, the upkeep and furnishings of the buildings, gardens and grounds, "Hansard" and other printing, passes to members and ex-members of Parliament and their relatives, and accident insurance for members. Surely they are all matters that have been handled over nearly 100 years—in fact, in many cases, for over 100 years—efficiently and well by various Clerks of the Parliament under the authority of the Speaker. Surely there is no need at this stage to start querying that.

Let me return to what apparently started all this haste or gave the Cabinet the excuse for taking over the Legislature. The reason given was that some failings were brought to light by the Peel report.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Look alongside you to your left.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am looking at the Premier. It is quite significant that, although the Premier is very keen to take over the control of this Parliament, he is not very keen at all to have Parliament take control of his aeroplane. How many members of the Opposition have travelled in it? I can remember an occasion—and I am terribly upset about this—when the then Leader of the Opposition suggested that it would be very convenient if he could accompany the Premier in the Government aircraft to Central Queensland, where there had been a mine disaster. To me, that was a genuine request that should have been acceded to. But there was no seat in the so-called Government aircraft for the Leader of the Opposition!

Will this move also control ministerial expenses? They are not being controlled. When Mr. Peel made his investigation into air travel, he did not go any further and look into Ministers' travel. He did not make any recommendations about their expenditures. But today the Premier wants to control Parliament and is using this means to do it. He does not suggest that these other matters should be controlled. The Leader of the Opposition suggested a means, in conformity with the British system, of setting up a committee. The Government aircraft could come under it. But, of course, the Premier is very keen not to have that happen.

The reason for the introduction of this Bill, according to the statements that have been made for public consumption, was the Peel report. On my knowledge of what went

on in the years before the report, no member of this Parliament knew exactly what he was entitled to in that area. We speak about it as a grey area. It was certainly a grey area. If we asked anybody our entitlements, we were told different stories. In fact, I was told by Government members that what members did prior to the investigation was quite in order. They suggested that it came from Cabinet down through the ranks. Whether that is right or wrong does not matter very much at this stage. What does matter is that no clear guide-lines were set.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: I won't fall for that tripe.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is not tripe at all. I shall give the Premier an example; it happened a few weeks ago. The Premier or somebody else increased the daily allowance from \$50 to \$54. I ask the Premier through you, Mr. Hewitt, if that is correct.

A Government Member: Yes.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course it is correct. Didn't the Premier know?

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: You don't mean to tell me that as a member of Parliament you cannot find out what is correct and what is not correct in a matter like this?

Mr. HOUSTON: It was the Premier who interrupted my speech. I am telling him that it is correct, yet no document has gone out to any member. I defy any honourable member to show me any paper informing him that as from such and such a date—

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Why didn't you find out?

Mr. HOUSTON: I found out because I had a claim in. I received the money. Later I received another cheque for \$4. That is how I know.

Mr. Lester: Did you knock it back?

Mr. HOUSTON: No. If I had knocked it back I would have started another inquiry into why a cheque was not cashed.

The point I am making is that honourable members had no clear guide-lines on these matters. It is my guess that the Cabinet were quite happy to allow that practice to continue. I will not be convinced that, when Mr. Speaker took certain action, Cabinet did not know. The Premier said that I should know what is going on in this Parliament. He is trying to make out that he did not know what Mr. Speaker had authorised. He is trying to tell me that he did not know what the present Treasurer was supposed to have authorised. The Premier cannot make the statement that he did not know what some of the back-benchers of the National and Liberal Parties were doing. Of course he knew. If he did not, he certainly cannot blame me for the questions I am asking today.

The fact is that, as far as the Opposition is concerned, we believe that the people are right in demanding that public money be accounted for. There is no question about that at all. But we believe that in recent years, when daily travelling allowances were introduced, members did not know what were the guide-lines, and that was Cabinet's fault. Prior to that time, the accounting of all public moneys spent by this Parliament was done by the Clerk of the Parliament and Mr. Speaker, and was carried out efficiently. Previous Auditors-General can vouch for that.

The whole problem began a few years ago when Cabinet, I believe correctly, allowed members of Parliament to move around the State and the nation. But where Cabinet fell down, and where the system broke down, was that they did not set out clear guide-lines. Every new member should have been given a copy of a member's entitlements. When new members entered this Chamber, they asked one another what they were entitled to. Most of us know, but there were times, as I cited in the case of the increase in daily allowances, when no-one knew what was going on. We found out about the increase in daily allowances only when it arrived in the form of an extra cheque. It was because of that breakdown that the Peel investigation became necessary.

The first answer to the problem is for us to get back to where we were. The allocation of money is the responsibility of this Parliament, and Mr. Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament should be the officers concerned. If the Government wants to appoint an accountant in order to give the Clerk of the Parliament a hand—and his is a very onerous position—then we have no argument with that at all. But the fact is that the Auditor-General has every right to come in and audit the accounts. It would be completely wrong, though, to allow this Parliament in any way to slip out of the control of Mr. Speaker, the person who is the essential link between this Legislature and the Crown. As I said at the outset, I completely disagree with the Deputy Premier in his assumptions.

(Time expired.)

Mr. FRAWLEY (Caboolture) (11.3 p.m.): This Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act introduced tonight by the Premier may be quite acceptable in today's political climate. We have been assured by the Premier that the proposed amendments will in no way interfere with the role of Mr. Speaker or the role of Parliament. The Premier is an honourable man, as we all know, and, if he gives his assurance, we can be sure he will keep his word. However, members of Parliament have a duty not only to themselves but to the future members who will sit on the benches that we presently occupy.

As I have already stated, we have been assured by the Premier that for the financial administration of the appropriations of the Legislative Assembly and for the establishment and keeping of the accounts in relation to the Assembly, and also the audit of such funds, but to no other extent, such accounts shall be deemed to be departmental accounts and the appropriate Minister shall be the Premier. It is reasonable to assume that the Premier will not continue in office for all time, and that is where the danger lies. A Premier may be elected who sees himself as a dictator and, with the assistance of officers of his department, he could assume complete control of Parliament. These amendments leave the way open for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland to become little more than a minor subdepartment of the Executive Government, and staff, services and finances could be controlled by the bureaucracy.

