Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1978

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

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development for 1977-78.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under "The Rural Training Schools Act of 1965" and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923–1975.

PETITIONS

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

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga—Minister for Industry and Administrative Services) presented a petition from 16 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.

RENAMING AS ROCHEDALE SOUTH OF THE LOCALITY KNOWN AS LANGFORD

Mr. KAUS (Mansfield) presented a petition from 1,175 residents of Rochedale praying that the Parliament of Queensland will officially assign the name Rochedale South to the unnamed locality south of Rochedale, temporarily named as Langford, in the Shire of Albert.

Petition read and received.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

NOMINATION OF MR. N. G. WARBURTON

Mr. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I nominate Neville George Warburton, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Sandgate, to fill the vacancy on the panel of Temporary Chairmen caused by the resignation of Keith Webb Wright, Esquire.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

RESIGNATION OF MR. CASEY

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have received the resignation of Mr. Casey from the Select Committee of Privileges.

APPOINTMENT OF MR. WRIGHT

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Mr. Wright be appointed to the Select Committee of Privileges to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Casey."

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough): I second the motion.

Motion (Mr. Warner) agreed to.

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries): 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 Wheat Industry Stabilization Act 1974 and the Wheat Pool Act 1920–1972 each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. PERMITS FOR STREET MARCHES

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

(1) With reference to the statements by the Premier on 4 December and in advertisements charged to the taxpayers that 316 permits for street marches throughout Queensland had been granted between September 1977 and September 1978, what were the towns or cities of the approved marches and the number at each such venue?

(2) Of the approved marches, how many were (a) political, (b) industrial, (c) religious, (d) Anzac Day marches, (e) Labor Day marches, (f) community festival processions such as Warana and the Carnival of Flowers, (g) commercial promotions and (h) other non-political purposes?

(3) Of the 30 permits the Premier stated had been refused, how many were political and in regard to each (a) who was the applicant for the permit, (b) what was the reason given for the proposed march, (c) what was the reason given in each case for refusal and (d) how many permits were refused for marches other than for political reasons, and what was the reason for refusal in each of the instances?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The breakup of statistics sought is not available without extensive research being undertaken. I do not propose to make police personnel available to undertake this research.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I have told the House repeatedly that I will not tolerate interjections while a Minister is on his feet. I ask all honourable members on both sides of the House to obey the Standing Orders, or I will deal with them under Standing Order 123A.

2. PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE COSTS OF OFFICIAL AEROPLANE

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked the Treasurer—

(1) In view of the incomplete information available in relation to the present official ministerial aircraft, will he, as the accountable Minister within the Government for the payment into and out of Crown funds, state when Cabinet approved the purchase of this aircraft and what was the total amount of money paid, including the sum of $127,348 listed in the Auditor-General's report of 1973 as the trade-in on the first official aircraft?

(2) What is the official make and model of the present aircraft and was it purchased new or second-hand?

(3) What was the form of payments in relation to this aircraft, that is, trade-in and dates, amounts and associated details of subsequent payments, including interest?

(4) From what company and through what company was the aircraft purchased?

(5) Will he explain the delay in listing an amount of $20,452 for an engine overhaul on the previous aircraft prior to its disposal, as it was traded in during 1973 and the figure for the overhaul was not mentioned by the Auditor-General until 1976?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) The scheme of accountability set forth in the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 is that—

(a) the permanent head of a department (with certain exceptions that do not apply in this case) is responsible for the financial administration of the appropriations for those services under the control of his department and is the accountable officer for those appropriations; and

(b) the responsibility of each accountable officer is subject to the principal responsibility of the appropriate Minister.

The particular service referred to in the question is indicated in the Estimates under the heading "Chief Office" of the Premier, and therefore the appropriate Minister responsible for the relevant appropriation is "The Premier".

I do not have ministerial responsibility in this matter, and the question should properly have been addressed to the Honourable the Premier.

3. QUEENSLAND LAND HELD BY OVERSEAS INTERESTS

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

(1) With reference to the unusual franchise agreement signed in Brisbane during the week ended 2 December by the Japanese millionaire, Mr. Yohachiro Iwasaki, involving a stretch of Central Queensland coastline comparable in length to the stretch between Broadbeach and Tweed Heads and the acquisition of "Malvie Downs" and "Clifton Park" at Gilliat near Julia Creek by the Hong Kong Cattle Company, what is the total area of (a) freehold and (b) leasehold land held by Mr. Iwasaki?

(2) What is the total area of (a) freehold and (b) leasehold land held by the Hong Kong Cattle Company?

(3) What was the total amount of money paid by Mr. Iwasaki for such (a) freehold and (b) leasehold landholdings?

(4) What was the total amount of money paid by the Hong Kong Cattle Company for such (a) freehold and (b) leasehold landholdings?

(5) In view of the concern of many people about the foreign acquisition of our land, will he recommend to Cabinet that a State-wide register recording all instances of foreign ownership of Queensland land be established, as suggested by the management committee of the National Party, that the register be constantly updated and that it be available to the public?

Answers:—

(1) I already advised the House a few weeks ago of lands held by the Iwasaki Group, but for the information of the honourable member I shall repeat the details.

At the time of passing of the Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Act 1978, the Iwasaki Sangyo Co. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. held about 3 328 ha of freehold land, and a further area of about 1 400 ha of freehold was under contract to that company.

The company presently also holds about 360 ha of leasehold land as Special Lease No. 32827, and is in the process of acquiring a further 2 882 ha of leasehold land, subject to prior freeholding by the present lessees.

In addition to those, and in terms of the agreement Act previously mentioned, the company is to be granted a special lease over about 269 ha at Sandy Point, and is to acquire the freehold of about 106 ha from the Livingstone Shire Council and about 4 ha in Water Reserve R.10, Parish of Woodlands.

(2) (a) I am not aware that any freehold land in Queensland is owned by Hong Kong Cattle Company.

(b) A company, the Hong Kong Islands Shipping Company Limited, in equal shares with the MacNicol Group, a well-known Queensland company, is involved in the purchase of an area of about 30 795 ha of leasehold land in the Hughenden area ("Malvie Downs" and "Clifton Park") for the establishment of a depot for the export of live cattle to Hong Kong and to South East Asia.

A company is not normally eligible to hold the original grazing selection tenures involved, but in view of the importance of the undertaking, it has been approved that the companies acquire the areas by way of a terminable special lease tenure upon surrender of the original secure grazing selection tenure. The companies will operate the venture as Clifton Pastoral Co. Pty. Ltd.

(3 & 4) I am not aware of the amount of money paid by either Mr. Iwasaki or the joint MacNicol Group and Hong Kong Islands Shipping Company for the purchase of the lands referred to.

(5) The matter of foreign ownership is a complex one relating both to freehold and leasehold lands, and has been under close examination by the Government for some time. The situation will be watched so that any land-purchase trends that might indicate the need for a wider record may be assessed. Arrangements have been in hand for some time within the Department of Lands that any transfer proposals that may be able to be identified as relating to a foreign company or person are brought to my attention.

4. HOME SUPPLY OF OXYGEN FOR EMPHYSEMA SUFFERERS

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

(1) As many age pensioners suffering from emphysema constantly require oxygen, which is very costly to the Government when administered in a hospital situation, are age pensioners requiring oxygen whilst residing in their own homes required to purchase their own oxygen?

(2) If so, as it must be far better and financially cheaper for these people to reside at home and be treated there, will consideration be given to providing oxygen free of cost to age pensioners suffering from emphysema who are prepared to live at home?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) My department provides oxygen and ancillary equipment for use at home in cases where a respiratory physician recommends the use of home oxygen therapy and where the person concerned satisfies departmental requirements on financial eligibility after completing the prescribed means test. If the honourable member would care to draw any particular case to my attention, I would be happy to deal with it.

5. NEW HOSPITAL FOR CUNNAMULLA

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

In view of the time lapse since his original visit to Cunnamulla, following which it was announced that a new hospital will be constructed at that centre, when is it envisaged that construction will commence?

Answer:—

As indicated to the honourable member in my letter of 24 October 1978, Cabinet has approved that the Cunnamulla Hospitals Board proceed with working drawings and specifications for the new 20-bed hospital at Cunnamulla.

The time at which construction of the new hospital will commence is dependent upon the receipt from the board of working drawings and specifications when these documents are finalised by the board's architects.

6. RESTORATION OF SPORTS TELECASTS TO INLAND AREAS

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

In view of A.B.C. television cut-backs in relation to major sporting events and as most inland areas of Queensland are only serviced by A.B.C. channels, will he, as a matter of urgency, approach the Federal Government on a State Government/Federal Government level in an endeavour to have these services returned so that inland T.V. viewers are not discriminated against?

Answer:—

I can fully appreciate the concern of the honourable member, because sporting spectaculars have undoubtedly become an important part of television in Australia and it is most regrettable that persons living in the outback areas of our country should be denied access to them.

This matter was recently raised in the Senate and it was pointed out that over the last year or two the commercial television operators in Australia have become much more aware of the attractiveness of telecasting international sporting events. As a result, they have gone into this field and have tended to outbid the Australian Broadcasting Commission and have subsequently tended to purchase the rights to international events to the exclusion of the A.B.C.

I understand that the commission is endeavouring to come to a mutually satisfactory agreement with the commercial channels concerned to permit the commission to beam these programmes into areas that are not covered by the commercial networks.

I believe that the Commonwealth Minister for Post and Telecommunications is working towards a solution of the problem in consultation with both the commercial interests and the commission.

In response to the representations by the honourable member, I propose to make an approach to the Federal Government to impress on the Minister the concern that is felt in the community about this subject.

7. RAIL SERVICES NOS. 283 AND 469

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

In relation to rail services No. 283 and No. 469, which according to correspondence from him are scheduled mail services, will he advise (a) the average number of articles of mail carried by these services, (b) from which stations the mail is delivered to the trains, (c) at what destinations the mail services terminate and (d) the estimated cost of operating these services?

Answer:—

The trains in question provide a service for schoolchildren and do not convey mails. The operation of the services is integrated with the working of shunting trains and the cost of running these passenger trains is not separately recorded.

8. NOTIFICATION OF CHILD ABUSE

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

I refer to a newspaper report on comments by Dr. Heyworth, who works within the administration of the Mater Children's Hospital and who, although welcoming changes to the Health Act, which made it mandatory for doctors to notify the Director-General of Health of all suspected child-abuse cases, said that "Notification of the problem without an adequate code in law, which recognizes that child abuse is a social and medical and not solely a legal issue, only compounds the problem." Does he agree with this criticism and, if so, what action will he be taking to remedy this situation?

Answer:—

I am advised that Dr. Heyworth's comments were related to the question of the rights of children and particularly certain legal aspects of this issue. The question of notification by medical practitioners to the Director-General of Health and Medical Services where they suspect the child has been abused is an endeavour to provide treatment for the children and/or family as quickly as possible. I can assure the honourable member that when this amendment has been in operation for some period of time, as I indicated in my speech during the debate on the Bill, the legislation will be reviewed.

9. PRISON INDUSTRY

Mr. Fouras, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Welfare—

(1) Does he consider that the primary objective of prison industry should be to offer gainful employment to as many prisoners and at as low a capital cost as possible?

(2) Is he satisfied with the current low level of prison industry in Queensland?

(3) Will he consider the establishment of an authority to assume responsibility for planning and running prison industry and marketing the goods produced?

Answers:—

(1) Whilst prison industry should provide a gainful employment for as many prisoners as possible at as low a capital cost as is possible, it should also endeavour to provide a means of training, particularly for younger prisoners, to assist to fit them for eventual re-entry into normal community life. In this regard, it is pointed out that from time to time arrangements are made for younger prisoners to undertake apprenticeships in various trades.

(2) The level of prison industry in Queensland is regarded as satisfactory, consistent with the work available and the skills and ability of prison inmates.

(3) It is felt that the department's existing resources are sufficient for the planning and control of prison industries and the marketing of the products of such industries. Officers have been appointed to specifically take care of this area of prison administration, and in fact inquiries are at present taking place departmentally to ascertain possible further avenues for disposal of products which might be manufactured within the prison area. In this regard, I should also mention that care is taken to safeguard the employment prospects of those employees within industry generally. Whilst it is recognised that in some areas of the world authorities have been set up to assume responsibility for operation of prison industry, it is considered that the establishment of such an authority in this State would only add to the present cost of operating prisons without improving the overall efficiency of prison industry.

10. FIRST-MORTGAGE LOAN GRANT PROPOSAL

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

(1) Is he aware that the Queensland Master Builders' Association has recently outlined a scheme to the Commonwealth Minister for Finance, Mr. Robinson, proposing the replacement of the existing Home Savings Grant Scheme with a first-mortgage loan grant to a maximum of $10,000 geared to eligibility and earnings on a pro rata basis at a low interest rate and repayable during the same period as the major loan?

(2) Has this proposal been brought to his attention and, if so, are there any grounds to believe that such a scheme would give added stimulus to home-building in Queensland?

(3) If there is evidence that that stimulus would be given, will he support the Master Builders' Association proposal?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I am aware of the proposal to replace the home-savings grant with a loan. Obviously any scheme which puts more money immediately into the industry should give a stimulus, provided it goes on new work. One of the industry's problems is that while loans are high in both numbers of loans approved and money lent, by far the greatest amount is going into second-hand housing. In general terms, I support any approach which will help to stimulate the industry. I said in the recent Estimates debate that I had already told the Commonwealth Minister I did not think a small upturn in the volume of funds would seriously affect Canberra's economic strategy.

If Canberra can find more money for mortgage finance on the lines suggested, I would like to give consideration to releasing it through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement at the attractive interest rate of that agreement. Apart from the amount of money going to second-hand housing, the other big problem is not so much the volume of available funds as the interest cost. A very significant part of the potential market is excluded because the borowers cannot afford the repayments.

11. USE OF LAKE SAMSONVALE FOR SPORT

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that several sporting groups in the northern Brisbane suburbs and the Pine Rivers Shire are anxious to make use of the large expanse of water in Lake Samsonvale?

(2) As the Brisbane City Council is loath to take any action because of the Government's water board proposals and as the Pine Rivers Shire Council has no power to act, will he undertake such action as will allow groups such as the Pine Rivers Sailing Club and associated schools to use the facilities of the lake?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) I have written to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Brisbane on the matter.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FEDERAL MINERALS EXPORT POLICY

Mr. CASEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, I refer to yesterday's A.B.C. radio news in which it was said that the Deputy Prime

Minister accused the Western Australian Government of double standards in opposing the Federal Government's new minerals export policy. In addition, Mr. Anthony said—

> "No floor price would be established under the new minerals policy but the Federal Government would not allow free enterprise to go mad."

I now ask: What are the Minister's views on Mr. Anthony's statement that the Federal Government would not allow free enterprise to go mad, and what is the attitude of the State Government to the establishment of a floor price under the new minerals policy?

Mr. CAMM: In regard to any criticism that I have of Mr. Anthony's statements as reported in the Press—first of all, I will confirm with Mr. Anthony that he made them, because some Press statements can be distorted. Any effect on the Queensland Government's policy on the mining or marketing of our minerals will be discussed between Mr. Anthony and me.

CLOSURE OF AMERICAN CONSULATE

Mr. BISHOP: I ask the Treasurer: Is he aware of any proposal to close down the U.S. Consulate in Brisbane? If so, what effects does he believe that such a move would have on tourism and ancillary areas? Will he indicate what steps the Government can take concerning such decision?

Mr. KNOX: I think that it has been public knowledge for some weeks that there is a proposal to close the U.S. Consulate in Brisbane. It has been operating since 1890, with one short break. Indeed, it and the Japanese Consulate in Queensland are the oldest in Australia. That indicates just how long those services have been established in this State.

Mr. Houston: As a Government, you have finally chased them out.

Mr. KNOX: We do not intend to chase them out; we intend to invite them to stay. The Premier has already taken action on behalf of the Government and the people of Queensland to have the consul's office kept open. The whole of the Queensland Government supports the office being kept open. It is tremendously important to this State; more so than similar offices are in other parts of Australia, because of the enormous investments that American interests, including American Government agencies, have made in many of our mining and other activities.

The service that I, as Treasurer, receive from this office is of tremendous importance to this State and, for many of the things that we have to do at governmental level, I see no advantage whatsoever in dealing with an office in Sydney. In fact, I think it would be particularly unsatisfactory, especially in view of the fact that the consular office in Perth is not being closed.

This is matter for the Congress of the United States to determine, and all members who have any influence in the matter whatsoever, or who know any American citizens, should ask them to contact their congressmen with a view to having them take suitable action to see that that decision is not approved by the Congress. This office renders a very great service to the people of this State, particularly in the issue of visas and the supply of information to people seeking contact with relatives and friends. As members know, there were many tens of thousands of American servicemen in this country during the war years, and the consular service here provides many opportunities for people to contact their relatives and friends in America. I think the office is most important to this State, and we all support the Premier's move to have it kept open.

NIGHT OPENING BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Mr. MILLINER: In asking a question of the Premier, I refer to the recent decision by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to recommend an increase in retail trading hours and his obvious support for the proposal. Will he now direct Government departments and instrumentalities that have counter dealings with the public to open one night a week?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not think the honourable member's leader would suggest something like that to the State Service Union. That is an entirely different question from that of late-night shopping. If the honourable member had given the matter a second thought, I do not think he would even have suggested it. Certainly we have no intention of doing anything like what is suggested by the honourable member.

TRAVEL BY PREMIER'S SECURITY POLICE ON GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT

Mr. WILSON: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, I refer to his answer yesterday to a question concerning the use of commercial aircraft by security police assigned to the Premier while he uses the Government aircraft. I now ask: How does the Minister reconcile his statement yesterday on the need for the police to be present in advance at points where the Premier will land with the fact that in the case of the journey from Perth to Brisbane they arrived back by commercial aircraft the day after the Premier had landed?

Mr. CAMM: I have been informed by the Premier that on the return journey from Perth to Brisbane, the flight was fully

occupied by officers of his department and other public servants who had to go with him to the conference in Perth. Consequently, the police came back by commercial aircraft.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

HON. J. R. HARRISON, E.D., M.P. (NEW ZEALAND)

Mr. SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the House to the presence this morning of the Honourable J. R. Harrison, E.D., M.P., Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives and his good lady. I welcome them to the Chamber and I hope that they have a very enjoyable stay with us.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

CONDUCT BY A.L.P. OF MINOR ART UNIONS ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRALIAN PENSIONERS LEAGUE

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.56 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of this House to a matter raised by the honourable member for Stafford (Mr. Gygar) during the Department of Justice Estimates debate on 23 November last. It will be recalled that the honourable member made a number of allegations concerning the conduct of minor art unions on behalf of the Queensland section of the Australian Pensioners League. The honourable member for Stafford made out a case which linked various branches of the Australian Labor Party with the distribution of the financial gain from those art unions.

It would be remembered by all honourable members that I undertook to have an immediate investigation made into all aspects of the issue raised by Mr. Gygar. That investigation has uncovered some most alarming facts which, in my view, clearly point to a completely unconscionable use of the Pensioners League by the A.L.P. for its own financial gain. This has been done through an organisation known as the Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers, which is not registered with the Justice Department as a charitable organisation or, indeed, an organisation of any other description.

This is how the confidence trick—and, perhaps, I am being kind in referring to it in those terms—is operated. Lucky envelope stalls are conducted regularly on behalf of the Australian Pensioners League at a number of locations within Brisbane and other parts of Queensland. The front here would seem to be the Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers but, in fact, cheques payable to the Queensland Pensioners League have been signed by members of the A.L.P.

As far as the general public is concerned, it would seem that these minor art unions ostensibly are being conducted by the Pensioners League for itself. But investigations by my officers clearly show that the majority of the funds raised on behalf of the Queensland Pensioners League has been paid to the league by cheques drawn on various A.L.P. sub-branches. Then, cheques supposedly representing 25 per cent of the gross proceeds of the lucky envelope sales are being drawn by the Pensioners League in favour of Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers for conducting the art unions on the league's behalf.

We have examined this operation over a period from 1 November 1976 to 30 October 1978. Accounting records of the Australian Pensioners League indicate that gross proceeds from these art unions during that period totalled $48,289.85. Of that total, Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers were paid $13,825.29 or, in other words, 28.63 per cent of the gross. Prizes accounted for $29,489.89, or 61.06 per cent of the gross. There are a number of other items of expenditure, all charged against the poor old Pensioners League which, in fact, finished up over the two-year period with a net $3,358.17, or a miserable 6.95 per cent of the total take.

Now, let us come to the real nigger in the woodpile, Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers. My office is in possession of bank records which clearly establish that money in accounts operated by Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers is paid to various branches of the Australian Labor Party. Most of these cheques, drawn in favour of the A.L.P., have been signed by G. O'Sullivan and Gerry Jones. These names, of course, would be familiar to every honourable member of this House.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, my officers have in their possession 234 cheques drawn by Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers which have been directed to the A.L.P. organisation. The total amount of these cheques is $20,645. Certainly, this amount is far in excess of the $13,825 rake-off by the Queensland Volunteer Finance Raisers during the two-year period from November 1976 to October 1978, so one can reasonably conclude that the pensioners racket has been pouring considerable sums of money into A.L.P. coffers for an equally considerable period. This proposition is borne out by the fact that cheques totalling $11,586.35 were drawn on the same account for other purposes. Included in this batch was a substantial cheque for a Brisbane hotel and another equally substantial cheque for a seafood merchant—enough for a great beer and prawn night; but no doubt the pensioners were not invited.

Mr. Speaker, my officers are still pursuing this investigation, and goodness only knows what further enquiries may reveal. But I

would like every member of the public to be made aware of the reprehensible tactics to which the A.L.P. have resorted to raise money. How shocking it is when one finds that the prime target for this gigantic rip-off is the Pensioners League of Queensland, whose members could gainfully use every cent of the money which is raised from street-corner art unions. In my view, the A.L.P. should immediately organise a large-scale Christmas party and invite every pensioner in Queensland; and that still would be miserable enough compensation for the deprivation that they have inflicted upon these people.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

GAP IN RELATIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN SECTORS

Mr. WHITE (Southport) (12.3 p.m.): I would like to speak today about a matter which is of growing concern to me and, I believe, to the people of Queensland. I refer to the gap that exists, and is growing, between an expanding urban sector and a decreasing rural sector. This is a problem that is occurring all over the world.

A recent survey conducted by the newspaper "The National Farmer" showed that 84 per cent of those surveyed realised this gap existed and were concerned about it. During this speech, I will use the term "farmers". This may upset some graziers, but they should realise that I am using it as a generic term. The problem is that both the urban and rural sectors of our community are completely interdependent, and we as a State and nation cannot afford to continue to have these only too apparent gross misunderstandings between the two sectors. The urban sector depends entirely on the rural sector for its food, and we as a nation depend, to a large extent, on the rural sector for up to 40 per cent of our export income. Of course, the rural sector depends entirely on the urban sector for its roads, aircraft, ports, machinery, fuel and so on.

Let us get this problem into some sort of perspective. In 1978, only 6 per cent of the Australian population was directly concerned with agriculture. It produces only some 6 per cent of our gross domestic product. That is valued at nearly $8,000 million, but it is still only 6 per cent of gross domestic product. As I said, in 1978, 6 per cent of our population is directly concerned with the rural sector. In 1950, the figure was 28 per cent; in 1960, it was 19 per cent; in 1970, it was 12 per cent; and today it is only 6 per cent. In America, the figure is approximately 3 per cent. We can expect a continued decline in Australia from 6 per cent to some stable figure which, presumably, will be about 3 or 4 per cent. But it should not be forgotten, as I have already mentioned, that that 6 per cent of our population, although it produces only 6 per cent of our gross domestic product, produces 40 to 50 per cent—some $5,000 million—of our export income. Up to 40 per cent of the jobs in this country are indirectly related to the production and support of the rural sector.

I should like to look quickly at some of the causes of this great gap in understanding. The traditional attitudes still apply. Farmers, to a large degree, still regard urban dwellers as people who live soft lives, are largely unproductive, and have all the money and amenities. In extreme cases, some urban dwellers are even seen as not being really Australians. Urban dwellers traditionally, and decreasingly I hope, look upon farmers as wealthy graziers who send their sons to expensive private schools, and have aeroplanes and seaside houses. Most of all, they probably envy the free and easy life that farmers are supposed to lead.

Of course, farmers forget that city dwellers have to put up with a great deal of noise pollution, extreme business competition, difficulties in running their businesses and, to some extent, a very dull routine. Urban dwellers forget the floods, the droughts, the heat, the lack of facilities, the low prices for produce and the bushfires. Anyone who has tried to fight a bushfire in Western Queensland in mid-January will know just what a problem it is.

To a large degree, I believe that farmers deserve this lack of understanding, because of some of the attitudes they have taken in the past. I should like to quote from a recent publication—

> "The community should be down on their bended knees, thanking the farmer for giving them plenty, and the cheapest, unsubsidised food in the world, from the driest continent on earth. The farmer is the salt of the earth and if they fold up the country will automatically fold up."

We all know that that is not true. If half the farmers in production in Australia went out of business tomorrow, there would still be enough food for the population. But the fact is that if they did go out of business we would be on the international dole, because 50 per cent of our export income would disappear.

Extreme statements, such as the one that I have just read, do tend to divide the community, and I think we should be careful that such attitudes on the part of the rural community are not given wide support, because they will lead to a forfeiture of urban support and sympathy.

What is widening the gap in understanding is the fact that too many people in the urban community just do not realise their dependence on the rural sector. A whole generation is growing up believing that milk comes from cartons, that meat is made in butcher shops, and that vegetables come in frozen packets. I might add that I believe one of

the other causes is to be laid directly at the door of the media. All too often country newspapers present country views for country people and do not attempt to bridge this gap in understanding. Urban newspapers report only disasters. They have, to a large extent, forgone any specialist rural reporting.

I should like to move on now to some suggestions to bridge this important gap in understanding. I suggest an expansion of media programmes on radio and T.V. and in the newspapers. I refer to programmes such as "A Big Country" and old serials such as "Blue Hills", which could be updated a bit whilst still incorporating the same principle. They could help to bridge this gap in understanding. Government assistance could be given in the form of sponsoring activities such as "Farm Weeks", which are big news in America. I should like to see the Government open to the public more frequently institutions such as the agricultural colleges at Gatton, Longreach and Emerald.

I should like to see political parties broadening their bases to include the interests of all people in the State, not sectional interests, and I believe that the party to which I belong, although it might have been guilty of being somewhat urbanised in the past, is in the process of expanding its base.

I believe that farmers' organisations should be more conscious of their public relations and do more to put their needs to politicians and to the community in general. In this regard, it is interesting to see that the Cattlemen's Union—we may not agree with some of its activities—has begun to open metropolitan branches, and I believe that this will be a successful venture.

I should like to see agricultural scientists, who are in a good position to do so because they see both sides of the question, do more explaining and refute the outlandish charges made against fertilisers and preservatives. To some extent, I believe that the changing agricultural scene will make some of its own adjustments. Many more agro-businessmen are becoming involved in agricultural pursuits and bringing with them a much more professional approach in marketing and public relations.

In conclusion, I suggest that it would be foolish to deny that the gap exists. There is great sympathy in urban communities for the rural sector, and that was particularly evident in the recent drought. But it is the lack of understanding of what makes the rural community tick that is the worry. As we all know, it is no use sending grass clippings for starving cattle. We already have enough divisions in this country—political, social and economic—and I do not believe that we should ignore the division that exists between the rural and urban communities. It will take goodwill and understanding on both sides to eliminate it, but it is too important an issue to ignore. In the long run, neither community can do without the other, and we should be looking to obtain maximum understanding betwen the two.

FOOTPATH PETROL PUMPS

Mr. YEWDALE (Rockhampton North) (12.12 p.m.): The matter of public importance that I raise today is the footpath petrol pumps that one sees scattered throughout shires, towns, and major provincial cities in Queensland, and the potential danger that they present to the community from day to day.

I shall describe briefly the rigid requirements placed on registered service stations. Firstly, no petrol pump may be installed within 6 m of council footpaths; secondly, there must be adequate fire protection in the event of a fire; and, thirdly, there must be no smoking and no naked lights when a pump is being used, and the engine must be stopped when explosive fuels are being handled. To my knowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, none of these requirements applies to the footpath pumps to which I am referring. They are often operated by children or members of the public serving themselves, and, because of their siting, they offer no protection to people or property in the vicinity. It is quite common to see people operating these pumps and filling petrol tanks while smoking a cigarette, or pedestrians smoking while casually moving past the pumps to attend to their personal business.

Motorists using controlled service stations usually are asked to turn off the engine of their vehicle; but when they pull up at a footpath pump, there are no safety requirements and no advice is given. The storekeeper or person in charge of the pump is not qualified in any way, and very often people are not asked to turn off the engine of their vehicle before refuelling begins.

Danger is also prevalent in late model vehicles, and it is necessary to be aware of the effects of overfilling a car fitted with anti-pollution devices. Again, it would seem to me that the people operating footpath pumps are not conversant with the danger.

Footpath pumps also create definite traffic hazards when refuelling is carried out within a few feet of passing cars, trucks, buses and other moving vehicles. In those circumstances, the danger is even greater when the fuelling point is on the driver's side of the vehicle. Many footpath pumps are sited near neighbourhood shops or buildings adjoining such premises.

As an example of a major catastrophe that could occur, I draw attention to what could happen if a bus full of schoolchildren was moving close to a pump when a lighted cigarette was thrown close to an open petrol tank or spilt petrol. One could easily imagine the results of an explosion in those circumstances.

Having cited the obvious hazards and dangers of such pumps, I should now like to list a number of requirements that should be placed on their operation. (Alternatively, they should be phased out or relocated to comply with current regulations covering service stations.)

(1) Adequate fire extinguishers and protection should be provided at the site of a footpath petrol pump.

(2) Signs should be placed in appropriate positions to indicate that the engine must be stopped, and that there must be no naked lights and no smoking at the pump.

(3) Only qualified persons should operate non-self-service pumps, particularly those without self-service automatic nozzles.

The point there is that many of the old footpath pumps do not have the latest nozzles on the serving end, and the flow of petrol is not controlled in the same way as it is with the modern devices.

(4) Persons under the age of 16 years should not be permitted to use petrol or liquid propane gas refilling devices.

Persons who operate such pumps should be of an age that they understand what they are doing. They should be qualified in some respect.

(5) Stricter checks should be made of all refuelling sites to ensure that regulations are adhered to.

(6) In towns or areas where the public has access to properly controlled filling stations, footpath pumps should be withdrawn from service immediately.

Many of the old pumps were installed many years ago when a shopkeeper in a small business area decided he would provide a service to motorists, and consequently he installed footpath pumps. At that time they served a useful purpose. Today most of them are not serving their original purpose as there are many other modern outlets in that area to meet the needs of motorists.

(7) In the case of country towns requiring footpath pumps because of the lack of proper facilities, the public should be warned, by prominent signs, that they are entering a petrol filling area, thus giving them the opportunity of not entering the area if they desire not to.

These days more and more people are travelling by car and coach in country areas. A coach could pass a vehicle that was being filled with petrol on the right-hand side. The person using the pump would be actually standing on the road as he filled the vehicle. Many honourable members would be aware of such circumstances in their own electorate. If a catastrophe occurred under such circumstances, we would say, "Why didn't we do something about it?" I have no statistics covering the problem, but it is obvious that throughout the length and breadth of Queensland there are many such self-service pumps or the old-fashioned type where the motorist actually pumps the petrol. In my own electorate I have seen petrol pumps almost on the edge of the gutter and close to moving traffic. One does not need much imagination to realise what could happen if there was a leakage of fuel or an overflow from a tank.

I would suggest that the Premier ask the Ministers concerned with safety, who would include the Minister for Labour Relations as he has some responsibility in connection with petrol outlets, to take a census throughout the State of how many such pumps are operating, where they are situated and other circumstances applying to their use. If it is considered that they should be allowed to continue to operate in the interests of a small community because no other outlets are available, certain provisions should be applied to their operation. As I have said, warning signs should be provided, and certain directions should be given to the proprietor. Unless something is done, the present dangers will continue to prevail.

Time and time again we are told by everybody concerned with the use of dangerous fuels, gases, etc., that we should strictly adhere to departmental requirements. We are told by fire brigade boards and the State Fire Services Council of the rigid requirements that apply to warehouses and retail outlets. However, it would seem that the old-fashioned pumps are being totally ignored. It behoves the Government to do something about the matter now that it has been drawn to its attention. I am sure that it had not even thought of it. Something must be done at top level to eliminate those pumps that are in dangerous locations and serve no useful purpose. Further accidents and injuries must be avoided.

OUTSTANDING AMBULANCE ACCOUNTS OF ABORIGINES IN NORTHERN ELECTORATES

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (12.21 p.m.): I want to raise the matter of outstanding accounts that are owed by a large percentage of Aborigines in the Barron River and Cook electorates to road and aerial ambulance services. I also want to refer generally to the problems associated with Aborigines in my electorate.

I believe in equal rights, equal conditions, equal responsibilities and equal work opportunities for all Australians, whether they be black, white, brown or yellow. My electorate contains a large number of tremendous coloured people who are fed up with the black trouble-shooters. The former member for Cook, Mr. Eric Deeral, was an outstanding fellow and one who represented his electorate very well. He possessed both a wonderful personality and tremendous capabilities. In contrast, there is Mick Miller, who, before Whitlam started handing out money to the Aborigines as if it was going out of fashion,

would have knocked down anyone who referred to him as a black fellow. Now, he would knock down anyone who referred to him as a white man. He claims that black is "in" and white is "out".

There are a few more persons like him, and I will mention their names. I am not frightened to mention the names of coloured people who deliberately set themselves up to create racial discrimination in my area and, for that matter, throughout Australia.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. TENNI: Members of the Opposition are interjecting. They support this type of element.

Other persons are John Grainer, Henry Fourmile, in Mareeba, Clarrie Grogan and so on. The majority of coloured people in North Queensland do not want to be associated with those fellows. Unfortunately, many people are frightened to speak out against those men because they are bullies, bouncers and standover merchants. The Aboriginal community certainly do not want them, nor do Australians at large.

To deal with the ambulance services—because the majority of Aboriginal people will not pay their subscriptions or costs of transport to local ambulance centres, the ambulance services are suffering. Members of the Opposition are smiling. This is happening in their electorates, but they do not have the guts to stand up and say so. They crawl to the Aborigines for votes. They even send buses out to collect them and bring them in to the polling booths.

The road ambulance services are being used as taxis by the majority of coloured people, yet no charges are being paid. When they use local taxi services, they pay for them; they do not, however, pay for ambulance transport.

The worst feature of all is that, in nine cases out of 10, when an ambulance bearer is called out to attend to an injured Aborigine, the injury has been sustained in a drunken brawl. Quite often, the ambulance bearer has to enter a filthy place and, because the inhabitants refuse to keep it clean, expose himself to the danger of contracting scabies and other diseases. As I say, on attending to an injured Aborigine, he finds out that the person involved with a cut arm, a split head or some other wound, has been injured in a drunken brawl. Nevertheless, because he is an ambulance bearer with the duty of trying to save life, he attends to the injured person. The centre concerned is not paid by the majority of these people. Thousands of dollars are owing to ambulance centres in North Queensland. They will never be paid. The cost of services used by Aborigines who do not subscribe or pay for Q.A.T.B. services will be met by increased contributions by subscribers and others in the community.

