

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 12 APRIL 1979

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Mr. ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Greenslopes) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Rural Training Schools Act of 1965 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1977.

Metropolitan Transit Authority Act 1976 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1975.

Regulations under—

Health Act 1937-1978.

Local Government Act 1936-1978.

Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act 1975-1978.

PRIVILEGE

REPLY TO QUESTION UPON NOTICE

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) (11.2 a.m.): I rise on an important question of privilege.

On Thursday, 5 April 1979, I gave notice of question to the Minister for Works and Housing, section 5 of which read:—

“In relation to Transport House, did his department find that the building was of poor quality and poorly constructed with many defects and was it subsequently considered to be substandard?”

On Tuesday, 10 April 1979 (five days after the notice of question), the Minister answered this section 5 in this House with an unequivocal, unqualified “No.”

I submit that this answer is completely incorrect, and there is documentary evidence in the form of a Works Department submission to the then Auditor-General (Sir Allan Sewell) in 1977 to substantiate this charge. The relevant section of this Works Department report re Transport House states under the heading “General Remarks”—

“Poorly constructed with many defects and of poor quality. Considered substandard.”

To substantiate this point, I will table the relevant page from the report. This section of that report proves the information as contained in my question and shows that the Minister's reply under the privilege of this House constituted “false information.”

To emphasise the seriousness of this matter, I refer to a similar occurrence in this Parliament on 7 November 1968, in which the central figure was the Premier, then also

Minister for Police. On that occasion, replying to a question on radar traps from the former member for Nudgee (Mr. Melloy), the Premier gave an answer which he was forced to correct on 12 November 1968. This incident prompted the then National Party Speaker (Sir David Nicholson) to write to Cabinet Ministers in the following text in relation to the supply of false information to this Parliament. I quote the text of Sir David's letter (which is quite clear and also quite brief)—

"I am deeply concerned at a happening in the House wherein you (the Premier) were considerably embarrassed by one of your departmental officers supplying you with false information for transmission to the House in the form of an answer to a question relating to police radar traps.

"As custodian of the rights and privileges of members, it is my bounden duty to uphold the dignity of Parliament.

"Therefore, I must point out the seriousness of this matter in relation to privilege, and would respectfully request that you draw the attention of your senior officers to the fact that, had the matter been raised in the House at the time on a question of privilege, based on evidence presented by you, there can be no doubt a prima facie case had been established, and as a result of the deliberations of the House the officer responsible for furnishing the false information could have been charged with contempt.

"Should there be any repetition of this practice, I shall consider it my duty to take what action I deem necessary in the circumstances.

"I have forwarded copies of this letter to all Ministers to convey to them the seriousness of departmental officers supplying false information for presentation by Ministers to Parliament."

That was the interpretation Sir David, as Speaker, placed on Standing Orders (which are unchanged in such matters) in relation to an incident of false information in November 1968, similar to the one now involving the Minister for Works and Housing.

Sir David left no doubt that the provision of false information by a Cabinet Minister to Parliament, whether deliberate or accidental, was a most serious offence under privilege, involving a prima facie case of contempt.

I submit that the interpretation of Sir David in November 1968 must be consistent in the case that has arisen in regard to the answer by the Minister for Works and Housing last Tuesday, 10 April 1979.

In such circumstances, I submit a prima facie case of "contempt" through the provision of "false information" exists in relation to the conduct of the Minister for Works and Housing and believe the matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee.

I seek leave to move accordingly in line with the ruling of Sir David Nicholson in a similar serious matter in 1968.

Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable gentleman has quoted precedents laid down by Sir David Nicholson. I believe that Parliament should be very heavily dependent upon precedents; nevertheless, Ministers are responsible for their answers. In the light of the allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister may, in the fullness of time, care to respond. My immediate response is that I will watch the proceedings of the House over the next few days and, if necessary, discuss the matter with Mr. Speaker and ask him to make a response.

Mr. CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (11.6 a.m.), by leave: Following a personal explanation that I made in the House yesterday and in which I refuted a claim made by the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr. Lickiss) that I spoke to him on Tuesday evening, 3 April, about amendments to the Justices Act, the Minister has continued to make this allegation, regardless of my denial.

I restate that, following the rising of the House on Tuesday evening, in my capacity as Opposition leader of the House I immediately went across the Chamber to discuss the next day's sitting with the Leader of the House, Mr. Newbery. It was pointed out to him that he had just announced that the House would sit at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon, when there was no need to do so as the amendments to the Criminal Code and the Justices Act had been introduced that evening. The Clerk of the Parliament, who was present, also brought this fact to Mr. Newbery's attention. It was then that Mr. Newbery said, "Well, we can go on with this one," meaning the Criminal Code Amendment Bill. My remark was, "That is all right by me."

As members will see, there was never any need for me to discuss this matter with Mr. Lickiss, as it had already been determined by the Leader of the House. I immediately left the building and, with the assistance of Mr. Malcolm McMillan, was driven to a consumer meeting up town.

Mr. Lickiss has proved himself wrong in another way. Yesterday, in making his personal explanation, he referred not to Tuesday but to Wednesday, and that is on record.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (11.8 a.m.): Mr. Acting Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal statement.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister seeks leave to make a statement, and I propose to give him leave. However, I advise the House that I believe that, after that, the matter will have been sufficiently ventilated.

Mr. LICKISS: First, I reiterate the statement that I made yesterday in relation to an inquiry, and more or less a confirmation, by the honourable member that Wednesday afternoon's time would be used for the passage of the second reading of the Bill. I adhere to those remarks.

I am quite alarmed that this morning I found it necessary to speak to the Chief Reporter in relation to this matter of the misstatement concerning Tuesday and Wednesday. The chronological line of events would indicate that there was a slip of the tongue and that I should have said "Tuesday".

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am also aware that the proof offered by the honourable member was his statement that he had a tape-recording of the proceedings of the House. I ask you to rule whether the proceedings of the House may be recorded in any way other than by the Hansard staff and whether it is in order for a member to tape the proceedings of the House.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! My understanding on the matter is that it is out of order to take notes in the gallery and it is also out of order to tape the proceedings. However, I will have the matter investigated.

Mr. LICKISS: May I then ask you, Mr. Acting Speaker, would you please confiscate the tape?

Mr. WRIGHT: Mr. Acting Speaker, my comment was that it was "on record".

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has made a request of me, I have given my personal opinion as to the taking of notes and the tape-recording of proceedings. However, I will seek advice upon the Minister's request.

TRUSTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Trusts Act 1973 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. CENTRAL SERVICE PROJECT FOR HOSPITAL LINEN

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

(1) Has his department instructed that a feasibility study and planning brief be prepared for a central linen service project to the value of between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000 and will he advise which parties are under consideration for the proposal at this stage?

(2) Will public tenders be called for the project?

Answers:—

(1) Submissions have been received from five selected firms to undertake a feasibility study to determine reliable estimates of cost and a cash-flow programme for the development of a central laundry and linen service and a central sterile supply department as part of a total central services complex embracing the cook/freeze food facility presently under construction. The submissions are currently being reviewed by officers of the Department of Health and the Department of Works upon completion of which a report and recommendation will be made to Cabinet for consideration.

(2) Whether or when the project will proceed will depend upon the outcome of the feasibility study and the availability of finance.

2. TARA POLICE DISTRICT, STAFFING AND AREA

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

(1) Will the vacancy that exists owing to the transfer of a police constable from the Tara Police Station be filled at the earliest possible time so as to maintain police strength in the district?

(2) Has the Tara Police District recently been increased in area?

Answers:—

(1) No. The present staff of Tara Police Station consists of two police officers and one civilian employee.

(2) Yes.

3. MEANDARRA PRE-SCHOOL

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

In view of the support for the Meandarra Pre-school, which is presently housed in a building rented from the Q.C.W.A., when will a new pre-school be built to cater for the needs of that area?

Answer:—

It is anticipated that new State pre-school facilities will be completed in Meanderarra in 1981.

4. SCHOOL BUS SERVICES

Mr. Booth, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Has the Education Department any intention of calling tenders for school bus runs in the near future?

(2) If so, how is it going to ensure that the present high standard of proprietors is maintained?

(3) If not, will he give some long-range guide-lines for the future of school bus runs?

Answers:—

(1 & 2) No. Applications will continue to be called by local conveyance committees.

(3) The honourable member's question is very general and I can only reply in general terms. At this stage, no major changes are planned in the administrative procedures governing the operation of school transport services in the State. However, the school transport system is, like any other facet of my department's activities, subject to periodic examination and such examination could result in changes in administrative procedures or policy at some future time.

5. PROTECTION OF INNOCENT PURCHASERS OF ENCUMBERED GOODS

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

(1) As many young people lose all their savings and many thousands of Queenslanders are robbed owing to unknowingly buying cars that are under hire-purchase agreements, is it true, as stated by the Australian Finance Conference Queensland Chairman, Mr. J. A. Rivers, that a special committee in 1972 recommended that a national registration system be introduced to enable consumers to check if motor vehicles were subject to hire-purchase or other credit contracts?

(2) Were recommendations also made on the elimination of hire-purchase and the introduction of a new system of legislation on an Australia-wide basis governing the provision of credit and sale of goods and services?

(3) Will the new laws provide that innocent buyers of goods subject to a credit contract receive clear title?

(4) As Mr. Rivers stated that the continuing problems facing people who unknowingly buy cars under hire-purchase agreements arise because the Government rejected the registration proposal, what action has the Queensland Government taken on the recommendations and was the proposal rejected and, if so, for what reasons?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) A committee under the chairmanship of Mr. T. Molomby, a Victorian solicitor, reported to the Victorian Attorney-General in 1972 on fair consumer credit laws.

Amongst other things, the report recommended a registration system, including an identified goods register, for chattel securities as a satisfactory means of protecting the interests of credit providers and of bona fide purchasers in goods subject to a security interest. Three alternative registration systems were put forward in the report.