It has been accepted that, under constitutional law and parliamentary practice, the Executive is granted funds by Parliament to govern and to administer the State, and it is accountable to Parliament for the expenditure of funds. However, over the years the Westminster system has been reversed, and Parliament is now controlled by the Executive. This Parliament is a classic example of that control. Parliament is now dependent on the Government of the day for adequate funds to carry out its duties.

The proper scrutiny of Government expenditure can take place only when Parliament has at its disposal certain effective methods to carry out that scrutiny, for example, the Committee of Subordinate Legislation. We have had an example where this committee has proved its worth by having certain regulations changed.

There is also a need for a public accounts committee. As other speakers have said, Queensland is the only State in Australia without a public accounts committee. Also, skilled staff are required to assess the effectiveness of the Government's vast bureaucracy.

Last but not least, there must be sufficient funds to finance all these things, and also to assist members to have research carried out in order to examine proposed legislation. Of course, this does make things difficult for Executive Government, and naturally any funds to increase any of these facilities are not given generously.

There is a danger that these amendments, if used unscrupulously, could seriously curtail the effectiveness of all back-benchers of the Parliament, both Government and Opposition, by reducing the funds necessary to provide research facilities. For example, the annual report of the Parliamentary Library for the year ended 30 June 1978 showed that comprehensive research requests totalled 1,821, which was an increase of 31 per cent over the previous year. Quick reference requests totalled 1,200. There was

a total of 3,021 requests. It is quite possible, under these amendments, that some public servant could instruct the library staff that it could do only a limited amount of research, and only for certain members. This would reduce even further the limited resources available to back-bench members of Parliament.

Officers of the Parliament are excluded by section 4 of the Public Service Act from being public servants, and under these amendments they can be classed as public servants and as such can be directed by other public servants. This leaves the way open for total control of Parliament by the bureaucracy. A Minister has the total research facilities of his department to brief him, but back-benchers have only the research and information services of the library, which is dependent on the Executive for funds and staff. Any attempt to curtail this research would relegate back-benchers to being rubber stamps. I certainly hope that this does not occur.

The authority of the Speaker will also be restricted under these amendments. The Speaker holds the most important position in any Parliament that follows the Westminster system, but under the Queensland system the Speaker could be reduced to the role of a nominee, placed in the position to prevent anything unfavourable to his master from occurring, instead of continuing in his current role as the guardian of the rights and privileges of all members of the House, and being impartial in his decisions. The Speaker is the guarantor that the Executive retains control over the Parliament only so long as it retains the confidence of the majority of members. The Speaker sees that each individual member is given the opportunity to voice the opinions of the electors he represents.

More importantly, the Speaker has control over the officers of the Parliament, who make it possible for Parliament to function. It should be clearly recognised that the Executive should not control the workings of Parliament to which it is responsible. This is one reason for having persons under the control of the Speaker exempt from the Public Service Act. The Speaker should be responsible to Parliament alone for all its administration. Parliament should never be a minor branch of the Executive. If this Parliament ever becomes a minor branch of the Executive—and this could happen in the future under these amendments—then whatever small amount of democracy still exists at present in this Parliament will be lost forever. The wheel will turn some day, as any student of political history will acknowledge, and in unscrupulous hands these amendments will ensure that Parliament becomes a rubber stamp, and the voice of the Opposition will become weaker than ever; in fact, there may not be an Opposition.

As I stated earlier, Queensland is the only State in Australia that does not have

a public accounts committee, whose job is to scrutinise how money is being spent by various Government departments, and any restrictions of funds to the Parliament would certainly prevent such a committee from ever being established in Queensland. The existence of a public accounts committee, and the possibility that it might call the head of any department before it, would certainly keep departmental officials and Cabinet on their toes. In every Parliament following the Westminster system, with the exception of Queensland, the Executive and its administration must account to the Parliament for the funds that it has been voted by the Parliament. This is achieved by the public accounts committee, an all-party committee, which reports to Parliament on whether effective use is being made of the money provided.

Arthur Calwell, when he was Leader of the Federal Opposition, stated that if he was the Treasurer he would get rid of such a committee. However, a public accounts committee in Queensland would enable us to restore the prestige of the Parliament and enhance its authority over the Executive and the bureaucracy.

It is interesting to compare the financial administration of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. The Commonwealth Parliament exercises its own control over parliamentary expenditure, although the Department of Administrative Services provides a whole range of services to Federal parliamentarians, including the costs of travel, but the Speaker of the House of Representatives administers travel expenses.

In New South Wales there is a Vote for each department of the Legislature in the Appropriations. Spending for the Legislative Assembly, which includes travel, is authorised by the Speaker. On 30 October last, the Under Secretary of the New South Wales Premier's Department stated that he had heard nothing about proposals to bring the expenditure of the Legislature under the Premier's Department. The Clerk of the New South Wales Parliament also stated that he was completely unaware of any move to change procedure by removing the authority of the Speaker to authorise spending on behalf of Parliament and vesting it in the Premier's Department.

In Victoria, the parliamentary departments have their own Budgets under the Appropriations Act and, again, expenditure is under the control of the Speaker. The permanent head of the Premier's Department, Mr. Green, stated that the only financial connection between the Premier's Department and Parliament was that major expenditure on parliamentary buildings was handled by the Premier's Department, with the Department of Public Works attending to routine matters.

The Director of Administration of the Premier's Department in South Australia stated that his department exercised no control over expenses incurred on behalf of the

Legislature. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Legislative Council authorise spending within limits set by the Appropriation Acts.

The Under Secretary of the Premier's Department in Western Australia stated that personnel attached to the Legislature control the expenditure of Parliament. The Premier's Department does not control it. The Premier's Department does administer the members' entitlements to travel, which are determined by the Government.