Although some Aborigines do not subscribe to the centre or pay for services they use, under the Act they are still entitled to the services. They know that they can use ambulances as taxis and that if they do not pay they will get away with it.

Most of the centres in the North were serving writs, but they were not getting anywhere with them. There seems to be one law for the coloureds and one for the whites. I am not saying that all of the coloureds are at fault. I have some good coloured people in my area.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. TENNI: Members of the Opposition are racists. They believe in discrimination against white people.

I urge the Aboriginal people who feel that they can continue to be parasites (feeding on the white community and the paying black community) to wake up to themselves and pay up or shut up; to stop using the ambulance services set up by the paying Australian public, be they black or white, unless they are prepared to pay. I suggest that they should walk if they cannot put aside the cost of one beer a week for the ambulance. I repeat that the cost represents only that of one beer a week. It is even less. It is only 30c a week and in some places it is only 20c a week. I remind these Aboriginal people that the cost of one lousy beer per week covers the subscription to the local ambulance, which provides cover every day of the week, every month of the year. That is all that the centres and the members of the good community, both black and white, who subscribe to the centres are asking.

Imagine the bad debts being incurred by centres such as the Cairns Ambulance Centre, which has both road and aerial services.

Mr. Underwood: Do you know how much?

Mr. TENNI: I have the figures. Who asked that question? Was it the honourable member for Cook? Whoever asked it should have checked on the answer if he did not know it.

It costs a lot of money to equip and operate an aerial ambulance. Unless all black and white members of the community subscribe, a centre with an aerial service soon runs into trouble. That is what is happening to aerial services in parts of Queensland. Because of increasing operational costs and the increasing bad debts of the Aboriginal people, I have no doubt that, in the near future, the Cairns Aerial Ambulance will close down. Members of the Opposition will not believe me, but time will prove me right. That will happen within the next 12 months if something is not done to convince the Aboriginal people that they should meet their commitments.

I believe that 95 per cent of Australians want equality for all people, both black and white. But land rights are biased against the whites in the community. We will not receive hand-outs unless we are prepared to work for them. Under the economic situation that has arisen since 1972, most whites will not achieve land-ownership. The continuing hand-out of privileges to Aborigines has created deep-seated resentment in the white community. It has eroded much of the goodwill that formerly existed between the people. We all want equality but we do not want an underprivileged white community, and that is what we are getting.

All Australians are born equal, irrespective of race or colour, and all are entitled to equal rights. At present we have a policy of give, give, give, and, in respect of the ambulance services in Far North Queensland, the majority of the Aborigines have decided to take, take, take, without paying for the services. The rest of the community, both black and white, are no longer prepared to cop it. I say to the Mick Millers, the Clarrie Grogans, the Henry Fourmiles and all the other stirrers, "Get off your backsides and stop this take, take, take. Get all your coloured friends together and pay up all outstanding accounts owing to the road and aerial ambulance services in North Queensland. Then, like the rest of sensible Australian people, both black and white, become subscribers and help to improve the financial position of all these services and not pull them backwards and damage the services that are given to your fellow Australians, as you are doing at the present moment." I say that they should meet their responsibilities, live decently and represent themselves as decent, sensible clean-living Australians, and help to support the ambulance centres as a lot of our coloured friends and the white population are doing.

(Time expired.)

STREET MARCH LEGISLATION

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (12.31 p.m.): Today, in the Matters of Public Interest debate, I want to speak on the most grave matter in the State today. On 14 September last year—15 months ago—the Liberal and National Parties withdrew the right of appeal to our courts against police decisions on street marches. This decision was in effect a vote of no confidence by the Government majority in Parliament in our judicial system. Since then, around 1,500 normally law-abiding Queenslanders have been arrested and over $1,000,000 in police resources has been squandered in upholding this unpopular, political law. Tomorrow, yet another violent confrontation seems imminent on a question that has not just divided the community, but divides at this very moment the Government that enforces it.

If proof were needed of the confused stance of the Liberal Party, it was provided this morning by its leader on radio. We discover from the Deputy Premier that the Liberal Party has, in fact, two completely different policies on this single issue. As a subservient minority within the coalition, it supports the National Party in its violent defence of the present legislation. But, at the same time, through a form of logic that completely escapes me, it professes to support the official Liberal Party policy, which is overwhelmingly against the street march laws. This is yet another example of the way in which the Liberal Party is a completely ineffective, impotent force within the coalition Government. Tomorrow, it will stand by timidly, hopelessly lost in a parliamentary no man's land, while the Premier uses the Police Force of this State as a political army against the people of Queensland.

Just under a fortnight ago the Premier made the Sherwood by-election a test of public opinion on the street march laws. At his own initiative, he converted the by-election campaign into an unofficial mini-referendum on the issue. The voters in Sherwood gave him their answer in no uncertain terms. His National Party finished a distant fourth in the by-election, recording only a dismal one in every 10 votes counted.

This week, somewhere between $20,000 and $50,000 in Crown money will be spent in promoting a violent policy on street marches that Sherwood shows is rejected by 90 per cent of the Brisbane people. I ask the Liberal Party leader and the Liberal Party Treasurer —indeed, the Liberal Party deputy leader, who presented the original legislation—just where they stand on this waste of public money. Was this political misuse of these funds approved by Cabinet? If so, when? Or is it just one more of the Premier's wildly extravagant adventures at the expense of the taxpayers?

We have public funds diverted in this fashion to promote a minority political viewpoint through the community on an issue that the National Party, the Liberal Party and the Premier refuse to discuss in this Parliament. The member for Lytton has had a notice of motion on the parliamentary Business Paper since 12 April and the Government that squanders public money to report through paid advertisements refuses to allow it to be discussed. I believe that the people of Sherwood, on behalf of most Queenslanders, showed they want to see an end to this senseless confrontation in our streets.

It is time to end the hatreds and bitterness that have grown out of control in our normally, easy-going community in Queensland. It is time to end this violence so foreign to our society, with police against people, people against police. It is unthinkable that 20,000 people can march peacefully in Sydney, and more than 10,000 in Melbourne while, at the same time, a much smaller demonstration on

the same issue under Queensland law ends in brutal brawling and injury. I believe it is time that people with influence in this street march issue got together calmly and rationally, free of political overtones, and worked out a satisfactory solution in relation to freedom of public assembly in Queensland. Surely the objective of peaceful enforcement of law and order in our society should be the target of all responsible sections of our community, including the Liberal Party.

The Trades and Labor Council, in a letter to the Premier a week ago suggesting a conference on this question, initiated yet again a welcome move towards a peaceful solution of this issue. That letter was ignored by the Premier. He did not even bother to reply. Mr. Bjelke-Petersen is too preoccupied with the promotion of violence to consider the permanent injury, or even death, that could result from a virtual civil war in our streets tomorrow.

We have the situation in which the Liberal Party, under the feeble excuse of coalition solidarity, is prepared to abide by a violent decision that is contrary to its own policy. Rather than offend the National Party and this aggressive Premier, it is willing to see innocent young Queenslanders bashed, arrested and jailed in defence of a political principle they themselves contemptuously pretend to support. If some Queensland citizen is seriously hurt or killed tomorrow, his or her blood will be on the hands of this weak and silent Liberal Party.

I believe that Queenslanders are entitled to expect not just a debate but a clear decision from this Parliament on an issue that divides the community and the Government. They are entitled to see Parliament take a stand on a question which the Premier deems so urgent and so important that he spent thousands of dollars this week to influence public opinion. The opportunity for debate has been before this Parliament since 12 April, with the notice of motion of the honourable member for Lytton. The Government has ignored its opportunity to defend a law that even the State president of the Liberal Party has publicly disowned. This is one more example of the depth at which the Liberal Party finds itself in the captivity of the National Party in this so-called coalition. It is, in effect, nothing more than an echo for the Premier. The Liberal Party parliamentarians are prepared to defame and dishonour the principles of their own policies rather than upset the Premier, Mr. Sparkes or Mr. Evans.

This law—this bad law—is disowned by our most respected church leaders; disowned by our most eminent lawyers; disowned by the Australian Labor Party; disowned by the Australian Democrats; disowned by nine out of 10 voters in Sherwood; and disowned even by the Liberal Party, although some members are too afraid to admit it. If there is bloodshed in our streets tomorrow without the chance of parliamentary debate, the shame is on the heads of the 24 Liberal Party parliamentarians in this chamber. The guilt is theirs.

No-one expects anything better from the Premier. Violence is his trade mark—police aggression has been his political weapon for over seven years. But the people are entitled to anticipate some sign of courage from people who pretend one policy outside Parliament when they want votes and another one altogether when the elections are declared.

Let me make my position very, very clear. I opposed this change in law away from the courts when the Bill was debated on 14 September last year, and I oppose it now. On that occasion 15 months ago I said, "Let us bring Queenslanders together again." I say here today yet again, "Let us bring Queenslanders together again."

This is a bad law; an immoral law; a law that allows the Premier to discriminate against the freedoms of not just political opponents, but all who differ with him on almost any issue. But at the same time I cannot, in all conscience, counsel my fellow Queenslanders to offer themselves as sacrifices to satisfy the brutal desires of an irrational Premier. I believe most thinking Queenslanders want to see this question affecting a very basic freedom of a democratic society settled peacefully through this Parliament rather than fought savagely in the streets, in paddy wagons and in the Magistrates Courts.

As a step towards avoiding the violence that otherwise seems destined to erupt tomorrow, I am prepared to move now, if granted leave, that this Parliament is willing to rescind the amendment of the Traffic Act of 14 September last year in relation to the right of appeal on street march decisions. I will seek the opportunity to move today for an expression by this Parliament that Queenslanders are entitled to again enjoy what is accepted throughout the free world as free speech, free assembly and free religious practice. No-one suggests for a moment that our streets should be perpetually choked with seething masses of demonstrators. That was not the case before this change of law. The Police Commissioner admits this in his annual report to Parliament. If the Liberal Party is prepared today to join here with Labor in support of its own official policy, I believe Parliament can act in a responsible manner that will earn it the respect of most concerned Queenslanders. I believe if we can come forward with a suitable expression it will bring a similar response of conciliation from the organisers of tomorrow's rally.

If this Parliament is prepared to do that, then I will make myself available and make that approach to the organisers of this rally to call off tomorrow's street march. I believe that from such action we can advance (and

again I am prepared to mediate) to meaningful discussion, such as the conference suggested to the Premier by the Trades and Labor Council, to draft satisfactory peaceful rules or guide-lines for the right of assembly. A broad conference of this nature proved a tremendous success in Victoria, and I am certain that co-operation and common sense would bring the same results in Queensland.

At this late stage, I appeal here in Parliament for a signal of unity, a sign of understanding, so that the violence that seems imminent tomorrow over bad law can be avoided. It seems incredible that our community can be split in vicious division over a change in law that was never necessary.

I issue a challenge to the Liberal Party in this Parliament to stand up and be counted on its own policy; to join with the Labor Party in seeking a peaceful outcome through this House to a frightening problem on which so many Queenslanders are looking to us for guidance.

I therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Row): Order! This is an allotted day for the Matters of Public Interest debate, and the time allotted for other business has expired.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the right of any member at any time to seek leave to move such a motion.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I draw the attention of the Leader of the Opposition to the statement that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, made in relation to the honourable gentleman's allotted time having expired.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have not said that my time has expired. I seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Under the Sessional Order, the honourable gentleman's time has now expired. I call the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is quite competent for me, in accordance with the Standing Orders, to seek leave of the House to move such a motion. It is a matter entirely for the House. That is what I have sought to do.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BOURKE: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. CASEY: I seek that leave.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CASEY: I seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice.

Mr. BOURKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Make your point of order.

Mr. BOURKE: I am next on the list to speak in the debate on Matters of Public Interest today, and I wish to do so. I do not wish my time to be wasted by this——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Under the Sessional Order relating to the time limit of speeches in this debate, I called the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr. BOURKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the call.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order and members will resume their seats. As I understand the situation, this is an allotted day for the Matters of Public Interest debate. The allotted time of the Leader of the Opposition expired. Under those circumstances, I called the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the clock showed that I still had one minute in which to speak in the Matters of Public Interest debate, I sought leave of the House to move a motion without notice. The buzzer did not ring until some considerable time later, after the Premier and somebody else had risen to take points of order. I believe that, in accordance with the Standing Orders, it is quite competent for me at any stage of any debate in this House to seek leave to move a motion without notice, and I did so accordingly. Mr. Speaker, I understand that that has been your ruling in the past. Prior to the expiration of my allotted time in this debate, I sought leave to move a motion without notice. I again seek your ruling on this matter, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice.

Mr. BOURKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the honourable member for Lockyer has received the call from the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a further point of order. I seek your ruling on this matter. In accordance with the Standing

Orders, is it not competent for me at any stage to seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice, as I did on this occasion while still addressing the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr. CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the ruling of the Deputy Speaker be dissented from.

Mr. SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a further point of order. Again, in accordance with the Standing Orders, I believe that it is competent for me to move such a motion at any time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is not permitted to move such a motion. The General Business today is Matters of Public Interest. The honourable member for Lockyer has been called and will continue the debate.

Mr. CASEY: I rise to a point of order. I give notice that I shall move that the ruling of the Deputy Speaker be dissented from.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. I again call the honourable member for Lockyer.

BELLEVUE AND THE MANSIONS BUILDINGS; ANZAC SQUARE WAR MEMORIAL

Mr. BOURKE (Lockyer) (12.45 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak today in the debate on Matters of Public Interest about two areas of special concern——

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I told the member for Archerfield before that I will not tolerate persistent interjections from him while a member is on his feet.

Mr. BOURKE: I wish to speak today about two areas of special concern to the public in the Brisbane area. I commence by saying that personally I am not a believer in simple-minded conservation.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You are simple-minded yourself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Archerfield under Standing Order 123A. The next time he interjects, I will ask him to leave the Chamber.

Mr. BOURKE: Merely because a building is old is not sufficient reason, in my opinion, to justify its preservation. I think that members of the community should look beyond mere age as making a building or an area worthy of preservation.

However, I believe—and I think that the majority of the population would agree with me—that buildings and precincts of special historical or emotional significance should certainly be preserved if that can be done at reasonable cost. Indeed, I think that the community is prepared to go to a fair amount of expense to preserve buildings of special significance and buildings that have played a role in the history of this State. Under these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we, as responsible members of Parliament, should be acting in the interests of the community and endeavouring to preserve certain distinguished buildings and areas, where a group of buildings constitute an area.

The point I wish to make at this stage is that, despite some of the attitudes of the National Trust, conservation should be carried out at Government expense. It is completely unfair to come upon a person who has purchased a building and suddenly impose upon him responsibility for preserving it in the interests of the community. My first point is that if we, as a community, make a conscious decision to preserve a building or an area, we should be prepared to shoulder the full expense of so doing and not expect the owner of the building to bear it.

From a community point of view, the practice of knocking down sound buildings just to obtain vacant land is not good economy and should be avoided wherever possible. I have a specific building in mind, and it is part of the Parliament House area. I refer to The Mansions building, the preservation of which is relevant to the whole area. A description has been done of it as part of the Parliament House precinct, and I believe that, both as part of that precinct and as a building in its own right, it deserves to be preserved.

In retrospect, plans and photographs of the Bellevue building, with its verandas, show that it, too, was worthy of preservation. I very much regret that the verandas were stripped from the Bellevue and the building left as it is today. As a country member who stays there, I must say that the Bellevue as it is now is not worth preserving. In days gone by, when the verandas were intact, it was; unfortunately the time has passed when it is worth making a big effort to save it.

However, I do not say the same about The Mansions. I think that The Mansions is worth preserving if the cost is reasonable. I do not have in mind any half-baked scheme to preserve the facade and build a new building behind it. The whole building should be preserved.

I am very suspicious of the Government's motives in this instance; I am suspicious about the fact that it has not announced a firm plan for The Mansions and for the whole general area. I look forward to the day when the Government indicates openly what its plans are for The Mansions, the Bellevue building and, possibly, the Bellevue site. The Government should state its intentions clearly. It should call for as wide a consultation as possible with the public and give everyone a chance to contribute and say exactly what he or she thinks about the issue. Having seen the pamphlet on the area prepared by the National Trust, I am of the opinion that the area had great merit and great attraction. In fact, it still has, even with the prospect that the Bellevue will disappear. If The Mansions can be preserved and the remaining area can be turned into a park, the area will still have a great deal of attraction and a great deal of merit.

The other precinct to which I wish to refer specifically is Anzac Park. Lately A.L.P. spokesmen have made a great song and dance about the buying of freehold land in Queensland by Mr. Iwasaki, who happens to be a businessman of Japanese birth. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we see an A.L.P. Brisbane City Council trying to make deals with insurance companies from all over the world over an area in the centre of Brisbane that is very dear to the hearts of many people, the Anzac Park War Memorial. The cost of establishing that park was largely met by donations from people all over Queensland. The Government provided the land, and both the Commonwealth and State Governments contributed towards the cost; to my knowledge, the Brisbane City Council or its predecessors did not provide anything. The council has now come along, cast its eyes on the park and endeavoured to seize it and sell it to an insurance company as part of a land deal, to sweeten the deal for the block on the other side of the road. In my mind, its actions are beyond comprehension.

I congratulate Mr. Kelly of the Save Anzac Square Society for the work he has done. He has performed a worthwhile function, and I think that the citizens of this city should be prepared to mobilise and make their feelings known on this subject. Some of the trendy members of the A.L.P. talk about public interest, and they are great people for marches. However, when it suits them, they try to suppress as far as possible the genuine feelings of the people. When it affects them, they are not prepared to go out and find out what the ordinary citizen feels and thinks, and they are not prepared to consider his feelings on the matter.

Much has been made of the attitude of the R.S.L. I am personally sorry that the Government has not seen fit to make room available to the R.S.L. in the S.G.I.O. building for the preservation of its relics, or to put some money into the restoration of the crypt at the Ann Street end of Anzac Square.

I have visited the war cemeteries in France, where many World War I servicemen are buried. They are very well tended. As a young Australian visiting overseas, I was touched by the fact that so many young people from my own country were buried there so far away from their homeland. Those men who fell during that war 60 years ago are very often forgotten in Australia today. They died for this country because they had a love for it, perhaps a greater love than that shown by many young people and others in this nation today.

Those bodies were not brought back to Australia for burial. They were buried overseas, and those graves and memorials have been well cared for. Is it too much to ask that we show similar consideration for the war memorial in our own city? Anzac Square in Brisbane is the equivalent of a cemetery in their own country for those who fell overseas. I can well imagine the reaction of members of this House and citizens of this nation if we were to hear that an Arabian Government or some other foreign Government had seized one of our overseas war memorials or cemeteries and turned it into a block of shops or a bazaar. We would all be very agitated and upset about it. But that is exactly what the Brisbane City Council is proposing to do with our own Anzac Square memorial. It is going to sell something that it does not own and never has owned—an area that has been set aside as a sacred memorial—to an insurance company, which would then put up shops, erect a car-park and generally use it to make money out of the block across the road. It is prepared to throw the State's war memorial into the pot for an insurance company to make money out of a purely commercial deal.

I cannot see that what is proposed would increase the visual attraction of the area; in fact, it would detract from it. If the council were sincere in its ideas, having resumed the land between Adelaide Street and Queen Street, it should be prepared to donate that land so that it could be amalgamated with the Anzac Square concept. But it is not prepared to do that; it wants to use it as part of a commercial, money-making deal. As a member of the Government, I am opposed to the concept in detail and in practice. I am not alone in that; many other Government members feel the same way.

The Government is now obliged to consider the proposal. The time must come when it is considered, and it must be finally rejected. The whole idea must be put down and finished with so that there can be no more speculation about it. When that happens, the matter will be over and done with. It would be cause for great shame

if we in any way condoned or encouraged the Brisbane City Council in its scheme to seize that land from people who cannot defend it. I am sure that many other Government members will oppose any project that would mutilate the original intention for which that land was donated.

STREET MARCH LEGISLATION

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (12.53 p.m.): We have just witnessed a very interesting exhibition in this House by a man who talked this morning about compromising—a man who is the greatest compromiser with his own conscience in this community, a man who offers to mediate between the Government and the union. He is the last man honourable members on this side would want to use as a mediator, unless it was a matter of dealing with moneys in the honourable member's manner, with all the debts he has around the place. That is the sort of compromising character he is. He offered to compromise. The Government would never accept any of his services as a compromiser.

The cold, hard facts are that Opposition members are trying to make a last-ditch appeal for their mates up in the Trades Hall who are getting cold feet.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They have had an opportunity to observe the law. Honourable members opposite know that they have not abided by the law; they are out to break the law. They know that they are going to be branded equally with the other people who are breaking the law. This House will no doubt take appropriate action tomorrow to place on record a censure motion against honourable members opposite who are involved in the march and give it their support and backing.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition will no doubt try to forestall the action that this Government will take tomorrow afternoon to have a censure motion moved against Labor members of Parliament who become involved in the protest march. The whole point is that these people had their opportunity. We have laid it all out quite clearly. No doubt the honourable member would not read the true story in the newspapers. He talks in terms of altering the legislation to what it was before. He does not seem to know that there is no appeal in any of the other States, and that Queensland is the only State in which there is an appeal. We know that they do not want any appeal.

The Trades Hall is split right down the middle on this issue. We know it, and Opposition members know it. That is why they are trying to get off the hook. The Leader of the Opposition has no influence whatever over the Left Wing. They have already labelled him as a grouper. They know his history and background. Everybody knows that he was tossed out and compromised with his conscience to get back into the party again. Everybody knows that he is one of the groupers of days gone by. The Trades Hall is split wide open.

We know that 16 people were going to march. Now that the day has come, however, only four will do so. That was reported in the Press yesterday. They roar like lions before the event, but they get cold feet.

This is a test of strength to determine who runs the country and who does not run it. The Trades Hall is prepared to defy the law, break the law and support people who are out to destroy our democracy and preach revolution.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The honourable members for Port Curtis and Bulimba will contain themselves.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Certain people outside have appointed themselves the extra-parliamentary opposition because they know that Opposition members in this Chamber are of no value whatever to their cause. They cry for compromise. They want us to compromise, as the Leader of the Opposition compromised with his conscience. They want this Parliament to compromise in a similar way.

I make it clear to those people that we are not giving a permit to march. Let me read from the article that I have already included in "Hansard". The portion to which I refer reads as follows—

> "Then the fateful moment arrived as they came onto the street, hundreds of bodies, row upon row, arms linked, yelling the words of revolution, the opening words of which seem to scream into my brain, 'Shoot all the Judges, kill all the police . . .' and they were in the mood to do it.
> "Peaceful demonstration . . . my eye!"

Opposition members are mixed up with those people and are trying to help them organise an illegal demonstration.

There is no way in the world that the Government will let the Leader of the Opposition or his fellow members off the hook by moving the motion outlined by him. Tomorrow afternoon the House will deal with Opposition members who have adopted a certain attitude.

As to appeals—the facts are that, in New South Wales, permits have to be obtained from the Police Commissioner or the local authority, and there is no appeal; in Victoria, permits must be obtained from the local authority, and there is no appeal; in Western Australia, permits must be obtained from the Police Commissioner, and there is no appeal; and in Tasmania, permits must be obtained from the Transport Commissioner, and there is no appeal. In South Australia, no permit is required, but if there is an accident or a similar incident, the marchers forfeit their immunity from the law. So it can be seen that the Queensland system is more than generous and is much better than that in any other State. We give a right of appeal to the Police Commissioner if the permit is rejected.

Mr. D'Arcy interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourmember who interjected bought a new car for $56,000 and, when the matter was raised in this Chamber, he got a great fright and sold it the next day. He knew that something very interesting was involved in relation to it. He is suggesting that the streets be taken over by an unauthorised and illegal march. The honourable member for Gladstone adopts a similar attitude.

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

ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. C. R. PORTER (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (2.15 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to amend the Aborigines Act 1971–1975 and the Torres Strait Islanders Act 1971–1975 each in certain particulars."

This Bill is a legislative expression of a promise that this Government made to the indigenous peoples of Queensland. We have repeatedly said that the Acts affecting the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples are their Acts. Just as they now exist in the form that they have requested, so we said they will be altered or abolished as the clear concensus of the people recommends.

I think the earnest of our sincerity is that these Acts are self-terminating. In the terminology of the United States, they are "sunset" Acts. They end after five years, so they must be reviewed in 1983, just as they must be reviewed and reinstated now. No other State gives its Aboriginal peoples this cast-iron guarantee of continuing review and change in accordance with their wishes —nor does the Commonwealth.

The advisory commission that was established by my predecessor some 18 months ago came into existence for the specific purpose of ensuring that this pledge on future Aboriginal and Islander legislation would be fully honoured. The commissioners spent some 15 months in visiting communities; there were hours of discussion with each elected council and much talking to private groups and individuals. Equally, the commissioners considered extensive submissions from many bodies, including the Commonwealth Government, churches and other entities.

The amending Bill deals with both Acts. It is the outcome of the commission's many months of conferring up and down Queensland and in the Torres Strait. Last week I took the unusual step of tabling for the frankest public inspection a report which, essentially, was made to me as a Minister, and not made to the Parliament. That was done so that all should know the facts. The commission's report was most comprehensive and most detailed. It was, perhaps, the most objective study ever done in this country by the indigenous people themselves into what their own peoples in the cities and towns, on the reserves, on the mainland, and on the Torres Strait islands want.

The commission naturally stood in an utterly different relationship to their own people from that occupied by academics, Left-wing and other self-appointed experts who are always so ready to make pronouncements and offer remedies for very difficult and complex situations. As was only to be expected, the commission produced utterly different recommendations. I and the Government will leave it to the electorate to judge which body is most likely to reflect the genuine aspirations and needs of the indigenous peoples. Is it those who are themselves indigenous peoples and hold important office in their own particular communities; those who theorise from ivory towers; or, worse still, those who are viciously attempting to divide Australia and to sow the seeds of discord and distrust in the hope that that will produce a bitter future harvest that will weaken our country and reduce our capacity to play a proper role in the world of a looming 21st Century?

This Bill, then, is an expression of the commission's recommendations, and what is not covered legislatively will be dealt with in extensive changes to regulations made under the Act. I will mention them after giving a brief resume of the salient points in the Bill. Whilst it is one Bill, it will in fact amend each of the Aborigines Act and the Torres Strait Islanders Act in a similar manner.

It is proposed to establish the Aboriginal and Islander Commission as a permanent body, with its members serving a 3-year term.

There is a minor amendment to the position of clerks of the court functioning as district officers under the Acts. As in most

petty sessions districts there is now more than one clerk of the court, it is obviously sensible that in certain circumstances duties can be undertaken by more than one district officer in a particular Magistrates Court district.

But the main change in this area is that we have now provided access for indigenous peoples to the normal judicial processes. This follows the strongest recommendation from the commission, and means that people in communities retain their present right of appeal from an Aboriginal court to a visiting justice or Magistrates Court, but now can also elect to use the normal judicial processes up to the Full Court and the High Court, if they so wish. This is a very real step towards equality, both in terms of legal justice and individual responsibility before the law, as between Aborigines, Islanders and their white fellow-Queenslanders.

The right of elected councils on reserves to deny a continued presence by someone claiming an entitlement to be there under some other Government's legislation is reinforced.

Community councils will now take a great step forward in acceptance of responsibility by becoming bodies corporate, and thus become capable of suing and being sued.

An important flow-on of this move should be an increase in Commonwealth funds for housing. Previously our Federal colleagues had a preference for funding through co-operative groups because they said the community councils were not incorporated. With incorporation, this objection disappears, and obviously this matter of greater Federal funding for housing is an important aspect with all the communities.

Finally, there are provisions repealed that dealt with the consequences of traditional racial practices. These are no longer realistic in today's circumstances, and the matters such as illegitimate issue and capacity to succeed as heirs-at-law are now covered by the Status of Children Act and other general law. This becomes another area in which indigenous peoples become the same as other peoples in our total community.

As I said, other recommendations from the commission will be dealt with through the regulations, where extensive alterations will appear.

Subject to Governor in Council sanction, councils will determine the canteen hours for sale of liquor, and making home supplies available.

The commission has recommended payment of award wages on reserves but recognises that there must be an inevitable corollary of higher rentals for homes, charges imposed for municipal-type services previously provided without cost, and so on. The Government recognises the importance of this and will move to it as rapidly as possible.

Another important change will be acceptance by the State Electoral Office of responsibility for council elections on reserves, which involves the proper preparation of rolls, the supervision of secret balloting, and all the other procedures normally practised by the Electoral Office.

The role of managers on reserves, whilst very important, is already very much an advisory one, and changes to regulations will ensure that this process continues. It is many years now since a community council decision was deferred or vetoed by a manager and this will be recognised.

The Government has given every assurance of good faith and sincere intention that it is possible to give. The advisory commission's report has been made public before the presentation of this Bill, so that all can check for themselves to see if we indeed adhered to the promises to legislate for the recommendations the commission made. Yesterday, I tabled the department's annual report, which is complete, utterly frank and a forthright account of our stewardship—so those who wish criticise and who are determined to find fault have all this material also available them.

Let me say again that this Bill represents what the indigenous peoples of Queensland and the islands overwhelmingly want. Over 90 per cent of them want it. Their voice requested this—not the voice of some group who see our indigenous peoples as little more than expendable cannon-fodder for some ideological war. I just want to warn this Committee——

Mr. Davis: You've got a lovely turn of phrase.

Mr. PORTER: The honourable member who just interjected might take note of the warning. I want to warn this Committee that much of what surfaces here as apparently spontaneous calls from local aboriginal groups all too often are neither spontaneous nor local. They are quite sinister manifestations of deliberate, well-planned, long-range endeavours by forces outside these shores to meddle, with malice aforethought, in our affairs. That the A.L.P. so consistently lends itself to supporting and promoting these attacks demonstrates that it has little concern for the real best interests of the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, and no concern at all for the long-term security of this State and of the nation.

For my department, this been a difficult year, when this Government's policies in the area of this portfolio have been assailed in one of the fiercest, most hysterical and most concerted attacks ever mounted on any Government in any area of policy. Through it all we maintained our policies, kept control of our own lands and aided our own people through our own statutory instruments—just as we are doing here today.

We remain supreme and in command. But this Committee—and the people of this State and Australia—should know that the attacks we have endured to date may be only a very pale shadow of what lies ahead. There is mounting evidence from overseas of a massive malevolent move against Australia, funded by millions of dollars and emanating from a body known as the Black Africa Movement, for all-out assault on Australian unity. Well-known radicals have already been financed on trips overseas, where they address meetings on the Continent and in England organised by this movement, obtain media coverage, do T.V. programmes and tell a vicious anti-Australian story. A Granada T.V. team was here last week filming in Weipa and Aurukun, led around by the radicals who have just returned from an overseas trip financed by an overseas body.

The objective of this massive international thrust is to secure separate development in Australia: to create huge black areas comprising much of the mineral-rich north of our continent, operating apart from (and certainly not as part of) the general Australian community. Because Queensland stands so firmly and so successfully against this regressive policy, clearly these forces see Queensland as a State where resistance must be broken at all costs if they are to win in Australia. Other States, (and notably the Northern Territory) recognise this, and make plain their dependence on us to maintain the unity of one people, one nation, one future. This Bill is the expression of our pledge to the State's indigenous peoples (the Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and South Sea Islanders); a pledge that we will assist them to eventual integration, but at a pace, and with the safeguards they themselves determine, maintaining their own cultural identity which enriches all of us.

The Bill will be taken only to the printing stage, so it can lie on the table for the fullest consideration and discussion by all those interested until the March session. Nothing can be fairer or more eloquent of genuine intention than that. When discussion of the Bill continues next March, ample information will be given of the proposed regulatory changes. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (2.31 p.m.): The Opposition, naturally enough, will be opposing this Bill in every possible way.

Mr. Porter: Naturally.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I am glad that the Minister said "naturally", because he can rest assured that the members of the A.L.P. in this Chamber will continue to attempt to highlight the denigration of the blacks in Queensland. When the Minister talks about these radical groups from overseas coming into Queensland, I wonder whether it is not mere coincidence that he does not happen to mention his own favourite group, the National Front, which is involved here in Queensland. I certainly think that the policies that we hear coming from those people coincidentally are in line with the policies that the Queensland Government preaches when it talks about Aborigines and Islanders throughout this State.

Mr. Wright: The Ku-Klux-Klan, too, now.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: That is very true.

Since the Minister tabled the report from the commission, I have had discussions with a number of community groups, including people from the church. I make the point here, to place it on the record of this Chamber, that I am not speaking about the Communists or the mad Left-wing radicals; I am talking about the sensible people in the community who have read this report from the commission and totally reject it out of hand.

The Minister talked about the Government's electoral promise some months ago—12 months ago, to be exact—to form this commission to present a report to the Queensland Minister. Of course, everybody is well aware of the fact that the commission was set up at that time merely as a sop. It was not set up to try to look after the best interests of black Queenslanders; in fact, it was deliberately set up to give black Queenslanders the impression that this Government was trying to do something constructive for them. It was a mere charade and a desperate attempt to try to save Eric Deeral in the electorate of Cook. Of course, we know that that was not successful. It was spelt out in the Government's policy speech that this commission would be established.

I am very critical of the commissioners who were responsible for bringing down this report, because I believe that they had the greatest opportunity ever presented to a group of people to do something constructive on behalf of the Aboriginal and Islander people of Queensland, the people of their own race. They had an opportunity to bring down laws and recommendations which could have seen Queensland projected, I believe, as a part of a leading nation in the world today in coloured affairs.

I say to this Committee, and I make no apology for doing so, that, in my opinion, the people who brought down this report should be gaoled for taking money under false pretences. There is nothing in this report that can really be said to be designed to update, or to recommend the updating, of the legislation. Later in my address I shall refer to a couple of sections in the report. By and

large, it has been a disgusting public relations exercise by the people who prepared this report. In fact, if one looks at the composition of this commission, one sees, I believe, that it leaves much to be desired. Previously in this Chamber I have mentioned Mr. Les Stewart, the chairman of the commission and the chairman of the Cherbourg Council. Quite frankly, I believe that Mr. Stewart would walk over hot coals if the Minister told him to do so. That is my honest opinion of the man.

I have a letter here with me today that was sent to me by a resident or submitted to me by a resident from the Cherbourg Council. I intend to read from it because I think it is very pertinent to the point that I have just made to the Minister.

Mr. Porter: What is the name of the person?

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: It is headed "Cherbourg Council", and in it the resident says—

> "The Cherbourg Council is not representative of the people apart from two new Councillors elected this year, whom the people feel are the only ones who truly represent them. The Chairman of the Cherbourg Council has been in this position for many years and members of the Community cannot even remember when they were given the opportunity to vote for him as Chairman. The people feel that he does not speak for them but is simply a mouthpiece for the Department and the Director. Apart from the Chairman the Council itself has very little real power or decision making ability. In fact, when one of the Councillors asked the Manager the extent of his responsibilities the reply was given 'How far can you go? As far as the Act will let you go.' "

We are all well aware, Mr. Gunn, of the restrictions that are placed on the black people of Queensland under that Act.