Following a seminar in Victoria on the report, the Molomby committee recommended in a supplementary report a scheme involving the use of insurance for the protection of security interests as a practical solution pending the introduction of a registration system.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in October 1975, it was agreed that for the purposes of the preparation of the model Chattel Securities Bill the proposals for a registration system would not be followed because the cost of introducing such a system would be expensive and its introduction would involve a considerable amount of administrative organisation. The proposal for protection of the mortgagee's interest by insurance was suggested as being more appropriate. Under this proposal, a bona fide purchaser for value and without notice of a prior security interest would displace the prior security interest and the holder of the prior security interest would be protected by insurance.

Consideration is being given to including a monetary limit in the model Chattel Securities Bill by reference to the purchase price paid by the innocent purchaser of goods.

6. WINDING-BACK OF SPEEDOMETERS; AVAILABILITY AND PRICE OF SPARE PARTS

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

(1) As it has been estimated that 70,000 used cars have their speedometers turned back annually in Queensland, how many dealers have been (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted for the offence under the Consumer Affairs Act?

(2) What was the highest fine or gaol sentence given?

(3) Is he also aware of the growing concern in the community at the rip-offs in spare parts for cars and farm machinery, in that, for example, parts for a Holden Torana manufactured four years ago are no longer available and will have to be specially made at a special price?

(4) Is he aware that to purchase spare parts for a car or a tractor and build the vehicle from the parts would mean that the completed article would increase in price four or five times?

(5) What action has the Government taken to protect motorists, farmers and businessmen from the obvious rip-offs associated with the spart parts industry?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) The Consumer Affairs Bureau has launched 26 prosecutions against 13 traders and has obtained 16 convictions. Seven prosecutions are still before the court. The highest individual fine was \$150. However, it should be noted that one trader was fined a total of \$700 on seven convictions. May I assure the honourable member that this Government is always concerned at any so-called rip-off. Should the honourable member care to forward to me any substantiated evidence of the instances he has cited, I will have such cases investigated.

7. NAMBOUR HOSPITAL

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

(1) Is he aware of the shortage of beds at the Nambour Hospital?

(2) How many intended patients have been turned away or redirected to other hospitals?

(3) How many hospital patients have been sent to other hospitals to make room for other admissions?

(4) When will Stage II extensions to the hospital be built to overcome bed shortages and future critical shortages expected with the rapid growth of the Sunshine Coast?

(5) When will the new dental clinic be operative at the Nambour Hospital to overcome the backlog of dental work in the area?

Answers:—

(1 to 4) The matters raised by the honourable member have been the subject of an in-depth study by the Division of Research and Planning within my department. The report submitted by this division is being examined and I will write to the honourable member in regard to this matter in the relatively near future.

(5) The manager of the Maroochy Hospitals Board has advised that the board will consider applications received for additional staff for the dental clinic at its monthly general meeting on 18 April 1979 and, subject to such staff taking up duties and the receipt of some minor items of equipment, it is expected that the clinic will be opened within the next month.

8. FACILITIES FOR USE OF NATIONAL PARKS BY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

Mr. Simpson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation—

(1) Will he develop special guided walks for blind people in the beautiful and readily accessible Noosa National Park?

(2) Will he also give consideration to other handicapped people and people in wheelchairs so that they also may use this park and receive enjoyment?

(3) Are any other national park improvements in Queensland envisaged to assist handicapped people?

(4) How are Binna Burra National Park improvements for handicapped people being received?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) My National Parks and Wildlife Service is very conscious of the desirability of making appropriate provision for handicapped people in our national parks. A recent overseas study tour by the service's interpretive officer included a study of the services and facilities being provided for the handicapped. Some of the points arising from overseas experience are—

(i) Often the facilities are designed by non-handicapped persons and do not entirely meet the needs and wants of the handicapped.

(ii) There is a general dislike by the handicapped of special facilities such as guide-ropes and concrete trails.

(iii) Grades of less than one in 12 are necessary for wheelchair use.

(iv) Signs, water fountains, toilets, etc., as normally provided are generally inaccessible to the handicapped.

(v) The problems of the deaf have been largely ignored.

(vi) The trend has been to provide special facilities for the handicapped, not realising how much these people need to be part of society, not isolated from it as they inevitably are for much of their lives.

I can assure the honourable member that my service will be endeavouring to cater for the handicapped in the light of the above factors. It is pertinent to note

that the standard of track construction in Queensland national parks has always been to a maximum grade of one in 12, and this has applied at Noosa. Thus wheelchairs can already be used in many of our parks, though in some places the existence of steps provides a barrier. Progressively, ramps will be provided where it is considered that wheelchair use is likely. It is also now policy to provide for the handicapped in any toilets being constructed in the more popular and accessible parks. As opportunity occurs, similar provision will be made in those older toilets where such provision is presently absent.

The honourable member has inquired specifically about the Binna Burra facility for the handicapped. This is a trail for the blind, with a guide-rope and signs in Braille. It is not known with certainty how this has been received by the handicapped. Certainly there have been favourable comments, but in view of the overseas experience to which I have referred it may be that it is not the ideal solution. It is of interest to note, however, that it has been very well received by sighted people, who are invited to walk the trail blind-folded with a friend reading from a leaflet. This has not only given them a totally new dimension to their park experience but has given them, often for the first time, a poignant glimpse into the world of the handicapped. This area of activity by my service is a very important one, which I am sure will be pursued with dedication in the light of the experience here and overseas.

9. FIRE BRIGADE SERVICE COSTS

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

(1) In view of the concern being expressed in the community about the fire services levy and the requirement for as much public information as possible, will he have inquiries made with the State Fire Services Council and Insurance Council of Australia to ascertain the number of unused private dwellings, including strata title units, which contribute to the cost of fire services within each of the following fire brigade districts (a) Metropolitan, (b) South Coast, (c) Warwick and (d) Mossman?

(2) What was the individual cost of maintaining fire brigade services in each of those districts in 1977-78?

Answers:—

(1) The number of policies covering private dwellings in individual fire brigade districts or even for the whole State is not available from the State Fire Services Council or the Insurance Council of Australia. Such information would have to

be obtained from individual insurance companies, who are not in all cases members of the insurance council.

(2) The net expenditure of such boards for 1977-78 was—(a) Metropolitan, \$11,026,458; (b) South Coast, \$2,587,653; (c) Warwick, \$289,157; (d) Mossman, \$41,217.

10. DISCOUNTS TO PENSIONERS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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

(1) How many local authorities in Queensland provide a discount to pensioners on rates and council charges?

(2) Which State Governments in Australia rebate to local authorities an amount equivalent to the discounts given by them to pensioners?

Answers:—

(1) 106.

(2) In all other States schemes exist whereby the State refunds a percentage of the pensioner remission granted. The schemes vary from State to State and are rather involved. I shall write to the honourable member in the near future explaining in detail the scheme in force in each State.

11. STATE ELECTORATE ENROLMENTS

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

As at 31 December, 1978, what was the enrolment in each of the State electorates?

Answer:—

I will table figures which show enrolments for all State electorates as at 31 December 1978. These figures in fact include all enrolments up to 2 January 1979. Incidentally, I thought the honourable member had been provided with these figures.

The honourable member will recall that recent legislation was passed in this House in relation to enrolments for local authority elections because of a legal opinion given by the Acting Solicitor General this year which reversed a legal opinion given in 1961. This legislation provided for all persons enrolled up to 2 January 1979 to be included in the local government rolls for the recent elections.

Because the computer was programmed to include all enrolments up to and including 2 January 1979, for reasons previously given, the State rolls also contain the names of those electors enrolled up to 2

January 1979. The figures tabled therefore include 1,274 electors who were enrolled on 2 January 1979.

Unless the honourable member can give good and sufficient reasons why a further list of enrolments should be prepared showing only enrolments as at 31 December 1978, I do not propose to incur the necessary labour and expense to provide such a list.

I now table the figures and seek leave to have them incorporated in "Hansard".
(Leave granted.)

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the following document on the table—

ENROLMENT—AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1978

Electoral District	Total
Albert	18,378
Archerfield	16,526
Ashgrove	16,336
Aspley	16,785
Auburn	9,864
Balonne	7,832
Barambah	10,528
Barron River	17,552
Brisbane Central	16,178
Bulimba	15,807
Bundaberg	15,160
Burdekin	11,236
Burnett	12,336
Caboolture	17,447
Cairns	17,329
Callide	12,594
Carnarvon	10,267
Chatsworth	16,358
Condamine	12,174
Cook	8,252
Cooroora	18,587
Cunningham	13,211
Everton	15,907
Fassifern	18,953
Flinders	9,943
Greenslopes	15,769
Gregory	8,011
Gympie	12,553
Hinchinbrook	12,172
Ipswich	16,173
Ipswich West	16,455
Isis	14,929
Ithaca	15,186
Kurilpa	15,817
Landsborough	18,836
Lockyer	16,529
Lytton	15,865
Mackay	18,054
Mansfield	17,175
Maryborough	14,744
Merthyr	15,503
Mirani	11,650
Mount Coot-tha	15,440
Mount Gravatt	16,857
Mount Isa	13,939
Mourilyan	10,839
Mulgrave	10,786
Murrumba	15,966
Nudgee	15,761
Nundah	15,344

Electoral District	Total
Peak Downs	9,563
Pine Rivers	17,179
Port Curtis	13,277
Redcliffe	16,468
Redlands	17,935
Rockhampton	17,069
Rockhampton North	17,489
Roma	7,805
Salisbury	17,382
Sandgate	16,426
Sherwood	17,578
Somerset	17,289
South Brisbane	16,062
South Coast	18,076
Southport	16,367
Stafford	16,254
Surfers Paradise	17,106
Toowong	16,215
Toowoomba North	16,411
Toowoomba South	16,533
Townsville	17,322
Townsville South	14,706
Townsville West	15,313
Warrego	7,919
Warwick	10,233
Wavell	15,953
Whitsunday	13,094
Windsor	15,789
Wolston	16,000
Woodridge	18,280
Wynnum	16,236
Yeronga	16,164
Total	1,221,386

Mr. Houston: I asked the question so that all honourable members would have the figures the Minister has now tabled.