The Under Secretary of the Premier's Department in Tasmania, Mr. Ward, stated that all matters pertaining to parliamentary finances were handled by Parliament itself. The Premier's Department did not exercise any control.

Other States in Australia do not control the appropriations for the Legislative Assembly through the Premier's Department.

There is one thing that I should like to make clear, Mr. Hewitt. It has been rumoured round the place that National Party members have been intimidated or blackmailed into supporting the Bill even to the extent of threats of non-endorsement for future elections if anyone votes against it in this Chamber. I should like to place on record that I have not been threatened or intimidated in any way to compel me to support the Bill. I point out that under section 60 of the Criminal Code it is an offence to attempt to influence a member of Parliament in his vote by using threats or intimidation of any kind. I place it on record that that has not occurred in my case.

The stage could be reached under the Financial Administration and Audit Act where members of Parliament could be called upon to disclose their pecuniary interests. Instead of challenges being issued right and left for members to table a statement of their interests, it could well become mandatory for all members of Parliament to declare their pecuniary interests on election to Parliament and update that declaration every so often as Parliament determines. Other States in Australia have already brought in legislation to this effect. In fact, the Premier of Victoria is endeavouring to introduce a Bill to compel members to disclose their pecuniary interests, no doubt as a result of some of the land scandals that occurred there last year. The sooner a Bill is introduced into this Parliament to compel all members to declare their pecuniary interests, the better. I am prepared to declare mine at any time.

The amendments proposed to the Financial Administration and Audit Act could turn Parliament into merely a branch of the Executive that will have to conform to rules designed for Government departments. Whether the Westminster system or the Queensland system best serves the people and basic democratic principles will certainly be a subject for future discussion; but one thing is certain—that the back-bench parliamentarian is in danger of becoming a rubber

stamp of approval for the Executive. I sincerely trust that the amendments proposed in the Bill do not allow that to happen.

Hon. C. R. PORTER (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.14 p.m.): Seeing there is a void to fill, Mr. Hewitt, I will fill it. A great deal of concern is being expressed by honourable members on both sides of the Chamber about the problem of Executive control of the Parliament. I venture to remind the Committee that that problem is not peculiar to this Parliament or even to this country. The problem of growing Executive interference with the business of Parliament is one of the prime problems in maintaining the Westminster system in this day and age. We all recognise it; we all know what to do.

An Opposition Member: Are you for or against it?

Mr. PORTER: The honourable member will learn if he waits a moment. I ask the honourable gentleman to contain himself.

Executive control is not the prime concern of only this Parliament. I do not think there is anything sinister in the growth of Executive control; it is just that the weight of affairs ensures that the Executive plays an ever-growing part in the business of Parliament. Of course, this has to be resisted; there is no question about that.

The honourable member for Townsville made a very eloquent speech in which he demonstrated his feelings about what he sees as the undue growth of Executive control in this Parliament. I appreciate his feelings and applaud his fervour, but I do not share his conclusions. Anybody who has been in this Parliament for a number of years would realise that there are few people who have been as deeply concerned as I have been about ensuring that Parliament plays the proper parliamentary role and that its powers and capacities are not inhibited or restricted. There are virtually no reforms that have come about in this Parliament over recent years that I have not been associated with in some way. I refer to questions without notice, changes in the procedure—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. PORTER: I am not boasting. I am just pointing out that I put my neck on the block time and time again, because I have been deeply concerned about the maintenance of an effective Parliament.

An Opposition Member: Before you were a Minister.

Mr. PORTER: It is so easy to say cheap and sneering things. What I am trying to do is say something that might be useful to the Assembly, because I am concerned about situations which I am sure other members are concerned about, too.

We have had a select parliamentary committee system set up. We had the first one on violent crime and punishment—the first

in 70 years. In their time in government, honourable members opposite never appointed select committees. We have established two standing committees—one on privileges and one on subordinate legislation. I certainly hope that one day we will have a standing committee on public accounts. Enormous changes have been made. All of them have been attempts to balance the problems of the growing power of the Executive, and to ensure that Parliament retains its position as the final arbiter on so many important matters.

That is precisely what this Bill now does. It is a step forward to ensure that the house-keeping side of Parliament, the business of the accounting of Parliament, the paying of its bills, and the ensuring that the moneys of Parliament are spent for the purposes for which Parliament appropriates them, are all kept separate from the parliamentary business of Parliament. When honourable members see the Bill, they will find that it has words in it which specifically ensure that this will be done. The great fears that have been generated in this Chamber tonight, mainly by Opposition members, simply will not arise when honourable members see the Bill.

Mr. Houston: We can't trust you.

Mr. PORTER: The fact is that there are words in the Bill which ensure that. The Bill will ensure that the accounting work of Parliament is done as it should be. This will clear the grey area which has caused trauma in this Parliament, the scars of which we are still suffering from and will continue to suffer from for a long time. The Bill will also overcome a situation which has done much to put this Parliament into general disrepute in the eyes of the people. I do not think any of us who are concerned about the Parliament want that sort of situation to continue for ever and a day. The Bill will put an end to that; it separates the accountancy side—the housekeeping side—from the parliamentary side.

Contrary to what has been said, decisions on the appropriations of moneys for the purposes of Parliament will be made by Parliament, not by the Premier or anybody else. Parliament will decide what moneys are to be appropriated for the purposes of Parliament. I would hope that in future we would consider breaking up the appropriations for Parliament into a series of divisions—Parliamentary Library, Hansard, sundry charges and whatever it may be. I believe that if there were departments of Parliament, it would be infinitely easier to keep the accountancy side under clear control. Everybody would see what had been appropriated and how the various charges were set against the various areas of the appropriation. That would be useful.

The other important point is that out of this we all want to see guide-lines for the future in terms of certain privileges. These would go through Parliament in the

form of regulations, so that Parliament itself would determine the privileges, how they should be used and, in fact, the precise guide-lines. The world would know, and parliamentarians would also know.