One of the shameful things that took place during the commission's work should be mentioned in this Chamber today. I refer to the sacking of Mrs. Colless from the commission. She was one of the more up-to-date people.

Mr. Porter: You didn't give us the name of the person who wrote to you.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I do not intend to give the Minister the name. He would probably ride him out of Queensland on a rail.

Mr. PORTER: Mr. Gunn, I move—

"That the letter from which the honourable member for Wolston quoted be tabled."

Question put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 45

Akers	Lee
Armstrong	Lickiss
Austin	Lockwood
Bird	Moore
Bishop	Muller
Booth	Neal
Bourke	Newbery
Camm	Porter
Campbell	Powell
Edwards	Row
Elliott	**Scassola**
Frawley	Scott-Young
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson
Glasson	Sullivan
Greenwood	Tenni
Gygar	Tomkins
Hinze	Turner
Hodges	Warner
Hooper, M. D.	White
Innes	
Katter	*Tellers*:
Kippin	
Kyburz	Ahern
Lane	McKechnie

NOES, 20

Blake	Shaw
Casey	Underwood
Davis	Vaughan
Fouras	Wilson
Gibbs, R. J.	Wright
Hansen	Yewdale
Houston	
Jones	
Kruger	*Tellers*:
Mackenroth	
Milliner	Scott
Prest	Warburton

PAIRS:

Bjelke-Petersen	Burns
Hartwig	D'Arcy
Hewitt, N. T. E.	Hooper, K. J.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the letter on the table.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I am glad the Minister took the opportunity to try to make some mark on his portfolio. Obviously after today he will be a byword to the Aboriginal people.

I make it very clear today that upon the election of an A.L.P. Government we will make no bones about it——

Government Members interjected.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: They can laugh. They must realise that the writing is on the wall.

We spell it out very clearly in our policy that we will abolish the Aborigines Act and the Torres Strait Islanders Act in toto. No legislation such as the present Acts will exist once we become the Government.

I wish now to refer to a number of matters contained in the report. At page 6 there is reference to the methodology used in gathering information for the report. I quote from the report as follows—

> "Early in the course of their duties, commissioners determined that they should not accept invitations to attend public

meetings and possibly be placed into a situation where they were merely justifying existing legislation, but rather that information should be gathered by individual approaches or submissions to the commission."

Why weren't they prepared to attend public meetings or have public hearings? I suggest that it was because they knew full well that they could not justify the legislation in Queensland.

Mr. Campbell: You are completely discredited.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: Look, grandfather, I feel sorry for you.

As I said, because these people were well aware of the fact that the injustices in the Act would be highlighted in Queensland, they were not prepared to attend public meetings. Why wasn't the commission set up on the same basis as the education inquiry? Why weren't people allowed to make submissions to it? Why couldn't it hold public meetings? I have already given the reasons why that was not so. I believe that the commissioners have turned out to be merely Uncle Toms for the Queensland Government.

On page 11 the commissioners, who are supposed to have the interests of their own people at heart, state—

"It is a fact that the Aboriginal and Islander Councils in Queensland, and further this Aboriginal and Islander Commission, view with deep concern deliberate attempts to override and nullify these laws and regard continuance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Act as a grave discourtesy."

It is no wonder that they regarded it as a grave discourtesy; it was the only sensible piece of legislation introduced in either the State or Federal Parliament in the best interests of the Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland. As we know, it was introduced by the Whitlam Government because at that time the Queensland Government was making very strong attempts to adopt subversive and standover tactics against Aboriginal and Islanders on reserves. The Whitlam Government introduced that legislation in the best interests of the black people.

That legislation stipulated, among other things, that Aborigines working on reserves must be paid at least minimum award wages. On previous occasions I have quoted figures to substantiate my contention that the Queensland Government will not pay award wages on reserves. The Minister made the point that, in their report, the commissioners advocated the introduction of legislation to provide for the payment of equal wages or minimum award rates on reserves. The Minister commented that the Queensland Government is working towards achieving that. All that means is that in 20 years' time we might see the first step taken to provide for the payment of minimum award wages—provided, of course, the Government is still in office, which it won't be. It would take the Minister 20 years to honour his promise. However, I am prepared to predict now that for as long as this Government stays in office the black people on reserves will never be paid the equivalent of an award wage. This Government will continue to exploit them and not pay them award rates.

In their report, the commissioners also mention land rights. From some of the wording used in this historical document, a person reading it could not be blamed for gaining the impression that the Minister himself compiled it. It contains terms such as "Left-wing radicals", and so on. That is the terminology the Minister is notorious for using.

Mr. Campbell: Are you ashamed of it?

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: No, I am not ashamed of it at all. In fact, the Left Wing has a great deal to offer the community.

The report comes down very solidly against the adoption of land rights. I spell out very clearly that the A.L.P., in Government, will grant land rights to Aborigines in Queensland. Aborigines will be set up on the basis of a corporate body and the present reserves will be turned over to them on that basis.

In the next few months, that is, prior to the second reading of this Bill next year, I believe that this report will be exposed for the fraudulent document that it is.

My last point concerns the following statement in the report—

"The Commission, after full and careful consideration, recommend the establishment of a permanent Aboriginal and Islander Commission to advise the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs and State Parliament on all matters concerning the welfare of indigenous people of this State."

I and the party for whom I speak fully support that. We applaud it. It is probably one of the better things in the document. But in relation to establishing the commission, I see at the bottom of the page that these people have recommended in these terms—

"It is firmly recommended that the present Director of the Department . . . be appointed the Chairman of the newly formed Commission."

I cannot think of a worse development. We have a frightening situation in Queensland at the moment with an all-powerful department riding roughshod over the black people, and now it is proposed to establish a commission

to advise the Government and the head of the department is to be the chairman of the commission.

An Opposition Member: It is a fraud.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: Of course it's a fraud. It's a shameful fraud. It is obviously a set-up. When it is established, it will be a mere sop. It will not be accessible to the people and I do not believe it will do the job that it was originally intended to do.

Another recommendation is that other areas of responsibility should include health, education, social welfare and housing services. I spell out, as it will be spelt out very clearly next year, that in accordance with our policy as the Labor Government of Queensland we will be dissecting that department and placing education and health where they belong, that is, under the control of the relevant departments.

In summing up, I point out that this is a shocking report. I do not believe the commissioners have done the job that they were originally appointed to do.

(Time expired.)

Hon. C. R. PORTER (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (2.53 p.m.): I do not rise to close the debate but to give notice that when the Assembly is not in Committee I will ask the Speaker to refer to the Select Committee of Privileges the fact that the honourable member lied to this Committee.

Mr. R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! The Minister will withdraw the remark.

Mr. PORTER: In order to get the point across, Mr. Gunn, I withdraw the remark and say that the honourable member said that he had a letter from a resident of Cherbourg written to him that said certain things about the chairman of the commission. No wonder the honourable member was reluctant to table the document. When it was tabled it was found to be not a letter sent to him. It is not a letter at all. It is a copy of an anonymous submission by somebody who calls himself a resident of Cherbourg to that commission. The honourable member claimed that he had a letter written to him. I believe it is quite wrong to mislead the Committee by making statements that are utterly contrary to the facts. I therefore propose to make whatever moves are necessary to have this matter referred to the Select Committee of Privileges.

Mr. SCOTT (Cook) (2.54 p.m.): I commence my contribution on this Bill by claiming that we have another fraudulent document in the Chamber.

Mr. Scassola: You are admitting that that letter is.

Mr. SCOTT: No. On many occasions claims have been made about documents being fraudulent. The report of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission is one such document. I do not believe it was written by the secretary or chairman of the commission. To prove my point I quote the following from page 8 of the document—

> "The Commission has been generally well accepted in the areas it has visited and justification for its establishment is exemplified by the fact that the Commission concept is quickly related to by individuals and seen as their own communication facility direct to the Queensland Government."

I submit that the people on that commission did not write that paragraph. In fact, I make the charge that the document was written by the person who was the author of this much more important document, that is, the annual report of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. Its author is acknowledged, and I believe it to be so. Some quite interesting matters are contained on the first page of the document.

I must record that the report was tabled only yesterday, at almost the last possible moment before this important debate came on. The aim was to keep the spotlight off the report of the department and to minimise debate on this Bill. It is quite interesting to note that there is a dearth of speakers on the Government side on this most important Bill and that the Minister spoke for less than a quarter of an hour in introducing it. I am quite surprised. It seems that because of the Minister's battle with his Liberal leader, his heart is no longer in his portfolio.

I wish to quote from the annual report of the department, which is addressed to the Honourable Charles Porter. It commences—

> "Queensland Aboriginal and Islander policy is designed . . ."

Here we have the essence of the problem in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander areas. It is that the policy is set by the director and directed to this Assembly through the Minister. That is my claim. Here it is set out in the first line of the report. The director is dictating to the Minister what the department's policy is. I deplore that because we get very little from the Minister on what the policy is. We get lengthy tirades against earnest members on this side of the Chamber and a series of name-calling in which the Minister is never game to engage outside the Chamber.

The following also appears in the first paragraph of the report—

> "Aboriginal and Islander land occupancy, law and language are therefore a number of the building tools and skills to be used to achieve goals of cultural diversity and racial integration."

That language is not intended to be understood by the ordinary people of the State. I quoted that passage because the main part of the introduction to the report is a tirade against the Federal Government. This sets the pattern of the policy in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. The director wastes no time in getting into the Federal Government.

The report continues—

> "The Commonwealth policy, based on Acts of Parliament which one expects will endure for all time, increasingly allows for land rights, customary law and tribal language to be developed as goals in themselves."

Large portions of the report are aimed at refuting that argument and establishing the guide-lines for the battle that has been going on between the Commonwealth department and the State department.

The report also states—

> ". . . the unopposed and apparently mundane proposal on Aborigines which was accepted; after being 'sold' to the electorate on the basis that it would allow Aborigines to be counted in a census, and legislatively, would only be invoked in co-operation with the States."

I quoted that passage because another part of the argument that Mr. Killoran brings to bear in the opening remarks of the document is his discounting of the referendum that was so resoundingly won in favour of Aborigines in 1967. He tries to write down the grounds on which that referendum was won. I have taken some time to study this document because it is very relevant and pertinent to this debate.

I support the remark of our spokesman on Aboriginal and Island Affairs that we will repeal the Act when we come to power, which is not very far distant. We certainly will repeal the Act. We will be bound to repeal it on the basis of the report by the Aboriginal and Islander Commission. The commissioners who were supposed to be charged with the responsibility of obtaining the opinion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people right throughout their communities did not do so. They were remiss in carrying out their duties. They went through the motions of obtaining opinions from all levels of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities, but they did not achieve the goal. They took very firm steps to ensure that they did not achieve it. They therefore did not get grass roots opinion.

There is a statement in that report that the commissioners decided, of their own will, that they would not attend public meetings, because there, of course, they would have to defend the department's policy. That would put them in a completely untenable position, as they would not be prepared to publicly defend the department's policy towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people. They certainly would not defend it in talking to the ordinary Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people, the people with whom I mix in the northern part of my electorate and whose opinions I value.

Mr. Campbell: Watch out they don't point the bone at you.

Mr. SCOTT: Here again we have more racist remarks. The other side is riddled with that sort of opinion. They are capable of nothing else, and they do it continually.

But, in spite of attempts by the commission to avoid receiving grass roots opinion, a great deal was provided. I refer honourable members in this document which was tabled to the whole mass of people who provided formal written submissions. I am not going to read them and I do not particularly see the need to have them incorporated in "Hansard", but I will refer to some of them. The list included Mr. George Mye (I will return to his submission in a minute or so), the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action—of course, these are all groups that are rubbished in the body of the report—social workers, the Holy Spirit sisters, the Honourable R. I. Viner, the Quakers and the Reverend Doctor Noel Preston. I would certainly like to see some of those submissions, because I do not think the report is based on all the invaluable material those people would have provided.

This document presented by the commissioners turns its attention to some very important aspects of Aboriginal policy. In fact, one of the earliest remarks relates to land rights. It very summarily dismissed this most important matter. I will quote from the report. Incidentally, in doing this the commission is talking about an environment in Queensland in which social unification rather than social fragmentation is fostered. The report reads—

> "It supports present Government policy with respect to land rights whereby Reserve Community lands are set aside under the Land Act 1962-75 with the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement as nominal trustee . . ."

Here again we see reference to the ubiquitous director whose name pops up so many times in the Aborigines Act and is very prominently mentioned in that document which I claimed, earlier in my speech, that he wrote himself. I believe that is so.

I have debated the land-rights question at some length in this Chamber and, if more time was available, I would certainly be happy to go over the most important principles again. I believe that there are many documents from which one could quote that

express the situation much better than I could, because I tend to stumble around with words a little when I am on my feet. I would like to quote from a document which was referred to in the commissioners' report. It is titled "Aborigines A Statement of Concern". This statement was made on Social Justice Sunday and was prepared by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace for the Catholic bishops of Australia. This document is worth reading, and I commend it to the attention of members on the other side. There are not many of them present, but I urge them to read it, because it is part of the latent campaign by churches to achieve a real form of social justice for Aboriginal people.

I say "latent" because it is only slowly emerging. As a whole, the churches tend to feel very guilty about their lack of policies and support for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders over a very long period. They have been a party to some of the repressive policies adopted by this Government in its treatment of Aborigines. They tend to support the Government, but there is a great deal of division now among church people. So many of them are coming to the view that it is time they took a stand, and that it is time they attempted to get this Government to adopt a better policy on Aboriginal affairs.

One of the things I note in the commission's report is that two words, "assimilation" and "integration", are linked with a dash. The authors of that document could not make up their minds which of those words they would ask this Committee to accept. I really do not think that the authors know the difference between the two words. I think they tend to use them interchangeably, and I reject that. They are not interchangeable.

I quote from this Catholic document on Aborigines, the part headed "Beyond Assimilation"—

> "It is only within the last decade that the policy of assimilation has been abandoned by the Australian and most State Governments."

I would add, "Not by the Queensland Government". The document continues—

> "As stated and implemented, it is a policy to which the whole Catholic philosophy of the development of peoples is implacably opposed. It can be described as psycholigical and cultural totalitarianism or cultural genocide. It is the antithesis of the right to self-determination."

Mr. Greenwood: Who said that?

Mr. SCOTT: If the Minister cares to listen, I will tell him. It comes from a document entitled "Aborigines".

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. SCOTT: That is right, and he is not particularly interested in this portfolio. In this document great concern is expressed for Aboriginal people. The Labor Party expresses great concern for real Aboriginal policy for the people who live in those areas.

Under the heading "Land Rights", the document reads—

> "Because of the nature of the relationship between Aboriginal clans and the land they occupied, the taking of their land from them, both in itself, and because of the violence with which it was done, is the root cause of the destruction of Aboriginal society."

In the amendments which the Minister is bringing forward and which, of course, we have not seen, there is no reference to land rights. If I heard the Minister correctly, I believe that there is passing reference to land tenure. Of course, that is totally different. I again quote from the Catholic bishop's document—

> "But beyond that longing, there is a desperate cry for the righting of an injustice: and for deeds, which go beyond the mere acknowledgment of injustice. Short of such deeds, Aborigines have little grounds for hope for relief from other crippling injustices, or reason to believe that there has been any real change of heart among white people."

Change of heart certainly is not expressed in the amendments brought forward by the Minister.

The commissioners, in their report, talk about a permanent Aboriginal and Islander commission. I repeat the remarks of our shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs that the commissioners have decided that the director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement will be the chairman of that commission, if it is set up. I would be interested to hear from the Minister if it is to be set up. We can deal with many of these matters in debate at the second-reading stage.

The phrase, "Recognising the vast experience and expertise of the present Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement", is given as the justification for the proposal that the director become the permanent chairman of that commission. I can think of no person who would be a worse chairman of such a commission. I hope that the Minister will not go as far as giving him that office.

Reference is made to illicit alcohol. The commissioners urge very strongly—and in this I support them—that the Minister take some action in this regard. They request that the Government's support be enlisted to suppress this illegal trafficking. I strongly urge such help, because I believe that some of the supporters of the Government in

Torres Strait are involved in the trafficking of illicit liquor. I agree that there is nothing more destructive to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities than allowing illicit liquor into them.

Payment of award wages is another part of Labor's policy that is now being adopted by people on the opposite side of the Chamber who have no policy. It is something that members of the Opposition have for a long time urged strongly should be adopted. It is the only means by which Aboriginal people will be given the pride that has been denied them for so long by the maladministration of members on the Government side of the Chamber.

I am going through various paragraphs of the commissioners' report because many of them are important, but not for the reasons that the commissioners have claimed. If one looks at them objectively and construes them properly, one sees that they tell a great deal about the maladministration by the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.

Councils will become bodies corporate. The only justification of that by the Minister was that it would allow them to attract more Commonwealth Government money for housing. What a shocking reason for amending the Act! There is no firm foundation for it.

In the Minister's speech, there is talk of regulations. Why not alter the regulations now? Why does not the Minister tell us now what he intends doing in terms of the repressive regulations that control the lives of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders?

Council elections are to be controlled by the Electoral Office. That is badly needed. I want to see the elections conducted properly, because in many instances I do not believe that they are at present.

I make a plea to the Deputy Premier to dismiss the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs from his portfolio. I ask that consideration be given to that tomorrow, when the Cabinet reshuffle is made, on the grounds of sheer incompetence of the Minister and on the grounds that he has come into the department determined to stir as much as he possibly can. Because of the vile language that the Minister uses in the Chamber, he is continually asked to retract statements, and I urge the Deputy Premier to remove him from his office.

I can give other grounds too. In the Chamber last night, I highlighted the complete contrast between the legislation that controls the Aurukun and Mornington Island areas and the repressive legislation that controls the Aboriginal people living on other reserve areas. That is one of my main grounds for saying that the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs has fallen down on his job. Aurukun and Mornington Island were taken from his control because the Premier had the sense to realise that the Minister could not administer them competently.

The situation now is that those areas have little to do with the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. Are there to be no mothering managers at Aurukun and Mornington Island? Are the Aboriginal people there out from under the umbrella of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement? If they are, why is the Minister now amending only the Aborigines Act? Why is it necessary for us to wait another 10 years to see it phased out, as the commissioners are suggesting? The Minister has even given the Act a tenure of five years. Why not look at it again in two or three years? The Minister will not do that because he knows that this glaring contrast will exist between the people of Aurukun and Mornington Island and Aborigines living on other reserves and up in the Torres Strait.

The Minister cannot come to grips with his portfolio; he has fallen down on the job completely. The director of the department is dragging the Minister along—perhaps dragging him up by the bootstraps.

(Time expired.)

Hon. C. R. PORTER (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (3.14 p.m.), in reply: The hypocrisy that comes from the Opposition is almost overwhelming. For honourable gentlemen opposite to suggest that things are done these days that are repressive when one remembers the history of their day in this field is so enormous as to be almost hysterical. For instance, in Labor's time councils were totally appointed; in our time, councils are totally elected. The control was indeed enormous in those days. National-Liberal Governments in this State have constantly eased this form of control, giving the Aboriginal people only the bulwark that they asked for themselves to give them protection against an outside world that is often very rapacious and very greedy.

As to the honourable gentleman's attack on me—I think the very virulence and violence of attacks that come from that side of the Chamber through members of the Opposition is the greatest testimony that one could get to the fact that I have indeed carried out, with great capacity, a policy desired by the overwhelming number of people in Queensland, including the indigenous people—I would say nine out of 10, at least.

The honourable member for Wolston—the shadow Minister (I don't know what that term means; I have never heard of it)—attempted to mount an attack on the basis of a falsehood. He said he had a letter; I asked him to table the letter; he refused to table it. When the Committee required that he table it, we saw that he had no letter

written to him; he had no letter at all. He had no document that carried any signature or any name. All that he had was a copy of a submission that some unknown person was alleged to have made to the commission. The whole tenor of his remarks can be summed up by this quite despicable way of attempting to mislead the Committee by pretending he had evidence which in fact he just did not have.

I suggest that the honourable member cannot name one person, one group of any standing or one elected community council in Queensland that would support the statements he made this afternoon. I challenge him. He suggests that people are afraid of us. If anybody had anything to say, he has had the opportunity to say it since the tabling of the commission's report and my department's report. There has been ample opportunity for anybody who believed that those documents did not show the truth to say so. What have we found? The only people who make statements here are the ranting, screaming Left-wing members of the Opposition.

The indigenous peoples who formed the commission are to be traduced, vilified and denigrated in this Chamber in order to satisfy the arguments of honourable members opposite. On the other hand, all the Left-wing radicals—the Mick Millers and the Grogans—are to be seen as honoured, respected, noble, very fine people! They are always right! The others, such as Getano Lui and Les Stewart, who hold important positions of trust in their own communities, having been elected to them by their own peoples, are to be disregarded! They are to be shown to be knaves, rogues, scoundrels and people who are men of straw who do what they are told and have no views of their own! It is so utterly despicable as to be almost beyond belief.

In attempting to use these arguments, honourable members opposite show themselves for what they are, and they show the quality of their argument for what it is. Who on earth would agree with honourable members opposite that everybody involved with the commission is of poor quality, whereas everybody from the Left Wing who wants a solution to land rights is a good person? Who on earth would believe them? The only people who would believe them are the extreme Left-wingers, whether that Left Wing belongs to their party or a section of the church. They are the only people who would believe them. Of course, the overwhelming majority of church people do not agree with them.

A little while ago the honourable member for Cook quoted from the Catholic bishops' statement. He very carefully did not quote what the Catholic Church itself thinks of that Catholic bishops' statement. I suggest that he does.

The credibility of the honourable member for Wolston is revealed by the abysmal depths to which his attack descended when he attempted to deliberately mislead the Chamber with false information. That is one of the most dastardly things I have seen done here for a long time.

The attitude of the honourable member for Cook was to traduce and vilify the director. He attempts to suggest that the director is a man who writes the words to which other people put their signature. He said that he is a fraud and a man who has no regard for his calling and no sense of responsibility, whereas, in fact, Mr. Killoran is a man who has served this Government and previous Governments well—a man who is respected throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. It is impossible for anyone who visits the communities with the director not to be made fully aware of the deepest affection that people have for him. People whom he has known since they were children come up to him, embrace him and shake his hand. I suggest that, by attempting to mount an attack on the basis of denigrating public servants who have given a lifetime of selfless service to the cause of their department, the honourable member persuades no-one.

If any suggestion is made that people like Getano Lui, Les Stewart, Noel Fatnowna and others do not represent the indigenous people, but that people like Mick Miller, Clarrie Grogan, Barbara Russell, Eddie Holroyd and the rest of them do, there will not be one taker for that suggestion outside the honourable member's own radical ranks. Unfortunately, the honourable gentleman for Cook has a very nasty, vicious quality of mind.

Mr. SCOTT: I rise to a point of order. I notice that on numerous occasions the Minister says, "The member for such-and-such a place."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member will state his point of order.

Mr. SCOTT: I ask him to use the proper title.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. PORTER: I do not recall using any title other than, "The honourable member for Cook".

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. On many occasions it has been ruled that even members of the Opposition are entitled to their correct title. In fact, Mr. Speaker gave that ruling very recently. So there is a point of order, Mr. Gunn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister will continue with his speech.

Mr. PORTER: I refer to the honourable member for Cook. If that is not his correct title, perhaps he might tell me what is. I say to the honourable gentleman that he has a very nasty, mean, vicious quality of mind. He believes that argument is best sustained by attacking people, and by attacking people who are not in this Chamber to defend themselves.

An Opposition Member: What are you doing now, Porter?

Mr. PORTER: The honourable gentleman asked that his proper title be used. I ask that a Minister's proper title be used.

Mr. Scott: Every time.

Mr. PORTER: I suggest that the honourable member do so and not refer to me just by surname. But that is typical of Opposition members.

Mr. SCOTT: I rise to a point of order. I did not interject.

Mr. PORTER: Well, whichever honourable gentleman did so. It is quite obvious that whoever made the interjection is not going to admit to it. That, again, is pretty typical of the Opposition.

The Bill is totally what the peoples on the communities want. Nobody is able to demonstrate anything even remotely to the contrary. It is undoubtedly in their best interests and, what is more, is totally what the overwhelming majority of the people of Queensland want. I commend it to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Porter) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

HARBOURS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. A. M. HODGES (Gympie—Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism) (3.25 p.m.): I move—

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

In my introduction of the Bill, I described in some detail the more important provisions and the reasons for their inclusion in the Bill. I would like to reiterate that in the main the provisions in the Bill are directed towards improving the administration of harbour boards.

Some observations were made by honourable members during the introductory stage of the Bill to which I replied at that time. However, the honourable member for Lytton raised the matter of whether town planning authorities are involved in the leasing of lands by harbour boards. The Bill clarifies that Crown land reserves are included in the lands that harbour boards are required to designate as harbour lands or industrial lands. In answering the honourable member's question, I had in mind that town planning authorities would not be involved in the sanctioning of the designation of land as harbour lands or industrial lands, nor would town planning authorities be involved in any action in respect of past leases as the result of the amendment. However, local authorities do at all times have the right to question the designation of any harbour lands and call for a review of the designation. New leases by a harbour board will also be subject to local authority town planning scheme approval of the use to which the lessee wishes to put the land, as has been the case in the past.

In view of the general acceptance of the measure by the Committee, there seems no purpose in expounding further on the measure that has been presented. I await further comment from honourable members and commend the Bill to them.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (3.27 p.m.): It seems that the general purpose of the Bill is to grant more powers to harbour boards and to complement their role and authority. As the Minister said, the Bill is designed to improve the administration of harbour boards generally. At the introductory stage, Opposition members canvassed the proposed amendments quite broadly, but other comments will be made at this stage.

The main point in the legislation seems to relate to the new procedure and arrangements in providing extensions to port facilities for the bulk-loading of sugar as between the Sugar Board and the various harbour boards. It reinstates the raising of loan funds by harbour boards for this purpose. In this way the borrowings will provide for the future needs, particularly at sugar ports.

The Harbour Corporation Fund is being retained under the Treasury through the Loan Fund arrangements. The matter of receipts and operation of the fund are acceptable as normal financial procedures. The provision dealing with the by-laws made by harbour corporations and boards is extensive. It clarifies requirements, and obviously it will be tested by time.

The Bill facilitates the inspection of by-laws by the public and designates procedures for doing so. It also allows copies of the by-laws to be available for purchase by the general public. It has enabling provisions to clarify the procedures relating to lodgment of objection to the by-laws. The only fault that I can see is that the board or the corporation would have to uphold an objection

before an appeal would lie. In effect, an objection will be considered by the corporation or the board and it, as a body corporate, will decide if any further action is necessary. What happens will be governed by the decision made at that point. It will take the correcting action and submit the by-law to the Governor in Council for approval. That in turn leaves us with the proposition that only when the board or the corporation decides to take such action or to take steps for an amendment to be made will the objection have any force at all; and it is still subject to the approval of the Governor in Council.

Mr. Hodges: Exactly the same as the local authorities.

Mr. JONES: I accept that statement. We do not intend to make a Federal case out of this.

It seems to me that the objector will have a fair amount of pushing uphill to do before he gets through the board. Obviously, he is appealing from Caesar to Caesar in each case. The representations of the harbour board or corporation in respect of such objection are of paramount importance and it must receive its imprimatur before it becomes reality.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the Opposition will not oppose the measure in any way. With the effluxion of time, it may be seen that there are some problems to be ironed out. We will allow the passage of the Bill to proceed without opposition.

Mr. PREST (Port Curtis) (3.32 p.m.): As a representative of one of the most progressive harbour boards in Queensland—in fact, on the east coast of Australia—I rise to speak on the regulations that apply to reclamation work. Reclamation work constitutes a big part of the activities of the board in my area. Before the introduction of this Bill, it was necessary to advertise intentions once a week for four consecutive weeks as well as in the Gazette. Under the Bill it will be reduced to one week in the Press and in the Gazette. That is O.K., but before the Bill was introduced the objectors had to pay a fee and, under the Bill, the applicant for a permit to undertake reclamation work will have to pay. That might be all right with small jobs, for instance at the Gold Coast, where a small area is being reclaimed for use as a boat depot or sales yard. The administrators would be involved in a fair amount of work before approval was given.

Over the years, hundreds of hectares of land have been reclaimed in the port of Gladstone. If the fee is to be levied on the valuation of the work to be done, it could place a big imposition on the harbour board, although the work involved in granting an approval would not be any more demanding. The area is known; the area to be reclaimed is a tidal flat and the officers could issue a permit smartly whereas, on the Gold Coast, inspections might have to be undertaken. I should like to be told if the fee is to be a set fee or if it is to be levied on the value of the reclamation work to be done. That is one query I would like the Minister to answer.

The major reclamation work that has been done by the Gladstone Harbour Board helps not only the people of Gladstone itself in being able to get away from the biting midges and mosquitoes that breed in that area but also the board and industry generally. It provides a very valuable asset. If the Government intends to impose huge fees for such work it could be that the harbour board will decide that it is not necessary at this stage to go ahead with such reclamation. Its members may say, "Righto, if there is going to be a large fee imposed, we will put a stay on reclamation." This will result in many men being put off because reclamation is a full-time job.

The Gladstone Harbour Board must be congratulated on the work that it does. Because the spill has to be carted from so far away, a huge amount of finance is required just to reclaim one acre of land. We find that the board does not make any profit from the work done, but at least it is providing industrial land in the hope that some day it will receive some revenue from the establishment of an industry involved in either importing or exporting through the port.

We have found in past years that sunken or abandoned vessels have caused problems for all harbour boards. If a vessel is abandoned in an area under a board's control, the board is forced to remove it in case it becomes a navigation hazard and it then has to advertise to try to find the owner. At present the owner must be advised in writing, and if possible the advice must be delivered personally. This is one of the problems the boards face. The owners of many of these abandoned vessels are very hard to trace. I want to know how the board goes about it. Does it have to advertise only in the local newspaper, advising where the vessel was found abandoned, or must it advertise further afield or even nationally? What other measures must it take to try to contact the person who abandoned the vessel?

I now want to deal with the provision relating to by-laws and their supply to interested persons. I thought the old provision was quite a good one. Harbour boards work in the interests of the citizens of the cities in which they operate. As far as I can see, this Bill does little to change the old provisions except that now an objector can procure a copy of a proposed by-law upon the payment of a fee which the board fixes by resolution. It will surely be a

token charge, perhaps only the cost of the printing. I think this a fairly petty because I do not think there would be objections on a scale that would warrant a charge of $2 or $3 for making available a copy of the proposed by-law. As I said, I cannot see any great change in that provision.

I have said previously that the harbour boards always work in the interests of the people. The Queensland Harbour Boards Association is a very responsible body and does a very good job. I sincerely hope that these proposed amendments have the approval of the association.

I had hoped that we might see some amendments to the mooring fees master fishermen are charged, which have risen so much in the last 12 months or so. We have heard a great cry from them about the imposition of a $300 mooring fee, and they are looking for some form of relief. I have said previously that these master fishermen use the mooring facility for only one day a week or thereabouts and yet they have to pay $300 a year for it. While they are out fishing, anyone else can tie up to the mooring post. They do not mind. We believe that the amendments generally are good ones, but we sincerely hope that sooner or later we will see an amendment introduced to provide some assistance for master fishermen in the matter of mooring fees.

Reference was made to the approval of the Queensland Harbour Board being required in the matter of banking. I am of the opinion that the previous arrangement was quite good. I am quite certain that approval would have been given. There were no complaints from the Queensland Harbour Boards Association about that matter. Nevertheless, I am quite certain that it will take the matter up with the Minister. I again ask the Minister to answer my query about the fee for reclamation.

Hon. A. M. HODGES (Gympie—Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism) (3.41 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for accepting the amendments. I agree with the comment of the member for Port Curtis that the Queensland Harbour Boards Association is a very competent organisation. These amendments have come through it as a result of various meetings that it has held.

The honourable member asked a question about the fees to be charged for reclamation. They have not yet been laid down, but they are to be effected by regulation. They will be commensurate with the engineering work involved, after an examination has been made of the area to be reclaimed. As I say, the fees will be laid down by regulation. Every case will be examined on its merits, and the fees will depend on the amount of work involved.

The member for Cairns raised the matter of objections to by-laws. Objections must be submitted to the Governor in Council. Of course, that will require surveillance and a decision by the harbour board. The Governor in Council may accept or reject the by-laws. Therefore, the whole thing must come through the Minister to the Governor in Council.

Mr. Jones: The harbour board then forwards the objection on. They can kill it at that point.

Mr. HODGES: Before the by-laws are gazetted, they must come through the Minister to the Governor in Council. Therefore, there will be an overall surveillance of the recommendations that come down from the various harbour boards for their by-laws to be amended.

As I said in my introductory remarks, these are very minor amendments, except the one concerning the financing of the sugar terminal extensions. That is a very major amendment, and we want it implemented as soon as possible so that the various harbour boards can carry out the necessary work at the various sugar terminals.

I thank the Opposition for the way in which it has accepted the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Hodges) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 23, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hodges, by leave, read a third time.

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.44 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to amend the Wheat Industry Stabilization Act 1974 and the Wheat Pool Act 1920–1972 each in certain particulars."

The Bill forms part of complementary legislation to be passed by the Commonwealth and all States. It is designed to achieve two things: firstly, it will enable the costs of handling and storage of wheat to be accounted for on a State by State basis;

and, secondly, it will enable the Australian Wheat Board to apply dockages to any undesirable varieties or classes of wheat—subject, of course, to certain safeguards. The necessary Commonwealth legislation relating to these two matters has already been passed.

I shall deal first with the objective of State accounting. Under existing wheat industry stabilisation legislation, all wheat-storage and handling costs are pooled on an Australia-wide basis. This has meant that, if the bulk-handling authority in any one State erects superfluous or excessively costly storage, wheat growers in all other States are required to share the burden of such costs.

Obviously, under such a system, the responsibility for ensuring that storage and handling facilities erected are the most efficient economically is not clearly defined. State handling authorities make the decisions as to when, where and what types of storage are erected, and wheat growers throughout Australia bear the cost.

Under the State accounting system as proposed in this Bill, each State bulk-handling authority would be responsible for meeting its own storage and handling costs. This, of course, will mean that the growers in any particular State will bear the cost of the facilities that they enjoy. I do not think that there can be any quarrel with this principle.

Mr. Davis: I used to stack wheat.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Maybe the honourable member did. This is 1978; it is not stacked in bags any more.

In Queensland, we have a very efficient State Wheat Board, which is responsible for the provision and operation of our bulk-handling facilities. The State Wheat Board also handles other grains and oil-seeds on behalf of the Barley Marketing Board, the Central Queensland Grain Sorghum Marketing Board and the Queensland Grain Growers' Association.

Our State Wheat Board has always shown a commendable regard for efficiency in the area of storage and handling and I believe it is only right and proper that our Queensland producers should reap the benefits of that efficiency. I have no doubt that the Queensland wheat grower will be better off under State accounting, as is proposed in the Bill.