12. IMPORT BAN ON AQUARIUM FISH

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

(1) What information is available from the Commonwealth Government concerning the possible banning of the importation of some species of aquarium fish, including the popular species of guppies, swordtails, mollies, platies, and all varieties of goldfish?

(2) Why are these imports considered for banning?

(3) As the banning of these fish will adversely affect the viability of many pet shops, particularly those whose dealings in aquarium fish are their mainstay, what action will he take to protect these businesses?

(4) Will he consult with all interested parties, that is, importers, pet shop operators and hobbyists, so that their considered views can be placed before the fisheries advisory council before a final decision is implemented?

Answers:—

(1) Restrictions on the importation of aquarium fish are still under consideration by the Commonwealth Government.

(2) The recommendations on restricted imports were based, amongst other things, on potential threat to the local environment and the difficulties of accurate identification which presently facilitates entry of undesirable species. In the case of goldfish, the proposed prohibition is based on potential disease risk.

(3) I believe the general public will readily adapt to any changed situation, and the proposed list of some 200 species permitted importation should provide a sufficient variety from which to choose. Local breeding is also expected to replace imports to a considerable degree.

(4) I have had many discussions with people in the trade and propose to make certain recommendations to the Australian Fisheries Council on their behalf in the near future.

13. CHECKING OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES

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

As it is estimated that in Queensland in 1978, 1,325,190 boxes (18 kg) of apples, 1,103,351 boxes (18 kg) of oranges, 535,803 boxes (10 kg) of grapes, 663,816 boxes (8kg) of lettuce, 5,168,404 cabbages, 2,435,635 cauliflowers and 1,760,085 boxes (10 kg) of tomatoes, plus thousands of boxes and sacks of other fruit and vegetables, were sold through retail outlets in this State and only 267 samples of fruit and vegetables were checked for pesticide residues, is he satisfied that this micro-checking is sufficient to safeguard the health of Queensland citizens?

Answer:—

Food sampling and analysis is carried out on a wide range of foods each year. If any problems are demonstrated, further investigations are made.

I would point out to the honourable member that my department carries out on behalf of the National Health and Medical Research Council a survey each year in respect of noxious substances in food.

14. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS

Mr. Lane, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Have the Government's plans on support for opportunity schools changed?

(2) Has the Newstead Opportunity School this year received no manual arts, home economics, equipment and materials,

reading materials, equipment repair, or audio-visual software grants, despite the fact that the school received a total of over \$2,000 in these areas last year?

(3) If so, how can this opportunity school effectively and completely prepare the special children under their care to take their place in the community?

(4) As this area of education demands greater effort from teachers and parents alike, will he take immediate steps to see that revocational-type courses are improved at opportunity schools?

Answers:—

(1) There has been no change in long-term planning for support to special schools in Queensland (honourable members will recall that the term "opportunity school" was recently replaced by the more general term of "special school"). However, in the light of prevailing economic circumstances adjustments have had to be made.

(2) It is correct that it has been necessary to suspend special purpose grants to special schools for the first half of 1979. However, schools have been invited to submit cases of particular hardship and these will be met.

(3) It should be remembered that in recent years there has been a considerable buildup of resources and special schools have been asked to exercise effective management in the use of what has already been provided.

For example, in the case of Newstead Special School, a survey conducted by my department late last year indicated that consumable stock held for manual arts was in excess of a full year's grant. As well there was a considerable cash credit balance in the same account.

(4) Considerable progress in both the vocational training area and in work experience provisions have been made with regard to special schools. Of particular importance is the very close collaboration between special schools and T.A.F.E. colleges in the area of pre-vocational experience which was introduced at the beginning of this year.

15. A.L.P. CONSUMER AFFAIRS POLICY

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the recent A.L.P. policy decisions arrived at just a few weeks ago at Rockhampton, which state that a Labor Government will create a Consumer Affairs Commission to replace the present Consumer Affairs Bureau, which would "draw up a set of prescribed trade practices in Queensland which would in the first instance, include

those practices presently contained in Part 5 of the Trade Practices Act 1974 (Commonwealth)”?

(2) As A.L.P. policy decisions are binding on the parliamentary A.L.P., including the Leader of the Opposition, what effect will such a proposal have on Queensland businesses, industry and employment?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) I fail to see the logic behind the A.L.P. policy to replace the Consumer Affairs Bureau with a commission. As with most A.L.P. policies, there appears to be more air than substance in this proposal. The honourable member will be aware the Consumer Affairs Act is being examined with a view to upgrading the Act in accordance with the Government's policies. The honourable member will appreciate that there will always be a very small percentage of traders who, no matter whatever legislation is introduced, will always endeavour to circumvent it. As distinct from the positive free-enterprise policies of this Government, the restrictive policy proposals put forward by the A.L.P. would inhibit the operation of market forces in the private sector, by over-regulation increase administration costs, and depress employment prospects.

16. EFFECT OF A.L.P. POLICY ON APPEALS TO PRIVY COUNCIL

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to that part of the policy agreed to at the recent State A.L.P. Conference at Rockhampton under the segment entitled “Justice and Attorney-General”, which states that “A Labor Government in Queensland will legislate to discontinue appeals from the Queensland Courts to the Privy Council”?

(2) If such a policy were implemented, what could be the effect on Queensland State sovereignty?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Let me assure the honourable member and this House that the preservation of the sovereignty of the State of Queensland is a matter of paramount importance to my Government.

The A.L.P. can espouse aims of abolishing appeals to the Privy Council with gay abandon and with complete disregard for the legal avenues available to litigants. Whilst it might be fashionable in some quarters to jump on this bandwagon, the A.L.P. has not, at any time, brought logical argument to support its policy.

17. EFFECT OF STRIKE BY S.E.Q.E.B. INSPECTORS

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

(1) Is he aware that the present strike by S.E.Q.E.B. inspectors is creating great hardship for families and is damaging the employment prospects of hundreds of Queenslanders?

(2) Is he aware of the case of a family, including two small children, who have been living in a house at Lawnton without lighting, cooking or hot water facilities for nearly four weeks as a result of this strike?

(3) As this house is only four years old and therefore is in excellent condition but has been disconnected from electricity for more than the maximum period and therefore requires reinspection, will he take action to have power connected to this house immediately?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware of the hardships that have been caused as a result of the strike by installation inspectors employed by the South East Queensland Electricity Board. However, the installation inspectors returned to work at 8.15 a.m. this morning to perform normal duties and the strike is now over.

(2) Yes.

(3) See answer to (1). Preference will be given to reconnecting domestic consumers who have urgent needs.

18. CONTROL OF FISHING IN PINE RIVERS

Mr. Akers, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

With reference to petitions containing up to 2,000 signatures requesting control of overfishing of the Pine River and its tributaries, what action has his department taken to overcome this serious problem?

Answer:—

Numerous estuaries along our eastern coastline are the subject of complaints in regard to so-called overfishing. These complaints reflect the tremendous growth in recreational fishing in recent years and the conflict that has understandably developed between the recreational and the commercial fishermen in many areas.

The presence of 2,000 signatures on the petition referred to by the honourable member highlights the points I have made in relation to recreational fishing.

The problem of fisheries management is a complex one because it affects major sections of all coastal communities, and thus there are no ready solutions such as further restrictions on the net fishing or

the closing of estuaries to all types of fishing. However, the participation by commercial fishermen in the Pine River fishery is under close examination.

19. ELECTORAL ENROLMENT CLOSURE DATE

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

As the electoral rolls at present close three months before the triennial local government elections are held and therefore a person must live in an area for at least six months before he or she can vote in a local government election, and as the rolls are now prepared by computer processing, will he investigate the feasibility of reducing the length of time between the closure of the rolls and the local government election date?

Answer:—

As the honourable member will be aware, the voters' rolls for local authority triennial elections are compiled from the relevant State electoral rolls and, consequently, the State Electoral Office would need to be consulted on the feasibility or otherwise of any administrative rearrangements regarding such compilation.

Accordingly, I am prepared to have discussions with the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General concerning the matters raised by the honourable member and will inform him of the outcome.

20. ACCOMMODATION FOR APPRENTICES ON BLOCK-RELEASE TRAINING

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What is the present accommodation capacity for block-release training apprentices in the metropolitan area?

(2) Does this accommodation cater for the overall intake of apprentices for this training and, if not, what numbers are in surplus of accommodation?

(3) What other accommodation is available for this purpose throughout the State, where is it situated and what is the capacity?

(4) Are any plans in hand to provide additional accommodation for apprentices participating in block-release training in the future?

Answers:—

(1) The only residential accommodation available to apprentices in the metropolitan area and operated under the control of my department is the Kelvin Grove Hall of Residence. Its maximum capacity

in any one week is 114. Therefore, it could cater for a maximum of approximately 800 students annually if all the bed spaces were occupied all the time.

(2) The total number of apprentices attending block-release tuition in the Brisbane colleges of T.A.F.E. during 1978 was 8,602. Of course, a large proportion of these students either reside locally or would stay with relations for the period of their tuition. Therefore, it is expected that the capacity of Kelvin Grove will be sufficient for the time being.

(3) Another hall of residence is available to apprentices at Maryborough, with a maximum capacity of 38 students per week. In the past two years, my department had chronic difficulties filling this residence consistently throughout the year. Maryborough is the only country centre at which such accommodation is provided by my department.

(4) Additional halls of residence have been incorporated in the long-term capital programme of my department. Subject to satisfactory finances becoming available for construction and to cover the annually recurring operating costs, a progressive establishment programme will be put in train. However, my department has no immediate plans for the construction of a third hall of residence.