Any suggestion that there is some deep-dyed, sinister significance in this Bill—an attempt to impose Executive muscle to force the Parliament to do certain things in the future—is utterly without foundation. The legislation, in fact, will do precisely the reverse. It will clean up a situation which I think has done Parliament a great deal of harm. When members see the Bill, I believe that those who have made inflammatory speeches will be very sorry that they made them.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines, Energy and Police) (11.21 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 in certain particulars. Tonight we have heard a lot about the Westminster system of Government and how the House of Commons operates in Eng'and. I remind honourable members that the House of Commons operates mainly through procedure and practice evolved over 700 years of that type of government extending back to Magna Charta. No constitution governs the expenditure of money in the British Parliament. It is all done by practice and procedure. When former colonies of Great Britain, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Queensland as a sovereign State, formed a Government and gained their independence, their expenditure and Parliamentary practices could not be governed by procedure and practice. Consequently they had to introduce a Constitution Act.

The Constitution Act of this State decrees, in conjunction with the Financial Administration and Audit Act, how Government money must be spent in Queensland. The Commonwealth has a Constitution, as do the United States and Canada. In fact, all countries with a Government based on the Westminster system have a Constitution Act that governs the expenditure of money.

Under the Constitution Act and the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the Crown, through the Executive Council, must be responsible for the disbursement of Government funds. Departments are allocated funds through the Estimates—they were debated here recently—and Parliament itself decides the amount of money that each department may spend. That expenditure is governed by an accountable officer in each department, generally designated the under secretary. Ministers, as members of Executive Council, present the accounts for expenditure every week to Cabinet and Executive Council. But Parliament is not a department; an accountable officer has no direct access to Executive Council and Mr. Speaker himself is not a member of the Executive Council. Therein lies the grey area that has worried the administration of this House for many years.

Mr. Casey: How is it that Orders in Council have to be tabled in Parliament if Executive Council is not subject to Parliament.

Mr. CAMM: I said that Parliament itself decrees how much money may be spent. When the Estimates and Appropriation Bill are passed, the honourable member can say, "We wish to take \$20,000,000 from the Education Department; we wish to reduce the Health Vote by a certain amount." Parliament itself has the responsibility of saying how much money will be spent by each individual Government department. That is when the responsibility of Parliament finishes relative to the spending of money. It is then that the accountable officer of a particular department, through his Minister, presents the monthly or weekly accounts to the Executive Council. The Executive Council is not responsible to Parliament, because Parliament has already decreed how much money can be spent. The Government operates properly when departmental expenditure is within the amount of money allocated for it.

Mr. Casey: If Executive Council tables its other decisions in Parliament—and they have to be subjected to Parliament—why does not Executive Council table its financial expenditure?

Mr. CAMM: Because financial—

Mr. Casey: That is what we are asking—the recommendations I put forward tonight

Mr. CAMM: He asked me a question. He should let me answer it.

Mr. Casey: We are asking that you go a stage further.

Mr. CAMM: Executive Council tables its decisions, but they are not related to expenditure of individual departments. The expenditure of every department has been discussed in this Chamber through the Estimates debates. It has been discussed and passed by the Parliament. Consequently, it must be a Minister as a member of Executive Council to whom an accountable officer must report. As I said a while ago, Parliament decides, when approving of the various Estimates, how much money may be spent by individual departments and, through the Appropriation Act, gives Parliament power to decree how much in total may be expended.

The office of Speaker has been brought into this discussion. May I add that the office of Speaker is an ancient and important one. Basically, the powers and functions of the Speaker are traditionally those of the presiding officer of the House and, more specifically, as set out in the Standing Rules and Orders. Under this Bill, the ordinary administration of the various functions and expenditure of the Parliament will remain within the province of the Speaker; but the accountable officer must present the accounts

to the Premier so that the Governor in Council may approve of them. It is Parliament that determines the amount of money to be spent from the public funds in this State and the purpose for which the moneys may be used. The Estimates are passed by the Legislative Assembly, and appropriations are made in accordance with those Estimates. This is governed by Division IV of Part II of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977.

The fundamental rule is that public moneys may not lawfully be expended unless they have either generally or specifically been appropriated for the purpose for which it is desired they be expended. The Clerk of Parliament, in pursuance of section 35 (3) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, is an accountable officer with respect to the appropriations relating to the Legislative Assembly. It is he who, in law, has the duty of determining the validity of expenditure in accordance with Parliament's appropriation for the expenses of Parliament.

As I construe the Financial Administration and Audit Act in its application to the Legislative Assembly, three matters have to be expressly provided for, because the Assembly is not strictly a department. These three matters are—

- (a) The accounts of the Assembly must be departmental accounts;
- (b) The appropriations relating to the Assembly must be deemed to be appropriations for services under the control of a department; and
- (c) An appropriate Minister must be settled on.

Of course, under the Bill the appropriate Minister is deemed to be the Premier.

I know that claims have been made that this is not applicable in other States. Our information is that it is applicable in other States.

Mr Houston: Your information is wrong.

Mr. CAMM: Our information may be wrong. However, I will say that our information is that the Premier's proposal in the Bill is very similar to the provisions in other States—New South Wales, I am told, is moving in the same direction—whereby the Premier becomes the Minister who assumes responsibility for financial administration of the appropriations relating to the House of Parliament.

Mr. Houston: Didn't you hear Mr. Frawley?

Mr. CAMM: Yes, I heard him. I am saying that our information is that most other States are doing what this Bill intends to do.

Mr. Houston: That's not what Mr. Frawley said.

Mr. CAMM: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says that I'm wrong. I am making the statement. It is recorded in "Hansard" that he says I am wrong.

Mr. Houston: Well, Mr. Frawley said—

Mr. CAMM: No. The honourable member says I am wrong. Never mind about what Mr. Frawley said. It is recorded in "Hansard" that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says I am wrong. I am saying that most other States in Australia are already doing what this Bill purports to do, and New South Wales is moving in that direction.