As to storage—this year Queensland has the biggest wheat crop that it has had in my lifetime, which, despite what is written in the Press on some occasions, is not all that long. In fact, I will be 60 years young tomorrow. In years gone by, the Wheat Board has not had any difficulty in handling the crop. However, this year, because of the absolutely perfect seasonal conditions as a result of rainfall, the crop is estimated to be about 1 400 000 tonnes, whereas the biggest crop previously was about 800 000 tonnes. Therefore, there has been a need for all farmers to store a portion of their crop on the farm, and that is being done.

Probably the problem is greater in the newer wheat-growing areas in the electorate of the honourable member for Balonne, in the South-west, because the necessary storage is not available. I do not think that the growers can really argue about that, because it is a comparatively new wheat-growing area. It was unheard of for areas to average from 1½ tonnes to 2 tonnes to the acre. It is hard to imagine a yield of 20 to 24 bags to the acre on areas that previously yielded 10 to 12 bags to the acre. Obviously, emergency provision has to be made, and that is being done.

Mr. Hansen: Does this mean that you can't send it interstate now?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Because a commodity board is involved, it has been illegal to sell wheat interstate. People have done it under section 92 of the Constitution, but the High Court has ruled against that. That question does not arise under the provisions of the proposed Bill.

Let me turn now to the second object of the Bill—the provision for dockages on undesirable varieties. I believe that this also will be to Queensland's advantage. As most members will be aware from previous statements I have made, Queensland produces the best quality wheat in Australia. Growers in this State have always paid particular attention to quality, and generally plant only the most desirable varieties. This is not always the case elsewhere in Australia. Admittedly our wheat growers mostly receive substantial premiums for their wheat.

However, I believe it is essential that the Australian Wheat Board should be given power to dock undesirable varieties, wherever they might be grown. I do not expect to see any such undesirable varieties grown in this State. It would be a tragedy if Queensland, with its world-wide reputation for producing quality wheats, were to have its position compromised by a mixture of undesirable wheats in our silos.

Basically what the Bill sets out to do is to provide a mechanism whereby undesirable wheats will suffer a dockage. There will be no interference whatsoever with a grower's right to produce what varieties he likes. However, if a grower chooses to produce a variety which is quite unacceptable in the market, he will receive a reduced price.

I mentioned earlier that there would be safeguards. The Bill makes specific provision for the setting up of a special Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee. This committee will recommend what wheat varieties cannot be subjected to dockages. In fact, the wheats recommended by the Committee will almost certainly be premium wheats. This means that the grower will know where he stands. If he grows the recommended wheat and if his grain is not affected by

weather, weeds or other problems, he will almost certainly get a premium. On the other hand, if he produces wheats of unacceptable varieties, he will run the risk of being docked. He will know the varieties that will be subject to dockage before he plants, so the decision will be entirely one for him.

The committee which will advise me on these matters will be a very broadly based one. It is proposed that the committee consist of—

* Two representatives of the State Wheat Board;
* One representative of the Queensland Grain Growers' Association;
* One representative of the Australian Wheat Board;
* One representative of the flour millers; and
* One representative of the Department of Primary Industries.

I am quite sure that such a committee will be the best possible to advise on quality requirements of all sectors of the industry.

As I indicated earlier, this Bill comprises part of overall Commonwealth State legislation for the wheat industry. The principles involved have been discussed with the industry, and have been agreed to by all States. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (3.53 p.m.): After listening to the Minister's remarks, I do not think we will be very critical of the Bill's provisions, at least until we see it. After all, it complements Commonwealth legislation, of which we have seen quite a lot for wheat and other products.

The matters outlined by the Minister are more or less procedural and what we would expect with these types of industry problems. I understand that the cost of handling and storing wheat will be carried by the individual State boards. To me that sounds eminently sensible. They get the benefit or otherwise depending on whether or not they do their job efficiently. I do not know whether the Minister referred to the cost of dockage, besides storage and handling. I would like clarification on that point later on.

Of course, the Wheat Board handles a lot of grains other than wheat. Although I know that those other grains are being handled, I am not quite certain whether that handling comes within the provisions of the Bill. No doubt we will find out before the end of the second reading.

The Minister referred to the present wheat crop as being the biggest in his lifetime. His comment goes to highlight the vagaries of primary production and of the fortunes of primary producers. Debates in this Chamber about the wheat industry seem to go through phases. At one time, members are in favour of the imposition on wheat production of quotas in keeping with the established production performance of growers; on another occasion, owing to supply and demand, they call for the dropping of quotas. That might occur in the very next season. It has been shown over the years that the quota provisions in any of these primary industries are worth holding onto.

If a person wishes to produce above quota, there is no law to stop him doing so. He can do that at his own risk. If he believes that the market prospects are such that quotas will not apply, he can go ahead and attempt to produce above his quota. Of course, the whole thing depends on seasons not only in the local production areas but also in other wheat-producing countries. They have a great effect on market prospects. I urge anyone who is tempted to do away with quotas to think twice and resist that temptation.

As I say, the Minister referred to the present wheat crop as the best that he has ever seen. Over the past decade, tremendous variations have occurred in wheat production in Australia, particularly in Queensland, as well as in market prospects throughout the world. Both the quantity produced and the demand for wheat can vary greatly from season to season.

It makes eminent good sense to consider the imposition of what I would term an embargo or penalty on poorer-quality wheats. Although we tend to boost our own egos by claiming that we produce the best wheat—and it is a fact that we do produce excellent premium hard wheat—we are faced with the prospect of a producer's deciding that, in order to obtain a higher yield per acre, or for other reasons, he will go in for the production of a low-grade wheat. If he decides to do that and if it is to the detriment of the trade, it is only right that he should have to measure the chances of quick gains against the certainty of paying penalties for the infusion of a lower-quality product that will denigrate the reputation of other producers. I say "detriment of the trade" because growers establish a reputation for quality and that reputation can be very quickly damaged by the infiltration into the market of a lower-quality product.

The Minister said that the committee would be composed of two State Wheat Board members, one representative of State grain growers, one Australia Wheat Board representative, one flour millers' representative and one Primary Industries Department representative. That sounds reasonable. I am not quibbling about a composition such as that. Any committee is only as good as the way it operates. No doubt a lot of honourable members would be aware of the saying that the most efficient committee is one of three persons with two persons absent. I do not suggest for one moment that this committee operate in that manner. Nevertheless, a large representation on the committee is not necessarily a good thing. What counts is the calibre of the members and their interest in the industry. They must, of course, be possessed of good intent and the

legislation must be such as to allow them to put their good intentions into good effect in the interests of the industry.

I do not think it is necessary to speak further on the Bill. It is enabling legislation similar to other Commonwealth legislation, that we have debated previously. Although the objectives differ slightly, I believe that the position will be as outlined by the Minister in his introductory remarks. Any further comments by the Opposition will be left until we have studied the Bill.

Mr. NEAL (Balonne) (4.1 p.m.): I support the Minister's introduction of this measure to amend the Wheat Industry Stabilization Act of 1974 and the Wheat Pool Act 1920–1972. As the Minister said, the Bill deals with the rationalisation of the handling facilities in each State whereby each State will be directly responsible for wheat-handling. Over the years the industry has sought this provision. In the past the Australian Wheat Board in each of the States has been responsible for the overall Australian situation. Under this legislation the individual States will have the ball in their own courts. Figures presented recently in the House of Representatives by the member for Darling Downs, Tom McVeigh (who was a member of the Wheat Board prior to his election to Parliament) were very interesting.

Mr. Mackenroth: You can't believe his statements.

Mr. NEAL: He knows what he is talking about in relation to wheat.

He said that New South Wales wheat growers close to the border could seek to put their grain into the Queensland system to take advantage of the lower handling costs. The difference in handling charges amounts to $3.80 a tonne. In addition, the grain freight rate advantage in Queensland is $2 a tonne as against New South Wales. In all, the advantage is some $5.80 a tonne. Naturally, any growers on the border would seriously consider channelling their wheat through Queensland.

The new provision means that State Wheat Board members will be directly responsible and answerable to the growers in the State who elect them.

We have been looking for a Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee for some time. In an average year growers in my area produce prime hard wheat that commands a premium price. If their wheat is not damaged by the weather they can expect a premium payment, which is excellent. Naturally the advisory committee will recommend the varieties to be grown. Growers will take heed of that advice because, in the areas where prime hard varieties can be grown and many growers are delivering to the one depot, the Wheat Board will have problems if one of those wheat growers comes along with one of the soft wheat varieties and delivers it into the pool.

The board will apply dockages for the varieties that it does not recommend, so that the onus is on the grower to stick to the recommended varieties. As a wheat grower, I know that dockages are applied for foreign material, weed seeds, etc., in the wheat. A grower with an H.1. classification or a prime hard classification could expect a premium payment. If his wheat contains seeds and foreign matter, he will be classified down to A.S.W. or general purpose. If the classification is general purpose, he loses his premium and is faced with a $6 a tonne dockage into the bargain. If the premium is $12 a tonne, as it has been over the past few years, he will be looking at a loss of about $18 a tonne. So it is in his interests to get his wheat graded prior to delivery. These dockages are necessary, and not only from that point of view.

Over the years, wheat growers have had problems because of drought and high costs. As the Minister said, this year we have the greatest crop on record. The preliminary estimate was that it would equal the 1968 crop, when quotas were introduced. The estimate is now 1 400 000 tonnes. Judging by the crop in my area, I think the tonnage will be greater. A tremendous tonnage of wheat is stored in the paddocks because it just cannot be handled; it cannot be sent into the dumps.

It is a jolly good thing for the wheat producers that they have this record crop. It is more than a bumper crop. It is a crop that nobody ever dreamt could be grown. However, the crop this year only makes up for what growers did not get last year and perhaps will not get next year.

One of the problems of the industry has been the fuel oil levy and the fuel tax implemented by the Federal Government. This has put the Australian wheat grower at a distinct disadvantage in competing with his counterpart in the U.S.A. and Canada. Something like 80 per cent of the Australian wheat crop is exported. U.S.A. and Canada virtually set the price on the export market. They are the big wheat countries and are able to compete on the world markets because of their lower costs and greater assistance from their Governments.

The Industries Assistance Commission, which recently made recommendations on assistance to the wheat industry, made no mention of the fuel levy imposed on growers. Not taking that into account, the commission found that the wheat grower received net negative assistance amounting to an average tax of $10,000,000 a year over the past few years. If the fuel tax had been added, the taxation imposed on the agricultural industries would have been much higher. The levy has been calculated as costing the agricultural industry some $432,000,000 a year. Those are just some of the problems that the wheat growers face in costs of production.

Getting back to the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee—I notice that it is to consist of two representatives of the State Wheat Board, one representative of the Queensland Grain Growers' Association, one representative of the Australian Wheat Board, one representative of flour millers and one representative of the Department of Primary Industries. I take it therefore that there will be four growers on the committee—the representatives of the State Wheat Board, the Grain Growers' Association and the Australian Wheat Board. I know that it is not essential that the members of the Wheat Board be practising farmers, but as a rule they are. I believe that that committee is absolutely necessary.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Minister in his introduction of this Bill.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (4.11 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Balonne and the honourable member for Bundaberg, who spoke on behalf of the Opposition, for accepting this Bill. As I indicated, it is a very simple measure. The honourable member for Bundaberg did ask a question about dockage, and I wonder whether he was referring to storage. The only reference in the Bill to dockage is in respect of farmers who insist on growing varieties that are not recommended.

Mr. Blake: I misinterpreted that.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I think the honourable member did go on to say that he agreed that there should be a dockage for somebody who persists in selling a variety that is not recommended. There will be people who will do this. Some of the old farmers think, "Well, I grew charter or spica back in years gone by and I always got good results." They have formed a sentimental attachment to these varieties and they will continue to grow them. But as long as they know the consequences, I do not think we can be accused of being harsh.

The honourable member for Balonne has come to maturity very quickly in his knowledge of the wheat industry. When he entered this place, he knew more about crutching and marking sheep than about wheat-growing, but he has applied himself now that grain-farming has extended into his area. I am sure he would be pleased, not only from his personal point of view but from the point of view of the farmers in his area, that owing to seasonal conditions magnificent crops have been grown this year.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The honourable member should keep quiet for a while. He does not talk much sense normally.

Because of seasonal conditions, the yields we have had this year have, to a great extent, offset the increased fuel costs to which the honourable member referred and about which I am very concerned. For the same amount of fuel, we have grown 1½ to 2 tonnes an acre, whereas the normal yield would have been eight to 10 bags. The increased costs will therefore not be a hardship to farmers this year.

As a point of interest I mention that this morning I was talking about storage to a young nephew of mine, who lives between Moonie and Westmar. He had made provision for storage of one tonne to the acre with a 1,300-acre crop, which would have given him 1 300 tonnes. He will end up this year with about 2 000 tonnes of wheat. In years gone by in western New South Wales I have seen farmers end up with wheat out in the paddock with no cover at all over it. They can do this because their climatic conditons are different from ours. Even if there is an inch or two of rain, as long as the stacks are built in a pyramid shape, the water soaks in only an inch or so and if they then have a couple of sunny days they do not suffer any loss.

This young nephew of mine told me that he has had to do this with about 600 or 800 tonnes of wheat this year. He is not complaining about it; he likes having a heap of wheat in his paddocks. No doubt there would be many people out in the electorate of the honourable member for Balonne who are doing the same. The honourable member might even have had to do it himself.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That is typical farmers' talk.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Old farmers are rather interested in discussing these things over a cup of tea.

The CHAIRMAN: I am absolutely fascinated. The Minister may proceed.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I conclude on that note.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

MILK SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (4.17 p.m.): I move—

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

I would like at this second-reading stage to thank honourable members for their acceptance of the principles of the Bill.

As I indicated at the introductory stage, the dairy industry is going through a period of significant change and it can be expected that the nature of the industry's problems

will change. We must always be prepared to change legislation to meet the changing needs of an industry.

As the honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned, the original Act was passed after an inquiry into the industry. It was as a result of the findings of that industry-orientated committee that the Act was introduced.

The honourable member also raised several other matters. I certainly agree with his statement that a huge outlet for market milk cannot suddenly be created. Market growth is a gradual process. It is largely for this reason that a pool of entitlements has to be derived from drop-outs.

He also raised certain matters concerning entitlements, as did also the honourable member for Fassifern. With regard to entitlements, I should like to make it clear that entitlements will be purchased from the individual farmer, whereas when an allocation is made from the pool that allocation will go to the processer. It will be up to the individual processer to determine the best method of getting its supply of market milk.

Some problems could occur when a processer has purchased a volume of entitlement, and distributed it and, shortly after, a producer who has received part of the entitlement drops out. In such cases, there will be a need to split the payment for the drop-out between the producer and the processer. The present Bill provides the necessary machinery to enable this to be done.

The honourable member for Redlands drew attention to the problems which could arise if too many dairy farmers go out of the industry. I believe that the entitlements scheme will go a long way towards preventing that happening. The present amendments in no way alter that situation.

It may be that in the early stages of this legislation some producers may be induced to leave the industry, but the long-term effects will certainly be to encourage them to stay. This can be done only by increasing the incomes of producers to a level where it is worth their while to stay in the industry. This is what the legislation sets out to do.

There is room in several areas of Queensland for increased, not reduced, dairy production. Any policies adopted must ensure that there is adequate production to ensure a supply of fresh dairy products to consumers in all parts of the State. Any such policy must also have due regard for the economic operation of dairy factories. This, of course, requires adequate throughput.

The honourable member for South Brisbane drew attention to the fact that Queensland is a deficit State in terms of overall dairy production. We import substantial quantities of butter each year from the South.

The honourable member also stressed the need to maintain the viability of our dairy factories. This has certainly been a problem for some years. The question of throughput is vital in this area. I expect, however, that the industry stability that will be created through the entitlements scheme will do much to overcome the problem in future.

Several honourable members mentioned increased milk consumption as a solution to the dairy industry's problems. It is, of course, an obvious solution, but as the honourable member for Fassifern indicated, one cannot force people to drink milk.

The present legislation does provide for a Milk Sales Promotion Advisory Committee. This year, for the first time, the committee is promoting milk on a Statewide basis. This promotion should result in increased sales.

A number of honourable members dealt extensively with the need for greater equity in the industry. I would make the comment at this stage that neither the existing Act nor the amendments provide for compulsory equalisation. Instead, the legislation provides for a fairly rapid transition to a stage where all producers will have equitable access to the market milk sector, which is the one that gives the best return.

In reply to the specific question of the honourable member for Maryborough, I would state that entitlements will still be issued to processers. Processers as defined under the Act include both co-operative associations and proprietary factories. In turn, processers are then left to manage their factory incomes within their areas.

Some are presently on individual quota systems; others have adopted a percentage system. However, irrespective of the system adopted, I will say that the legislation offers the industry the opportunity to put its house in order. I do not consider it appropriate to legislate to direct factory managements in the control of their internal affairs. This is an area where the individual managements are best able to make the necessary judgments.

I thank the honourable member for Cooroora for his support, and I was very pleased to hear of the improvement that has already occurred in his area. I would agree with him that producers in that area are some of the most efficient in the State.

The honourable member for Warwick expressed his support for the Bill and indicated that most of the State's dairy farmers support it. This is certainly the case, and the Government is very grateful for that. Obviously I have not had time to talk to all dairy farmers in Queensland on the subject, but I have had discussions with the various organisations involved, and the proposed changes have their support.

I would reiterate my earlier statement that the proposed amendments will not change the real intent of the legislation. The changes that are being made are designed purely to facilitate the operation of the legislation and the various bodies constituted

under it. While I make no claim to having resolved all the problems within the dairy industry, I do hope that the amendments will prove to be a solution to most of the administration problems involved.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (4.24 p.m.): I note what the Minister said about hoping that producers will be able to leave the industry with some dignity. The Opposition has always supported the principle of paying producers market value or cash for their entitlement. In many cases, it has taken a lifetime to build up that entitlement, and, whether people leave the industry because of age, declining viability of the property, or scale of operation, it is very desirable that they should leave with some equity.

Of course, many of them do not wish to leave the property. It is a facet of human nature that in old age people like familiar things. If they can sell an equity in a property and remain on that property, it is very desirable socially, not only for the people themselves but also for society as a whole.

If the entitlements committee is to acquire entitlements for the pool, naturally in the early stages some whose viability is on the borderline will probably go willingly. Without its being interpreted as their being forced off the land, probably it will be just as well if some of them do go; but the decision will be for them to make.

I read the introductory debate on the original legislation. One honourable member said that it was a very well-drafted Bill, but I am afraid that he was quite wrong. The present Bill is quite a formidable-looking one in terms of the number of amendments, many of which cover errors and omissions in the drafting of the original Bill. After the administrative impediments in the original Act are corrected, not a great deal of change is made by the Bill, other than to spell out what was intended in the original legislation. I accept that, when new ground is being broken, some mistakes are excusable. However, in the drafting of the original Bill quite a lot was overlooked. Even simple matters like plurality were missed. There was reference to the Minister's selecting committee members from a "panel" instead of from "panels".

At the introduction of the original legislation honourable members indicated that they were keenly waiting for policy guide-lines to be introduced by the Minister. There is still no definite evidence of policy guide-lines in the present Bill. It is mostly left to the discretion of the Milk Board and the entitlements committee.

What are the specified objectives? What is considered to be viable for a processer? If entitlements have to be transferred, at what level is viability decided? When entitlements are transferred to a processer, what is considered to be the level of a supplier's or processer's share of those entitlements? What is the objective at the present time? What is the scale of entitlement for a producer or processer? These are things that are not stated.

I realise that in a grey area like this everything cannot be stated positively, but I am wondering whether we could get closer to knowing what the committee is trying to achieve. For instance, in the sugar industry there is a continual argument about trying to build up the smaller growers to a viable cane assignment. Then others advance the argument that, as they developed the sugar industry, they should not be held at a level which results in their losing relative viability.

Reference has been made to guide-lines. We would like to see what are the approximate objectives of the entitlements committee on levels of production. It has arrived at a value per litre, and we know that, even though it varies with the market, it is something positive. Nothing is shown, however, in relation to levels of production.

If the Minister were to say that this is completely new territory and the Milk Entitlements Committee has to be given a wide-ranging mandate, I would be prepared to accept that. However, the previous Bill, this Bill and the Act that it amends all refer to a discretion of the Minister to lay down policy guide-lines. In this instance, there does not seem to be any indication of how those guide-lines apply to levels of production and viability of producers and processers.

Earlier I asked what would occur as the result of the creation of the pool. Apparently a drop-out entitlement is bought up and then reallocated. I understand that it goes to the processer. What I do not understand is the nature of the restriction, if any, on the processer in the redistribution to producers who are considered by him to be worthwhile producers.

I can well understand the Minister's desire not to interfere in the internal affairs of the processer. However, I am very concerned that the disproportionate allocation of milk quotas over the years might be perpetuated within the entitlement pool under the present system. I am not saying that harshly. I realise that the producer who in the past had an abundant production in the spring and summer months and low production in the winter months, then had no right of equal claim with someone who produces consistently over a 12-month period.

The whole purpose of the exercise is to ensure that not only processers but also producers get a fair crack of the whip from now on. If no surveillance is to be maintained on the internal affairs of a processer, the problem will not be solved. Perhaps the problem relating to processers will be solved, but that relating to producers will only be perpetuated. That is the point that concerns members of the Opposition. We are not looking for interference in the processer's reallocation of entitlements to producers. We

are concerned at the prospect of lack of surveillance to ensure that there are no abuses within the confines of the processer's business affairs. Do the Minister and his department believe that all they have to do is to look at the entitlements of a processer? If the processer wishes to play favourites within the confines of his business, will that be O.K. with the Minister? If it is not, is the producers' only recourse an approach to the tribunal? Is that the only avenue open to them for entering a protest? If a person considers that his business is not viable, I do not know on what grounds he could apply to the tribunal other than the ground that he is disadvantaged. I would like to know if that is the only avenue of redress open to a producer.

In order to get an idea of the action to be taken, I refer to the proposal to amend the Act as it concerns persons employed by the board. The Act provides that employees shall be paid salaries and wages at a rate fixed by an industrial award or agreement applicable to their employment or, if there is no such award or agreement, at a rate fixed by the Public Service Board. That provision seems eminently satisfactory to me and other members of the Opposition, and when it is amended to provide that if there is no such award or agreement payment shall be at a rate fixed by the board, we wonder about the necessity for the change. In other primary-producer legislation—I think this applies in the sugar experiment station legislation—it is provided that rates of pay shall be at the discretion of the board, provided they are not below the rates prescribed in equivalent awards. When the amendment provides that it may be altered at the discretion of the board, we think it is left rather open and we wonder what legislative purpose can be gained by effecting the change.

We agree with the Minister's power in situations where the supply or distribution of milk is, or is likely to be, insufficient for the needs of an area. In other words, a processer is given a specified time within which to show cause. A maximum time of three months is provided in the Bill for some of the appeals or show-cause matters, but we have seen no minimum time provision on the notice to show cause why the entitlement should not be lost. That is a very necessary provision. So short a time could be provided in the notice that, in a practical sense, there would not be time to appear and show cause and the entitlement could be lost. In that event, the only recourse would be to the appeals tribunal. I ask why a minimum time is not specified. The maximum time may be very important to the entitlements committee and the processer, but it is also very important to the producer to know that he has a prescribed minimum amount of notice when asked to show cause why he should not lose his entitlement.

Those are the matters that worry us in the Bill. The setting up of the pool and the financing of it with fidelity bonds is a matter of common sense, and we approve of it.

Another facet of the legislation I should mention is the discretion of the Minister to waive the need for a processer to lodge a fidelity bond or a monetary deposit as security against the buying of his entitlement. I take it that if the Minister uses his discretion to waive and by some chance or mischance the processer defaults, the State would carry any loss rather than anybody else in the organisation, such as the producers or the person from whom the entitlement was purchased.

That covers the few facets of concern that we found in the Bill. We will wait and hope that the Minister gives us an explanation on those points.

Mr. WHITE (Southport) (4.40 p.m.): I have a few brief comments to make on this Bill. In general I support it, but there are one or two details that give rise to some concern. The first is that the Bill appears to be giving increased control to the Milk Board. That causes me and others in the industry some concern because of a letter that the Milk Board sent out, dated 27 November, telling various co-operatives what they would do over Christmas. It set out when they would supply their customers and it laid down whether there would be single deliveries or double deliveries and on what days and at what times deliveries would be made.

This appears to those co-operatives to be a blatant case of over-centralisation. It is no use sending out one letter dictating to the whole of Queensland when milk will be delivered. Each area in a State as vast as Queensland is different. I am speaking about my own area in particular, which, over the Christmas period, is basically a tourist area. The co-operatives take umbrage—and I support them—at being told how to run processing and deliveries in their areas.

For this reason I believe that any extra power given to the Milk Board should be looked at with a great deal of suspicion. All areas are different and, as I heard the Minister say in relation to one or two other matters, they should be left to get on with running their businesses in their own areas, which they should know best how to do.

I believe that there is some talk about controlling the mortgages of vendors and others in the industry. Again I believe that this is best left to the market forces. Interfering in a man's private business and questioning whether he has sufficient capital to run it is no concern of the industry as a whole. Apart from any other result of over-centralisation, it leads to the creation of a bureaucracy, which is a very expensive system.

The co-operative in my area paid an annual levy of some $8,000 last year. It would appear that in 1979 it will pay more than

three times that amount. I might add that production is up by only some 3 to 4 per cent, but the increase in the levy to be paid by that co-operative is 300 per cent. I do not know in detail where the extra money goes. I suspect that some of it—probably quite a deal of it—goes towards the running expenses of the Milk Board. One wonders whether this money is used simply to employ more people to process returns. In a time of unemployment, I suppose that is to be commended because it reduces unemployment, but it does little to support the case for decentralisation.

Generally speaking, from what I can see, the advisory committees are doing a good job. The zoning of runs is a very successful operation. The vendors themselves have no wish to return to cutthroat competition, which could put them out of business very quickly. They seem to support the zoning system, which has been successful. They are happy and under the system customers receive good service.

I believe there is also a suggestion that some power should be vested in the advisory committees to vet the suitability of vendors in particular areas. Again I would urge that this is not necessary. Market forces should be left to dictate who takes up runs and who does not. If a vendor is no good, he will not sell his milk. That is the law of supply and demand, the principles under which I believe this Government should operate.

In general, I support the Bill. It will give further assistance to an industry that has faced extreme difficulties over the past few years. Back in 1970 it was a very unstable industry and many people in it faced a very dim future. Not so many years ago thousands of dairy farmers operated at a level of bare sustenance. Since that time some $23,000,000 has been made available by way of loans to the dairying industry for restructuring and improvement. These loans have enabled hundreds of dairy farmers to leave the industry and hundreds more to obtain assistance to develop their dairy farms into viable businesses. So while I support the Bill in general and believe it will bring further improvement to this particularly important industry in Queensland, I do ask the Minister to look at any tendency towards over-centralisation and undue feeding of a bureaucracy that is not needed. I ask that the Milk Board be restrained from interfering in areas where, generally speaking, it does not have much knowledge and where its attentions are neither sought nor wanted.

Mr. KRUGER (Murrumba) (4.47 p.m.): I rise to make a few brief comments on this Bill as I see a few problems associated with it. As our spokesman on primary industries has said, the Bill seems to be pretty sound, but it is a large Bill and, with the number of alterations that have been made to it, we wonder why this has to be done quite so quickly. I believe that the production side of the industry should be looked at in a different light so as to make the producers' operations more viable. In the past certain producers have had their pockets lined exceptionally well, while others, simply because of the location of their properties, have not been looked after nearly as well.

The entitlement pay-out scheme seems to be operating fairly in most cases. Apparently the Minister took my remarks on this subject wrongly the other night. My idea was not that we should not pay some people out, but that we should be going flat out to keep as many people as possible in the industry. Having gone through the Bill, I think the Government is giving most assistance to the processers and those who have to get out of the industry. There does not seem to be any alteration in the assistance provided to those on the production side to make it easier for them to conduct a viable operation for the outlay of a certain amount of money.

Under certain parts of the Bill, quite a bit of the final decision-making seems to be left to the Minister or the Governor in Council, and this does not seem to me to be what we need. While the Minister could be quite honest in his approach to primary industries, and I believe he does work hard in his portfolio, I think the industry we are discussing is too large, in some cases, for one man to be making the final decision. Although boards and committees have been set up, it seems that in certain cases the Minister can, if he so desires, by Order in Council, overrule decisions made by those boards. I do not think that is always the best way to overcome the problems that we face.

There are a few items in the Bill that I consider to be a bit on the wishy-washy side, to use a phrase that is often heard in this place. I do not think it will be long before we are looking at further amendments to the Act. I see that even this afternoon the Minister is proposing a further amendment. I am pleased that he has done it now because that will give us at least another week or so before we have to start going through the Bill again. Handling a Bill of this size is quite an undertaking and I feel sympathetic towards any Minister who has to go through it and try to deal with it in one operation. I think that the Minister and his staff, with their experience, could have gone into some parts of the Act a little more deeply at an earlier stage and perhaps avoided bringing it back to the House quite so soon.

Another matter that has worried many people in the industry over the years is not so much quota milk or distribution and the problems associated with that, as the way in which many farmers are being got at by the processer with his over-quota milk. Over-quota milk has always presented a problem for the dairy farmer. Whilst he has to try to produce over-quota milk in order to increase his quota, it seems to me that many processers are not quite as fair

as they might be, or the legislation in this State is not quite as fair as it might be to the producer of over-quota milk.

When I was engaged in dairying, I looked at this matter. It is a difficult problem to overcome. I would not throw a spanner in the works by asking the Minister or anybody else to solve this problem overnight, but I think that a lot of research has to be done on this question. Milk is not like sugar-cane, which can be allowed to stand over. Once milk comes out of the cow, its life is not very long. It either has to be processed or sent to the fresh-milk market.

I think that a little more research needs to be done on processing. If milk can be processed, I think that a little extra payment should be made to the producers. As I have said, this has always been a problem, and it will continue to be so. I think that the Minister should have a good look at this question.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (4.52 p.m.): The subject-matter of this legislation has been fairly well aired over a considerable period. I think it would be fair to say that this legislation has proved to be fairly controversial.

The Minister announced earlier that the purpose of the entire exercise is to give all producers fair and equitable access to the market over a number of years. This is the intention, but it would be fair to say that up to this time there has not been a lot of co-operation from the industry or from the persons engaged in it, who have indicated, of course, that they desire equity in this matter. But the people who have been most vocal about equity are those who were not in the industry in the early stages and those who, in fact, have had access to the whole-milk market for a number of years. They are not very enthusiastic about any part of this exercise. That is the problem which confronts us.

It has been suggested that all persons producing milk should have equal access to the market-place; but there is a long history associated with this. Many of the things that I intend to say have been said on numerous occasions previously. When I talk about equitable access to markets, I must point out that this industry has been developed, in many instances, by sheer hard work and dedication by the persons involved in it. They believe that they have built up something which should be their entitlement from now to eternity. There are also those in the industry who are close to markets and who, as a result, have been responsible for developing, to a large extent, the present market forces. The suggestion that some overriding power should be used to relieve them of what they consider to be their entitlement is not going down very well.

Certain districts were removed from the Brisbane milk market and from the south-eastern area. There is added cost in giving equity to persons who are considerably removed from the market, and that cost has to be shared by all persons in the industry. Other matters are to be considered when we are talking about equity. Many properties in regions further removed from the south-eastern area are large in area and, as a result, have a capacity to produce other products.

Reference is made to the production potential in the south-eastern area. A lot of land, particularly near the coast, is suitable only for the production of milk and dairy produce. People in these regions are not at all happy about relinquishing something that has taken them many years to establish and build up, and that is what the argument has been about.

However, because of pressures from other people within the system, Governments had to accept the responsibility of devising a policy under which some of the difficulties could be overcome. As a result, legislation was brought down in this Chamber about eight or nine months ago. Had the Government received complete co-operation from persons in the industry at that time, it may not have had to introduce this Bill. But that co-operation was lacking and, consequently, when there was talk of compensating those who were ceasing production, injunctions were served on the persons involved and payments were not made.

People were promised that they would be compensated if they relinquished the quota that they felt belonged to them. They left the industry, for reasons best known to themselves, expecting compensation. The nominated sum was 50c a litre. However, as far as I am aware, very few people have received compensation and, needless to say, there is a fair amount of disenchantment about the whole exercise. It is to be hoped that the legislation now before the House—I do not yet fully understand the mechanics of it—will be capable of being implemented to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. The Minister well knows, of course, as do other members of this Assembly, that probably he will be confronted by people who are dissatisfied with the proposal now being submitted.

There has been talk of complete equity to all producers; but, as I mentioned at the introductory stage, the Government has not had the co-operation of the processers in the industry. A number of processers have not equitably distributed to the producers in their regions the quotas that were available; nor has there been any suggestion that they would do so. That internal dogfight has gone on for a long time, and there are difficulties in overcoming the problem. Although the new entitlement has been functional for some time in a limited way, I think it would be fair to say that, because full co-operation has not been forthcoming, it has not been completely effective.

A little over 42 per cent of the total quantity of milk produced today finds its way onto the whole-milk market. Some

members of the Opposition, and also some members of the Government, have suggested that an attempt be made to retain in the industry all the dairy farmers who are currently in business. They are producing a commodity that appears to me not to be marketable. There are by-products such as casein and powdered milk, but there are limited outlets for these. About 12 months ago I visted one of the co-operative dairy factories in my own district, and there I found a big shed stacked to the rafters with casein and powdered milk. At that time there did not appear to be an outlet for it; but even when outlets are available, the economics are such that sales are a very doubtful proposition. However, as I said earlier, I think that some stability can be introduced into the industry by orderly marketing and by doing what the Minister has indicated should be done over a period of years.

There are other problems associated with the acquisition of quotas. After quotas are acquired and the final determinations are made by the entitlements committee, who in fact will make the payment in the final analysis? I do not feel that I have ever had a complete and satisfactory answer to that question. Many methods are applied by different co-operatives. To me, they seem to be unable to reach agreement as to what the requirement is.

I emphasise that in the final analysis it is absolutely essential that every entitlement held must in some way be attached to the property or to the owner of the property so that, if he desires to relinquish his interest in the industry, he has an asset that he can sell. As a person gets older, he might desire to relinquish his interest in his property but still retain that property. Unless it is decided to tie the quota to the property or the owner, there will be difficulties. However, with the explanations I have been given by the Minister and his officers, I am confident that the mechanics of the Bill can be worked out so that the legislation will be acceptable to all persons concerned.

Above all, we must have the co-operation of everyone concerned. Without that co-operation, those persons who have relinquished their interest and are enthusiastic about obtaining compensation for the asset they have relinquished will suffer great frustration, particularly if the minor difficulties cannot be overcome in a reasonable period.

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.3 p.m.), in reply: When I introduced the legislation we are presently amending, I made it perfectly clear that the whole purpose was to have a more equitable sharing of the more profitable sector of the dairy industry, that is, the market milk. This is what the legislation is all about.

I was pleased to hear the comments of the honourable member for Bundaberg, who is the Opposition spokesman on primary industries matters. I am not being political when I say that his remarks seemed to be so different from the attitude of the Labor Government in New South Wales when it took away from people things to which they were entitled.