21. EXTENSION OF ROADWORTHINESS CERTIFICATE COVER

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement in the December-January edition of "The Road Ahead" by the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs in which he referred to roadworthiness certificates and stressed that the certificates were introduced to eliminate "bombs" and that the certificate does not extend to the condition of the engine and transmission?

(2) In view of this situation and as the engine and transmission involve costly repairs and, after brakes, perform probably the two most important functions of a vehicle, will he consider having incorporated in the roadworthiness certificate provision for a form of test for the motor and transmission of second-hand motor vehicles?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) The statement that appeared in the issue of "The Road Ahead" referred to by the honourable member was in fact an extract from the last annual report of the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. The purpose of a certificate of roadworthiness is to provide for the purchaser of a used vehicle an adequate degree of

road safety with respect to critical components such as brakes, steering and tyres. This certificate is now available at moderate cost. I am advised by the Chief Inspector of Machinery that to correctly determine the actual condition of an engine or transmission would involve extensive testing and dismantling, the cost of which would be prohibitive in so far as the issue of a certificate is concerned. Inspection of engine and transmission therefore is an optional extra for the purchaser and, as the honourable member is aware, the R.A.C.Q. offers a complete service in this regard.

22. BOOKLET ON SHOPPERS' RIGHTS

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

With reference to the booklet "Shoppers Rights: A Guide Book on Consumers' Problems", which has been prepared by the Trade Practices Commission, as the booklet compliments the work of the State Consumer Affairs Bureau, has he obtained copies of this booklet for distribution in Queensland in the interest of consumers and, if not, will he take action to have supplies made available?

Answer:—

For the information of the honourable member, I state that I have read with considerable interest the booklet to which he refers. Because of budgetary restraints, the Consumer Affairs Bureau is not able to purchase these booklets for distribution, but I draw the honourable member's attention to the range of consumer literature specifically designed for Queensland that has been published and widely distributed by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. Should the honourable member be interested in obtaining copies of "Shoppers Rights", these are available from the Australian Government Publishing Service Bookshop, Leighton House, 294 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, at a cost of \$1.15 per copy.

23. DENTAL X-RAYS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Does legal permission exist under the dental therapists Act for a therapist to X-ray the teeth and jaw of a child without the specific consent of the parents?

(2) Does the procedure have to be carried out by a qualified radiographer or by the dentist-in-charge?

Answers:—

(1) School dental therapists practise within the provisions of section 30A of the Dental Act 1971-1973 and dental by-law

21A. One of their prescribed duties is "Dental radiography for usual dental examination."

Parental consent is obtained before any treatment is carried out. Specific consent for each individual aspect of treatment is not sought, but parents are invited to discuss treatment proposed for their children. Should a request be made that X-rays be not taken, that request would be respected.

(2) School dental therapists are granted, following proper training and examination, a licence under the Radioactive Substances Act 1958-1970 to take X-rays, restricted, however, to the extent covered in the prescribed duties of school dental therapists.

24. AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION ACT

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

(1) What is the purpose of the Australian Heritage Commission Act of 1975?

(2) How does the Act affect the ownership and tenure of grazing and farm lands in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) I am advised that the purpose of the Australia Heritage Commission Act 1975 was—

To establish and constitute the Australian Heritage Commission, and set out its functions duties and powers; to provide for the keeping of the Register of the National Estate;

To enable the Commission to give advice in respect of matters relating to the National Estate; and to prescribe the duties of Commonwealth Ministers and authorities within their respective Ministerial responsibilities do not take any action that adversely affects as part of the National Estate a place that is in the Register of the National Estate; unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative.

(2) I believe that the inclusion of grazing and farm lands in Queensland in the Register of the National Estate gives the Commonwealth Government no right to interfere in the legal rights of landholders whose properties are so listed; neither can the Commonwealth Government interfere in the functions and responsibilities of a local authority.

However, under section 30 of the Act every Commonwealth Minister is required to ensure that any Commonwealth department or authority for which he is responsible takes no action that adversely affects, as part of the National Estate, a place that is in the register unless he is

satisfied that there is no feasible and prudent alternative. A decision relating to such action is deemed to include recommendations and approvals, the issuing of licences and the granting of permits. The Commonwealth Government may therefore interfere in land-use activities to the extent that Commonwealth Government approvals or assistance are required.

Different views have at times been expressed by different persons as to the implications of inclusion in the register, and whether there are latent implications as well as patent implications. The chairman of the Australian Heritage Commission strongly contends that the operations of the Australian Heritage Commission do nothing to inhibit the mining industry or any other form of land usage. However, his views have not been universally accepted.

25. LEGISLATION FOR REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Will he permit members to have a free or conscience vote on the legislation to register chiropractors under the guise of manipulative therapists?

(2) Will he inform the House if previous attempts were made in this Chamber to bring down similar legislation and, if so, what was the procedure and what were the results?

Answers:—

(1) If the Government should decide to proceed with the introduction of any such legislation, a decision regarding the attitude to be adopted by the Government parties will no doubt be made at the appropriate time.

(2) I would think that the honourable member, who claims that he is a person well versed in parliamentary matters, would be well aware of the details related to this question, and therefore I feel that any answer I might provide would be superfluous.

26. POLICE UNIFORMS AND NUMBERS

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

(1) How many policemen and police-women have been issued with the new police uniform?

(2) Do all of those policemen and policewomen who have been issued with the new police uniform have their identification numbers on their caps and, if not, what are the reasons?

(3) Precisely where are the identification numbers located on the caps?

(4) Are police officers required to wear their caps at all times when on outside duty, such as when questioning traffic offenders?

(5) What are the dimensions of the numbers?

Answers:—

(1) Approximately 1,800.

(2) Not at this stage. Contracts have been let for the supply of the new head-gear badge, which contains the identification number. These badges are expected to be available for issue in approximately two weeks. Non-commissioned officers have not worn identification numbers in this State since 1975, but the cap badge will bear the abbreviation "SGT".

(3) In the base of the cap badge.

(4) Yes, except when seated in the departmental vehicle.

(5) 4 mm in height and standard width.

27. POLICE VEHICLES ON EMERGENCY CALLS

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

(1) Regarding the special six-man committee that the police department has set up to evaluate responses by police vehicles to emergency calls, what exactly is the aim of the evaluation?

(2) Is the committee accepting submissions from interested persons?

(3) When will the committee complete its evaluation?

(4) Will the committee's findings be made public?

Answers:—

(1) The aim of the committee was to examine the driving of police vehicles in emergency circumstances and establish guide-lines for police drivers to follow having regard to the nature of the emergency and the safety of the public generally.

(2) Whilst submissions were not canvassed generally from members of the community, a number of interested persons from other organisations were interviewed and a wide variety of data was examined.

(3) The committee's report has been finalised, and the implementation of its recommendations is presently under consideration.

(4) It is not intended at this time to make any findings public.

28. POLICE OFFICER'S DISCHARGE OF
FIREARM DURING MOTOR
VEHICLE PURSUIT

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

(1) With reference to his ministerial statement on Tuesday, 13 March, in which he stated that a police officer fired his revolver five times when pursuing a vehicle and that so far as the presiding magistrate was concerned the constable acted quite properly, did the constable fire his revolver in circumstances other than those given in a reply to a question that I asked on 17 October 1978?

(2) Was the constable who fired the five shots in fact the driver of one of the six vehicles involved in the particular police chase?

(3) Did the constable actually fire the five shots while driving a police vehicle at speeds in excess of 80 km/h in a suburban street?

(4) Has the vehicle that the constable was pursuing been inspected for bullet holes or bullet indentations and, if not, what are the reasons?

(5) What disciplinary action has been taken against the constable concerned?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) I have previously made a statement to the House concerning the incident in question, and as indicated in that statement the circumstances of the police officer's firing the shots have been well and truly canvassed. Further, the magistrate expressed the view that the constable acted quite properly.

There was a lapse on the part of the constable by failing to report the use of his firearm on this occasion, and he has been firmly instructed as to departmental requirements in relation to reporting any such use in the future.

I do not intend to enter into further debate on the matter.

29. ROAD-WORKS PRIORITIES, CABOOLTURE
SHIRE COUNCIL

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

(1) What was the order of priority submitted by the Caboolture Shire Council for permanent works on the secondary roads of Pumicestone Road, Caboolture River Road, Neurum Road and Campbell's Pocket Road for the financial years of 1976-77, 1977-78 and 1978-79?

(2) What priorities have been submitted for permanent work on the same roads for 1979-80?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Priority lists are not sought from shires on an annual basis, because one of the main purposes is to allow forward planning of future works and allow time for surveys, design, resumptions, if necessary, and, in some cases, relocation of services. Changing the priorities on an annual basis would defeat this purpose.

The last priority list submitted by Caboolture Shire Council was dated 5 August 1976. It listed the following priorities:—

(i) Caboolture River Road; (ii) Pumicestone Road; (iii) Another section of Caboolture River Road; (iv) Campbell's Pocket Road; (v) Another section of Pumicestone Road.

As the major concentration in Caboolture Shire in recent years has been on highways and main roads, and will continue to be so for some time, no permanent works have been programmed on secondary roads in the shire since 1975-76, and none are programmed in 1979-80.

However, in view of the lapse of time since the council was last asked to list priorities, its updated advice on this matter will be sought in the near future.

30. REDUCTION OF PERMITTED BLOOD-
ALCOHOL LIMIT

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

(1) Is he aware of a recent media report that the road toll in Victoria has been reduced from 8.1 per 10,000 registered vehicles to 4.5 per 10,000 registered vehicles owing to a sustained effort by Victorian police in combination with a reduction in the permitted blood-alcohol limit to .05?