The new Leader of the Opposition makes a great cry about ministerial expenses having to be tabled. Surely he has been long enough in this place to know that every year ministerial expenses are tabled for his examination. For his information, I tell him that every month a voucher is prepared by my secretary and signed by me outlining every dollar I claim as expenses for departmental expenditure associated with my ministerial duties. Those vouchers are examined by the accountant in my department. He verifies that the money has been spent in accordance with the vouchers that I submit. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition will have to do this, but he will find that he cannot go along adopting the same lackadaisical attitude as he adopted in his previous financial dealings. He will find that he will have to be responsible and will need a voucher for every cent that he claims. In my case, each month, after the accountant passes the amount of expenditure that I, as Minister, have claimed, the vouchers are examined by an officer of the Auditor-General's Department. Each month, Ministers' expenses are examined by accountants and by an officer of the Auditor-General's Department. Every year, a return showing ministerial expenses is tabled for the perusal of honourable members.

The Bill gives to the Premier, whoever he might be, the right to present to Executive Council the expenditures associated with Parliament House, which are presented to him by the accountable officer, who, in this case, is the Clerk of the Parliament. This will remove the grey area that has existed in this State for so many years concerning the money that has been appropriated for the Legislative Assembly and, through the Financial Administration and Audit Act, automatically has passed through the Treasury and has been issued by the Treasurer. That matter will be cleared up and the Premier will assume responsibility for the financial aspects of expenses associated with Parliament House.

Mr. Houston: Can you tell me when the return showing ministerial expenses was tabled in this Parliament this year?

Mr. CAMM: I have no idea. I do not worry about my expenses. I submit a voucher every month. My conscience is clear. The

accountant passes those vouchers and a representative of the Auditor-General examines them. I do not care if they are tabled every six weeks, every six months, or when they are tabled.

Mr. Houston: You said they had been tabled.

Mr. CAMM: I did not say they had been tabled. I said that every year a return showing ministerial expenses is tabled in this Parliament. I did not say they had been.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. CAMM: The year has not ended yet.

Mr. Casey: They have not been tabled for the last financial year. Every other aspect of last year's expenditure, such as the Auditor-General's statement, has been tabled, but ministerial expenses have not been.

Mr. CAMM: Not all of them have been tabled yet. I stand by my statement that every year a return showing ministerial expenses is tabled in this Parliament.

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.33 p.m.), in reply: I suggest that all honourable members carefully read what the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, my other colleagues and I have said tonight. They should read it with an open mind and consider it very carefully. Then they will realise how far off the track they have been in their speeches and attitude tonight.

The new Leader of the Opposition did not even wait to hear my speech. He had a prepared speech, which he read. It had very little to do with the issues that were raised by me. He spoke about, for example, Tarong, the Government aircraft and many other issues. He did not deal with the proposals that I outlined.

Mr. Casey: These are the questions that the people of Queensland are asking. These are the questions that I want you to answer in this Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Casey: The people of Queensland are asking those questions and I want you to answer them. That is your role.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We will not have a very happy friendship if the Leader of the Opposition continues to conduct himself in that way.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition is getting very toey. He has every reason and justification for it. Day by day I will deal with him at every opportunity. He will have a very interesting career.

The Leader of the Opposition did not even wait to hear the speech that I delivered. He talked about all sorts of issues but he did not deal with the proposed amendments.

He talked in circles and made a very confused speech. I was hoping somebody would give him a drink of water because I thought he was going to choke before he finished. The Leader of the Opposition tried to talk his way out. He said he would be the first one to oppose this Bill, and I forecast that he is going to oppose the Bill at every stage.

Mr. Casey: We oppose the surrender of the democratic rights of this Parliament, that is all we oppose. We oppose the surrender of the democratic rights of this Parliament.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr. Hewitt—

Mr. Casey: We oppose the surrender of the democratic rights of this Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable gentleman has made his point.

Mr. Casey: He asked me a question.

The CHAIRMAN: And the honourable member answered it three times.

Mr. Casey: It takes a bit to sink in.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: All I am saying to the temporary Leader of the Opposition is that we have established—

Mr. Casey: "Temporary" is right. We will be over there soon because you are all on your way out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No wonder the Leader of the Opposition opposes the Bill. What about the \$3,700 of Government funds that he misused? What is he going to do about that? What is he going to do about the thousands of dollars outstanding? That is why he is opposing the Bill.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I intend to keep reiterating why the Leader of the Opposition is opposing the Bill. He owes the Government \$3,700 and more in actual cash that he misused. He has got thousands of dollars tucked away out there.

Mr. Casey: What about what you owe, \$205,000?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable gentleman will cease his constant interjections.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: One of the lessons that the honourable member has to learn in this Chamber is that others, too, must have an opportunity to speak. I am drawing the attention of honourable members to why the Leader of the Opposition is opposing this Bill. Of course he will oppose it. He will oppose it at every stage. All the Government is seeking to do is make sure that the honourable member cannot do these things in future.

Mr. Casey: We will oppose the take-over of the Parliament by you.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I just reiterate that the Government is determined the Leader of the Opposition is not going to be allowed to misuse Government funds as he and some of his colleagues have done in the past, and it will not be a laughing matter.

Mr. Casey: We are going to tell the public of Queensland about the way you have misused public funds as well.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member has the opportunity on any occasion to talk on any issue he wishes, whether it is the aeroplane, Tarong, or anything else. All I ask him tonight is where he stands in relation to the money he has misused.

Mr. Casey: Where do you stand in relation to the money you used flying to the New South Wales elections for the National Party?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am asking the honourable member a question.

Mr. Casey: Where do you stand on that?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I think honourable members have to admit that if people have time for a hypocrite such as the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Casey: You tried to say that at Kingaroy, too, and they laughed you off the stage.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Honourable members saw the Leader of the Opposition handing in a document the other day setting out his pecuniary interests as if he were a cleanskin. He is a hypocrite because he knows he has misused Government funds. He has misused \$3,700. He still owes the Government thousands which he has to his credit. What a hypocrite he can be!