My Government made it clear that we did take the 5 per cent right across the board, for which farmers were compensated, and we distributed that to those who had very little, if any, market milk. What we are doing now is amending the legislation in the light of experience. When the original legislation was introduced, I said that no doubt the Milk Board and the entitlements committee would come up with some recommendations for amendments. After six months of operation, they have done just that.

Over the week-end I spoke with some dairy farmers who supply a factory that has one of the lowest levels of market milk. They are very satisfied; they are being patient. They can see the way the Act is working, and their entitlements of market milk have increased considerably over the period in which the Act has been in force. They are satisfied to the extent that they can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and their situation is much better today than it was 12 months ago.

The honourable member for Bundaberg indicated his support for the Bill. As he stated, the changes involved are mainly for the purpose of tidying up certain anomalies and administrative difficulties.

As to his specific question concerning the ultimate aim of the entitlements scheme, I would stress that the aim is to build up the entitlements of the have-nots as quickly as possible. I reiterate, however, that the economic position of existing producers with market-milk quotas should not be prejudiced. We are not taking from them something to which they are entitled.

I am quite confident that the entitlements committee will carry this policy into effect. I am confident of that because of the people on the entitlements committee. The whole industry—the producers and the processers—is represented, and I know that its representatives will work for the benefit of the industry.

The reason for the amendment concerning staff employment conditions is that, because of their nature, the jobs concerned do not fit into Public Service classifications. If the board were required to fit in with Public Service conditions, it could experience difficulty in getting appropriate staff for the particular jobs involved. Generally, people in the Public Service have qualifications that are not tied up to any degree with the dairy industry. I think all honourable members would agree that the members of the entitlements committee are the type of people that we want. That is why those jobs are not tied to Public Service classifications.

The honourable member for Southport raised several points. As might be expected,

his main concern centred on the possible intrusion by authorities into the affairs of individual processers. I have made it quite clear that the intention of the legislation is to interfere as little as possible with the internal operations of processers.

As to deliveries of milk over the Christmas period—this is always a difficult time and the consumer needs to be assured of reasonably frequent deliveries. At the same time, the processers and vendors are entitled to a good deal of consideration. After all, it is Christmas-time for them, too. I am quite sure that the Milk Board, in consultation with all industry sectors, will provide a satisfactory resolution.

I appreciate the comments made by the honourable member for Murrumba that this is not an easy field of administration. This view was explained in somewhat more detail by the honourable member for Fassifern, who has had a long association with the industry. His counsel is generally spot on and very wise. The simple fact is that we are dealing with different groups of people with different interests. If we try to satisfy any one group completely, it is likely that we will disadvantage some other group. The key is to try to achieve the most equitable solution overall. I believe that this will be achieved within a reasonable time under the entitlements scheme.

I thank honourable members for the part that they have played in the debate. I believe that the legislation will be of great benefit to the people engaged in the industry. If I did not believe that, the Bill would not be before the House.

Motion (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of s.6; Interpretation—

Hon. V. B. SULLIVAN (Condamine—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.10 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 2, line 27, omit the words—'by retail'."

If left in the present form, the definition of "vendor" would exclude vendors who served exclusively retail outlets. It is not the intention to have these vendors excluded. Since a definition of "sell" is included in the Act and covers both wholesale and retail sales, it will be sufficient if the words "by retail" are omitted from the definition of "vendor".

Amendment (Mr. Sullivan) agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 25, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26—Amendment of s. 82; Appointment of officers and other employees—

Mr. BLAKE (Bundaberg) (5.12 p.m.): This is the clause I was speaking about during the second-reading debate. It concerns the omission of the words "Public Service Board of the State" and the substitution therefor of the word "Board". In effect, that means that the conditions applying to employment through the Public Service Board will now be omitted and the employees will be subject to conditions decided by the board. In my earlier remarks, I was not trying to make any objection to that provision. My point was that the wording in the Sugar Experiment Stations Act, 1900 to 1965, is—

> "The Director, the secretary, all other officers, inspectors, and employees appointed and employed by the Board shall each be paid respectively by the Board such salary, wages, or other remuneration as is fixed by the Board but not less than the amount thereof payable under any award or order of any industrial court in any case where such an award or order is applicable."

I was trying to be certain that not less than any award or equivalent thereof would be decided by the board. Is the Minister prepared to accept my suggestion as an amendment?

Mr. Sullivan: No, I will not accept the amendment, but I will take the honourable member's point of view to the board.

Clause 26, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 27 to 41, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Sullivan, by leave, read a third time.

STUDENT EDUCATION (WORK EXPERIENCE) BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education) (5.15 p.m.): I move—

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

I would like to remind members that the purpose of this legislation is to allow certain students to obtain work experience as part of their education.

This Bill is closely allied with the Education Act, but because of the nature of the Bill it is necessary to alter some of the definitions for the purpose of work experience. This applies specifically to such definitions as "school" so that non-State schools and other institutions can be brought under the Act.

Although 18 years is full age under the Age of Majority Act provisions, 21 years is the term used in labour legislation and awards. However, this legislation allows students under 21 to be engaged in work generally and it also ensures that any special controls or prohibitions concerning the nature of employment are observed.

The Bill also ensures that the operation of the provisions of Part XI of the Children's Services Act are not prejudiced or affected, for Part XI of that Act covers the employment of children in care and places certain responsibilities on the Director of Children's Services and gives him certain powers. That Act also limits the employment of children between the ages of 12 and 15 years.

If I could give an example—Part XI of the Children's Services Act requires the director to ensure, as far as he is able, that a child in care is placed in employment or apprenticeship best suited to his capabilities. The director may issue a licence to enable a child between 12 and 15 years to engage in street trading and he may issue a permit to enable a child under 15 years of age to be engaged in certain callings at certain times, for example, as a performing artist.

We also find that the Apprenticeship Act prohibits anyone from employing a minor who is not apprenticed or likely to be, but under this Bill the relevant section of that Act—section 21 (1)—will not apply as far as work experience is concerned, provided the work experience does not exceed 10 days in any school term.

The Bill also limits the period of employment and enables the Director-General of Education, or an officer authorised by him, to consent to work experience for students under 15 years of age.

The last two provisions I have mentioned are necessary to the legislation to provide exemptions against provisions in other legislation. For example, section 45 of the Factories and Shops Act prohibits the employment of a child in a factory unless the Minister who administers that Act grants a permit.

The Bill also sets out the conditions of work experience and clarifies certain references such as the use of the terms "person", "company", "business", etc., which were considered necessary to avoid the term "employer", which could denote an employer-employee relationship.

It also sets out that students shall not be provided with work experience for more than 30 days in a school year and not more than 10 days in a school term. I think that this is reasonable, as work experience plays a significant role in special education and it is felt that fewer than 30 days' work experience would be unsatisfactory. By limiting the type of work experience that students can perform in one particular area of work, we have also ensured that there will be no exploitation of them. If I could give another example—this provision will ensure that a student who develops a particular skill in one type of job is not used in the same type of job for the benefit of the person providing work experience.

The legislation also emphasises that there is no employer-employee relationship intended when a person takes a student into a business to provide him or her with work experience.

All participating students from State schools will be covered by workers' compensation under the Bill, but non-State schools and institutions will be expected to arrange their own cover for their students. The cover for State school students will be based on standard lump-sum payments for injury and not on lost income, as in the case of a family bread-winner. This will be done on the cost-plus basis applying to Government departments. This means that the workers' compensation regulations will have to be amended and the Workers' Compensation Board has agreed to delay such amendment until this legislation is approved.

The Bill also provides for legal liability cover of up to $500,000 for all employers engaged in work experience programmes. It also enables regulations to be made under the Act.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (5.20 p.m.): During the introductory debate, the Opposition Education spokesman, Mr. Eric Shaw, made the point that the Opposition was pleased to accept the proposition in principle because we like the idea of a work experience programme. Whilst Opposition members raised a number of points that it was felt ought to be considered, we were prepared to accept it because we felt that it was not only an opportunity for students to consider the various alternatives in work, but possibly also an extension of career counselling.

For many years students have been given the opportunity to go to various areas to consider the types of work they might undertake in the future. We have hoped that in the day they spend talking to vocational officers and other persons they might decide for themselves, after finding out the periods of employment, the type of training, the type of study and all these various factors that are involved, the type of employment they would like to undertake. So we do accept the Bill in principle.

Members of the Opposition committee have had the time to consider the legislation, and again we come out in favour of the proposal. There are a couple of areas, however, that I think need to be clarified. I am very pleased to see that the Minister has given consideration to all aspects of insurance and compensation, and he did say that this will require further amendment in the future. I note, too, that we are ensuring that parents have a say. It is very clear in one of the clauses that a child will not take part in any such programme unless the parents have agreed.

We note, too, that the Director-General of Education must give his permission if the child is under 15 years of age. I do not want to deal with the clauses now, but it might save time in Committee if I could develop this point and certain others. I notice that in the interpretation clause—

> " 'Student' means a person who is of or over the age of 14 years and who is enrolled in a school;"

I take it from the first point here that we do not want children under the age of 14 years participating in such a programme. Would I be right in thinking that?

Mr. Bird: Yes.

Mr. **WRIGHT:** If that is so, will this then apply to special schools? I note also in the interpretation clause that a school means a State secondary school or a State special school, so it would seem to me that by limiting the age to a minimum of 14 years some students who are attending special schools might be prevented from participating in such a programme. I do not know of instances of students under the age of 14 participating in the programmes that have been going for many, many years. I have discussed it with other members and they also cannot cite specific cases, but it seems also to the Opposition that as they are students in special schools they might be treated as special cases. There could be a student of 13 years of age who could benefit from being involved in a work experience programme. The way the legislation is drafted, it would be impossible for such a person to be involved. So we will not have to spend a great deal of time on this point in the Committee stage, I ask the Minister to get it checked out now. It could be a disadvantage to the child in a special school.

The other point that I come back to is one that involves the teachers. I ask the Minister to recall representations that were made by the Queensland Teachers' Union some time ago in which it sought a public risk cover for teachers participating in the work experience programme. I have had sent to me through the shadow Minister for Education a letter from Mr. J. Golding, the Director of Secondary Education, to the general secretary of the Queensland Teachers' Union, Mr. E. P. Clark. As it pertains to another clause of the Bill relating to protection of employers from liability, I would like to bring this matter to the notice of honourable members.

The letter reads—

> "With reference to your letter of 15th August, 1977 re Public Risk Cover for teachers participating in Work Experience Programmes, I have now received the following information from the State Government Insurance Office:
>
> 'The Office is prepared to issue a policy protecting the legal liability of the Department and the various Employers accepting Work Experience Students into their workforce. This policy will only provide protection for the Employers where an action is instituted for damages by a participatory Student of this Programme.' "

I have no argument with that. The letter continues—

> " 'As regards the position of Teachers, you are well aware that an Employer is vicariously liable for his servants' acts if those acts are committed in the course of the servant's employment in carrying out the Employer's work. The Department (or Crown) in the position of Employer has Common Law Liability embracing the Service (Teaching) it provides and its employees.
>
> " 'A Public Liability Policy protects the legal liability of the Insured in respect of bodily injury to or damage to property of Third Parties for which the Insured is held legally liable, but such personal injury or damage to property must occur as a result of an accident. Therefore any liability protected by the Policy must arise from an accidental occurrence and not through a deliberate action.' "

I accept that decision, but we may face the position where parents will sue a teacher because he played a role in determining that a child should go into a certain place for work experience. One would wonder, therefore, whether the teacher would not be liable for having issued an instruction in some way that a particular student should go to a certain place to carry out this work experience programme.

The letter continues—

> " 'The Teacher could not be held legally liable for an accidental occurrence involving the Student at his "Experience" work place. The only decisive action taken by the Teacher would appear to be the placement of individual Students in the various fields of experience employment.' "

That is the point I make. It goes on—

> " 'Should it be thought that some legal liability could attach to the directing Teacher then the only policy to afford this protection is a Professional Indemnity Policy.
>
> " 'It is not certain whether we could arrange this insurance. However, we are prepared to open discussions with Reinsurers on the availability of this market.
>
> " 'It is certain at the outset that the Reinsurers will require to know:—
>
> "(i) the number of Teachers involved;
>
> "(ii) under what circumstances would the Crown accept liability for the directive actions of Teachers;
>
> "(iii) under what circumstances would the Crown not accept liability for the directive actions of Teachers.' "

Three very important points are made by Mr. Golding—points that have not been satisfactorily answered. We note that the Bill refers to protection for the employers from liability. It clearly states the arrangements that are to be made. An employer will be completely covered.

In his letter to the Queensland Teachers' Union, Mr. Golding said that the Department of Education would be prepared to open discussions with reinsurers on the availability of this market. Obviously the department has given some consideration to this matter. The union is well aware of the problems that could arise because of the teacher's role in making the decision on where a child should be placed. We have heard nothing about the final outcome of those discussions. We have heard no more about a professional indemnity policy. I do not believe that we should be taking any risk in this matter.

We certainly do not want anyone injured, but children will be put in the work place and accidents do occur. All sorts of negligence suits could arise. There ought to be a professional indemnity policy. This Parliament needs to be told what discussions took place and why such a clause is not being included in this legislation. I am sure that in the future the Minister does not want court cases arising which involve massive sums of money; litigation in which teachers are involved simply because they take part in this work experience programme by determining that a certain student should go to a particular place of work. Because this matter is of major concern to the Opposition, I ask the Minister to look very carefully at it.

I can understand the department's saying that it cannot see that a teacher would be liable and that, if there were any action, the Crown or the Department of Education would be responsible for that liability. That is not always so. I believe that more information about it is needed.

Let me now refer quickly to one other point that I noted. The clause pertaining to the making of regulations provides that the Governor in Council may "make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, for or with respect to prescribing institutions, training centres or other places to be schools for the purposes of this Act". If that is to be the case, one has to refer to section 22 of the Education Act, which reads—

> "Wilful disturbance of school. Any person who wilfully disturbs any school or who upbraids, insults or abuses any teacher, teacher on probation or teacher in training at any school in the presence or hearing of any pupil who is then in or about the school or who is, with others, then assembled for school purposes whether in school or not, commits an offence against this Act."

I wonder whether some sort of action will be taken against other employees within the school work place, because it seems to me that the Governor in Council can prescribe by regulation a certain work place to be an institution and therefore "a school". That might need clarification at a later date, too.

Apart from that, the Opposition is very pleased with what the Minister is doing. I think everyone appreciates that he has been very careful about this proposal and has not rushed into it. I have with me the work experience proposal that was considered by the interim work studies committee. I know, too, that a considerable number of discussions have been held as a result of the experiments that took place at Corinda High School, and that deliberations have taken place over the special school experiment that has been going on for many years. The Opposition cannot see many problems arising other than in the few areas that I have mentioned, and I ask that the Minister give honourable members an explanation of those when he replies.

Mrs. KIPPIN (Mourilyan) (5.32 p.m.): I take this opportunity to compliment the Minister and his department on the introduction of this legislation. The programme has been on trial in some schools for a year or so, and some time ago a number of teachers realised the value of the work experience programme and were quite prepared to put a lot of additional work into it so that we could see it in operation and evaluate the system.

Two problems concern me. Under the provisions of the Bill, we will be able to cater for children attending State schools but not for children attending private schools. The committee looked very carefully at this because it would have liked to include private schools if possible. It was not possible to do it tidily, so, rather than hold up the Bill, the committee eventually agreed to go ahead on the present basis.

I am sure that the Minister will consider sympathetically any problems that are brought to him by private schools that would like to enter into the programme but have a financial barrier. A number of private schools educate children who probably would benefit most from a work experience programme. Many country children cannot attend State schools and have to go to boarding schools. About the only life that these children know is life on a farm or on a property, mustering cattle or growing crops. It is very likely that the parents and grandparents of these children have been farmers or graziers, and in all probability they will follow in their parents' footsteps. I should like to see them given an opportunity to participate in a work experience programme to broaden their outlook while they are at school. I hope that they will not be disadvantaged by the fact that we have not been able to extend the programme to cover private schools.

The other point that concerned the committee a little was the provision for five

regional advisory officers. It obtained an assurance that if five regional advisory officers are not necessary, they will not be appointed. I hope that this will be observed by the Education Department in the future.

We were a little concerned about another point, particularly with the present ceilings on the number of teachers. I am not suggesting by any means that we are short of teachers in schools; I think our schools are very adequately catered for with teachers. The Innisfail High School made a little bit of a fuss because the deputy principal was transferred and complaints have been made about class sizes at that school. What was not reported in the newspaper article was that the Innisfail High School has had the benefit of up to four extra teachers this year. Those teachers have been employed to advantage, as there is a rather large percentage of Aboriginal children at that school who need extra attention. Nowhere in my electorate have any of the schools been short of teachers. However, the Minister's committee was a little concerned that teachers would be deployed outside the class-room situation. We have been given an assurance that, unless it is absolutely necessary, all five regional advisory officers will not be appointed.

I thank the Minister for the legislation. I think it will do a lot for young people. Until now, many youngsters have had to leave school without any work experience, and without knowing what they would like to do in the future.

Hon. V. J. BIRD (Burdekin—Minister for Education) (5.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank the two speakers for their contributions. In reply to the honourable member for Rockhampton, might I say that we have always considered that children 14 years of age and over are best suited for work experience. That has been shown by experience. It is for that reason that we do not intend to reduce the age below 14 years.

Mr. Wright: I accept that. The question was whether that would apply to special schools.

Mr. BIRD: It would apply to all schools, including special schools. There would be other experience programmes for those in special schools. Naturally, the whole of their education is not received just in a class-room situation. They are given other experiences that benefit them in their training.

The honourable member for Rockhampton spoke about the possibility of actions being brought against teachers and the need for cover. It has always been the spelt-out policy of the Government to protect teachers in any actions that might be taken against them, provided, of course, that they are not negligent in what they have done. That will continue. I will certainly ensure that there is no difficulty about that. Full protection will be given to the teachers. That is the protection that has been given to them by the Government in the past, and they will continue to be covered when they are involved in the work experience programme.

Mr. Wright: The point was that Mr. Golding did say that he would look at the suggestions from the Queensland Teachers' Union. Nothing has been finally done, but admittedly that was only a month and a half ago. Are you still looking at a professional indemnity policy?

Mr. BIRD: I would not be absolutely sure at the present time. If there was any doubt about it, we would certainly look at an indemnity policy. Of course, we have a period of time before school starts again and the first students go out. I assure the House that, if there was any doubt at all, the programme would not continue until we were absolutely sure that there was cover for the teachers.

The honourable member for Rockhampton referred to the prescription by the Governor in Council of a place to be a school "for the purposes of this Act." That is in clause 3 (3) of the Bill, not the Education Act. I would refer the honourable member also to clause 12 of the Bill.

It is not the policy of the Government to have professional indemnity policies for teachers. The matter was considered. Our policy with respect to teachers is clear. They will be acting in the course of their duties and their employer, the Crown, would therefore be vicariously liable. The Government has expressed its support for Crown employees who may be separately sued as the result of an incident arising from the performance of their many duties. That should clarify the issue.

The honourable member for Mourilyan spoke of the desire to have private schools eventually covered in relation to insurance. This matter was considered. All of us have to think about our own budgets and finances. We believe that in the past the private schools have been able to arrange these things, and I am quite sure that they will continue to do so in the future.

She also expressed concern about the appointment of possibly five advisory officers and suggested that they could be surplus to requirements. We will certainly be watching this matter very carefully to determine whether advisory officers are needed and, if so, how many are necessary.

Again I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion (Mr. Bird) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Bird, by leave, read a third time.

GREENVALE AGREEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Treasurer) (5.44 p.m.): I move—

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

Greenvale has had many knockers. However, it would be entirely unrealistic to now adopt an attitude that the Government should pull out and not stay with the project. At the time that it was proposed, the project was considered to be viable. Nobody was tricked into financing it. The reasons that it now faces difficulties have been documented on a number of occasions. The reasons are valid and we must live with them. The job now is to ensure that this valuable asset continues to make a positive contribution to the Queensland economy.

The obligations which the State undertook in 1977 and now continues with some variation are not really new obligations. I say this because the commitments which the State has previously made, together with the now proposed variation, are, with one exception, directly in line with the commitments which had been made under the guarantees. The State has agreed to make good to the guaranteed lenders the amounts of interest and redemption payments due to them each quarter, to the extent of the level guaranteed, less any amounts which the project is able to pay to these lenders. In other words, in order to prevent the project from being placed in default, the State has agreed to make payments which it would otherwise be liable to make if the project had been placed in default and the guarantees had been called.

Mr. Houston: Have you amounts that you can quote on that?

Mr. KNOX: Yes.

The one exception where the arrangements are additional to the guarantee is the case of payments by the State in relation to interest on deferred interest. Such interest had been guaranteed in 1975, and when all lenders agreed in 1977 to waive it, as a concession to the joint venturers, the State accordingly agreed to make payments to the guaranteed lenders to the extent of such guaranteed interest.

The guaranteed lenders are covered on principal and interest mainly up to 8 per cent and interest on interest deferred between July 1975 and December 1976 under their State guarantees. Where Australian insurance and superannuation funds are involved, these are covered by the State guarantees to that extent. The unguaranteed lenders have each judged from their own point of view that it is desirable to stay with the project.

Greenvale is an important world source of nickel. Its importance will no doubt grow over the years ahead and will be a valuable asset to Queensland. Further, the project creates much employment and generates rail revenue, royalties, pay-roll tax and so on. There are therefore no realistic reasons why the State should not support the restructuring. Further, it is important for the State to remain a party to the arrangement because, in so doing, it will be entitled in the years ahead to be recouped from the project to the extent of all of its payments except the interest on deferred interest previously referred to. The arrangements provide that the State will not only be entitled to those recoupments but also be entitled to interest on all payments in respect of principal and interest after 1 January 1986 on payments in respect of interest.

It is impossible to accurately predict what the future will bring. We all hope that world circumstances in the years ahead will be such that the project can generate adequate cash. Under these circumstances, the State will be well placed to benefit from the recoupment provisions. If we were to let the project falter now, it could be realised, if at all, probably only at a very discounted value. The net cost to the State under the guarantees in those circumstances would be substantial, with no hope of recovery.

It was said that the restructuring is an accomplished fact and that the proposals are being put to the Parliament at a late stage. Negotiations concerning the restructuring have been continuing for some considerable time. There are 27 parties involved and it was, of course, necessary to arrive at a conclusion on principles and to document those principles in a manner acceptable to all parties. It is understandable that, because of the number of parties involved, this proved to be a long and drawn-out process which has only just been completed in time to bring the legislation before the House. However, I stress that nothing has been signed yet. The State has negotiated what it sees as the best possible terms for the debt-restructuring deed-amending deed. I seek endorsement of the terms proposed so that the restructuring can now proceed smoothly.

In relation to presentation to Parliament, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition commented yesterday on the frequency with which amendments have had to be made to the financial arrangements for the project. The reasons for the various amendments were set out in my speech yesterday. The initial amendments which increased the guarantee to $70,000,000 were necessitated by the very high level of cost inflation during the construction phase. I stated yesterday that the construction cost increased from an expected $223,000,000 to $286,000,000.

The 1975 and 1977 restructuring arrangements were designed to ensure that the project would continue in operation despite the fact that, at the prices then ruling, full debt-servicing costs could not be met. Any such restructuring plan must be formulated in the light of reasonable expectations of price movements in the forthcoming period. Each of the two sets of arrangements in question was proceeded with in the hope of some price increases in the reasonably near term. In the event, on each occasion the nickel market and other factors were such that the hoped-for improved financial position of the project did not eventuate and further amendments proved to be necessary.

This Bill represents long-term provision for the problems facing Greenvale. The arrangements are aimed at ensuring that the project is assured of continuing in operation past 1990 without any further alterations or amendments. The minimum amounts of debt-servicing which the project must meet to avoid default are very low, and there is sufficient flexibility in the arrangements for lenders to prevent default, if desirable, even in the unlikely event that these minimum events are not achieved. The whole basis of the arrangements is that a further restructuring should not be necessary.

Whilst I can assure honourable members that the correct decision has been made at this stage, I wish to make it clear that it is impossible to predict what the future will bring. Much depends, in particular, on future movements in the world nickel price, which is determined by a large number of unpredictable factors.

As indicated yesterday, while the price for nickel is currently depressed, the high current price for cobalt is offsetting this to some extent. The Deputy Opposition Leader asked about the relationship between nickel and cobalt production. During the six months to 31 October 1978 the project produced 24,200,000 pounds of contained nickel and 1,100,000 pounds of contained cobalt.

Questions were also raised on the calculation of the cash available in the project to meet debt commitments. The arrangements provide for a working cash pool of $10,000,000 to be available in the project to meet operating expenses. This allowance is equivalent to about two months' working expenses. There is provision to increase this as costs rise if a specified percentage of lenders agree. The amount available for debt payments is the amount above this minimum working cash buffer of $10,000,000. Assessments are made at the end of each quarter on a formula basis as to the cash available for debt payments at the end of that quarter. The assessment is based on the average amount of cash and other liquid assets on hand in the last month of the quarter. As a check to ensure that all available funds are applied to debt payments, the State has insisted on a special verification cash flow audit to be incorporated in the arrangements.

Overall, the arrangements are realistic, given difficult circumstances, and protect the interests of the State to the maximum possible extent. There is now only one aspect of major concern. Yesterday in my introductory speech I mentioned the potentially serious effect on the project's viability of the Commonwealth Government's recent decision to increase oil prices. This has greatly reduced the project's ability to withstand any additional problems which may be encountered in the near future.

This morning I received advice from the Honourable J. D. Anthony, Commonwealth Minister for Trade and Resources. The message was that the Government had concluded that assistance to Greenvale by way of rebate of the levy would not be appropriate. I am hoping that by this Mr. Anthony means only that he considers that a rebate of the levy is an inappropriate method of providing relief to the company. I shall be contacting Mr. Anthony shortly to clarify this and impress upon him once again the importance of this project to Queensland and the very serious effect of the oil price increase on the project's costs.

In summary—

* The project is an important part of the State's economic structure.
* All lenders support the restructuring.
* The venturers have given assurances that they will continue to exert their best efforts on behalf of the project.
* There are good reasons why the State should continue to participate in the arrangements.
* The maximum cost to the State is no more than the liability previously assumed under the guarantees.
* And, further, the arrangements hold prospect for the recoupment at a later date by the State of payments made and to be made in future.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.54 p.m.): As I indicated in my speech at the introductory stage, the project had reached the stage at which the Government had to make a firm decision either to get out and hope to cut its losses or to further assist in keeping the project going. The Government's decision to keep it going is accepted by the Opposition on the clear understanding that the facts and figures as presented by the Treasurer are not only realistic but also true and correct. In the presentation of a Bill of this type, naturally, no-one would expect any Treasurer to know all of the facts associated with it, but I thought it was remarkable that nowhere in either the Minister's introductory or second-reading speech did he indicate, or even try to indicate, the extent of the State Government's actual financial involvement. During the passage of other amendments to this Act, we were told quite clearly that the guarantee figure rose from $43,000,000 to $50,000,000, then to $70,000,000, and the last time it had risen to about $86,000,000.

Mr. Knox: That is the position at the moment.

Mr. HOUSTON: Then in fact there has been no change as far as the guarantor arrangements are concerned, and that I accept. But the fact is that the State is to pay deferred interest payments, and again there is no mention of an actual amount or even a suggested amount.

Mr. Knox: $5,000,000 for this year, $4,100,000 last year.

Mr. HOUSTON: I appreciate that, but I think the Minister will agree that that was not mentioned in either of his speeches on this Bill. I think this is important, because the Oppositon and the people of this State are entitled to know just what it is costing the State to keep this project going. Conversely, one also has to look at the amount of income received by the State directly from the project by means of royalties and profit on goods hauled on the railway line to the project. I suppose these are both on the plus side as far as the State is concerned.

The closure of the project would mean a tremendous loss of income and jobs, and it would also have a great effect on the viability of businesses in the area in which those people live and work. Although there are a lot of major factors to take into account, the important one as far as the State Government is concerned is the income received directly from the mining operations.

Naturally I want the project to succeed, and I say that on behalf of the Opposition. However, I am sure that the lenders, particularly the smaller ones, and even more particularly those associated with the insurance companies in our State, must be very concerned indeed about this type of investment. If this project failed, I think it would have a tremendous effect on future investment by these companies in similar projects. This is also something which we have to try to avoid. So, without labouring the point, the Opposition accepts the proposition put forward by the Government on the understanding that it has been clearly assessed and that it has been a matter of compromise as far as the various lenders are concerned.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Treasurer) (5.59 p.m.), in reply: I can understand the points raised by the honourable member for Bulimba. As I said, there are a great number of uncertainties about this project, and I cannot predict the outcome. We know each year, in retrospect, the success or otherwise of the restructuring arrangements. Certain evaluations and assessments have been made by the financiers around the world, and these correlate in their eyes within some limits and margins. Obviously they have come to the conclusion that it is worth while for the project to continue, and for their interest in it to continue under these circumstances. But should nickel prices drop considerably, the situation will, of course, deteriorate.

Mr. Houston: I think the cobalt price would be the main one to be watching.

Mr. KNOX: I mentioned the actual poundage that is involved and the ratio which the honourable member asked for, and it is a fairly small amount. At the same time, the value of cobalt has increased substantially, which, of course, is to the advantage of both the project and the trading company that is receiving the product under the contractual arrangements.

Exactly the same situation could arise with regard to the nickel side of the operation. In that case, the traders would be happy, so would the project management, and the surplus cash would be considerable. That would be very beneficial not only in meeting all the obligations in this arrangement but also in allaying any fears for the future. I cannot predict the future and I am not trying in any way to suggest which way these things will happen. Obviously, a lot of other people share the Queensland Government's confidence in this project. All I am asking is for the same confidence to be displayed by the Parliament.

[*Sitting suspended from 6.1 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. KNOX: I have concluded my remarks.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clause 1—Short title—

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (7.16 p.m.): Because of the benefit that it gives to the northern areas and to Queensland as a whole, I consider that this is a most important Bill. When one looks at nickel production in the world today, one sees that Australia is one of the high-cost producers. Another high-cost producer is in close proximity to Australia, and that is New Caledonia. Canada and the U.S.S.R. are low-cost producers, and between them produced 360,000 tonnes of nickel in 1975. Australia and New Caledonia produced 155,000 tonnes. So it can be seen that if we can keep abreast of the world market, we will have a viable proposition. I consider that this is the reason why the Government has placed so much emphasis on these contractual arrangements with the Japanese and the various other money-lenders in the world. It wants to keep this project alive.

From the very beginning, the Greenvale project has been dogged with hardships—not only financial hardships but also hardships associated with industrial disturbances. It cost more than $20,000,000 just to do the preliminary estimation and investigation

of the site, which was a huge burden in itself. After the drilling was completed, it was estimated that there would be a yield of between 30,000,000 and 50,000,000 dry tons, which would last for 20 years. It gave the original venturers a period of 20 years on which to work.

They found that the ore was composed of 1.5 per cent nickel and 0.12 per cent cobalt. Not much emphasis was placed on cobalt at that stage, but, because of the present price of cobalt, it could represent the viable part of the project. They estimated that they could produce 50,000,000 lb of nickel and 2,500,000 lb of cobalt a year. The present price of nickel is $1.80 a lb, which is the lowest it has been for many years, and the present price of cobalt is $20 a lb. So, thanks to the cobalt yield, there is still a viable product in the mine.

The other aspect of this project that is so vital to the North and to Queensland is that the Yabulu-Greenvale complex will directly employ about 1,200 people and indirectly employ about 3,000. So the viability of this project is important if we are to maintain unemployment in the northern areas at a reasonable level.

The venturers in the Yabulu-Greenvale project fully realise that the mine cannot last for more than 20 years, with the result that consideration is being given to bringing in ore from New Caledonia to process at the Yabulu works. This project could last for more than 20 years—up to 50 years—with the use of ore from New Caledonia. Again, this shows the foresight and planning of the Treasurer and those associated with this project.

The financing of the project was very difficult. Originally, it was estimated to cost $223,000,000, but by the time it was finished the cost had increased to $286,000,000. The principal financiers associated with the project are clearly set out in the Minister's speech and I shall not enumerate them. However, when one reads that list one sees that a considerable number of people are involved—not only Australian financial houses but also international financial houses.

The Act has been restructured three times. The State Government commitment in 1970 was $43,000,000; in 1974, it was $70,000,000; in 1975, it was $86,000,000; and, according to the Minister's speech, in 1978 it was about $91,993,000. What has caused that? The main problem is that the world price of nickel has dropped considerably; but that is not the only problem. There have been big industrial problems associated with the establishment and maintenance of the project, and even today it is being bugged by industrial strife. Figures that I have here show that in 1975 industrial strife occurred on 17 November and 27 December; in 1976, on 18 February, 5 March, 12 April, 29 September and 14 October. Although that is a comparatively short period, a considerable number of industrial disputes occurred for which there was no obvious reason. It looks as though a certain group of individuals wished to bring the project to its knees.

Mr. Houston: That's not right, and you know it.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: It is true. There have been absolutely useless strikes—walk-off strikes—and even this year, when the whole country faces economic problems, on 25 July, "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" carried a headline "700 nickel workers end four-day strike". Even when the Government goes out of its way to finance the project, some people will not allow workers to work full time and in full strength; they cause industrial strife. It is only by reason of the great administrative ability of the Treasurer in seeing these international financiers and working out a new scheme that the project is going to continue.

I went to the mine with the Minister when he told the workers what had happened and informed them of the new structuring of the financial deal. He received a standing ovation at the mine head and at the treatment plant. I believe that that was the first occasion in the history of Greenvale and Yabulu on which the miners had been made fully aware of what had been done for them by the Government and by the Treasurer of this State.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Execution of agreement evidence of approval—

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (7.24 p.m.): I am speaking to this clause because I should like the Treasurer to give the Committee an undertaking. The clause provides—

> "Upon the execution by the Premier of an agreement substantially to the effect of the agreement set out in Schedule I or, as the case may be, Schedule II it shall be deemed that he has approved of all variations from the agreement set out in the relevant Schedule evidenced by the agreement executed by him."

That means that when the Bill has been passed, the Premier can vary the schedules as they are set out in the Bill. As far as I am aware, that is a new concept. I can appreciate the reasons for it, but will the Treasurer undertake, on behalf of the Government, to table in the House the schedule that is finally approved? As he knows, once Bills pass through the Chamber, it may be 12 months or more before we receive the official copies of them.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Treasurer) (7.25 p.m.): I am not sure as to whether there is provision in the original Act for the tabling of the schedules.

Mr. Houston: It is only under the special conditions of——

Mr. KNOX: I realise what the honourable member is referring to. I will have to refer to the original Act. Nevertheless, I agree with the honourable member that if there were any substantial variations, they should be made public. They should certainly be made known to the people involved, and that means making them public. An enormous number of people have to be notified of the changes, including a number of Australian lenders and, of course, various people around the world. So that would be public information, anyway.

Mr. Houston: I think this Parliament should be told.

Mr. KNOX: I cannot speak on behalf of the Premier, but I can say that any substantial variations should be made a matter of public knowledge.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4, and schedules, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Treasurer) (7.27 p.m.): I move—

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

I outlined to the Committee at the introductory stage the principles of the Bill, which were dealt with in the Budget speech also. There is no need for me to repeat those principles now. The comments in reply at the introductory stage mainly centred on valuations and the amount of land tax collected.