(2) Will he consider reducing the permitted blood-alcohol limit in Queensland to .05 in combination with a sustained effort by police, so as to reduce the drink-driving toll and hopefully reduce fatalities in Queensland from 5.2 per 10,000 registered vehicles?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) I am now aware of the media report referred to by the honourable member, but I am advised that according to official statistics published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the quarter ended September 1971, the Victorian fatality rate per 10,000 motor vehicles registered was eight, the same as for Queensland for that quarter. The latest statistics available for the quarter ended March 1978 show that the Victorian fatality rate per 10,000 registered motor vehicles is five, and this again is the same as the Queensland rate. As the national rate per 10,000 registered motor vehicles for the same quarter

is also five, it is difficult to conclude that a reduction in the blood-alcohol level from .08 to .05 would have a significant effect on the road toll, although no doubt enforcement action of the legal limits would seem to have been a contributing factor in both Queensland and Victoria.

While the reduction in the legal limit involves a question of Government policy, I have no doubt that in Queensland police enforcement action will continue to make a major contribution to the reduction of the drink-driving road toll.

31. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN SCHOOLS

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Bourke**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) How many occupational therapists are employed by his department to work within schools and treat children diagnosed as suffering, for example, from minimal brain disfunction?

(2) Is he aware that apparently no such service is provided for these children in the Toowoomba area and that parents of the children, who are naturally desperate to obtain the best for their children, are left to fend for themselves and rely on other agencies for assistance?

(3) Will he take urgent action to have the services of an occupational therapist made available to cater for Toowoomba schoolchildren in urgent need of such treatment?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The honourable member should direct this question to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Education, as this is a matter coming within his jurisdiction.

32. DRIVING OF CHILDREN TO SCHOOL IN GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Bourke**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Is he fully aware that recent developments in our society have led to increasing numbers of fathers driving their children to school on their way to work?

(2) In view of the Public Service prohibition on public servants' transporting their children in their cars, is he aware that this often results in a father being followed on his way to work by his wife in their private car, delivering their children to school?

(3) In view of the obvious waste of community resources and the unnecessary strain on the mothers concerned, will he consider having the regulations amended so as to permit public servants to deliver

their children to school, subject to their giving suitable notice and being prepared to meet the extra cost involved?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) It is a firm policy of the Government that official cars should be used for official purposes only. To relax this policy would inevitably lead to further similar requests. As the honourable member would also appreciate, it would be extremely difficult to monitor and control such an arrangement.

33. WIDE BAY/BURNETT RESOURCES INVESTIGATION

Mr. Yewdale for **Mr. Hansen**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) With reference to paragraph 4.65 of the Co-ordinator-General's Annual Report, page 25, concerning the Wide Bay/Burnett resources investigation, wherein it is reported that the completion date is expected during 1978-79 and that it is on schedule, has the investigation been completed?

(2) As there are numerous persons and organisations vitally interested in this investigation, will it be made public or will it remain the property of the Government?

Answers:—

(1) The investigation has been completed. It is expected that the report on the investigation will be completed by late July 1979.

(2) No decision has yet been made on the report's distribution.

34. EAST CAIRNS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE SEWER CONSTRUCTION; TENDERS AND PREFERENCE

Mr. Yewdale for **Mr. Hansen**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services—

(1) With reference to his advice on 20 March that General Constructions Pty. Ltd., a New South Wales firm, has been awarded a contract of \$243,458 for construction of sewers on the East Cairns industrial estate, did any Queensland-based firms tender for this work?

(2) What preference was allowed to Queensland firms over New South Wales companies in this case?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Despite the fact that tenders were invited by advertisements in "The Courier-Mail" and the "Cairns Post", no Queensland firm submitted a tender.

35. BITING MIDGES; CONTROL RESEARCH
AND EFFECT ON TOURISM

Mr. Yewdale for **Mr. Hansen**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Has Dr. Reys of the Queensland University unsuccessfully sought, on a number of occasions, Government funds to assist in his study of biting midges and the methods of controlling them?

(2) Does the only outside assistance for Dr. Reys's research come from a few interested local authorities and does this restrict the research to a slow part-time process?

(3) While sandflies might not cause death, does he agree that they can cause serious bites and infections and have a deterrent effect on tourism on our very popular coast beaches?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) I am advised that some local authorities are providing assistance at the present time.

(3) From the health point of view, there is no demonstrated relationship between biting midges and human diseases.

36. EFFECT ON SHIRES' INCOMES OF
ALIENATION OF RATEABLE LAND

Mr. Row, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation—

Will he take the necessary steps to ensure that the alienation of rateable land from shires in Queensland for national park purposes does not deprive those shires of income from rates that the average shire council could normally anticipate being able to raise from rateable land and, as there are already some shires in Queensland whose lands have been alienated by the Crown to between 40 per cent and 60 per cent, will he consider the payment of compensation to shires?

Answer:—

Although the area of national park land in Queensland is insignificant compared with the area of other Crown lands, much of which is non-rateable, I am sympathetic to the problems facing local authorities with high proportions of non-rateable land in their shires. I should point out, however, that much national park land is in fact rateable, as it is grazed under permit or lease by adjoining landholders. Nevertheless, local authorities with areas of great scenic beauty must accept that they have the greatest potential for national parks and tourism. Many shires have realised this potential and are working

closely with my National Parks and Wildlife Service to preserve and present these areas of public enjoyment and environmental protection.

Concerning the suggestion that the Government should compensate local authorities for non-rateable Crown land, particularly national parks, I point out that this is a matter for the Honourable the Treasurer.

37. ACCIDENTS INVOLVING ELECTRIC-POWER
POLES

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

(1) In the years 1976, 1977 and 1978 how many road accidents have occurred in each electricity region in this State where motorists or motor-cyclists have hit electric-power poles?

(2) In each year, how many fatalities and serious permanent disabilities have occurred from these types of accidents?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) I am unable to comment on the statistics requested by the honourable member, as the Commissioner for Transport assumed custody of traffic records as from 1 July 1976. I suggest that the question be referred to my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Transport.

Mr. Prest: I do so accordingly.

38. CONDITION OF STATE ELECTORAL ROLLS

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

(1) In view of the large number of section votes recorded at the recent local government elections, will he investigate why so many names have been removed from the State electoral rolls and issue a true statement in relation to the present situation?

(2) How does he intend to have this unsatisfactory situation rectified?

(3) What action will be taken to have the rolls brought up to date?

Answers:—

(1 & 2) Following the 1977 State election, a total of 35,701 electors who failed to reply to the letter of inquiry and non-voter notice were erased from the State Electoral Rolls in accordance with the provisions of the Elections Act 1915-1976.

Rolls for the conduct of the recent Brisbane City Council and local authority elections were compiled to 2 January 1979.

As supplemental rolls are not required to be prepared for these elections, approximately 25,000 electors whose enrolments were processed from the closure of the rolls to 28 February 1979 were not eligible to vote for their current address.

At this time I have not received details of all section votes recorded. When the Principal Electoral Officer has received details of all section votes recorded at the recent local government elections, he will report to me and I will examine his report with a view to determining what action, if any, should be taken.

(3) If any electors have been wrongly omitted or erased their names will be restored. A total of 35,000 electors whose enrolment cards were received since the 1 March 1979 will be processed. Persons who are not enrolled for the address for which their section vote was cast, and who have not recently completed a claim or application to transfer enrolment, will be written to by the Principal Electoral Officer to secure their due enrolment. Consideration will be given to conducting a complete State roll canvass during 1979.

39. MUSIC TEACHER, GLADSTONE SCHOOLS

Mr. Prest, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Owing to the resignation of the music teacher for schools in the Gladstone area, as parents of children who have been encouraged to learn to play an instrument have spent thousands of dollars to purchase instruments, will he assure the parents and children of the Gladstone and district schools that the appointment of another music teacher will be given priority?

(2) When will such appointment be made?

Answers:—

(1) Yes, appointment of another music instructor (instrumental) to the position in Gladstone is being given a high priority.

(2) No suitably qualified person is presently available for appointment to Gladstone. Nevertheless, arrangements have been made to advertise the position nationally within the next few days.

40. MOTOR VEHICLE DEFECTS DURING WARRANTY PERIOD

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

(1) How many complaints has the Consumer Affairs Bureau received during the last financial year regarding inadequate service or defects on new cars during the warranty period?

(2) Against what brands, models, and retailers was each of the complaints made?

(3) How many complaints were settled to the satisfaction of the owner?

Answers:—

(1) 105.

(2) It is not Government policy to give identifiable information with regard to the ethics or reputations of individual traders or companies arising out of complaints processed by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. Because of its generalised nature, the information sought by the honourable member could in some instances react unfairly against retailers who carry out warranty work on behalf of manufacturers.

(3) To give the bureau sufficient time to obtain this information, I ask the honourable member to place this specific question on notice for next Wednesday.

Mr. Austin: I do so accordingly.

41. QUALITY OF IMPORTED BICYCLES

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

(1) How many complaints has his department received regarding the quality of imported bicycles?

(2) What was the nature of the majority of complaints?

(3) About what brand were the majority of complaints made?

Answers:—

(1) Until 30 June 1978 the Consumer Affairs Bureau had received a total of 59 complaints with regard to motor cycles and pedal bicycles.

(2) To obtain detailed information regarding the nature of the majority of complaints would necessitate an officer being assigned to peruse each file, but in many instances it still would not be possible to determine whether the bicycles were imported or not. Should the honourable member require information as to the nature of the majority of complaints, it is suggested that, in order to allow sufficient time for information to be obtained, the honourable member place this question on notice for next Wednesday.

Mr. Austin: I do so accordingly.

Answers (contd.):—

(3) With regard to the question of predominant brand involved it is not Government policy to allow for publication of identifiable information of individual traders or companies arising out of complaints processed by the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wavell might do the Clerk the courtesy of discussing those sections with him later.