Mr. Casey: And what about yours? Put yours on the table!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is going to lead a great number of debates in this Chamber and I am not going to tolerate the type of conduct he is presently showing. He has to learn on occasions to sit back and listen, and this is one of those occasions. I am appealing to him. I would be very sad indeed if, on his first day as Leader of the Opposition, I had to deal with him. I am appealing to him to conduct himself as he should.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member might laugh, but I can assure him that he is in for anything but a laughing time in his political career now.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition is laughing and putting up a brave face, but I forecast that he will not be Leader of the Opposition for very long.

My good friend and colleague the honourable member for Townsville might know a lot about medicine—and I give him that—but, as the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police pointed out pretty clearly to him—

Dr. Scott-Young: I know more about medicine than you know about Brych and his mob.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I say to my honourable colleague that I will not go into that question tonight, but the day is coming when I will. The honourable member will have a different opinion then.

My colleague and friend the honourable member for Townsville is whipping a dead horse. The members of the public are against him. He only needs to reread the transcript of what his wife said on television. He only needs to get a bit of legal advice.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I rise to a point of order. If the Premier criticises my wife, he steps over the threshold. Do not bring my wife's name into this Chamber. I demand an apology. I find it extremely offensive. I ask that he withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot order the Premier to make a withdrawal, but he can choose to do so of his own volition. I suggest that he may choose to do so.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr. Hewitt, my honourable friend and colleague has a very fine wife, a very good wife. All I was suggesting to him is that he should read the transcript of what she said on T.V. That is all I suggested. That is not derogatory of his very fine wife. He should read that and he should get a little bit of legal advice on this whole situation.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Mr. Hewitt, this is a debate on a Bill, not on wives.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr. Hewitt, I am not debating his wife. All I am suggesting is that he should get a little bit of legal advice, and then listen to the explanation of the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police and some other members.

The ex-Leader of the Opposition started off his career as the honourable member for Mackay has done today by attacking me—over shares. He is sitting there today, but not as Leader of the Opposition. The honourable member for Mackay has started off with a similar attack on me and a smear campaign. He will go the same way as his former leader.

The honourable one-time Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Houston—

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. I have heard the Speaker on many occasions ask members to refer to other members by their correct title. At this point of time, "ex-Leader of the Opposition"

does not happen to be my title in this Chamber. I ask, Mr. Hewitt, that the Speaker's ruling be adhered to.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out to the Premier that the honourable gentleman is presently Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member is also a very experienced member of Parliament. He asked why we don't take Labor members of Parliament with us on visits. Of course, the answer is that they are too big an embarrassment. To give him an example, I refer to "Hansard"—

Mr. Casey: That is an old one.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, it is an old one, but it still refers to Labor members. When I was here in days gone by, one of the honourable member's colleagues asked Dr. Noble why he did not take him on his trip to Palm Island.

Mr. Casey: What is the date?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition can get that afterwards.

Mr. Casey: Come on, give us the date.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It appears in volume 219 of "Hansard" for 1957-58.

Mr. Casey: Mr. Premier, you will have to give us the date, because very few members were here when Dr. Noble was here.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That's all right. I will read what Dr. Noble said in reply to one of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's colleagues, who asked why he did not take him with him. He said—

"I shall repeat what I said yesterday by interjection. I could not have taken the honourable member even if he had asked me, because I could not take him into a private home."

Mr. Houston: Who was the member?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That was Dr. Noble's reply to a question similar to that posed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He has asked why we do not take Labor members with us. It is because they would be a complete embarrassment.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also referred to the plane, as did the Leader of the Opposition, who asked why Labor members cannot get on the Government plane. They have criticised it; they have condemned it right from the word go. Because ample other air transport facilities are available to them, I have no intention whatsoever of taking them on the plane. The Leader of the Opposition is not a Minister and he has heaps of time. I am not going to make a hypocrite of him by offering him a seat in the plane at any time. He is already a hypocrite, and I am not going to make him a bigger one.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that there are no guide-lines. That is a childish remark for him to make. Here is a member of Parliament who is given the responsibility to ask questions about problems facing people and about every subject under the sun. He says he does not know what the guide-lines are. He has only to ask the Clerk of the Parliament, who has the guide-lines and knows what they are.

Mr. Houston: You didn't know the guide-lines.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition cannot get out of it that way. He knows very well—

Mr. Houston: I did not break any guide-lines. Your colleagues did not know what they were.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am dealing with the honourable gentleman and his colleagues generally.

Mr. Houston: I didn't break any guide-lines, did I?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am not talking about whether the honourable gentleman did or who did: I am talking about his colleagues generally.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable gentleman was the one who said that he did not know what the guide-lines were.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a point and it seems to me that the Premier is entering into proper rebuttal. Whether that rebuttal is relevant is for the Committee to decide, but it is appropriate that he should respond.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member will not get away with that sort of thing, as far as I am concerned. He said that he did not know the guide-lines, and he condemns himself as a member of Parliament. He did not even know that he only had to go to the Clerk of the Parliament to find out. He knows very well that his two colleagues and members of the Opposition generally went wrong. They knew what the guide-lines were and they got the tickets—

Mr. Casey: What about you people over there?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am talking about honourable members opposite. They got the tickets and they cashed them. They know what the guide-lines are; they got them from the Clerk of the Parliament.

They cashed tickets, and they know what a serious offence it is to misappropriate and misuse funds in that way.

Mr. Casey: You are giving us a good example of why you should not be in control of Parliament, the way you are behaving tonight.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr. Hewitt, the honourable member will never get out of it that way. He has something hanging around his neck that he will not shake off in his political career.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Honourable the Premier made an accusation that I cashed air fares. I believe I heard him say that.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: That is right.

Mr. CASEY: That is completely incorrect, and I ask for a withdrawal by the Premier on that particular matter. I don't want to ask for an apology; I wouldn't like to have him apologising.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: You won't get one.