Land tax is an important source of State revenue, and we cannot afford to give it up completely if we are to maintain State services at an adequate level. However, we have progressively structured the tax over the years so that only in very exceptional circumstances does it affect the ordinary citizen. There are also generous exemptions for primary producers.

Last year we collected $15,100,000. This year we anticipate the receipts will be $16,000,000. This represents an increase of only 6 per cent. That would just about maintain the real value of last year's collections. There is virtually no increase in real terms.

This matter is also related to the question raised by the honourable member for Fassifern. He pointed out during the introductory debate that in the first quarter of this financial year, revenue to the Treasury from land tax increased by about $218,000 over the same period last financial year. I advise that by far the major part of this increase in collections was attributable to the receipt during the period of arrears of land tax.

Generally speaking, land tax does not affect the ordinary citizen. The new residential exemption will mean that all parcels of an area not in excess of 1.05 hectares or approximately 415 perches used exclusively for residential purposes by the owner will not be taxed. For such residential parcels, only the area in excess of 1.05 hectares or approximately 415 perches comes into consideration.

However, even in this circumstance, the value of the area in excess of approximately 415 perches has to exceed $33,999 before tax is incurred. This is because of the combined operation of the generally applicable deduction of $30,000 and the minimum tax provisions of the Act. Hence, for an ordinary person to be liable to pay land tax in respect of a residential parcel of land, the parcel would need to be in excess of approximately 415 perches in area and extremely valuable. Further, this residential exemption is in addition to the general exemption.

The Government has also endeavoured to minimise the number of primary producers liable to pay land tax. Leasehold land is completely exempt from land tax. Primary producers who have freehold land and who personally work that land will be able to take advantage of the $90,000 exemption level provided for in the Bill. As a result of these measures, only 249 primary producers are expected to pay land tax this year.

Land tax mainly falls on companies. In 1977-78, $13,653,069, or 89.29 per cent of the total land tax collected, was paid by companies. A large proportion of this amount was attributable to land in the central business area of Brisbane.

Various members, including the Honourable the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the honourable members for Pine Rivers, Fassifern and Caboolture, discussed during the introductory stages of the Bill the effect that increased land valuations by the Valuer-General may have on the liability of a person to pay land tax. In this regard, it is relevant that most land in the State is revalued by the Valuer-General every 5 to 6 years, so that between revaluations land-owners enjoy the advantage of paying land tax on outdated land values.

I have looked into the matter of valuations in the Caboolture and Pine Rivers Shires. In the case of the Caboolture Shire, unimproved land values for land tax purposes have not increased since 30 June 1974. These 1974 values will apply for land tax purposes

this financial year. In the case of the Pine Rivers Shire, unimproved land values for land tax purposes were last increased on 30 June 1973. New valuation notices for the shire have recently been received by the Commissioner of Land Tax. These increased valuations will not be applied for land tax purposes this financial year. They will be effective as from 30 June 1979 for land tax purposes in 1979-80. This latest revaluation will result in an average increase upon the 1973 land values in the shire of 207 per cent. It is noteworthy that over the same period land tax exemption levels have increased by 300 per cent.

I think I have answered most of the queries raised at the introductory stage.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (7.33 p.m.): As I indicated at the introductory stage, although the Treasurer has raised the level of exemption, the Government expects to obtain more revenue this financial year by way of land tax than it received last financial year. Furthermore, in view of new valuations and tremendous increases in valuations carried out by the Valuer-General's Department, a substantial increase in revenue from land tax can be expected in the 1979-80 financial year.

About every two years the Government raises the exemption level. Since the last review, it has been increased by 20 per cent all round. That works out, on an average, at 25 per cent per year or, over a five-year period, at 140 or 150 per cent. In contrast, valuations carried out by the Valuer-General's Department have increased by more than 200 per cent. In fact, examples of increases of approximately 1,200 per cent have been given. That is the problem that faces the Government when two different authorities operate.

I do not object to the use of land tax to discourage people from aggregating large areas of land, particularly when the land is not used for production purposes. The profitability of land must be taken into account, whether it be used for commercial or primary industry purposes. The value of land is relative to its productivity and to the value placed on it by the person selling it.

If the Valuer-General, through his officers, makes an error and over-values land, that reacts adversely against the owner. I realise that the Treasury relies substantially on the Valuer-General's taking into account the profitability of land and its use when determining its valuation. If that is the case, provided we can get down to a lower rate of inflation between one valuation and the next, I visualise that the system will work very well. As other members have pointed out, the system breaks down when the relativity of land values as between areas is lost.

One of the problems with land valuation arises through changes in land use, such as happened at Redland Bay, Sunnybank and other places, where land that was used for rural production was developed for urban use by a private developer. This led to chaos in land valuations.

Opposition members realise the basic reason for the legislation. We also understand that taxes are required. The only thing we want to ensure is that people who are charged land tax can afford to pay it. I am sure that no-one wants a person to be charged land tax simply because he has a valuable asset. If the land is not earning anything, it seems a little hard to impose a tax in such circumstances.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

COMMON LAW PRACTICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate initiation in Committee of the Whole House of a Bill intituled a Bill to amend the Common Law Practice Act 1867–1977 in a certain particular and for related purposes; and the passing of such Bill through all its stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

COMMON LAW PRACTICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (7.41 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Common Law Practice Act 1867–1977 in a certain particular and for related purposes."

This Bill is concerned with the principle involved in the assessment by the courts of damages for loss of earning capacity. Since 1956, the practice in Australia has been to follow the decision of the House of Lords in British Transport Commission v. Gourley. The principle determined in that case was that, in assessing damages for personal injuries that have diminished the

plaintiff's earning capacity, it is necessary to take into account the income tax that the plaintiff would have had to pay on his lost earnings if he had received them.

On 5 October 1978 the High Court delivered judgment in the case of Atlas Tiles Limited v. Briers. Two judges considered that the Gourley principle should not apply in Australia. Two considered that the principle should apply. The other judge held that the principle applied in respect of past earnings, that is up to the time of judgment, but should not apply in respect of future earnings.

The net result is that, in respect of assessing damages for loss of earning capacity, the court is to take into consideration the liability to pay tax on earnings which have been lost up to the time of trial, but not in respect of future earnings.

It is clear that awards of damages for loss of earning capacity will be substantially affected by the decision. The amount of awards will increase by considerable amounts, depending on individual circumstances but, generally, from about 20 per cent and upwards.

The impact on fees payable for third-party insurance and for common law cover under the Workers' Compensation Act will be substantial. Logically, it will lead to greatly increased premiums.

It is considered that the principle in Gourley's case is sound and in accordance with the realities of the situation. It is consistent with the principle that damages should be to compensate a person for his actual loss. While there are arguments for and against the principle in Gourley's case, in the final analysis it is the capacity of the community to pay damages that should be the determining factor. The decision of the High Court will be the law in Australia unless otherwise altered.

As the matter is one that would involve considerable cost to the community, directly and indirectly, this Bill proposes to restore the position to that which has been in existence for over 20 years and that is in accordance with reality.

It is also proposed that the Bill not apply to matters that have been finally concluded as at the passing of the Act.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (7.44 p.m.): As we are putting this Bill through all stages tonight, I appreciate the Minister's advising me of his intentions. However, owing to the publicity that has surrounded the recent High Court case of Atlas Tiles Limited v. Briers, this legislation was not unexpected.

That decision certainly sent waves of dismay and fear through the insurance industry not only in Queensland but throughout this nation. People started to realise that this decision could mean substantial increases in the damages paid to injured people and also, in the case in question, to those wrongfully dismissed.

It certainly has been a matter of great discussion. In one release the Queensland Bar Association president, Mr. Hampson, made comment. Justices have made comments. Insurance industry leaders have all expressed concern.

It has been estimated that, unless this Assembly does something—and we are thinking of Queensland because what we do here will not affect the other States—it could cost the insurance organisations in this State tens of millions of dollars and would have a major effect on the S.G.I.O., which we look upon as our own insurance company. It is expected to add something like $10,000,000 to the costs of the S.G.I.O. unless action is taken. It would create serious financial repercussions for the S.G.I.O. and therefore for its shareholders. For this reason, the Opposition is prepared to allow the Bill to pass through all stages tonight.

It could also lead to steep increases in the compulsory third-party premiums paid by all vehicle owners in this State. So we are not just talking about reducing the compensation paid to one person who is injured or wrongfully dismissed; we are talking about all those who contribute to the insurance industry.

It is obvious that action has to be taken. If it is not, the decision of the High Court will be followed by the Queensland courts. This must result in significant increases in damages awards in cases of personal injury, unless, of course, the courts were to fly in the face of this High Court decision and not take the income tax element into consideration. I doubt whether our courts would do that, because when an award is made the court has to consider loss of earning capacity, pain and suffering, and loss of amenities, and when it starts estimating the loss of earning capacity it sees what a person would earn over a period. That is clearly shown by industrial awards, and in this courts have the assistance of expert witnesses from the trade union movement.

This High Court decision presents a real problem, and it has to be resolved. People have to be compensated; that is not denied in the slightest. If a person is injured and suffers because of that injury, he loses his capacity to work and carry on a normal life, and there has to be some sort of remuneration paid to him by way of compensation. There is no argument about that. But I think that we have to look at this in the terms of actual loss, not on some bloated figure which would place an intolerable burden on the financial institutions or, in this instance, the insurance companies. I am glad to see that the Minister is not looking at the

award of interest that was mentioned in one of the cases I was reading this afternoon. With the long drawn-out nature of some of these damages cases, there ought to be an interest factor. We are appreciative of the problems. We realise the necessity for the speed with which the Minister is acting, and we support the proposition before the Committee.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (7.47 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for his contribution. He certainly has a grasp of the problem which confronts the community as a result of this recent High Court decision. It seems quite clear that the sooner this action is taken to clear up the matter and to restore the situation to that previously existing, the better it will be for all concerned.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

SECOND READING

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (7.50 p.m.): I move—

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

It was indicated when introducing this Bill that the object is to counter the decision of the High Court in respect of the assessment of damages for loss of earning capacity. I am very pleased to have general acceptance of the proposal, and I thank the honourable member for Rockhampton for his contribution to the introductory debate.

It is considered that the decision of the High Court will grossly inflate awards for damages for personal injuries involving a diminution of earning capacity. It must inevitably lead to a substantial increase in third-party motor vehicle insurance premiums. The principle in Gourleys' case has provided the basis upon which damages have been assessed in Australia for the last 20 years. It is considered that the principle in that case is sound and consistent with the realities of the situation and should be retained.

This Bill, therefore, should be enacted as quickly as possible. If its enactment is delayed, the possibilities of injustice to persons who have obtained judgments for damages assessed on some other basis than that acceptable will increase. The sooner this legislation is assented to, the fewer persons there will be whose interests are likely to be prejudiced by their being deprived of damages for payment of which an order has been made.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (7.51 p.m.): As I said at the introductory stage, we support the move by the Minister. The comments he made are in line with what other people said when this issue arose. I note the comments of Mr. Justice Stephen, and I echo them. He is reported to have said—

" . . . the ruling would 'dramatically increase the general level of awards of damages, calling for a far-reaching and temporarily disruptive re-evaluation of the present basis whereby loss has come to be distributed, by means of insurance, throughout the community.' "

The S.G.I.O. General Manager, Mr. Col Douglas, is reported to have said—

"The decision is likely to flow through to compulsory third party damages awards."

In the Bill before us we clearly see that the income tax component is to be removed when the assessment is made.

I conclude by saying that I hope that all other States quickly follow the precedent now being set by Queensland, because what we are doing here will affect only Queenslanders. We can see major difficulties for the insurance industry and, through it, for all vehicle owners and people throughout the nation who pay premiums in this way. We commend the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Lickiss) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

URBAN PASSENGER SERVICE PROPRIETORS ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Transport), by leave, without notice: 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 Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act 1975–1977 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Transport) (7.55 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act 1975–1977 in certain particulars."

The Honourable the Treasurer, in his Financial Statement for 1978-1979, drew attention to the continuing review of the assistance schemes for private operators of urban passenger services and indicated that I would be in a position to make an announcement on this matter in the near future.

As honourable members would be aware, the present Act provides assistance to the proprietors of privately owned bus services in the metropolitan statistical division, provincial cities and urban centres by way of—

* a Government guarantee for a loan from an approved financial institution for the purchase of a new bus as an additional or replacement vehicle;
* a subsidy of up to 6 per cent per annum on interest on such loans; and
* a general subsidy to a maximum of 25 per cent per annum on gross fare revenue on the basis of 15 per cent generally with up to a further 10 per cent as might be approved where this can be justified.

Despite the assistance that has been given to date, urban bus operators are still finding difficulty in maintaining a sufficient degree of viability to permit replacement of buses that, quite frankly, are generally of a considerable age and lacking in appeal to the travelling public. Because of these financial constraints, there is a reluctance by private operators to place orders for the purchase of new buses substantially manufactured in Queensland. This has resulted in the motor-body-building industry in this State not getting the work that it could expect from a progressive replacement of older urban passenger buses by more modern vehicles.

From investigations that have been made and from discussions with the bus proprietors, it seems clear that a stimulus would be given to proprietors and the industry if loan funds could be made available over a longer period of time and at more favourable terms. At the present time, many proprietors have had recourse to high-cost finance more appropriate to the purchase of private motor vehicles than to the operation of a small business.

I am pleased to be able to say that this Bill will enable operators to obtain loans for the purchase of new buses on more favourable terms than at present. This has been the subject of lengthy discussions with representatives of the main banking institutions, who are now prepared, on the basis of the new guarantee scheme, to consider loans at normal overdraft rates that apply to other business undertakings.

However, I must stress that the whole success of this scheme will depend upon the response of bus proprietors to the improved scheme of government guarantee for loans. It is expected that they will avail themselves of the opportunity now given to them to purchase new buses of substantial Queensland manufacture and so provide a stimulus to the body-building industry and the employment position in this sector.

Mr. Houston: Will they be Queensland-made bodies?

Mr. TOMKINS: That is the general idea. There are firms here looking for that type of business, and we would like to think, as we are involved in it, that they will take advantage of the opportunity.

Mr. Houston: But they have not got to; they can buy anywhere?

Mr. TOMKINS: Well, not really. If we can get these people to co-operate, they should be prepared to place an order in Queensland. That is something that we have been trying to bring in.

Mr. Davis: But you can't guarantee it, can you?

Mr. TOMKINS: Perhaps we cannot guarantee it, but at least we will use our influence to see that they do.

The period of the guarantee will be increased from five years to a maximum of 10 years, which should enable an operator to negotiate a loan at normal overdraft rates with his bank for a longer period. In addition, the Government guarantee will be increased from two-thirds to nine-tenths of the purchase price in respect of approved standard urban buses.

Mr. Houston: Is that purchase price the difference between the trade-in value and the new price, or is it the initial price on a straight-out new purchase?

Mr. TOMKINS: There will be trade-ins, and it is a question of adjustment. The adjustment would be on the difference between the two.

Mr. Houston: It is nine-tenths of the loan?

Mr. TOMKINS: That is right.

As the repayments can be spread over a period twice that at present, this should be of considerable assistance to the operator, with a reduction in the instalments for repayment of the loan and interest.

Apart from the improved Government-guarantee scheme, the Bill will provide for the interest subsidy payable to be increased from up to five years to up to 10 years, and this should also improve the viability of the industry.

So far as operating subsidy is concerned, in order that the operator will be able to generate a sufficient cash flow without a substantial increase in fares, the Bill will provide for an increase in the base rate of subsidy from 15 per cent as at present to 30 per cent.

The present provision for an increase in the maximum rate by a further 10 per cent is retained, so that after detailed investigation, and where this can be justified, the proprietor could be paid an additional amount of up to 10 per cent, depending upon a complete review of his operations and the need for such a further payment.

I feel I should say that overall the review of the operations of the private urban bus services will be continued with the aim of improving operating efficiency and, where necessary, rationalising services in order to contain the effect of escalating costs, which have, unfortunately, been a serious problem in recent years.

The Bill will give effect to the Government's promise to maintain the private sector of urban bus passenger transport, and is in line with the assistance that it has afforded the Brisbane City Council for the operation of its bus transport undertaking. At present the State Government subsidises the Brisbane City Council to an extent of 50 per cent of gross fare revenue, which, of course, is still higher than the improved assistance now proposed for the privately operated sector.

The Bill is therefore simply one to increase the existing level of assistance that may be given to private urban transport operators. This has been found necessary after a comprehensive review of their operations since the scheme commenced in 1975 in order to maintain the viability of the industry in the face of increased costs as well as the upsurge in competition from the private motor car with every increase in passenger fares.

The general subsidy proposed will be retrospective to 1 July this year, and I would hope that the additional payments would be used towards the purchase of new buses under the improved guarantee scheme.

As mentioned earlier, this Bill is a decisive step towards giving effect to the Government's promise to maintain the private sector of the urban bus passenger transport industry. I must add that we do not regard it as a final solution. I am in the process of giving serious consideration to very strong representations that I have received from Government members for a further widening of the scheme, particularly in respect of the population definition of an urban area, which is the basis for determining eligibility for subsidy, and the distance stipulation of the present local pensioner scheme. To this end I will initiate investigations into the nature of the assistance required and the financial implications thereof. I invite interested members to make appropriate submissions to me.

I commend the Bill to honourable members; I feel sure it will have their support.

Mr. DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (8.4 p.m.): I always maintain that in December three things will always occur. Firstly, we are always assured that 25 December will be Christmas Day; secondly, we can always be sure of an increase in taxi fares; and thirdly, there will be an increase in subsidy to the ailing private bus industry.

What the Minister said tonight illustrates the terrible plight public transport is in throughout Queensland. It is amusing when we hear the Liberal spokesman in the Brisbane City Council saying that he would like to see private enterprise take over the council's bus fleet. How absurd!

We can all recall what has occurred with some of the private bus services in Brisbane in the last three or four years. We can all remember McGrath's Black and White Bus Service, which operated between Brisbane and Sandgate. That service was operated for many years with aged, decrepit buses. That company gave no notice to the Transport Department of what it intended to do. It just closed up business on a Saturday night. On the following Monday the Brisbane City Council was invited by the Transport Department to provide the service. So much for a big operation like the Black and White Bus Service. The licence for the Cribb Island Bus Service had to be relinquished because a proper service could not be maintained. I recall the stand taken by my good friend from Archerfield on behalf of residents in the Acacia Ridge/Archerfield/Sunnybank area. Their bus service failed and the Brisbane City Council had to come to the rescue. In addition to providing a better service, the Brisbane City Council extended the bus route to cater for outlying commuters.

The Opposition will look at the Bill. We go along with the provision of a 10-year period to allow private bus services to pay. We also go along with the increase in the subsidy from 15 to 30 per cent. Those steps will help ensure that the private bus services provide better buses. When I look at some of the private buses that carry passengers throughout Queensland, I am amazed that people are prepared to get into them.

Mr. Frawley: You haven't seen one outside Brisbane.

Mr. DAVIS: What is the honourable member talking about? I have travelled widely throughout the State. When I was an official of the Transport Workers' Union, the private buses came within my realm of influence. I

realised the shocking and pathetic condition that some of the buses were in. At that time, the drivers were not paid their correct award rates of pay.

The latest report of the Commissioner for Transport shows that, as at 30 June 1977, 12 per cent of the registered bus fleet in Queensland was over 25 years of age, 7.2 per cent was between 20 and 25 years of age, and 16 per cent was 15 to 20 years of age. No-one could deny that the age of many buses in Queensland is a matter for concern.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. DAVIS: The same report refers to tow-trucks, one of which was operated by the honourable member for Caboolture. But, because they come under the provisions of another Bill, I will not touch on that matter.

I appreciate the extent of the problems confronting private bus operators. One of the biggest problems confronting them arose in July when Doug Anthony increased the price of petrol by 16c a gallon. The price of diesoline and similar products also rose.

It is time that the Government looked at the whole matter of public transport and stopped fiddling around with subsidies. It should adopt a suggestion put forward recently in the Press by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, namely, that the State Government take over all forms of public transport. Only by so doing will it provide the people of Queensland with better bus services.

I do not want to go into the generalities of the car versus the bus and so on. Experience throughout the world shows that public transport will not pay. It is about time the Government decided to apply a more sensible subsidy system to public transport. The biggest problem arises with private operators, whose only thought is for the filthy lucre. They simply have to make a profit. If they do not make a profit, they do not provide the service.

Mr. Bishop: What a shocking thing! Fancy making a profit.

Mr. DAVIS: I am not against profit. As I have said on numerous occasions, I am a small businessman and one of the leading advocates for the small businessman, the small farmer and the trade-unionist. I am a man of many seasons and many skills. I was a taxi-operator and I am sure that officials of the Transport Department would tell anyone that my taxi was always in first-class order. I think I received a commendation from them. But I will not discuss that tonight.

Mrs. Kyburz: What a sob story this is!

Mr. DAVIS: That is correct; I was one of the most successful taxi operators in Brisbane.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill before the Committee.

Mr. DAVIS: I am not condemning profit. It is necessary to the private sector. When it comes to service—and that is what public transport is all about—if a bus run is not getting enough passengers, naturally a private operator cannot afford to operate. It is then that the aged, the infirm and the youngsters who do not have their own motor vehicles suffer. When the State or the local authority runs bus services, they are run for the benefit of all in the community.

We may reach the situation in which we have to examine all the bus services in the State. I think the Minister will agree, when he replies, that private buses do not pay unless they engage in charter work or are lucky enough to carry numerous passengers.

I think I should point out at this stage how the Government has failed to assist the Brisbane City Council. I do not want to retrace how the State Government diddled the Brisbane City Council out of $20,000,000 in State grants. When the argument was going on between the Lord Mayor and the Treasurer, who was then the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Treasurer, aided and abetted by the Premier, said that if the Brisbane City Council did not want to run its bus services, private enterprise should do it. I have given three or four examples of the way in which private enterprise runs its bus services. The suburbs I referred to are suffering.

I agree with the Minister's opening remarks that some will benefit, but we must keep in mind the cold, simple fact that, irrespective of the subsidy paid, the community will not get the service it demands if a profit is not made.

At this stage, I do not say that the Opposition will object to the Bill. We will have a good look at it before the second-reading stage, which may not be until the end of the session. We will look into the Bill, and at the second-reading stage we will put forward Labor's views on how public transport and private operators throughout Queensland could be assisted.

Mr. M. D. HOOPER (Townsville West) (8.13 p.m.): In tracing the history of this Bill since it was introduced in 1975, I cannot but reminisce on some of the statements I made at that time. From memory, the original subsidy offered to private bus owners who granted a 50 per cent rebate to pensioners was about 3 per cent. At the time I emphasised how paltry it was and said that the figure must have been plucked out of the air without any research by the Transport Department into what the bus companies would lose by granting the 50 per cent

rebate. It did not take very long for the Transport Department to realise that the 3 per cent was in no way effective in giving a proper subsidy to the bus owners. I doubt that any bus proprietor in an approved area is getting less than 10 per cent subsidy on his bus takings to help recoup losses accruing through the carriage of so many pensioners.

When the State Government introduced the innovation several years ago by which pensioners were given a 50 per cent rebate, it did not intend that the cost would be carried by the private bus owners. The Government has been moving progressively towards approving a higher subsidy or a more realistic subsidy that will keep private bus owners on the road.

As the Minister said, the Government is providing a 50 per cent subsidy to the Brisbane City Council to cover losses incurred. It is only right and proper that a subsidy close to that should be paid to private bus owners in provincial cities and towns. Later on, I hope it will be paid to the private bus owners in the smaller country towns.

As the A.L.P. spokesman, the honourable member for Brisbane Central, said, it is a fact of life that bus patronage throughout the world is declining. In that respect Queensland is certainly running true to form. Bus patronage is declining rapidly in country towns and provincial centres. There are many reasons for this. It is not simply because people own motor cars. Part of the cause is the poor standard of buses owned by private owners. Many are wartime vehicles. Some are converted old truck chassis with a superstructure. They are hideous machines to travel in even if there is no charge.

I think in most cases the timetables are hopelessly inadequate. Buses do not run at convenient times and they run infrequently. There is an insufficient variety of services available to the public. People who wish to go to town to catch a bus to another suburb or their place of employment are greatly inconvenienced by having to wait for long periods. There are many reasons why people have given away public bus transport, whether it be in Townsville or in any other city.

Townsville has one of the worst bus services in Queensland, something of which I am not very proud. I am trying very hard to gain assistance for the private bus operators in that city. Townsville has no bus services after 6 p.m. during the week and only one major company runs services on Saturday mornings. For almost the whole of the week-end those in the community who rely on bus services are without transport.

One matter that does concern me—and I have a question on notice for tomorrow concerning it—is that there seems to be reluctance on the part of the State Government to make public a report on the urban passenger transport service in Townsville. It was commissioned several years ago by the Commonwealth and State Governments. The report was presented in 1976 and, to my knowledge, it has not yet been made public. Many people are asking why. If the report contains some strong recommendations for financial assistance to the Townsville City Council or a transport authority to provide better transport services in our city, I should very much like to see the report made public and some Government action taken to effect some of the requirements of our city.

In 1976 the A.L.P. council in Townsville, when it took office, made one hell of a noise about how it would take over the private bus owners in Townsville and go into the bus transport service itself. Fortunately for the citizens of Townsville, the council has had second thoughts and no longer wishes to get involved in taking over the bus service. It has seen the losses incurred by the Brisbane City Council and the Rockhampton City Council, which do not know how to run a bus service efficiently. If a transport authority is to be established in the provincial cities, particularly Townsville, I should like to see it set up at an early date.

I shall now deal with the quality of the buses in Townsville. The South Townsville Bus Service has four very old buses. I think two of them are pre-war models. That shows how old they are. The West End Bus Service has 10 or 12 old Bedford chassis which are maintained miraculously by a father and son and I am sure that on average over the 12 months they do not even draw the basic wage. That shows how poor the patronage is on those bus services and how inadequately the people are served. The Hermit Park Bus Service is a slightly better service. It caters for the majority of the population of Townsville. It has four modern buses that are used mainly on charter work. Its other buses are very obsolete and need replacement. The three companies would like to get adequate finance to replace their buses. I hope that this legislation will make it easier for them to buy new buses.

A new bus costs $40,000 to $50,000 and, even at an interest rate of 4 or 5 per cent over 10 years, the loan will take a lot of paying off. It does not follow that new buses will be filled immediately. Certainly they will have better patronage because young people will be attracted to using them. The services would be much more reliable. I hope that these firms will be encouraged to take advantage of the finance that will be available from the State Government. It is a great offer and the companies should give some very serious thought to it.

Personally, I should like the bus services in Townsville to come under one authority, whether it be a transport authority owned by all the present operators as a public company or one person. The services should be restructured. This is the case in many provincial towns where four, five, or six

companies operate small franchise areas. They cannot give the service and it is impossible to travel direct from one suburb to another. The routes should be restructured. The services would be more efficient under one manager. Bus services have come to be looked upon as a facility that should be available to all people when they want them.

I think most members of the community are prepared to pay something towards keeping bus services viable and operating most times of the day. After all, they know when they pay income tax that they are subscribing towards schools, hospitals, public parks and public swimming-pools. I am quite sure that the average citizen is prepared to pay some additional amount either in rates or taxes if he knows that disadvantaged people in our community such as pensioners, low-income earners, the unemployed, and young people looking for jobs can use public transport.

I believe also that the Minister is giving some consideration to extending a similar scheme to smaller towns in country areas, and, whilst I know it is not possible to achieve that under this Bill, I do hope that next year we will see a similar scheme offered to them.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.21 p.m.): I think the public are entitled to expect, in fact demand, an efficient public transport system. We notice that in other States of Australia the public transport system is completely State-run. That does not mean to say that every service has to be individually run by the State, but it does mean as far as finance is concerned that any profitable routes are run by the State and any losses are covered by the State.

As we know, railway services in Queensland, both freight and passenger, showed an operating loss of $19,900,000—no small amount—for the first quarter of 1978. That loss, of course, is borne by the State Government. We know that the Brisbane City Council showed a considerable loss—certainly nowhere near that figure—on its bus services last year. We also know that if private operators were to provide very frequent services with brand-new buses only in areas of proved high patronage, they would show a profit. However, if a private operator serviced an area of not so high patronage and had to pay high interest on money borrowed to replace old buses, he would get into financial difficulties, and being in business he would naturally shed the areas of lower patronage and refuse to go into areas that need developing. This can be understood. So I suppose one could say that under the existing situation the private operators would welcome this amending legislation.

I think the public transport system in Queensland has to be reviewed, and reviewed urgently. I know that we have transport authorities and that we now cross the river by suburban rail, and it is also true that there have been gradual improvements to the rail-bus co-ordinated services. I would like to see a lot more of that. I believe there are a large number of areas in Brisbane and in the surrounding shires where there could be a substantial improvement in the bus-rail co-ordinated services. I believe the transport authorities should be given the necessary finance to carry out that improvement. I know they can operate only within a certain budget, but I think assistance for these services should be a very important part of the State Government's financing of transport. But in the final analysis, for every car we can keep off the road, particularly the short-distance commuter from a suburban area to a shopping centre, the State will save money, which will eventually amount to savings of millions of dollars spent on the development of roads and parking facilities. Very large tracts of valuable land are used for the provision of car-parking facilities for the private motorist.

If the Government delays in taking positive action with regard to public transport, it will pass on to future generations an insurmountable problem. Something should have been done about this matter many years ago. As it was not, I believe that now is the time to do it. The State Government, through a State transport authority, should take over the whole of public transport. It was very quick to take the electricity undertaking from the Brisbane City Council, because that was a paying concern, and put it under the control of regional authorities. I believe that the Government should do exactly the same thing with public transport. Long-distance transport could be covered by a State transport authority. Regional authorities could cover the major parts of the State. Of course, that would be in conformity with the desires of any provincial city that wanted to improve its public transport system.

I can see no reason why runs should be taken off private operators if they are at present providing an efficient service. By that, I mean a good service. If they were allowed to carry on, they would do so under licence from the authority. There would therefore be no need to upset any existing arrangements. This would allow new areas opened up to be immediately serviced by public transport; they would not have to wait until a private bus operator decided that it was profitable to come in.

One of the tragedies in the development of Queensland has been the ad hoc approach that developers, particularly land developers, have been allowed to adopt. They decide where a new housing area will be situated. If one travels along any of the main roads out of Brisbane, one sees a residential area, a shopping complex, and then miles of vacant land before another residential area. A transport operator could not expect to pick up any passengers for many miles along that road. This enlarges the timetable and adds to the running costs and the costs of passengers travelling from one point to

another. I believe that local authorities should be given more powers by the State Government to stop development from proceeding in this ad hoc way. It happens in the provincial cities as well as in the major cities, and the Queensland Government has contributed to this state of affairs.

Let me take, for instance, the development of some of the housing areas. When the Inala housing development was proceeding, no thought was given to public transport. When the Beenleigh housing development was proceeding, again no thought was given to public transport. This has happened in other areas. Time and time again members of all political parties have got up in this Chamber and asked that public transport be provided for developing areas in their electorates, because no thought was given to it in the early stages of the development.

I believe the public should demand better timetables and a reasonable distance between stops. On some bus routes a person has to get off a bus and walk a considerable distance even before he comes to the side street in which his home is situated. I believe that the public is not being provided with a good service. Also, in many areas outside Brisbane the roads over which buses have to travel leave a lot to be desired. The public is entitled to good buses, and the Opposition supports the idea of allowing those who are in the field to provide the best buses available.

When I asked the Minister by interjection where the bodies of the buses are to be built, I believe he indicated that he hoped they would be built in Queensland. I go further than that. In effect, the Government is acting as guarantor. The operator goes to the bank and obtains a loan, provided the Government stands guarantor for 9/10ths of it. Therefore, one of the terms should be a fixed contract for the building of the body on the chassis that is bought.

I do not think it would be realistic at this stage to tell the bus operator that he must buy a chassis and motor that is assembled or manufactured in Queensland; that would be taking it too far and would only limit his choice of vehicle. However, a survey should be carried out, and if it was found that there was a substantial choice in vehicles available from various agencies, such a condition could also be enforced. There are certainly enough body-builders throughout the State to warrant the Government's saying quite clearly and distinctly to an operator, "The subsidy will be available if you take out a contract with a Queensland firm for the building of the body." The particular firm need not be named, but contract prices could be asked. In my opinion, Queensland companies can match southern companies.

Mr. Davis: They are doing something similar with the cement works.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, that is something that suits the Government. It is done to keep competition out. What I am suggesting in this case would ensure that Queensland money was used to keep Queensland industries in operation. If that is the basis of the guarantee, there is quite a lot of good in the proposal.

I should like to see the State Government become more generous to the Brisbane City Council. It is all very well for the Government to talk about subsidies. The city council gives concessions to pensioners, and it is necessary for it to do that only because the Federal Government is not accepting its full responsibility and giving pensioners an adequate income when they go into retirement. If it did, there would be no need for local authorities to worry about giving rate or bus-fare concessions. Concessions to pensioners and schoolchildren should be a straight-out responsibility of the Federal Government, relayed through the State Government.

Mr. Warburton: They are putting greater onus on local authorities all the time.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is one of the tendencies of the National-Liberal Government of this State. On many occasions over the years I have seen it pass financial responsibility of some kind to a local authority and then wipe its hands of the matter. We have argued such provisions in Bill after Bill in this Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I hope that the honourable member will relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am sure you will agree that it is a similar principle, Mr. Miller.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I have been fairly lenient.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know you have. I saw you in operation on clause 1 of the Greenvale Agreement Bill, and you were very lenient.

If the Brisbane City Council gives a concession to a passenger—it does not matter whether it is to a child or to a pensioner—that adds to the council's losses on the operations of its bus system and it has to be paid for by the ratepayers of Brisbane. The same principle applies in provincial cities or anywhere else in the State. Instead of the State Government paying for it from its revenue—and, as honourable members are aware, part of its revenue comes from Commonwealth taxation—the whole burden falls on the shoulders of the ratepayers. You will appreciate, I am sure, Mr. Miller, that in speaking about local authority finance I am referring only to the losses on public transport systems.

As the honourable member for Brisbane Central said, there are many facets of the Bill that we will take a look at. They relate to the mechanical side of financing. The most important thing the Government should be doing is working out ways and means to take over the whole of public transport as its responsibility. Where possible, I see no reason at all why it could not be leased back to private or local authorities. But at all times it is a State Government responsibility.

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (8.36 p.m.): It is sad but true that we cannot have fair weather every day in this Chamber. It would be nice if on some days a person did not feel that he or she was swimming through wet cement. This has not been such a day.

The history of this Bill is despicable, to say the least. It would have to be the second-worst example of legislation by strangulation, after the Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Bill which dealt with the Iwasaki project. Indeed, that was legislation by strangulation. It is the principle behind the enforcement of the Act being amended by this Bill that I wish to speak about. This would have to be about the sixth time today I have gone through this, but I will go through it again because I am quite determined that this must not happen again.