42. UNFILLED GLADSTONE HOSPITALS
BOARD LOAN

Mr. D'Arcy, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Is he aware that the Gladstone Hospitals Board is unable to find a lender to fill a loan of \$50,000 at 9.7 per cent to pay architects' fees for the construction of the new hospital?

(2) In view of this and, as time is running out, what action does the Government propose, and does this indicate that the Government's economic practices are failing and that interest rates are about to rise again?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Yes, I am aware that the Gladstone Hospitals Board has been unable to raise a loan of \$50,000 for costs associated with the construction of a new hospital. However, my understanding is that most, if not all, the approaches by the hospital board to prospective lenders were made prior to the recent adjustment to the interest margin for private treaty loans.

It was because small authorities such as the Gladstone Hospitals Board were unable to adequately compete with the larger public borrowers that the margin for private treaty loans over public borrowings was increased by 0.2 per cent from 3 April of this year. Furthermore, there are still over 2½ months of the financial year left in which to raise funds. In this period in recent years authorities have raised in total between \$30,000,000 and \$40,000,000, nearly all of which was by private treaty loans.

43. T.A.B. COMPUTER CONTRACT TENDERS

Mr. D'Arcy, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

Will he table in this House the complete details of the tenders received for the T.A.B. computer contract awarded to Burroughs Ltd.?

Answer:—

The honourable member's attention is drawn to a statement that the Deputy Premier and Treasurer made to this House on 13 March 1979. Whilst respecting the confidential nature of the documents and details received from the three companies that submitted a tender, it was clearly indicated in the statement that on both a financial and technical evaluation the tender from Burroughs Pty. Ltd. was the lowest and the best. I have nothing to add to the statement made earlier.

44. GOLD COAST HOSPITAL

Mr. D'Arcy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

Why is the new Gold Coast Hospital not able to receive patients even though it was officially opened over one month ago?

Answer:—

The Gold Coast Hospitals Board has advised that the transfer of patients from the pavilion-type wards at the Gold Coast Hospital to the new multi-storey block was never intended to take place immediately upon the official opening of the new block but that rather it would be done progressively. The board has further advised that the transfer of patients will begin during the week commencing Monday, 16 April 1979 and will be carried out on a progressive basis as planned.

45. MANUAL ARTS BUILDING, BEENLEIGH
STATE HIGH SCHOOL

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

(1) Is he aware that the manual arts building at the Beenleigh State High School is in need of upgrading, especially with regard to the teachers' preparation and administration accommodation?

(2) Are any plans being made to upgrade the manual arts accommodation at this school?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. The honourable member for Albert has kept me informed on the need for improving the manual arts accommodation at this school.

(2) Provision has been made on the Draft Loan Works Programme for 1979-80 for the provision of improved staff accommodation and increased storeroom space in this building.

On the Forward Planning Programme for 1980-81, preliminary provision is being made for the construction of a modular machine shop for the manual arts section.

The provision of these proposed improvements will receive further consideration as soon as it is known what funds have been allocated for the respective financial years and I will then further inform the honourable member.

46. SCHOOL SWIMMING-POOL SIZES

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

Has a decision been made to allow small schools with limited growth potential to construct swimming-pools smaller than the standard pool?

Answer:—

On 9 April 1979, Cabinet approved of a change in policy in relation to the construction of swimming-pools at State schools. As many parents and citizens' associations, particularly those at schools with a small enrolment, have not been

able to raise the finance necessary to construct the standard 25 m pool to the required specifications, Cabinet decided to accept smaller pools and economies in construction methods.

Subsidy on a dollar-for-dollar basis is now available on pools measuring 16.67 m by 8 m, provided each specific applicant satisfies the Education Department that the proposal is in the best interests of the school concerned. Furthermore, applications are now permitted for the construction of a pool other than by the conventional method of reinforced concrete. Each request will be considered on its merits. The maximum subsidy available for a swimming-pool at a State school remains at \$49,000.

47. RELOCATION OF BEENLEIGH CATTLEYARDS

Mr. I. J. Gibbs, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Further to the decision to relocate the Beenleigh cattleyards, when will this work be completed?

Answer:—

Tenders have been called for the construction of these yards and it is expected that work will be completed within about four months.

48. SALE OF UNDERSIZED FISH

Mr. Gunn, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

(1) Is he aware of the practice in some of our fishing areas whereby professional fishermen sell undersized fish to people to feed pelicans?

(2) What is being done to eliminate this practice, which could have a detrimental effect on this industry in the future?

Answers:—

(1) I am not aware of the practice referred to, but understand that some fish not covered by minimum size limits are used to feed pelicans. These may not legally be classed as undersized.

(2) I very much doubt that the alleged practice is of any magnitude, but will have the matter investigated if the honourable member will provide me with appropriate details.

49. PLAYING AREA, NANANGO STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Gunn, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is he aware of the restricted playground area at the Nanango State School?

(2) Following the transfer of some small parcels of land to his department, when will work commence on the school oval?

Answers:—

(1) The Nanango State School now covers an area of 5.89 ha. I am aware that the playground area at Nanango is somewhat smaller than may be desired. However, the grounds have recently been enlarged by the addition of two small areas of land, 1.269 ha and 1.023 ha.

(2) The upgrading of these areas falls within the province of our colleague the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing. This matter is being referred to him for consideration in the light of funds available for such work.

50. BLACKBUTT RANGE ROAD

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

What work is being done to correct the deteriorating condition of the Blackbutt Range Road, and when will this work be completed?

Answer:—

The concern of people about the condition of the Blackbutt Range Road, which has been seriously affected by a landslip following the wet season, is shared by officers of the Main Roads Department, who undertook an extensive investigation to determine the nature and extent of the remedial work required. This investigation is currently nearing completion. It is expected that remedial work will commence in June, and a preliminary assessment is that it should take two to three months to complete. In the meantime, traffic will still be able to use the road, where necessary using the side tracks provided.

51. VITAMIN B₁₅ TABLETS

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

(1) Are tablets known as vitamin B₁₅ unable to be purchased in Queensland without a doctor's prescription?

(2) If so, what is the reason for this measure?

Answers:—

(1) Various brands of tablets have been marketed as vitamin B₁₅. If those tablets contain diisopropylamine dichloroacetate, they can only be obtained on the prescription of a medical practitioner.

(2) Diisopropylamine dichloroacetate is a restricted drug as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

52. MOGGILL FERRY SERVICE; FEES AND SUBSIDY

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

(1) In view of the reopening of the Moggill Ferry, what fees are payable for the crossing?

(2) What is the proposed subsidy to the operation, and on what basis is this subsidy to be paid?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) As the final decision on the fee structure for the Moggill Ferry when it reopens in the near future has not yet been taken and, as the agreement has not yet been signed, it is not possible to answer the question at this stage. However, I will provide the honourable member in writing with the information he seeks when these details are finalised.

53. CESSATION OF PAYMENTS TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Davis, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is he aware that his department has stopped the payment to special schools of amounts ranging from \$250 for home-crafts to \$500 for manual arts?

(2) Why has this payment been stopped?

(3) Does he expect parents to pay for materials so these courses can continue?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that it was not possible for the manual arts and home economics grants to be automatically paid to special schools for the first semester of 1979.

(2) The reason for this action arose from the need to exercise constraint over expenditure during the 1978-79 financial year. However, it should be noted that a survey of special schools undertaken in the latter part of 1978 revealed that a number of them had high cash balances in their manual arts and home economics accounts and also substantial stock on hand for these activities. Given this situation, principals of special schools facing difficulties in these areas have been invited to make application for the payment of grants.

(3) It is not my desire for parents to have to accept responsibility for the costs of manual arts and home economics. Subject to overall fund availability in the coming financial year, I would hope that it will be again possible to pay all grants in full.

54. TRAINING OF SHEARERS

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

(1) In view of the severe shortage of shearers in Queensland, will he seek details of the New Zealand shearer-training scheme?

(2) Will he support any practical scheme that may be presented by the United Graziers' Association for State and Federal Government assistance to help with the training of shearers?

Answers:—

(1) As the honourable member is aware, the Industry and Commerce Training Bill, which was recently passed by this Parliament, makes provision for the establishment of an Industry and Commerce Training Commission. That commission will be responsible for training in industry and commerce and I will ensure that this particular area of training is brought to its notice as soon as the commission is constituted. In the meantime, I will arrange for my officers to obtain details of the New Zealand shearer-training scheme.

(2) I am always prepared to support any practicable and worthwhile training scheme and, if the United Graziers' Association or any other recognised industry organisation presents such a scheme to me, I will certainly cause it to be investigated and, if found to be satisfactory and within my authority, then I will support it.

55. LEGALISATION OF SUBURBAN SHEARING

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

When will the Workers' Accommodation Act be amended so that suburban shearing may be legalised?

Answer:—

A comprehensive submission relating to the Workers' Accommodation Act will be considered by Cabinet in the very near future.

I am making every endeavour to have legislation introduced during the current session and discussions are being held with the A.W.U. in relation to this matter.

56. BAN ON ENTRY OF BEES TO QUEENSLAND

Mr. Turner, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

Has his department recently placed a ban on the entry of all bees and bee-keeping equipment from New South Wales into Queensland and, if so, what is the reason?

Answer:—

Under the Apiaries Act of 1947, the movement of bees and used bee-keeping equipment into Queensland is not permitted unless accompanied by an appropriate certificate that they come from a district where certain diseases of bees do not occur. The New South Wales Department of Agriculture recently decided that it was unable to issue such certificates because of the discovery of European brood disease in a number of areas of that State. This effectively prevents entry into Queensland.

European brood disease is a serious problem that has spread through apiaries in South Australia, Victoria and now New South Wales in recent years. It is highly infectious and there is no known cure. The action which has been taken is an attempt to prevent the spread of this important disease into Queensland.

57. EMPLOYMENT OF DROVERS ON STOCK TRAINS

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

Following repeated requests from many sections of the community for train drovers to be in attendance on all stock trains in order to prevent injury and death to livestock travelling by rail, will the advent of train drovers prevent all injury and death to livestock travelling by rail?