Mr. Houston: You will apologise if you are told to.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable gentleman has taken exception to those words, and I ask the Premier to withdraw them.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Well, Mr. Hewitt, shall I tell the Committee what he did do?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Mr. Premier, will you formally withdraw them?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. Mr. Hewitt—

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Mr. Premier, will you first withdraw the words?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. I will explain it this way, Mr. Hewitt—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Mr. Premier, the forms of the House provide that when a member asks for a withdrawal, the person speaking will comply, and I ask you to do that.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: O.K., Mr. Hewitt. He did something worse than that. The Leader of the Opposition booked tickets to certain parts and then cunningly, and knowing that he was doing something wrong, changed them and got credit from the airlines. The honourable member knows how many thousands he has stored away out there at the moment. The honourable member can laugh about it.

Mr. Casey: You are a slow old man, Joh.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That does not matter. The honourable member will not get out of it; I will tell him that.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is quite obvious tonight why the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues are opposed to this measure—quite clear. He does not want to part with his ill-gotten gains.

We in the Government are determined that this whole question will be resolved once and for all, and the Bill will not affect the running of Parliament by the Speaker in any way. As was indicated clearly by me, it will certainly clarify the situation as far as the spending of Crown moneys is concerned. That is the purpose of the amendment, and if honourable members read the amendment they will see quite clearly that what they have been saying is confused speaking and completely off the track. The Leader of the Opposition ought to take a good look at himself and think hard about himself and his future.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 45

Armstrong	Lester
Austin	Lickiss
Bishop	Lockwood
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Booth	Miller
Bourke	Moore
Camm	Muller
Campbell	Neal
Doumany	Newbery
Edwards	Porter
Elliott	Powell
Frawley	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Scassola
Goleby	Simpson
Greenwood	Sullivan
Gunn	Tenni
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Turner
Hooper, M. D.	Warner
Katter	Wharton
Kaus	
Kippin	Tellers:
Knox	
Lane	Ahern
Lee	Kyburz

NOES, 24

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, read a first time.

SURVEYORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL
(No. 2)

SECOND READING

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—
Minister for Survey and Valuation) (11.58
p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second
time.”

When the Surveyors Act was introduced in 1977, the Association of Consulting Surveyors asked for provisions which would allow corporate practice. The Government was anxious to assist in this direction, but a problem arose in that it was necessary to protect the Government's financial position at the same time. An important factor that had to be considered—a factor present in the case of the surveying profession and one that is not present in the case of other professions—was that the Government accepts the responsibility for rectifying the work of surveyors in certain circumstances. Although such cases are rare, a serious instance could involve the Government in the expenditure of some thousands of dollars. That could not be recovered from a \$2 company unless some provision was made in advance for the creation of a fund. The Association of Consulting Surveyors agreed to the creation of some such fund. It prepared a draft set of regulations dealing with corporate practice and, after some amendments to which the association agreed, these were included in the Surveyors Regulations of 1978.

One problem that arose in the drafting of these regulations was that, although both the A.C.S. and the Surveyor-General preferred to set up the fund by means of an insurance policy, the Solicitor-General had some serious reservations. He was not satisfied that a suitable form of policy could be devised to give the Surveyor-General an insurable interest. Some form of fund or financial protection was plainly necessary. It could, of course, be a bond; it could be a guarantee, it could be some other form of security. But the one that would be most convenient for everyone would be an insurance policy.

As all the interested parties preferred, it was decided to go ahead with the regulations nominating an insurance policy. The regulations were therefore drafted in that way. We were fairly confident that a suitable policy could be drafted. We are still fairly confident that a suitable policy can be drafted. It was, however, recognised that it might be necessary to change the regulations to provide some other form of security if a suitable form of policy could not be devised; so flexibility in the regulations was essential.

I should read to the House the relevant parts of the provisions of the Act and regulations. Section 40 of the Surveyors Act provides—

“Registration of body corporate as surveyor. If the Governor in Council prescribes by the regulations conditions

on which bodies corporate may be registered as surveyors or licensed surveyors (which he is hereby authorised so to do) the Board may permit a body corporate to be registered as a surveyor or, as the case may be, a licensed surveyor subject to and in accordance with such regulations.”

Regulation 17 (2) (e) in its relevant parts is as follows—

“the application for registration or renewal of registration is accompanied by a Surveyors Indemnity Insurance Policy from an insurer approved by the Board in the sum of \$50,000 or such higher sum as is required by the Board and containing such provisions, terms and conditions as are approved by the Board and the Board may require the policy to be taken out jointly in the name of the body corporate and the Board.”

The Committee of Subordinate Legislation asked that this regulation 17 (2) (e) should be included in the Act. Doing this would not have given the necessary flexibility. It would have bound us to one form of security. Should it prove necessary to use a form of security other than an insurance policy, such as a bond or guarantee, we could not do so if 17 (2) (e) in its present terms were inserted in the Act. However, after discussion with the committee, an amendment has been devised to both give the necessary flexibility and satisfy the wishes of the committee.

In its relevant provisions—and, of course, the Bill is before the House—it says—

“The regulations may prescribe as a condition precedent for the registration of a body corporate as a surveyor or the endorsement as a licensed surveyor of its registration that there be furnished to the Board such indemnity insurance policy, bond or other security as a financial guarantee in such form as is prescribed and in such amount as is fixed by or pursuant to the regulations for the proper performance by the body corporate of the functions and duties of a surveyor or, as the case may be, a licensed surveyor.”

Then there are other provisions in the Bill which are consequential upon the first.

So this is the solution that has been adopted. It is well accepted on this side of the House that, before a man's right to enter and practise his profession or calling can be forbidden or be limited by certain qualifications, such a serious matter should occur only after debate on the provision in this House; that the provision should only be altered after debate in this House; that it should be exposed to public scrutiny in the forum devised for that purpose—this Parliament.