The Bill was introduced into the joint party room last week, and was shunted aside because of what I considered to be lack of agreement amongst back-bench members of the Government. Suddenly this morning we saw it pop up again. There was quite heated debate about it. I am not going to say any more about that other than to comment that during and after that heated debate we were told that we ought to continue our supposedly sweet round-table discussions elsewhere. We have done so, and we realise defeat. The wounds of defeat will probably mean that next year we will not see this type of thing happen again. I have said again and again that the bringing of legislation of such major importance before the Assembly on the night before it rises prior to Christmas shows gross lack of planning on the part of the Government, and gross mismanagement of what is supposed to be a major business of Government. It is appalling.

I should like to quote from a book titled "Parliamentary Scrutiny of Government Bills" by Griffith, who is a constitutional lawyer. Dealing with the possibilities for reform in the parliamentary system—God knows, we need them!—he said—

> "The relationship between Governmental powers and the critical examination of those powers and of their exercise determines the nature of every constitution. In practice, the dangers of Governments being ineffective because of excessive critical opportunity are in modern industrial society not serious."

Later he went on to state—

> "What must be criticised . . . is the excessive secrecy of Governments . . . "

We often see excessive secrecy with this Government. We get handed in the joint party room a piece of blurb about legislation, and when we have the opportunity of going through it, even if we are not satisfied with it, we find that it has already been steam-rollered through the joint party room. If a person gets up to say anything about it, he or she is either yelled at in a derogatory manner or looked upon as some sort of witch-hunter who is out to niggle somebody else's electorate.

Griffith went on to say—

> "This secrecy is founded on a fear of effective criticism. And this is why the secrecy is dangerous."

As back-bench members, we are having less and less effect on legislation. I have now been here for four consecutive years, and have been through this crush-and-rush process of legislation every year, without change. Why the Bill could not have come before the Assembly four weeks ago when we were scraping the bottom of the barrel for effective legislation, I do not know. If it is the fault of the Transport Department, I am criticising it; if it is the fault of the Treasury Department, I am criticising it. If it is the fault of the Minister—I have said all this to him earlier today, too.

We are now making amendments to prop up the private bus operators. What will we see next? The bread industry will be propped up and the ferry operators will be propped up. Will subsidies be paid to tow-truck operators? Are the heavy-transport operators going to be subsidised? The point I am making is that this Government does not allow any type of market force to operate.

I was very interested in the speech by the Opposition spokesman on transport. It could very well have been a speech made in the joint Government party room. It was a lovely little treatise on how to make private enterprise work. It was most interesting indeed.

When we consider amendments to the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act, we have to look at the whole State. We have to look at the country bus operators as well as those in the cities and the provincial towns. Having been through it all earlier today, I believe that we now have the agreement of the Minister. I must say that he deserves a very small, very simple, very lonely bouquet. He did come half way by agreeing not to proceed through all stages of the Bill tonight. Whether his agreement to go no further than the first reading of the Bill is a slight 24-hour victory for the back-benchers, I do not know. Having gone through this process again today, I say that if I see this happen again next year, this swimming through wet sand, I will get up again and say exactly the same things.

It does not matter which Bill it is; if assistance is given to certain people in one area of the State, it must be given to the lot if the lot need that assistance. It is despicable that country members have had to plead all day for that assistance. They should have been considered in the first place along with the provincial cities and the metropolitan area. For me to have to say this indicates that there is something rotten in the State of Denmark.

I suppose that, now that we have reached agreement to subsidise all private bus operators who need it, the ramifications of the Bill will be not only wide but also uniform and widespread. That is fair and precisely the way it ought to be.

The Minister, in his speech—should I say the department, in the Minister's speech—said that an overall review of the operations of private urban bus services will continue. He also said that rationalisation of services in order to contain the effect of escalating costs, which unfortunately have been a serious problem in recent years, will continue.

Part of the problem and the reason for these further amendments arise in two provincial cities. I am not going to speak for those cities; the members who represent them will do so. Besides which, God help me if I happen to mention the names of those cities!

We have been told that in one particular city there are 12 operators. A rationalisation of those companies has to occur. A city with a population of 80,000 cannot support 12 private operators. No doubt honourable members have worked out for themselves which city I am referring to; but I have not mentioned its name. The point is that if there were six private operators in that city they would probably be running at a fair profit. How much propping up do they need? If they cannot work out a rationalisation among themselves and if they cannot work out an effective cost structure, they should not be in business.

The Minister said that the Bill will give effect to the Government's promise to maintain the private sector of urban bus passenger transport. That is a nice little euphemism meaning a very slow take-over of the entire transport system of the State. I have no idea whether that is Government policy, but if it is, it ought to be elucidated clearly and the lines of demarcation should be drawn publicly. If that is what we are doing, I am not sure that I agree with it. Slowly but surely the malaise of the transport system in Queensland is being formed into a conglomerate being run by the Government. If we are to do that, let us say it, and let us say it clearly in the Bill.

Mr. Fouras: Are you accusing the Minister of socialism by stealth?

Mrs. KYBURZ: That is a very interesting theory; it is one that I have put forward before. I am not so much accusing him of socialisation by stealth as I am accusing the department of socialisation by weakness in opposing it.

The Minister said that the assistance afforded to the Brisbane City Council for the operation of its bus undertaking will be augmented. Whether or not I agree with that is also a major point of consternation. The Brisbane City Council bus operation is to the fore in receiving pro-discrimination from this Government. It is the country bus operators who are in trouble, and not only those on the seaboard but also those in inland Queensland. The Minister said that at present the State Government subsidises the Brisbane City Council to the extent of 50 per cent of gross fare revenue, which is, of course, still higher than the improved assistance now proposed for the privately operated sector.

The Minister then said that the Bill is therefore "simply" one to increase the existing level of assistance. I disagree with that word "simply". Whoever wrote his speech has no idea of the semantics of the English language. To use the word "simply" is an affront to anyone who happens to understand the ramifications of its meaning. This is not a simple Bill. It has major connotations and the major connotations have been largely overlooked by the writer of the speech. Further, to propose a retrospective subsidy is anathema to me in respect of a private industry. Let us get our definitions clear. This is not a private industry; it is a mixed industry—a mixture of private and Government industry. Calling the industry's economy a private-enterprise economy is just pulling so much wool over nobody's eyes any more. As I said, if we are to prop up industry, let us start with the ones that need it most and let us prop them up quickly.

We have gone through the whole exercise with the bread industry. It has been neatly submerged under the moss and lichen which is called the lobbying of Government members. If that submerging has taken place, when will it come to the surface again? I shall be interested to see it when it does. The Federal Parliament has gone through the procedures of committees, non-reporting to back-benchers and so on again and again. One by one the back-benchers in the Federal Parliament have said that they are tired of being division fodder.

I have given an undertaking to the Government Whip that I will not divide on this Bill. I do not have any personal disagreement with the principles in the Bill, apart from the fact that if we are to subsidise a part of the State we should subsidise the lot. It is the principle of the lack of critical appreciation of Bills that I certainly disagree with. It is an insult to the integrity of members, who are supposed to have an opportunity for rational discussion and rational and reasoned appreciation of legislation, to put a Bill of this proportion before us the night before the Assembly rises. We do not have that opportunity now.

Probably the House will rise somewhere near midnight tonight and we will go home like tired little bunny rabbits, creep into our burrows, wake with furry little brains and be back here by 11 o'clock in the morning, having had no time to read the Bill; and yet we will be expected to come in and blandly vote with the Government on it.

It has happened too many times. We put up with it earlier in the year on the Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement

Bill because there were mad threats going around this place. And I say no more on that. I said then that I would not tolerate it again and I am saying here and now that I will not tolerate this sort of treatment from any Minister once more.

We should get due warning of Bills that are to be introduced. I do not believe that it is right and proper for any Minister to bring a Bill to the joint-party room when it has not been through his committee—that is a fundamental part of the democratic process—where it might gain some consensus of agreement—at least some.

Couldn't we at least have a semblance of the democratic procedure, because if we cannot have that, what are we here for? We are wasting the taxpayers' money. We might as well all pack up our little rabbits and our little holes on the top floor and go home because we are serving no purpose. We are a rubber stamp for the Public Service because it is the Public Service that is making these decisions. And that is probably where the major decisions ought to be made, anyway; but, if we are here to set the policy, we ought to have adequate opportunities to do so. We have not had those opportunities with this Bill.

Having been through the whole exercise today, we have all been awakened to the fact that the procedure of which I complain has happened again. Somebody said to me this morning, "It seems to me I've heard that song before." Singing the song is becoming painful. I hope that we do not have to go through it again.

Mr. WARBURTON (Sandgate) (8.52 p.m.): It was rather interesting to hear the revelations of the honourable member for Salisbury. She informed us of some of the behind-the-scenes activities of the joint Government parties. I assure her that she was not telling members of the Opposition anything that they did not know. She spoiled her episode by doing what we expected—viciously opposing the Bill and then saying humbly, "I'll vote for it anyway." We are becoming used to hearing that from members of the Liberal Party in this Chamber.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you know that the honourable member for Salisbury is the poor woman's Sarah Bernhardt?

Mr. WARBURTON: That is far too deep for me.

I must agree with one point raised by the Minister, and I think I can speak for all Opposition members. We are very much concerned about the manner in which this Government appears in this case to be propping up the urban private transport system. This causes us a great deal of concern. Substantial financial assistance is already being given to private bus operators. We will be interested to see the Bill; but, from what the Minister has said, it appears that there will be further propping up through additional financial assistance. Many doubt whether propping up private operators, particularly in the Brisbane area, is a reasonable and proper use of the funds that belong to the people of this State.

Historically the Brisbane City Council has provided a very comprehensive bus service, which is regarded as being both necessary and essential. It is interesting to compare it with the private enterprise services that we are talking about today that are operating on the city's fringe. The classic case is the Acacia Ridge private bus service and what happened to it. The Brisbane City Council service provided in the area is excellent, although infrequent on week-ends. Because it is very difficult to provide a service that will please everybody and be as good as everyone would like, the buses are infrequent—but they still run far more frequently than did the private buses.

I would now like to make a comparison. Because we are talking about additional finance for private bus operators, this is very important. I heard the honourable member for Salisbury say that in her opinion the Brisbane City Council was doing quite well from State Government assistance. I will be very happy to have the opportunity shortly to prove to her how wrong she is.

I can recall another instance of the failure of a private bus operator in this city, and that occurred in the Sandgate area. This matter was touched on by the Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Brisbane Central. He also mentioned the Cribb Island service. I am not suggesting that the operator of the Cribb Island service did not endeavour to do the correct thing by the people in the area he was servicing. He gave the Brisbane City Council reasonable notice. Some time later, thanks to the Lord Mayor of this city, Alderman Sleeman, the Brisbane City Council took the place of the Red and White coaches, which was forced to give the game away. The position in Sandgate was entirely different.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central also was correct when he referred to certain statements now being made by Opposition members in the Brisbane City Council. In fact, they are saying that the Brisbane City Council bus service should be scrapped and that we should be looking towards private bus operators—a ridiculous statement when we look at what has occurred recently.

It concerns me that tonight we are looking at further propping up urban bus proprietors. Of course, the simple fact is that the private operators want to carry people for profit. In 1978, that just quite frankly is not on—for neither bus transport nor rail transport. Irrespective of the huge losses that are being made by the railways, I will concede to the Minister that it is an impossibility to run a public transport service at a profit without charging fantastically high fares.

I have referred to the Brisbane City Council service because it is an important part of our urban transport system. It has been said here tonight that the amount of finance presently going to the council is adequate. The present administration has accepted the responsibility of the bus service, which is now costing the ratepayers—and this is relevant to the whole issue—about 25 per cent of their entire rates, which is a very significant amount. I quite appreciate that it is an essential community service and I believe, as a previous speaker said, that the people of Brisbane are entitled to an efficient public transport system. That is the point that has to be made here tonight when we are looking at the additional money that is going to urban passenger service operators. Let me say at this point that I believe the Brisbane City Council is one of the most efficient bus transport operators in the State. I believe that at this stage that is the proper body to run the bus service throughout the whole metropolitan area of Brisbane.

If the State Government were to reveal the costs incurred in running its train service in the Brisbane area, we would be quite surprised. It tries to keep the real costs of rail transport hidden. It is important to know, when we are giving money away as the Minister wishes to do, how much it is costing the Government to run the train service. I suggest that a conservative estimate would be about $1 per passenger per trip. Of course, the cost of providing a bus service is almost as prohibitive. These are the things that we must keep in mind when we speak about propping up, if I can use the term of the member for Salisbury, some forms of urban transport. I am particularly concerned about those operating in the fringe areas of Brisbane.

There is one obstacle in the way of the council's providing a better service: this Government's rather tight-fisted attitude to financing. That is contrary to what the member for Salisbury said. I believe that this Government has tapped off a very vital part of Federal Government money that was recommended by the Grants Commission and was destined to be used in helping to maintain Brisbane's bus service. The Government has done this in order to finance what I would regard as its own Budget gimmicks, such as the freeze that it imposed on Government charges. The Government and the Treasurer of this State are, in my view, guilty of taking millions of dollars of Federal money that should have been used to assist this city to run its bus system. That is not well known. If we analyse the arguments, we see that even the Treasurer's colleagues in the Federal Parliament are on the side of the Brisbane City Council in this matter.

The Brisbane City Council sought information from the Federal Government about the allocation of funds from the Federal Government to the Brisbane City Council's transport undertaking. I refer to the replies that were sent to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane by Senator Withers, who is undoubtedly well known to the Treasurer and, I would hazard a guess, to the Minister for Transport.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Is the Senator Withers to whom you are referring the electoral rigger?

Mr. WARBURTON: I understand that he has some reputation in that regard.

Senator Withers sent the following letter to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane—

> "I refer to a recent telex message that you sent to the Acting Minister for Transport, Mr. Macphee, concerning the allocation of funds related to the Brisbane City Council's public transport undertaking. Mr. Macphee has asked me to reply to you directly.
>
> "I am pleased to provide the information as set out in the attached papers.
>
> "I am sending copies of this letter and the attached papers to the Minister for Transport."

I will not refer to all the questions and answers on this matter, but I think it is very relevant to the discussion tonight to place on the record question No. 4 and the answer.

Question No. 4 was—

> "By what amount was Queensland's assessed special grant for 1974-75 increased on account of the Brisbane City Council's Street Public Transport Undertaking modified deficit being taken into account?"

The answer was—

> "$7,085,000. The special grant paid to Queensland for the year 1974-75 was $24,000,000. The amount of this special grant would have been $16,915,000 had the losses on the Brisbane City Council's Transport Undertaking for that year not been taken into account. It should be noted, however, that the Commission still assessed negative needs of $7,596,000 in respect of Queensland's Metropolitan Road Transport for the year 1974-75."

In three years the State Government has filched something of the order of $20,000,000 for its own purposes from money aimed at the Brisbane public transport bus system.

I would like to outline briefly a little more of the history, Mr. Miller, because it shows why a Bill of this type is being introduced in this Chamber tonight. People are saying that plenty of money is going to the Brisbane bus transport system and that it should be able to look after itself; that we should prop up a little further some of the private bus operators who, as I have already shown, are going to the wall one by one.

Following a request in September 1975 from the then State Treasurer, Sir Gordon Chalk—a man who, in my opinion, had a far better understanding than the present Treasurer of the requirements of a big city such as Brisbane—the Brisbane City Council appeared alongside the State Government

before the Commonwealth Grants Commission to give details of how Brisbane people were further disadvantaged by having to pay for their own bus transport system. That was mentioned by the honourable member for Bulimba, and he pointed out that in that respect Brisbane was unlike every other capital city in Australia.

At this stage, Mr. Miller, let me quote a key sentence in that letter from Sir Gordon Chalk—

> "If the State is successful in extending its claim into this new field, it would be in a much better position to assist the Council with its urban transport losses beyond the present assistance."

Obviously, the present State Treasurer has deliberately rejected that offer by his predecessor.

The first appearance before the Commonwealth Grants Commission was for the financial year 1974-75, when $7,080,000 was determined by the commission to be the equivalent of the additional cost to Brisbane people of the system of funding buses. The following year, the council again appeared before the Grants Commission and was successful in having earmarked an amount of $6,600,000 for the financial year 1975-76, and in December last year the city council again appeared before the Grants Commission and successfully argued, we believe, for an amount of $9,400,000 to be passed on to Queensland for the Brisbane City Council's urban bus transport system.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I remind the honourable member that the Committee is dealing with the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. WARBURTON: I appreciate that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would like the honourable member to come back to the Bill. I have been fairly lenient.

Mr. WARBURTON: Thank you, Mr. Miller. I bow to your ruling, but may I make a final point that is very relevant? There have been discussions and negotiations and more discussions, all of which have been less than satisfactory, and it is true to say that, despite what was said in this debate by a Government member, a huge amount of money—and I have mentioned a figure of slightly more than $20,000,000—earmarked for urban transport in this city has never reached the Brisbane City Council. Although there was no legal obligation on this Government to pass that money on, there was a heavy moral obligation on it. That is one of the reasons why urban transport in this city is not flourishing, and the service that should be provided in the interests of the people of the city is not being provided.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (9.10 p.m.): I would be failing in my duty if I did not register the strongest possible protest against this sectional legislation. I realise that this is prop-up legislation, and I am conscious of the problems associated with the whole sphere of operations of bus companies.

What we are looking at is a subsidy to bus companies, at two levels, to assist them to continue to provide service to the public in certain specific regions. As I understand the Bill, the regions are the Brisbane metropolitan area and the provincial cities. Whether there would be any limitation in these areas has not been clearly determined. It seems to me that approximately 70 per cent of the people in the State will be the beneficiaries, with the other 30 per cent receiving no benefits whatever. That is what concerns me. Whatever the policy implemented by this Government it should be a State-wide policy.

We are looking at a subsidy that has been raised from 15 to 30 per cent. Let us consider what this will mean to the passengers concerned. They seem to be fairly limited benefits. In Brisbane most people live in reasonably close proximity to the heart of the city. Probably the maximum fare paid by any passenger on a Brisbane City Council bus would be 30c. If a 30 per cent subsidy is payable, that means that 10c is being contributed by the Government to the cost of each bus fare. I find it difficult to believe that there are many people who could not afford to pay an additional 10c. If a person wants to go out to do some shopping, he would be well advised to stay home if he is short of 10c.

Had the principle been applied throughout the whole of the State, possibly I could have accepted it. People removed from provincial city areas or the Brisbane metropolitan area are not being subsidised in any way. Persons in those other areas receive no assistance whatever, even though they have enormous distances to travel. They, too, are taxpayers, and they are contributing towards a subsidy for others to gain a benefit. Is that justice? If this is to be the policy of the day, let it be applied State-wide so that all persons are included, no matter where they reside. I have frequently said in this Chamber that it is not the Treasury Department that makes financial provision. Government departments simply make manipulations as a result of decisions made by the Government. The taxpayers of Queensland make the initial provision. If country people are providing a subsidy for one section of the community, they, too, are entitled to be beneficiaries.

Apart from the subsidy on passenger services, I understand that when a bus proprietor acquires a vehicle, the only money he requires is 10 per cent of the total cost. The remainder can be guaranteed by the Treasury at a subsidised interest rate. As I understand it, that subsidy of the interest rate is quite substantial. The subsidy alone amounts to approximately 6 per cent. If that is the present proposal, as I believe it is, it is excellent. I have no desire to appear to be parochial to the extent that I want to deprive

people in the benefited area of these benefits; however, if these benefits are to flow on, why shouldn't they flow to all areas throughout the State? It seems that approximately 70 per cent of the State's population live in the benefited area and that the remaining 30 per cent are providing a subsidy and are not deriving any benefit from it. That is not a fair crack of the whip.

In addition, many of those persons who are deprived of subsidy assistance do not have public transport available to them. Some years ago, my district had a railway service. It was not a very efficient one, consequently it ceased to operate. I must say that we did not miss it. Nevertheless, we were deprived of a rail service. The private bus operator is now the only person who provides a public transport service. The people in my area have to travel long distances, yet they receive no assistance whatever.

The Government's policy is to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the electrification of the metropolitan railway system. I hope that, in the not too distant future, electrification will be extended. The funding for this scheme is provided by the taxpayer. The Government is now subsidising a bus service to compete against a publicly financed railway service. That is a ridiculous policy. I realise that it is not possible to provide rail services to all suburbs in Brisbane and I can see the need for feeder bus services. The people in Brisbane are deriving the benefit.

Again I say that I have no desire to take it from them. The taxpayers of Queensland are quite prepared to make a contribution to the cost, but they wish to receive some benefit from their contribution. What would happen if the Government attempted to introduce legislation to make provision for the people in the city of Brisbane and the provincial cities to subsidise the rural areas? What an uproar there would be. I am quite certain that members of the Opposition would not support such legislation. I would happily support this legislation if the whole State benefited.

The Minister has indicated that possibly at some time in the future—maybe next year —we will be given favourable consideration. I am not impressed at all by that promise. In 1975, members went through this same exercise, and nothing happened. I venture to suggest that next year we will be given some reason why some action is not taken. If we approve of this legislation tonight, we are a lot of suckers. We are on the hook, and we will be left there. There is no way that the Commissioner for Transport is in any way sincere in his suggestion that perhaps next year we will be given favourable consideration. If I can get that message across and be given an assurance that someone will consider the proposal seriously, taking into account the interest of the people who are deprived of all public transport, I will concede that point. Until I have a clear-cut guarantee that this matter is being seriously considered, I cannot support the legislation.

Mr. GOLEBY (Redlands) (9.21 p.m.): I must make a contribution to this debate because the legislation is very important to the area I represent. I am sure all honourable members agree that transport is the life-blood of any area, particularly local urban areas. My electorate, with a population of 33,000, relies wholly and solely on one bus company for transport to the city of Brisbane. At one time this part of Queensland had a rail link with the city, but, following its abandonment in 1961, the whole of the community has had to rely on the one bus company. Under certain management agreements, over the years amalgamations have been entered into with the Bayside Bus Company operating from the Wynnum/Manly area. Because 50 per cent of the people in my electorate work in Brisbane, an efficient bus service is essential. Under the present financial arrangements, it is impossible for the bus company to provide an adequate service to the people in the rapidly developing areas of my electorate. Scarcely a week goes by without representations being made to me for a better service for some of these developing areas. I see this as an interim method of financing this company to allow it to continue giving a service to the people.

If this company were to fold up—and there is every chance that it will without further Government assistance—the whole community of 33,000 people will be left without public transport. Even with the present service, some families find it necessary to own two cars. The bus service to the southern part of the electorate gives continuity of service only in the early morning and late in the evening. Buses are not provided for shoppers. Any sizeable community is entitled to a reasonable shopping service.

I see the increase from two-thirds to nine-tenths in the financial arrangements for the purchase of new buses as the only way in which private bus companies can replace their ageing fleets. Like other honourable members, I would like to see this arrangement extended to all areas of the State in which there are privately operated bus companies. When a community is too small to support a bus service, I do not suggest that we should prop up makeshift public transport. However, existing services must be maintained. It is significant that Queensland is the only State that is so decentralised that more people reside outside the capital than live in it. If we want this population trend to be maintained, it behoves the Government to subsidise the various private bus operators. That will induce people to stay in urban and country areas. We frequently hear of the drift of population from country areas to the coast. Without people, and work for them, no area can operate efficiently or economically.

I am very concerned about one aspect of the subsidy that is being provided. I refer to the subsidy of 50 per cent on fares that is being given to the Brisbane City Council. I would have no complaint if it were being used to extend services and

provide more frequent services to the suburbs. However, I have seen advertisements in the daily Press under the name of the Brisbane City Council promoting its Lord Mayor as the great giver of all and the saviour of everything because he is providing a free bus service so that shoppers can come to the city. I do not believe that the Government should subsidise such a bus service. If a service is good enough to use, it is good enough to pay for. If people want to come into the city to shop, it is up to them to pay the full fare. I do not see why any council should, as an election gimmick, offer a free service at the expense of a Government subsidy. The money would be far better spent in providing a service in areas where it would be appreciated, such as the outlying suburbs.

The Minister should have a very close look at this matter. I would like to think that the legislation was conditional on the subsidy being used for the extension of existing services and no free transport being offered. I ask the Minister to take note of that suggestion. Regardless of whether it is a country area or a capital city, no subsidy should be provided so that those in authority can give it away in the form of free travel. The council is not providing free buses for any charitable organisation. It is providing them for the community as a whole to travel into the city to shop at night. That does not lead to either good government or a good operation.

Mr. WILSON (Townsville South) (9.27 p.m.): There is a great need for an adequate public transport system, and the subsidies offered to bus proprietors have to be sufficient to allow them to provide the service required by the people. Poor bus services in Townsville have forced many workers to buy motor cars that they cannot afford. Public transport is required by people to go to work and to go shopping, by aged people who wish to go to town and, of course, by children attending school.

During peak periods buses are overcrowded. Buses that should carry 40 or 50 people in fact carry 80 people and more. This happens especially in the early morning period when children are travelling to high schools and workers are travelling to work. It creates a very dangerous situation. It is because buses are not a paying proposition during the off periods that so many people have to use them during peak hours, and this creates the overcrowding and the dangerous situation.

There are no buses from Oonoonba, Railway Estate and South Townsville after 6 p.m., and there are no services on Saturdays or Sundays. I believe that the bus problems in Townsville are the real reason for the introduction of the Bill. I do not think that there is any place in Queensland where bus services are worse than they are in Townsville.

During the boom period people were able to buy a motor car for the first time and bus patronage fell off. This resulted in bus services being curtailed, so more people bought motor cars and this, in turn, caused a further reduction in the use of buses. Things became so bad that the bus proprietors were unable to replace their old buses. We have already heard the honourable member for Townsville West say that some of the buses in Townsville are 20 to 25 years old, and I venture to say that some of those in the West End area are of pre-war vintage. That shows how bad the public transport system is in Townsville.

Some years ago the transport system deteriorated to such an extent that workers had to purchase motor vehicles that they could not afford. Because of the way Townsville has developed, and no-one can be blamed for that, a person living at one end of town could be working 14 or 15 miles away on the other side and have no bus service to transport him to and fro. The service got so bad that some families were forced to purchase a second car, which they also could not afford, so that the wives could go to town to do their shopping. This also added to the parking problem in the city.

Mrs. Kyburz: Why don't the men go in the bus and the women keep the car at home?

Mr. WILSON: I thought I had just explained why the men had to take the car. No buses were available for workers who had to start work at 6 or 6.30 in the morning.

Mrs. Kyburz: You just said that the women go shopping in the buses. Why don't the men leave the cars at home so that the wives can do the shopping?

Mr. WILSON: The honourable member for Salisbury is suggesting that the men leave their cars at home so that their wives can do the shopping. As there is no bus service, I suppose she thinks the men can walk 14 or 15 miles to work. I do not imagine that they would be in any sort of condition to do much work when they finally arrived.

Many of the bus proprietors brought their problems upon themselves by sticking to the main routes throughout the city. After alighting at a bus stop on a main road, most people then had to walk a mile or a mile and a half to get to their homes. I think these companies should give some consideration to the purchase of mini-buses, which could provide a proper service to the people in residential areas.

In his opening remarks, the honourable member for Townsville West referred to the A.L.P. city council in Townsville and said that it was making a big noise about taking over the buses. If he and this Government were sincere about giving the people of Townsville a decent bus service, they would purchase a fleet of buses and hand them over to the Townsville City Council to operate.

If the Government is trying to maintain private bus services today, it must provide

them with a subsidy to enable them to purchase decent buses and thus maintain a proper service, something which is required in the Townsville area and no doubt in a lot of other areas throughout the State. It has taken a long time for this Government to realise that there is an urgent need for improved public transport in this State. As we are talking about urban transport, I will not go into the ramifications of the cancellation of the electrification of the railway system in Queensland by this Government back in the late 1950s.

I am pleased to see that at last something is being done. I hope that the subsidy that is being provided will enable the Townsville bus proprietors to purchase new buses so that they can provide the bus service that is badly needed by the people in Townsville.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (9.35 p.m.): In rising to speak to this Bill I should like, firstly, to recapitulate on its history. Its origin is to be found in a policy speech delivered by Sir Gordon Chalk in 1974. The legislation was introduced into this Chamber by the late Keith Hooper—a far more honourable gentleman than the member of the same name who is sitting on the other side of the Chamber at the moment—in 1975.

In return for a pensioner concession fare, a very small percentage was paid to urban bus proprietors based on their gross fare revenue. This percentage was paid by the Government in return for the bus proprietors' carrying out the Government's policy of providing a concession fare for pensioners using buses in the major towns in Queensland outside Brisbane.

In 1976, the late Keith Hooper again introduced amendments into this Chamber to rectify certain anomalies that had arisen. There was, first of all, an increase in the percentage return paid to bus proprietors based on the gross fare revenue. This was necessary because it was found that there was not an even sprinkling of pensioners on every bus run that attracted a subsidy. Some bus proprietors were managing, and I might add that they seemed to be the ones in Archerfield.

So it was found necessary to amend the legislation to increase the percentage return. As soon as the amendments were passed, some help was given to urban bus proprietors throughout the State. The facts were coming through to the Department of Transport in the monthly returns from the private bus proprietors. By 1977, it was found necessary to increase the percentage return. I think originally it was 3 per cent, and it was increased to 15 per cent. This allowed an additional 10 per cent to be applied, at the discretion of the department and with the Minister's approval, to the gross fare revenue as collected by the bus proprietors. It was found that in some cases this figure of 15 per cent had to be increased to 22 per cent, and that is the present position. The subsidy of 22 per cent on gross fare revenue that is paid to urban bus proprietors is a long way short of the 50 per cent subsidy that this Government provided to the Brisbane City Council. So the subsidy provided to private bus proprietors is very small when compared with the subsidy provided in other places.

In 1977, when the Honourable Fred Campbell, who was then Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Transport, was speaking on the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act Amendment Bill, he is reported in "Hansard" of 5 October 1977, at page 1218, as saying—

> "As I said, it will provide a new scheme of assistance to allow fare concessions to be given to pensioners living outside urban areas so that they may travel from where they live to an urban area."

I believe that that one sentence gave many members in this Chamber false hopes. That sentence, I am led to believe, applied to the particular circumstances surrounding the bus routes in Rockhampton, where the city council provided a service in the central part of the city and a private bus proprietor skirted around the outside of the city and had the right to enter it. I think that gave rise to that sentence. As the Minister said —and it is in "Hansard" for all to read—that sentence is the crux of the concern that we have heard expressed by a great many Government members this evening. They want to see applied right across the State a provision exactly similar to that applied in Rockhampton.

In other words, if a bus proprietor has a run that goes along a country route and then out of the rural scene into a city, they want to see him given the right to pick up pensioners for a concession that is met by the Government. It was mentioned in the 1977 amendment introduced by the Honourable Fred Campbell, and members came to accept that, because of the words used, it would solve their problems. Although the words were intended by the Minister to apply only to the circumstances in Rockhampton, members hoped that the amendment would solve the problems of pensioner concessions in their electorates.

The Government should take action to see that that can happen. But I do not believe that it can introduce a simple amendment of the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act to provide for the payment of subsidies to a bus service that travels along a main road, or a lesser road, and then enters an urban area. A completely new Act will be required, and I support those members on this side of the Chamber who have called for such an Act to be introduced in the next session of Parliament, which I think will be some time in the latter half of March 1979. I believe it is only just that they should get that. It is a system that the Government provides as a service to pensioners and also as a service to bus proprietors, and it is being provided out

of tax money. Country members are entitled to see some benefit come to country pensioners and country bus proprietors.

There is a need to make the service available to centres with a population less than the 10,000 lower limit now provided. We heard a great deal from members of the Opposition, but they did not speak to the Bill, for the Bill, or about the Bill. They spoke about a completely different Act that the Government uses to make subsidies available to the Brisbane City Council. It has nothing to do with the Bill, and I doubt whether members of the Opposition, with the exception of the honourable member for Townsville South, spoke about the Bill at all.

The honourable member for Salisbury said that bus proporietors will now be able to resolve their own business-management problems, and that, of course, is what the Bill is all about. Budgetary provision has been made for the implementation of the Bill that will be introduced, and honourable members have approved that budget. Nobody has criticised that till tonight, when a couple of members from Brisbane seemed to think that for years the Government has been swindling the Brisbane City Council and, at the same time, somehow or other managing to satisfy the Federal authorities that it was doing the right thing with the grants moneys that came to it. Those members are talking nonsense. They know it would not be possible to satisfy the members of the Grants Commission if the Government had perpetrated the massive swindle that has been suggested by one of the Labor aldermen on the Brisbane City Council who also sits in this Chamber.

At present, there is a subsidy of 6 per cent per annum on interest on loans on buses, and bus proprietors throughout the State have found that that is not sufficient to enable them to go forward with confidence and buy a bus. Many people who seek money to buy a major piece of machinery are turned away from the banks because they cannot put up sufficient collateral. They then turn to hire-purchase companies. Hire-purchase money can attract an interest rate of 20 per cent and, I am told, even as high as 26 per cent. That would mean that each year a bus proprietor who paid a minimum deposit would be paying approximately one-quarter of the value of his bus in interest, without making any capital repayment.

The Bill increases the guarantee from 66 per cent to 90 per cent of the total value of the bus. With this Government guarantee behind him, the bus proprietor will be able to approach a bank and receive a loan at bank interest rates. Even though they have been well maintained, many of the buses now operating are very old. Because they have reached the end of their economic life, they cannot be traded in. What this Government is doing will enable bus proprietors to replace old vehicles.

Loans up to $50,000 will be guaranteed, which I think is a realistic figure. If the figure were only $10,000, the scheme would be unworkable. The Bill is aimed at making workable the scheme to support bus proprietors. It will get them through the doors of the private banks as valued customers. They will not have to go to any other Government agency. They will be able to become valued customers at their banks in their own towns. I have no doubt that Toowoomba bus operators will avail themselves of the provisions of the Bill to obtain new buses.

Mr. Davis: They need some, too, don't they?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: They might, but it must be remembered that the Brisbane City Council is getting a subsidy of 50 per cent, whereas operators in Toowoomba have not gone past 22 per cent. If the honourable member is commending the way the Brisbane City Council runs its buses, he is sticking his head in a noose. We heard from the honourable member for Redlands that the Government has been providing a subsidy for the Lord Mayor of Brisbane to give free bus transport. I support that honourable member's call for the Department of Transport to investigate procedures whereby the subsidy paid to the Brisbane City Council is so generous that the Lord Mayor can authorise free bus rides around the city. That is not the name of the game. We should slash the Brisbane City Council's percentage to 35 per cent, and let the Lord Mayor justify anything beyond that. Let us twist his tail and let him try to justify the subsidy the Brisbane City Council is receiving. I think he would cut out his free bus rides very smartly, and get down to the realistic business of running an urban transport system in Brisbane.

Provision is made to increase the period of the loan from five to 10 years. Many people buy motor cars on terms over a period of three or four years. With motor cars costing between $5,000 and $10,000, that is a realistic period of repayment. When $50,000 has to be paid for a bus, it takes a much longer time to repay the loan. The additional five years will be truly appreciated and greatly availed of in Toowoomba.