Answer:—

The use of train drovers will not prevent all deaths and injury of livestock, but it does have the tendency to minimise the incidence of this.

During past years train drovers have been used very successfully by producers all over Queensland, and there is no doubt in my mind that they were virtually dispensed with during the five-year period of the cattle slump. However, I believe that the position has now become so acute that it is necessary for my department, stock and station agents and brokers to conduct a campaign to encourage producers to once again employ train drovers.

After all, the Railway Department does allow a train drover to travel on the train with the cattle and return home free provided he has at least three "K" wagons in his charge. It also is a fact that a train drover is virtually in control of the train upon which his stock are being carried and he may request the unloading of a particular "K" wagon if indeed stock are down and/or are unable to get up.

I believe that the situation has been reached where it is vitally necessary to re-employ these train drovers, and I most certainly appeal to producers of stock in Queensland to avail themselves of the generous terms offered by the Railway Department in this regard.

At the present time tests are being carried out by the Department of Primary Industries and the Queensland Meat Industry Organisation and Marketing Authority on the water curfew which has been instituted in respect of stock going to market where liveweight selling methods are employed. My understanding is that it may not be necessary to have this restriction and I most certainly hope that these organisations come up with a recommendation along these lines.

In recent years the Railway Department has increased the speed of long stock trains from outback Queensland and this has tended to allow these trains to come from places such as Longreach and Winton without a stop of any sort, whereas I believe it is necessary for stock from these areas to be watered at least every 24 hours.

I thank the honourable member for raising this question with me and I hope that this reply will encourage primary producers to make use of train drovers rather than making it necessary to introduce legislation along these lines.

58. OIL EXPLORATION IN GREAT BARRIER REEF REGION

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

(1) Is he aware of an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 11 April, wherein the member for Sandgate is reported as saying that the Premier and his Cabinet Ministers are avid supporters of drilling in waters adjacent to the reef islands and the Great Barrier Reef?

(2) Does Cabinet support drilling on the Great Barrier Reef?

Answers:—

(1) I have seen the Press report in which the member for Sandgate claims that, among other things, "Protection of the reef remains under a cloud". This statement, with its alarmist overtones, is another clumsy attempt by the members of the Opposition and radical conservationist elements allied to them to cloud the issue of protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

(2) Both the Commonwealth and State Governments have yet to make a decision on whether any exploratory drilling for petroleum will be allowed in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef, which are some 207 000 sq km in total area, or in waters of the adjacent area seawards of the reef. However, I have stated previously that I shall be guided by the findings of the Great Barrier Reef Royal Commission and I shall not condone any exploration activity which will harm the reef.

I would like to draw the attention of the member for Sandgate to the fact that I, as Minister for Mines, took a recommendation to Cabinet, following an oil blowout at Santa Barbara, that there should be a moratorium on drilling in Great Barrier Reef waters until there had been a thorough investigation into the dangers of drilling. I also immediately sent a senior officer of the Department of Mines to the United States to study the effects of the Santa Barbara incident.

Following this, the Premier and I went to Canberra to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister at that time. In spite of Press reports to the contrary, it was at the suggestion of the Queensland Government that a royal commission was appointed. This proposal received the agreement of the Prime Minister.

I find it very strange indeed that the member for Sandgate shows such concern for the Great Barrier Reef when he has been an alderman of a council which for years condoned the discharge of sewage at the mouth of the Brisbane River. This resulted in the worst pollution to which any stretch of the Queensland coastline has ever been subjected.

FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. CASEY (Mackay—Leader of the Opposition) having given notice of a question—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I am not impressed with the preamble to the honourable gentleman's question. He has already brought that matter to my notice and I have said that it will be considered. Until that consideration is forthcoming, I think that the preamble to the question is superfluous and I will be looking at it. The honourable member will proceed with his second question.

Mr. CASEY: I am sorry, Mr. Acting Speaker; it is unrelated to the—

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will proceed with his second question.

Mr. CASEY: It is unrelated to the matter that I discussed earlier this morning.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LETTING OF GOVERNMENT CAPITAL WORKS CONTRACTS

Mr. CASEY: Bearing in mind the doubts in relation to the Government's procedures in the letting of capital works contracts and the many points outlined by a former Auditor-General, Sir Allan Sewell, in his report dated 14 September 1977, and evidence of contracts being awarded against the recommendations of the Minister's own

departmental experts, and in view of Sir Allan's comments on the need for public accountability, I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Will he recommend to Cabinet, as a matter of urgency, legislation for the appointment of a joint parliamentary Public Works committee, as has existed in the Federal Parliament for approximately 20 years, to meet regularly in open session to examine all proposed State Government capital works projects above an estimated fixed minimum amount? Secondly, in doing so, will he, as a step towards open government so that Queenslanders can see it to be clean and decent and free of any hint of corruption, undertake to refer the contract in relation to the Mt. Gravatt Hospital to that committee and report to Parliament?

Mr. WHARTON: Questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to matters of Government policy need not necessarily be answered. As he has been unable to ask a short question that I can answer off the cuff, I would prefer him to put his question on notice so that I can answer it in detail next week.

Mr. CASEY: I do so accordingly.

AURUKUN AND MORNINGTON ISLAND SHIRE COUNCILS

Mrs. KIPPIN: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: Could he advise the House of the situation of the Mornington Island and Aurukun Shire Councils, following his visits to both areas at the week-end for the first statutory meetings of both councils? Does he regard the two councils as having been launched successfully, and how does he see the future for both councils?

Mr. HINZE: I have been advised that the first elections for the shires of Aurukun and Mornington were held very successfully on 31 March—along with the elections for all other councils throughout the State. It is a very historic occasion for both these Aboriginal communities, and I am advised that the polls for both places were declared in a day or two.

Preliminary figures indicate that four members of the old five-member community council have been elected to the Aurukun Shire Council. The fifth member of the old community council did not seek election. At Mornington Island, all members of the old five-member community council nominated for election to the new shire council, and it appears that three of these five candidates will be re-elected in the finalisation of the poll.

The honourable member would know that the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act, introduced in this House last year, makes provision for eight elected members on the new shire councils. The vote in the election on 31 March at Aurukun and Mornington Island is seen very clearly as a

vote for the system of local government self-management as agreed on between the State Government and the Commonwealth in April last year. The number of people who cast informal votes, or did not vote at all, was very small. The success of the elections is further evidence that the Government's policies and decisions in respect of Aurukun and Mornington Island are working, and they obviously enjoy general support both in the area and outside it.

As you will recall, Mr. Acting Speaker, last week-end I visited the area with the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Fred Chaney. I indicate to the House that the whole operation was very successful and something of which the Government of Queensland can be very proud. For a period last year we were all very concerned, and many people were sitting on the sidelines hoping that local government would not be a success. I am sure that they will now be very disappointed. The discussions that were held and the inaugural meetings that took place were very successful.

Now that the councils have been elected, all that I hope is that the people will be allowed to work for the benefit of their respective areas. I am sure that time will prove that the whole local government exercise at Mornington Island and Aurukun is what we want it to be. Both areas could be made very productive. I am sure that, with local government in the area, this will eventuate.

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines, Energy and Police) (12.11 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Mining Act 1968–1976 in certain particulars and for another purpose.”

To cope with the continuing expansion of the mining industry in Queensland, as well as the industry's operations in relation to closer settlement of the State, it has been found necessary to examine the Mining Act in this light. The proposed Bill introduces amendments not only to cover this situation but also to correct anomalies that have become apparent in the administration of the Act.

The provisions relating to the issue of miners rights and the entitlements of the holder thereof have been tightened as it has been noticed that in some instances the miners' right has been used to gain entry to grazing properties and other lands for illegal purposes.

Previously the laws relating to the taking up and operation of claims were contained in the regulations. However, it was felt that those titles should be subject to the Act rather than the regulations and, consequently, the Bill provides for this. A claim will now be known as a mining claim, and will be a tenure in its own right rather than be held by virtue of a miners' right. It will now attract rent and have a fixed term. Provision has also been made for the holder of a mining claim that has been determined to retain ownership of stacked earth or other material the produce of the claim for a period of one year.

The proposed amendments ensure that in the case of conditional surrender of a mining tenement or in a successful forfeiture action the preferent right a person may have to take up the ground is preserved. Previously this was open to doubt.

Another anomaly that has been removed is that the Minister is not now required to consider a mining lease application which has been abandoned. As with mining claims, it was considered desirable to bring within the ambit of the Act provisions contained in the regulations relating to the application for and the hearing of mining leases.

A major provision of the Bill relates to the interaction of mining leases with local authority town planning provisions. The grant of a mining lease by the Governor in Council confers a right to use the land for the purposes of the lease but in practice the actual use may be constrained by town planning provisions of the local authority. Indeed, the lessee could be prevented from carrying out mining operations completely. This situation is clearly undesirable and contrary to the intention of the Governor in Council in the grant of a lease.

Furthermore, the uncertainty of the position makes it virtually impossible for a mining company to soundly commit funds, in some cases of very substantial amounts, for development, and, in effect, leaves the miner without security of tenure. In addition, mining companies can be placed in the position where they have to accede to unreasonable infrastructure requirements or face local authority disapproval of the project.

The proposed amendments make mining leases exempt from the town planning provisions of the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. However, it must be stressed that the present system, which has not been changed, provides adequate safeguards to ensure that the rights of local authorities are upheld and any representations properly considered.

Under existing provisions a local authority that objects to a mining lease application can appear in the warden's court before the warden makes his recommendation on the basis of evidence presented to him. The local authority can also make direct representations

to the Minister, as well as Ministers of other departments, before a recommendation is made to the Governor in Council concerning the grant of the lease. A copy of any special lease conditions which are proposed is always submitted to the Governor in Council with the recommendation for grant.