[Wednesday, 29 November 1978]

Mr. MILLINER (Everton) (12.5 a.m.): As I indicated at the introductory stage, the Opposition has no objection to the Bill. As a matter of fact, we welcome a Bill of this type that gives people protection against professional persons who are negligent in doing their work. In view of the lateness of the hour, I do not propose to say more than that we welcome the Bill and do not oppose it.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) (12.6 a.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Everton for his remarks.

Motion (Mr. Greenwood) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

TRUST ACCOUNTS ACT AND
ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.7 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The object of the Bill is to ensure that trustees are strictly responsible for lodging an audited report of their trust accounts in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Accounts Act and the Auctioneers and Agents Act. To achieve that objective, the operation of section 23 and section 24 of the Criminal Code is excluded from those provisions of the Trust Accounts Act and the Auctioneers and Agents Act, which relate to the duty of lodging audited reports of trust accounts under those Acts.

As honourable members appreciate, the Bill is designed to ensure the maximum protection for members of the public who either are the beneficiaries of a trust or have created a trust.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.8 a.m.): The Opposition has considered the measure. It was debated at some length at the introductory stage. We realise that it is a measure to try to close a loophole that has been used by certain persons to try to evade the requirements of law.

As I stated at the introductory stage, we do not believe that people ought to be able to delegate responsibility, especially when it

comes to forwarding reports about the results of the audits of their trust accounts. It comes back to trust. These people are required to hold those moneys in trust on behalf of the depositors.

It is the responsibility of those people, whether they be conveyancers, solicitors, commission agents or auctioneers, to meet the terms of the law. We support the measure and we are pleased to see the Minister taking this step at this point.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.9 a.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for his comments. All that needs to be said has been said in relation to this matter.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS
AND MARRIAGES ACT AMENDMENT
BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.10 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Bill has two objects. The first of these is to provide that a number of irrelevant particulars which have been furnished to district registrars over the years in respect of the births of children will no longer appear in certified copies of the entries of these births.

For the reasons that I outlined in my introductory speech, the particulars which will not appear in a certified copy are the mother's former surname, if previously divorced or widowed, particulars of any marriages of the parents, and particulars of the father's children by former marriages.

The second object is to simplify the registration of the birth of a child where that birth is sought to be registered later than seven years after the event. This will be achieved by requiring the judge of the Supreme Court or of a District Court who makes an order for the registration of the birth to also set out in the order the necessary particulars for the registration of the birth.

I believe that these procedural changes will be welcomed by all concerned.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (12.12 a.m.): The Opposition is prepared to support this legislation. It is in line with another measure that the Minister introduced recently to try to remove some of the embarrassment concerning children. We believe that no child should, in later life, be embarrassed because of the activities of his parents. It is not important that the mother's previous marital status be known.

We take for granted that the Minister also intends by regulation to ensure that the information we are removing as a requirement today will also be removed as a requirement on the initial register. This apparently was done back in 1970 in respect of particulars of the children of the father by any previous marriage. I hope that this matter has been clarified, because it was important.

But the most important point in my mind, from the experience I have had, is overcoming the difficulty that arises when people have not had their births registered. It certainly has created some problems, and this measure will now remove the difficulties we have been experiencing. It will overcome the delays and do away with the long searches that have had to be carried out by people in trying to establish their births. So we do support the measure.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.13 a.m.): I want to speak only briefly. A case came to my notice only the other day which I think the Minister should know about. I am raising it because the person concerned has been asked to pay quite a substantial sum of money, I think about \$70 or \$80, to have the matter rectified.

Briefly, the situation is that the gentleman concerned decided to go overseas, and in order to obtain a passport he had to produce a birth certificate. When he inquired about his birth certificate, he gave his surname and was told that no certificate was available. Upon investigation it was found that after his birth the midwife, or whoever it was who made the notification—we are going back 60 or so years—by mistake gave his mother's maiden name as his surname instead of his father's name. In other words, the two names were switched around. His registration of birth therefore carried the wrong surname and he did not know about it.

At school, he was naturally known by his father's surname. He married using that name. Children were born and eventually married, and they also carried his father's surname. When he went to obtain his birth certificate, it did not exist as such. This means that not only has he been using an incorrect name, but his children and possibly grandchildren have also been using incorrect names. He naturally wanted to correct the situation, and I believe the only procedure available at this moment is for him to pay \$70 or \$80 to have a new name registered.

The Minister will know more about that than I do. What I am suggesting is that

when it is obvious that there has been a mix-up in the original registration—perhaps it would not happen today—and that is the only problem, the correction should be made without any charge to the person concerned. I do not know the exact financial position of this person, and I do not think it particularly matters. This could happen to anyone who requires a birth certificate. I just mention that case because I think it is worthy of consideration.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.15 a.m.), in reply: I should like to thank both honourable members for their contributions. I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for his support of the measure and the honourable member for Bulimba for pointing out this anomaly. There have been a number of anomalies, and they have caused quite a bit of sadness. One case that comes to my mind concerns a person whose birth was never registered. Now, in later life, he has a court order. But, of course, he is supposed to have the supporting evidence of people who were present at his birth, knew of his birth, or have definite details of his birth. There is no-one who was present at his birth or who can remember the occasion. This has prevented his birth from being registered. This Bill will overcome that situation. He will be able to act on the court order and on the details as required by the court. When this Bill is passed, his birth will be able to be registered.

I am not aware of the details of the other case that was mentioned.

Mr. Houston: I will give you the details.

Mr. LICKISS: If the honourable member does not mind, I should like him to give me the details. I have not heard of this case before. I should like to apprise myself of the facts. If anything can be done, I will let the honourable member know.

Mr. Houston: They not only changed his name; it also affected his children.

Mr. LICKISS: I can see how that could have occurred in days gone by. I hope that it will not occur now, but I suppose that it is still occurring. I should like to be apprised of the details to enable me to see whether corrective action can be taken.

I thank honourable members for their contributions and for their acceptance of the measure. I will leave it at that.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

The House adjourned at 12.19 a.m. (Wednesday).