The Government has been subsidising fares. On one particular run in Toowoomba, because of the very high percentage of pensioners being transported, a subsidy higher than that paid to the Brisbane City Council would be justified. Because the passengers are mainly pensioners, the bus proprietor could still be in trouble. Because of the huge number of passengers carried by the Brisbane City Council, it will have an evening out of passengers from one run to another. All the runs are pooled, anyway. The 50 per cent might suit it handsomely.

I am pleased to see that there will be an increase in subsidy from 15 to 30 per cent on gross fare revenue as collected, and as

proved to the department by monthly returns. That is a worthwhile step. I am pleased to see that a 10 per cent addition to this can be allocated by the department if a special need exists for it.

I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill. It is well and truly needed. It has been found that, to make the system absolutely reliable and workable, the subsidy has to be increased according to the number of pensioners carried and according to the need for the bus proprietors to replace their buses.

The Minister knows the exact circumstances of every bus proprietor who operates under the scheme. I am quite sure that upon the passage of the Bill there will be no delays in making payments to those bus proprietors retrospective to 1 July 1978, on the figures already in possession of the department.

I commend the Bill to honourable members and reserve the right to speak on it again at the second-reading stage.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (9.52 p.m.): The introduction of these amendments highlights the divisions that exist within the ranks of the coalition Government. I was astounded by the speech by the honourable member for Salisbury. I do not normally commend members of the Government parties, but I must commend the honourable member for Salisbury for having the courage and intestinal fortitude to stand up tonight and expose the machinations of the National Liberal Government of this State. She drew to the attention of the Committee the fact that the Minister's committee never even met.

Mr. Davis: Shocking.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Of course it's shocking. The Bill was drawn up by public servants, so all the Minister did was stand up and mouth platitudes written for him by senior public servants. He should be ashamed of himself.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not taking any notice of the member for Caboolture, who is a well-known member of the National Party's dog squad.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to that remark and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member for Archerfield to withdraw that comment.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I accept the honourable member's denial. I do not want to digress too far from the Bill, but I want to say that I have been told on good authority that the three members of the National Party——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: . . . dog squad——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: . . . are Messrs. Goleby, Gunn and Gibbs. If only some members in the Liberal Party had a little bit of old-fashioned guts and were prepared to stand up to the boggy farmers in the National Party, the people of Queensland would be a lot better off.

Mr. Scott: Mrs. McComb told us just that on television tonight.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is true that Mrs. McComb is trying to put a little bit of backbone into the Liberal Party. But I would say to my colleague the honourable member for Cook that that has nothing to do with the amendment under discussion!

This amendment affects only the metropolitan area and the provincial cities. It does nothing for the small country town. In fact, it completely discriminates against the country dweller, whom this Bowyang National Party purports to represent. As we all know, the National Party represents only the wealthy grazier, cane grower and multinational company. It has no concern whatever for the small average person in the country town. As for the people I represent at Archerfield, the members of the National Party have no rapport with them whatever and do not care a fig for them.

Mr. Frawley: They nearly did you in Archerfield last time.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Caboolture used a very crude term and said that they almost did me in Archerfield last time. The correct word is "done" not "did". For the edification of the honourable member for Caboolture, I point out that I obtained 68 per cent of the vote at the last election.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will do so, Mr. Miller.

This Bill was introduced expressly to review the assistance scheme for private urban bus proprietors, mainly in the city of Brisbane.

I shall now draw the Minister's attention to the problems in the Inala area. Inala is the largest suburb in the metropolitan area. During the debate on the Transport Estimates, I pointed out to the Minister that after 6 p.m. no bus runs to Inala from the Darra or Oxley Railway Stations. With the advent of late-night shopping, the people of Inala will be discriminated against if they want to go to Indooroopilly Shoppingtown. I pointed that out to the Minister, but I might as well have been talking to a brick wall. I see the blank look on the Minister's face when I speak to him and I know that I am not getting through to him. How many times, Mr. Miller, do I have to try to get it through the thick

skull of the Minister for Transport that the people of Inala do not have a bus service after 6 p.m.?

Mr. Jones interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Of course they agree with me.

In former Parliaments with which I have been associated the Transport portfolio was always held by a member of the Liberal Party who had some interest in, and knowledge of, transport problems facing Brisbane people. Now that the portfolio is held by a wealthy grazier, the honourable member for Roma, it is obvious that interest is not displayed in the problems of the people of Brisbane. Judging by the provisions of the Bill he has introduced, I say it is clear, too, that the Minister has very little interest in the problems of people living in country towns.

Mr. Blake interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: We have a pony club at Inala. If the bus service to Inala is not improved, I am sure that some of the people from Inala will be travelling from Inala to the Toombul Shoppingtown by pony express.

Mr. Jones: Or by Shanks's pony.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Or even by Shanks's pony.

Mr. Frawley: You would not be able to ride a pony; you would need an elephant.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member would even give a bike a sore back.

I draw the Minister's attention to the subsidy received by the Inala bus proprietor. Because the Inala bus service runs in a Labor-held electorate, the proprietor gets a very low subsidy compared with the subsidy for the Hornibrook bus service, which traverses electorates held by two Tories.

Mr. Katter: A very reasonable solution would be for the people to change their representative in Parliament.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The only transport that the honourable member for Flinders is familiar with is the camel service.

The Inala bus proprietor has always believed that he is discriminated against. He has made numerous approaches to the Minister, all to no avail. The other day he told me that talking to the Minister for Transport was like talking to a brick wall.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: My Deputy Leader said that it is like the back of a bull. I certainly will not insult the Minister; I will let that remark pass.

At the moment the Government is only propping up the private bus service in Brisbane. If the Government was doing its job properly, it would do something about eliminating the private bus services in Brisbane. When the Metropolitan Transit Authority was established, it was heralded with a fanfare of trumpets as an authority that would solve Brisbane's transport ills overnight. I say categorically that in my view the authority is just a paper tiger. It has done nothing. In the meantime, the poor Brisbane ratepayers have been subsidising public transport. I point out that they are the only ratepayers in Australia to do that.

Mrs. Kyburz: What about Adelaide?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The bus services in Adelaide are not subsidised by the ratepayers. The member for Salisbury is very erudite in many other areas, but I am told on good authority that the Adelaide bus services are subsidised by the State Government.

Mrs. Kyburz: I dispute that.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member can dispute it all she likes. Even though she made a very courageous speech tonight, she is fairly light-weight in her normal speeches.

Mr. Davis interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will take that interjection. The honourable member asked me if I helped the honourable member for Salisbury with her bus service. It is true that I did. My colleague the honourable member for Sandgate mentioned the bus service into Acacia Ridge. When the members of the Acacia Ridge Ladies Action Committee and I were making representations for a bus service into Acacia Ridge and Algester, the honourable member for Salisbury, to her eternal discredit, did not one thing for the people in the Algester area. The bus service in the Algester area was obtained by the people in my electorate and me. The honourable member for Salisbury can hang her head in shame.

The problems I have just mentioned with the Inala bus service are very real. The bus proprietor is somewhat like the Premier—when the action is on, he is missing.

Mr. Houston: Where is the Premier tonight?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: After the drubbing he got from the Leader of the Opposition today, he is probably in a hollow log in Kingaroy.

The proprietor of the Inala bus service has been very politic. Because of the problems that exist there, he has gone overseas. The bus drivers do not want to work at night. Meanwhile, the residents of Inala are being penalised, as they have no bus service after 6 p.m. and nothing is being done for them.

Mrs. Kyburz: What about the violence on the buses? That's why they don't want to work.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is a stupid statement. Violence has been occurring on the Inala buses, but surely the honourable member does not expect members of the Queensland Police Force to ride shot-gun on the buses. The honourable member has made some inane statements during her four years as a member of this Parliament, but that is the most inane statement yet and it does her very little credit. I do not like to say that to a lady, but she does not have a clue about what is going on in public transport in this city.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: She is not defenceless. I saw the way that she unsheathed her claws tonight and made a vicious, personal, but warranted attack on the Minister.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

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

I urge the Minister to exert some ministerial responsibility and do his utmost to have a night bus service restored to the residents of Inala.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (10.3 p.m.): I cannot help but draw the attention of the Committee to the extraordinary speech made by the previous speaker. Actually, it is a gross exaggeration to call it a speech. It is good to see the honourable member for Archerfield drag himself away from his research of the brothels of Brisbane. I am sure that his research work and studies must be a very onerous task. He spends day in and day out moving from brothel to brothel.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. I do not usually take a point of order, but the honourable member for Flinders referred to my being dragged out of the brothels of Brisbane. I find that a completely offensive statement and I ask that it be withdrawn. When I was passing the "Golden Hands", I saw the honourable member for Flinders fall out.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: (Mr. Miller) Order! I ask the honourable member for Flinders to withdraw those words.

Mr. KATTER: I withdraw the——

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. KATTER: I did not say that he was dragged out of the brothels.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without qualification.

Mr. KATTER: I withdraw the statement that he was dragged out of the brothels.

I again refer to the tremendously valuable and important research work that this gentleman has undertaken into the massage parlours, or brothels, to use his own expression. I am sure that honourable members have benefited very much from it.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. KATTER: He seems to be so familiar with this particular area that one must think that it occupies an awful lot of his time.

He began by praising the honourable member for Salisbury. I hope that the electors of Salisbury take note of that at the next election. I think that on many occasions we have all been proud of the honourable member for the work she has done and the courageous stand she has taken.

Later in his address, the honourable member said that the Government only looks after rich graziers. He made great play on this, and then he started attacking the Minister who was introducing this Bill that does just the opposite of helping rich graziers. It takes money off the country people, money that we pay in taxes, and gives it to people in the city. That was a rather extraordinary remark. Then, jumping from one extraordinary remark to another, he said that the bus operator in his area had approached the Minister and run into a brick wall. We all assumed that he was on the side of his local bus operator, and that is very good, but his next statement was that the Government should take over all the private bus operators and that the best thing would be to put them all out of business.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. KATTER: I would far prefer to come up against a brick wall than be nationalised out of existence in one fell swoop, as the honourable member for Archerfield suggests. It was a most extraordinary sort of address, but I suppose a man who has undertaken all this valuable and important research work in the massage parlours and brothels does not have a lot of time to look after the buses of Inala.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. KATTER: I know what the honourable member was referring to the other day as a bus, but it is spelt differently.

Moving on to the Bill itself—a figure of $2,600,000 has been suggested as the amount this Bill will cost the taxpayers of Queensland. I suppose by itself that is a fairly small amount. However, at the moment people in country areas face the pending removal of Fokker Friendship air services, while at exactly the same time we see advertisements in the newspapers of 30 per cent cuts for people flying from the city to the holiday resorts of Queensland.

Finally, let me cite another figure. That is the loss made by the Southern Division of the railways for the last financial year, a staggering $62,000,000. Compare that figure, and similar figures for the last 20 years, allowing for inflation, with the profit of $38,000,000 made in the Northern and Central Divisions. I will refer to them

together, because on occasions one has made a loss while the other has made a profit. We all know that the loss in the Southern Division is caused by the commuter services operated in Brisbane. So we have an absolutely colossal subsidy being paid to the railways.

This is a very serious matter for people in country areas. A recent study undertaken by the chamber of commerce in Julia Creek indicated that in the week the study was taken there was a 100 per cent mark-up on the cost of freighting a sack of potatoes from Brisbane to Julia Creek. So we are looking at a cost-of-living escalation of 100 per cent on rail freights alone in some of our far-away centres such as Julia Creek. And yet we have to shoulder a subsidy for the railways and a subsidy mentioned in this Bill of $2,600,000 for urban transport.

I am disappointed in the sort of approach we are adopting under this Bill. We live in a free-enterprise economy, the sort of economy we hope will continue, and in this sort of economy we look to supply and demand to determine price. Some honourable members might be critical of the marketing arrangements of some of our primary industries, but we put a price on the product and, if the consumer does not want to pay that price, he does not buy the product. If the bus operators of Brisbane want to adopt the same sort of approach, quite frankly I will applaud them. I can see absolutely nothing wrong with that. It is simply one seller going into the market instead of five, six or 12, which I think was the figure mentioned for Toowoomba. I much prefer that sort of approach to a straight subsidy.

Added to that is the fact that the subsidy paid in this area offers very little, if any, incentive to people to try harder to meet the problems they face. They believe that if they make a loss they can run to the Government, get a subsidy and be looked after in that way. That is not the valid, economic system that should prevail not only in this area but also in every other area of the economy.

Finally, assistance is being provided under this legislation at present to save 10 or 12 businesses. I think that all businesses, if they get into a serious situation, should be allowed a certain period in which to try to get out of their difficulties. I should like to see the Minister and his department adopt the policy of phasing out this subsidy over a period, because if these bus proprietors cannot survive in the market-place, and if the people of Brisbane are not prepared to pay a bus fare of $1 or $2, there is simply no economic reason why these bus services should continue.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: What about the subsidies paid to primary producers?

Mr. KATTER: I am pleased that someone brought that matter up, because I have it noted here. I expected it to be raised and I would have been disappointed if someone had not done so. I was asked, "What about the subsidies paid to primary producers?" A rail subsidy of some 25 per cent has been paid to the beef industry for the last two or three years. If we in the industry had received what we were after, which was minimum pricing, we would have received about $200,000,000 in the last two years. I would have gladly swapped the subsidy, which amounted to some $5,000,000 or $6,000,000, for the $200,000,000 to which we would have been validly entitled in the market-place. Because we were many sellers catering for few buyers, we were taken for a ride over the last two or three years.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The member for Wolston is not in his usual place.

Mr. KATTER: I am quite happy to take the honourable member's interjection.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I am not very happy for the member to take his interjection. I want him to come back to the Bill.

Mr. KATTER: Right, Mr. Miller.

Mr. Fouras interjected.

Mr. KATTER: What I am saying is that nothing compels the buyer to buy the product. There is a whole range of alternatives. If the member knows anything about economics, he would know about the substitution effect. There are a dozen alternatives in the beef industry. If we raised the price of beef, people would turn to other products. It is up to us to determine that matter. What we are advocating with minimum pricing is not only price-fixing. We are simply saying in the beef industry that we will put one seller into the market-place, instead of the 25,000 sellers that we have in Queensland at present. I would say that that is similar to what is being said in other areas. I am sure that a person such as the member for South Brisbane, who should be experienced in this area, should know that without my telling him.

I should very much like to see the subsidy that we are providing under this legislation phased out in the short-term. I emphasise to the Minister that the statements he made in his introductory remarks represent a blatant discrimination against the people in small country towns who do not have a bus service and will never get one. They desperately need great help.

The statistics prepared by the James Cook University show that the cost of living of people in the towns of the mid-west of North Queensland is 20 per cent higher than the cost of living of people living in Brisbane. So they start 20 per cent worse off than people living in Brisbane. They have all the hardships and lack of facilities that a person in Brisbane does not have. A person in Brisbane has four channels to watch on his television set. We have only the A.B.C., and

it is doubtful whether that is of any great benefit on many evenings because it shows only opera and soccer programmes.

Mr. Bishop: What is wrong with that?

Mr. KATTER: Neither of those forms of entertainment is found in my area. They might be popular in Surfers Paradise.

Mr. Gygar interjected.

Mr. KATTER: There is a hidden cost that the road haulier does not pay, and that is the cost of maintaining the road. So it is not quite as simple as that.

Mr. Gygar: They are paying road tax.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr. KATTER: I conclude by saying to the Minister that although I understand that he is being humane and saving businesses from going on the rocks, I plead with him to consider the Bill as no long-term solution to the problem that exists and to introduce it only on the basis of eventually phasing it out and allowing the people concerned to see whether they can get themselves into a more favourable economic situation.

I again emphasise to the Minister and to the Committee the blatant discrimination in the Bill against people in country areas. I know it is not intended by the Minister, but I bring to his attention the fact that it is inherent in the Bill and that at some future time I would like special assistance for people on a 20 per cent higher cost of living who so desperately need it.

Mrs. KIPPIN (Mourilyan) (10.16 p.m.): The honourable member for Salisbury has come in for a considerable amount of criticism from the Opposition. The fact is that the Opposition was quite happy to accept the contents of the Bill until the member for Salisbury brought to the attention of the Committee the plight of some country people. Now honourable members opposite have suddenly realised the mistake they made and decided that, in later speeches, they had better hop on the bandwagon and begin looking at the difficulties of country people instead of considering only metropolitan electors, as they usually do.

Because of the number of honourable members who have taken part in the debate, the Minister realises that country members are far from happy with the legislation. We were not happy with the original Bill that was introduced in 1975, but at that time we were given an assurance by the Minister that he would do something to assist us. I acknowledge that in 1977 the Honourable Fred Campbell introduced the local pensioner service, which allowed bus proprietors in country areas to be subsidised to the extent of 50 per cent of the fare for the carriage of pensioner passengers, but only for a distance of 32 km. Unfortunately, that excluded quite a number of pensioners in country areas who have to travel long distances to reach a major town. That was part of the promise originally made by the Minister for Transport of the day, the Honourable Keith Hooper.

In 1978, the Act is again before honourable members for amendment, but still no assistance is being offered to country bus operators. That is the crux of the matter; that is why country members are so disappointed. After three years they still have not received any assistance under the Act.

It has been mentioned that it may be necessary to introduce another Bill to cover country areas. If that is so, it was up to the Transport Department to look at the whole situation and bring forward a Bill to cover country areas if that could not be done under the Act.

There is one point in particular that is peculiar to country areas but is not covered by the Bill, and that may be why another Bill is needed. This Bill refers to an urban situation. What the Transport Department does not seem to recognise is that right down the coast of Queensland there are towns that are major centres for a large number of hamlets—I will call them that for want of a better word—scattered through farming areas. The Bill does not recognise that in the majority of cases people in these little hamlets have to go to the major towns to do their shopping, to visit a doctor or a dentist, or to enjoy all the normal facilities that people in the metropolitan area have in their own suburbs. We must ensure that in any future legislation these little hamlets are recognised as suburbs of the larger centres of population.

Most of the bus operators in my area can meet their operating costs, but they just cannot find the finance to replace buses once they reach the end of their viable life. That is why I would like to see the terms of the Bill applied to country bus operators. The services operating in country areas carry a variety of passengers, including schoolchildren, workers and pensioners. Pensioners are a very important group that we have to consider, because most of them cannot afford other means of transport.

Tonight we are considering a Bill to assist to provide transport for people in the metropolitan area and the major provincial cities. Yesterday's "Telegraph" referred to a free bus shuttle for late-night shoppers. One Labor alderman gave a great account of how the Brisbane City Council could afford to run free buses around Brisbane to provide a service for late-night shoppers.

I am well aware that Brisbane City Council buses are not funded under this Act, but the State Government does give considerable assistance to the Brisbane City Council to operate its bus services. Only a few months ago that council was whingeing because its bus services were costing it far too much money. Now that there is an election

coming up, and the campaign is starting, it can come out with a gimmick like that. How the State Government can justify extra assistance for transport in the metropolitan area, I don't know.

I refer to one particular problem I have had to face. It may have been rectified, but I would like the Minister to comment on it in his reply. If pensioners living in country areas come to Brisbane, can they travel on Brisbane City Council buses at the rates applicable to pensioners living in Brisbane? Someone will say, "But that is a Brisbane City Council scheme." That is precisely the answer I received a couple of years ago. I make the point that the State Government subsidises the Brisbane City Council bus services. Why cannot country pensioners who have had to travel to the city enjoy the same privileges as pensioners living in Brisbane?

A number of speakers have stressed the fact that country areas have not been given consideration in this Bill. The Minister has given an assurance that he will give every consideration to assistance to country areas, possibly in the March session. What really worries me is that even if the Minister for Transport comes up with some scheme to help country operators, the Treasurer can veto the funding of such a scheme. That is what we saw happen today. We have spent all day trying to find a solution to the problem. When we thought we had a solution, the Treasurer said, "No, you can't produce the figures, so we can't agree to such a scheme." Here we see the introduction of a Bill in a most undesirable form for country members. I ask the Minister to do everything he possibly can to have the situation rectified in the March session.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (10.25 p.m.): I rise mainly to support the honourable member for Salisbury, who was very forthright and very truthful in her criticism about the manner in which the Bill was brought before the Committee. I am rather disappointed that no-one else has supported her direct and almost manly approach to the problem. The practice of introducing a Bill in the dying stages of a session and attempting to rush it through with little discussion—and, in this instance, with very little research—is becoming quite common. The Department of Transport has not carried out adequate research into the subject; yet the legislation has been handed to the Minister, who is endeavouring to push it through. A feasibility study should have been conducted to ascertain the functional and financial aspects of management, particularly in the provincial cities. They were neglected in the original legislation.

This measure does not spell out any of the projected costs; nor does it contain any financial statement as to costs. I understand that the Treasury has laid aside the sum of $2,500,000 for a similar type of experiment, but it has not projected future costs arising from an increase in subsidies or a decrease in interest rates. The whole thing is purely theoretical, and the cost could be many millions of dollars more than the $2,500,000.

I have gained the impression that this is a typical socialist ploy, such as we have seen so often, to take over control. He who pays the piper can call the tune. This happens very often here as well as overseas. At first there is subsidising; next there is a complete take-over.

The greater proportion of commuters on a bus service are schoolchildren. The Department of Transport could be put to good use in determining whether the transport of schoolchildren is the only means of keeping a bus service alive. I have personally studied the position and found that in non-peak hours most buses carry only one or two passengers—and they are not pensioners. We have heard a good deal of emotional talk about pensioners, but much of that talk is without foundation. In the provincial cities and country areas the greater proportion of pensioners own their own vehicles. Certainly their families have their own vehicles. Queensland probably has the highest percentage of two-car families in Australia. People simply do not use the bus services.

If the Transport Department wants to carry out any research, let it find out the reasons why people are not using the bus services. That is the first thing the department should do. This Bill gives an open order to bus proprietors to use the taxpayers' money. It is a very flimsily disguised attempt to take over the whole of the transport system. I do not agree with the Bill. It is a very bad one.

Mr. PREST (Port Curtis) (10.29 p.m.): I welcome any amendment that will benefit struggling private bus proprietors in the provincial cities. I have in mind particularly the transport service in the city of Gladstone. The Minister may remember that in late 1976 the local bus proprietor wanted some assistance but was unable to get it. Just prior to the commencement of the 1977 school year, he walked out and left the city of Gladstone without a bus service. In March 1977, a submission was made to the Treasurer (Mr. Knox) when he officially opened the Kin Kora Mall. It was hoped that some assistance could be given to the bus service in Gladstone.

It was some time before Cox Coaches came in to provide the present very limited bus service, which caters mainly for the schoolchildren. The last service leaves the city centre at about 3.30 p.m. or 3.40 p.m. on week-days, and after that service on Friday the run does not resume until about 8 a.m. on Monday. The service provided is very inadequate, but the proprietor lacks funds to purchase buses to cover the city of Gladstone adequately.

Mr. Frawley: What is the total distance of his run in kilometres?

Mr. PREST: I do not know that offhand, but if it is so important to the honourable member, I will make some inquiries and let

him know. Because so many other honourable members want to talk, the honourable member would be well advised to allow me to make my brief contribution. I am interested in the people I represent. Unlike the honourable member, I do not jump from one area to another to feather my nest.

This bus service concerns me, the electors of Gladstone and the bus proprietor who is struggling to give a good service. He is finding it hard to get money to buy a fleet of buses to service the city properly. In the circumstances, he is buying second-hand buses that do not permit him to provide a proper service for the people. It is costing him a lot of money. If assistance similar to that provided under the Bill were available to him, he would be able to buy new buses that would give trouble-free service for quite some time.

I am quite happy with the amendments outlined by the Minister. I am sure that they will assist people providing service to the public. When I think of the number of children attending school in Gladstone and the limited number of buses available to the bus proprietor, I realise that many children and aged pensioners must be forced to use some other form of transport. I am sure that honourable members can visualise the complete traffic chaos caused by people who drive to a school of 1,500 pupils to pick up their children. We have been very fortunate that the past 12 months have been accident-free. However, I am sure that if the present chaos continues at Gladstone schools, we will have a serious accident.

The people of Gladstone and I would welcome any relief that could be given if an application for assistance were made by the Gladstone bus proprietor. I repeat that I welcome this opportunity to speak on bus transport in Gladstone.

Honourable members have referred to the Brisbane City Council's providing free buses for late-night shopping. Many people in Brisbane did not want late-night shopping. It was forced on them. The Labor local authority deserves credit for trying to assist people with late-night shopping. Good luck to it.

Mr. Davis: Late-night shopping gets cars off the streets, too.

Mr. PREST: It relieves congestion on the roads in the daytime. It would be a damned good thing if the other modes of transport could put a lot of private cars off the road.

I welcome the Bill and sincerely hope that it will be of benefit to the urban bus proprietors and those in the provincial cities.

Mr. BISHOP (Surfers Paradise) (10.35 p.m.): This has been a most interesting and stimulating debate. Government members have expressed conflicting points of view about the proposed legislation. One could be forgiven for believing that some of them think that if they cannot obtain subsidies for their particular areas, nobody else should have them. On the other hand, there is the point of view that this legislation is socialistic. That may or may not be so. Possibly some people think that socialism in small doses does not do anybody any harm, especially if it is on their side.

This is one of the few occasions on which we are able to say that the Department of Transport is likely to benefit the second largest city of Queensland, which, of course, is the Gold Coast. As many honourable members would know, the Gold Coast area—and my electorate in particular—has been savagely mauled by the Transport Department over the years. It is common knowledge that the railway line was ripped up in the 1960s by one of the Minister's predecessors and, ever since, the Gold Coast has been deprived of a railway system. The Government not only pulled up the railway line, but it also flogged most of the land that the railway line ran over. So that now it is almost financially impossible to provide a railway system.

It will be very interesting to see whether the present transportation studies will, as they should, indicate that a rapid transport system should be provided to the Gold Coast, because that area suffers from poor bus services. The majority of the complaints that I get as a member are about the failure of the present bus system.

Not long after I was elected to Parliament and was still an alderman of the Gold Coast City Council, I convened a session with the Commissioner for Transport and the Gold Coast City Council concerning the complaints of residents in the Mermaid Beach area about the transportation system. I believe that the commissioner was particularly arrogant in his approach. He said to the meeting that he would not change his mind about the decisions that had been made and that, if the people there had any suggestions that required him to change his mind, he was a busy man and would leave the meeting and return to Brisbane. Unfortunately, this problem has been created on the Gold Coast by the attitude of the Commissioner for Transport.

I hope that the Minister will suggest to the commissioner that he improve his public relations because they are not as good as those of his departmental inspectors, whom I found to be particularly efficient and courteous in the way in which they approached their job. Indeed, I have had nothing but courtesy and assistance from the Minister; but these things must be said because they affect the transport system provided to the people.

In view of the money involved in this legislation, it is strange that it is impossible for the department to provide sufficient testing officers in Surfers Paradise to give the people of the Gold Coast City an adequate drivers' licence issuing service. The excuse

seems to be that there is no money. I suppose that the total on cost of a testing officer might be $15,000 or $20,000 a year——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I remind the honourable member that we are discussing assistance to private bus operators, and I ask him to come back to the Bill.

Mr. BISHOP: I just want to point out that there is a huge amount of money involved in this legislation and that $15,000 for a testing officer at Surfers Paradise would not seem to be too much to ask.

Mr. Mackenroth: Where is Surfers Paradise?

Mr. BISHOP: It is the hub of Queensland. If we are discussing the cost of, and the lack of investment in, public transport on the Gold Coast relative to the rates and taxes levied on its residents by the Government, then they have been sold short on their public transport system. The only public transport on the Gold Coast is provided by private enterprise. The Government and the people of Queensland are getting off very lightly if a subsidy is to be paid to these private operators arising from this legislation.

So whilst I whole-heartedly support the idea, as some honourable members would know, that country areas should not be deprived of an adequate transport system, I would not want the impression to be created that the Gold Coast City should be sold short either. I hope that this legislation will go through all its stages this evening. I also hope that its passage will mean that the transportation system on the Gold Coast will be improved considerably and that those people who live in the Miami/Mermaid Beach area will get a better deal than they have had over the past few years.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (10.44 p.m.): In speaking to these amendments, I would like to point out to the Minister and his officers that, if it is necessary to subsidise private enterprise to carry pensioners and other poor people who travel 2 km into the heart of a provincial city, it is just as necessary to subsidise private enterprise to carry people 2 km to the centre of a small town. This is the objection to these amendments that was raised by some country members.

I compliment the Minister for agreeing to report progress at this stage. That will give us a chance to convince him and the Government that people in small country towns should be given assistance similar to that offered to those in provincial cities. It would only mean a simple change to the scheme he is already proposing. All he needs to do is allow private enterprise in the small country towns to avail itself of the assistance that he is offering to towns and cities with populations of more than 10,000 people. Because I feel very strongly about it, I urge the Minister to do something about this matter. I hope that he will see fit to accede to my request.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Caboolture) (10.45 p.m.): I shall be brief because I do not wish to delay the Committee. But I would be failing in my duty if I did not rise to put forward the views of the people of the electorate of Caboolture, which I have the honour to represent.

Mr. Mackenroth: Are you in the dog squad?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I will ignore that inane interjection.

The Bill that the Minister introduced tonight leaves a lot to be desired. It does not do one thing for my electorate.

Mr. Mackenroth: Are you in the dog squad?

Mr. FRAWLEY: Of course I'm not. I'm a lion, not a dog.

As all honourable members agree, anything to assist urban transport is commendable. This Bill does not do one thing for Caboolture or Deception Bay, and the transport service in those areas leaves a lot to be desired. That is not the fault of the bus proprietors there. They are doing their best. In areas like that, they have to run a service and their buses cannot be filled with people all the time. They run these services at a very low profit. I really believe that assistance should be given to the people in those areas.

The Minister stated that an overall review of the operations of private urban bus services will be continued. I ask him not to neglect Caboolture, but to include it in that review.

To put the record straight—I did not jump from one area to another. I have represented five-sevenths of the electorate of Caboolture since 1972. When I found out that there was to be a redistribution, I was smart enough to work out where the boundary would be. I shifted right into the centre of the new seat. Anyone else as smart as I am could have done it too. In fact, when I finish my term in Parliament, I might even get a job as a redistribution commissioner.

I take exception to some of the things said by the member for Archerfield. He said that private bus runs should be taken over by the Government. That is a shocking thing to say. Look at all the men—the bus drivers and the bus proprietors—who would be put out of work if something like that happened. I do not believe that anything should be taken over by the Government. I believe in private enterprise. In fact, I built the first freehold service station in Redcliffe for 20 years, so that proves that I believe in private enterprise.

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has been complaining about not receiving enough

money from the State Government to run his buses. Yet he is putting on free buses for late-night shopping. What is wrong with him? What is he complaining about? If he can afford to do that, he must be getting enough money to run his buses. The Brisbane City Council is continually whingeing about what it does not get from the State Government. It is on a damned good wicket. If the aldermen of the Brisbane City Council do not like it, they should resign and let onto the council some aldermen who can run it properly.

I was an alderman in the Redcliffe City Council for six years. My brother is presently the mayor of Redcliffe. We did not come whingeing to the Government for everything. We ran the council the way it should be run. We had the confidence of the people. That is why we kept getting re-elected at every election. I would still be a member of the Redcliffe City Council if I had not offered my services to prevent the Labor Party from winning the seat of Murrumba.

An Opposition Member: Tell us about the dog you kicked.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I did not kick a dog. In fact, when I was campaigning in 1972 around the country areas of Samford and other places the dogs rushed to welcome me because they realised that in me they had a friend. I do not kick any dogs.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill.

Mr. FRAWLEY: Yes, Mr. Miller. I will not digress any more. I am being subjected to a lot of harassment tonight, and I put myself under your protection.

A great many pensioners live in Deception Bay.

Mr. Prest interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: What is Friar Tuck mumbling about?

Pensioners from Deception Bay and Caboolture have complained to me that when they come to Brisbane they cannot get a concession on the Brisbane buses. That is wrong. They should get a concession on the Brisbane buses. It is shocking to think that they cannot get it.

When Mt. Nebo was in my electorate—it is now in the electorate of the member for Pine Rivers—Miss Bulcock, whose father was a Minister for Agriculture and Stock in this Parliament and a member of the Labor Party for many years, complained to me that she could not get a concession on the Brisbane buses. I wrote to Brian Mellifont in the Brisbane City Council, but he did not even answer my letter. When I was the maintenance electrician in Parliament House in 1950, Brian Mellifont was my apprentice. Yet he did not have the decency to answer the letter that I wrote to him about the Brisbane transport system and about my efforts to try to get the pensioners in my electorate a concession on Brisbane buses. People living at Mt. Nebo had to use road transport to get to Brisbane; they had no other way of getting there. In spite of that, they could not obtain any concessions.

Mr. Row interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I would not doubt that. I am quite sure that the honourable member for Sandgate and the honourable member for Brisbane Central and others like them use their gold passes on Brisbane City Council buses. In fact, on one occasion the honourable member for Brisbane Central tried to use his gold pass in a taxi and was very insulted when the taxi driver would not accept it as payment.

Mr. Davis: That is ridiculous.

Mr. FRAWLEY: No, it is not; it is true.

Mr. Prest interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member for Port Curtis has already made his contribution.

Mr. FRAWLEY: And made a botch of it, too, if I might say so. He made a rotten speech, as he always does. One could see that tonight it had not been written for him by the Trades Hall.

I have said before—and I will say it again—that some consideration should be shown for the people of Caboolture and Deception Bay.

Mr. Prest interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is exactly what I expected some honourable member opposite to say. Members of the Opposition have no consideration for people outside their own electorates.

Mr. Prest: Which electorate do you represent?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I represent the electorate of Caboolture, but I also make representations on behalf of Redcliffe.

In conclusion, Mr. Miller, I urge the Minister to show some consideration for the Caboolture and Deception Bay areas and provide an electric train service to Caboolture first, with a spur line to Redcliffe.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Transport) (10.52 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I intend replying to them tomorrow.

Progress reported.

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Leader of the House) for **Hon. L. R. EDWARDS** (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (10.53 p.m.): I move—

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

The Minister for Health explained in his introductory speech that these amendments are of a machinery nature, to enable the Medical Board of Queensland to appoint advisory committees and to pay allowances and out-of-pocket expenses to members of any committees that may be appointed. On his behalf, I thank honourable members for supporting the amendments, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (10.54 p.m.): After hearing the Premier's verbal treat on Thursday last about the responsibility of members to be in the House, I am rather surprised that the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health is not in the House now to accept his responsibility for moving the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: Where is he?

Mr. MACKENROTH: I understand that the Premier lent him the Government aircraft to fly to Rockhampton. On television this evening, Mrs. Yvonne McComb asked Dr. Edwards to stand up against the Premier.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MACKENROTH: The amendment is a machinery one, and the Opposition agrees with it.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

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

Mr. MACKENROTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member for Woodridge stated at the introductory stage that the Opposition is not opposed to the amendment in principle. However, it suggests that the Medical Board should consider having on the board, and especially on the advisory committee that is to be set up, representatives of consumers. Too often ordinary Queenslanders are not represented on boards, and the Opposition would like the Minister to consider appointing consumer representatives in this case. We agree with the amendments proposed.

Motion (Mr. Newbery) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Newbery, by leave, read a third time.

The House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.