Where a person is given approval to enter upon the land contained in his lease application before the lease has been granted, provision has been made for the Minister to impose conditions or call for a security deposit if it is considered necessary.

The present Act provides for the lodgement of a security deposit if considered necessary prior to the grant of a lease. The amendments provide for a reassessment of such deposit every 10 years from the grant of the lease, on renewal and every 10 years from any such renewal. It is also provided that the Minister may utilise the deposit at any time during the term of the lease to rectify any breach of the conditions and to have the amount of the deposit restored as he sees fit.

In regard to assessment by the warden of likely damage that may be caused to land by a prospector or miner, the present Act is not clear whether more than one assessment may be made. The Bill provides that such an assessment may be made at any time during the term of the authority to prospect or mining tenement. At present, the holder of Crown land may apply to the warden for assessment of actual damage caused by prospecting or mining within one year only after such operations had commenced. The amendment provides that such an assessment may be applied for at any time.

Provision is made for a person authorised by the Minister to enter upon an authority to prospect or a mining tenement to give directions regarding compliance with the conditions of the authority or tenement. The warden has also been authorised to remove pegs where the holder of a mining tenement has failed to do so on termination of the tenement or where an application has not been lodged in the required time in respect of a pegged area.

The Bill provides that mining claims shall not be registered on private land and that, in future, residence areas and business areas shall not be registered over Crown land, as the need for these titles has passed.

A new section is included to permit the Minister to authorise the applicant for a mining lease over private land to enter upon the land for mining purposes before the lease is granted, to subject such approval to any conditions necessary and to call for a security deposit if considered desirable.

A similar provision already exists in relation to mining lease applications over Crown land.

Present legislation allows the holder of a permit to enter to be upon private land to search for minerals without any notification to the landholder. Under the proposed amendments, the warden is required to notify in writing the owner or occupier of any private land in respect of which he issues a permit to enter. The holder of the permit to enter is also required to give due notice in writing to the owner or occupier of private land before he enters such land.

The existing provisions of the private land section of the Act make it necessary for the applicant for a mining lease and the owner of the private land to come to agreement concerning compensation before a mining lease is granted. However, no such provision exists when the lessee desires to renew the lease. The amendments cater for this contingency.

I have covered the main points of the Bill, the remainder being machinery provisions dealing mainly with the change in status of the mining claim and the provisions relating to the miners' right, which I mentioned earlier.

I consider the proposed amendments are necessary to improve the administration of the mining industry and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (12.18 p.m.): I can see from the Minister's introductory remarks that the Bill contains a good deal of modification of the existing legislation as it affects mining companies and persons who take out miners' rights, which will now be referred to as mining claims. It appears to give protection to people who would be affected by such claims.

I am looking forward to analysing the provisions of the Bill concerning changes in responsibilities and requirements of local authorities. I can recall that some time ago it was reported in the Press that the Government was considering amending the Mining Act to cover certain objections raised by local authorities to mining claims in particular areas and action taken by those local authorities.

In his remarks the Minister referred to the expansion of the mining industry. I take this opportunity to direct some observations to that matter. The Opposition and I personally are concerned at the emphasis placed on mining by the Queensland Government. I am not saying that Opposition members do not go along with mining, but we believe that the Government is going cap in hand to the mining companies and to some extent is encouraging mining, to the detriment of other industries in the State. The State is virtually tending to rely on the mining industry.

I am aware of the extent to which the Government has allocated leases to overseas companies, and honourable members know about the controversy surrounding the Oaky

Creek coal deposits. So far as I can ascertain, 80 per cent of Queensland's mining industry is foreign controlled. Foreign control of mining in Queensland is higher than in any of the other Australian States. On my understanding, the national average is 56 per cent foreign control, but in Queensland it is 80 per cent. We in Queensland compare our State with Western Australia. We regard Queensland and Western Australia as the two leading mining States, but so far as I can ascertain the mining industry in Western Australia is 45 per cent foreign owned. The people of Queensland should be questioning the extent to which the Government is allocating mining leases to foreign companies. I believe that to be to the detriment of the people of Queensland. As I said, foreign companies own 80 per cent of Queensland's coal resources, but in New South Wales, which we regard as our main competitor, because of Government policy, Australian interests own 85 per cent of the coal reserves. It is well to remember that this Government opposed the Federal Government's proposal to oversee export sales of minerals. The people of Queensland should be asking what is going on in the State; what is happening in the development of our mining industry.

I refer to the article in "The Australian" on Monday, 9 April, headed "Queensland drops French N-bombshell", which reads, in part—

"A joint French-Australian uranium mine project is being planned near Townsville, and the Queensland Government hopes it will attract Australia's first uranium enrichment plant."

The news was released by the Minister for Mines and Energy, and I trust that he was correctly reported. On reading the article, I ascertained that, once again, the Queensland Government had approached a foreign company—on this occasion a French company called Minitome—and granted leases to it to develop a uranium mine about 100 km west of Townsville.

All honourable members and, I am sure, the people of Queensland are aware that we have one uranium mine at Mary Kathleen, which produced 423 tonnes of uranium oxide in 1976, 420 tonnes in 1977 and 608 tonnes in 1968.

Mention was made of a uranium-enrichment plant. It caused quite a controversy in North Queensland. I shall deal with that shortly. I am concerned about the publicity or propaganda released by the Government about future mining projects. So far as the Government is concerned, it is good publicity to get headlines announcing that a multimillion-dollar mining project is to be established at one place or another and that it will create so many jobs. But the fact is that many proposed mining projects remain on the drawing-board for some considerable time. Recently the honourable member for Port Curtis spoke of the

problems created by such announcements. Because of the employment situation in Australia, people make inquiries and, in fact, move to areas where it has been announced that giant mining programmes are to proceed.

Let us consider the announcement about the exploitation of the Ben Lomond deposit west of Townsville, which is supposed to have reserves of about 2 000 tonnes. As I understand it, from investigations I made after reading that announcement by the Government, the uranium market is in the doldrums. The uranium that is currently being sold has in fact been stockpiled. That has been reported in the Press, too. I think the actual sales from Mary Kathleen last year amounted to 623 tonnes, although production was not quite that much.

When the Government made an announcement about Ben Lomond—and there was also reference to a lease being investigated at Maureen—the propaganda came to the fore again. With those two deposits being exploited, in addition to the deposit at Georgetown, a glowing impression of the development of uranium-mining is created for the people of the State. However, to couple that with the proposition that it could lead to the establishment of a uranium enrichment plant, which the Government is striving to get for this State, is false and misleading.

Mr. Frawley: What about you last week? You frightened all the pensioners at Toorbul by saying that there would be a nuclear power-station there. They are trying to sell up their homes.

Mr. VAUGHAN: I still say that the Government has not come clean on that issue, either. Even though the Government has mentioned a uranium enrichment plant at Townsville, the fact of the matter is that in 1972—let members opposite deny this—the Government submitted a feasibility proposition to the Federal Government for a uranium enrichment plant at Beaumont, I think it is, just north of Rockhampton.

Mr. McKechnie: Don Dunstan submitted one, too, didn't he?

Mr. VAUGHAN: That is exactly right—but he has since changed his mind.

Getting back to the propaganda about a uranium enrichment plant—there are 2 000 tonnes of reserves at Ben Lomond, 4 000 tonnes at a place called Maureen and 3 500 tonnes at Mary Kathleen, which, if one looks at their annual production, is almost exhausted. According to my information, the amount of ore needed for processing by even the smallest uranium enrichment plant is 3 000 tonnes a year. If we look at a reasonably practicable proposition for a uranium enrichment plant, the throughput needed would be 10 000 tonnes a year. So the people at Townsville have no need to

be worried at all about the Government's talk of a uranium enrichment plant at Townsville.

One only has to consider the deposits in the Northern Territory to realise that, if there is to be a uranium enrichment plant anywhere in Australia, it will be associated with the development of uranium in that area. In the Northern Territory, there is Nabarlek, which is supposed to have 9 000 tonnes of uranium oxide and a production capacity of 1 000 tonnes a year. There is Ranger, for which the Federal Government granted exploitation approval in August 1977; and there are Jabluka and Koongarra. Talk about a uranium enrichment plant at Townsville is just another instance of the Government's grandstanding and trying to convince the people of development in this State.

I was a little surprised at the suggestion of a joint French-Australian venture with the Minitome Company, which is involved in the Ben Lomond project. I think the people of Queensland should be concerned about this. They should remember that France is not a party to the non-proliferation treaty that has been signed by almost all other countries in the world. Let us consider the problem we had with France a few years ago, when the French were exploding their bombs in the South Pacific. I recall that Australia took France to the World Court in connection with that series of tests.

As far as I am concerned, it would be wrong to open up our uranium deposits to a French company, having regard to the French attitude to the uranium issue and nuclear problems generally. I do not believe that France can be completely trusted. The French have shown that they have no regard for the concern of any nation, that they have their own policy and will go ahead and do what they want. If they get their hands on any uranium in this State, I think it will be to the detriment of not only the State but the entire nation.

Referring again to the statements about a uranium enrichment plant, I have here a Press release from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Resources dated 23 January 1979 in which he said—

"The Government will be proceeding to study the feasibility of the establishment of a commercial uranium enrichment industry in Australia."

So notwithstanding the fact that we in this State do not have enough uranium to sustain an enrichment plant, the fact is that the Federal Government is still analysing the feasibility of establishing such a plant in Australia. Of course, as I said, as far as the use of uranium in Australia is concerned, one can look only at the Northern Territory with its substantial deposits. The statement continued—

"Uranium enrichment is a highly complex industry, and substantial feasibility

studies are required before consideration can be given to any commitment to its establishment."

I am particularly interested in noting that Mr. Anthony went on to say—

"Environmental factors will be taken into account in these studies."

So, as far as the Federal Government is concerned, any suggestion about a uranium enrichment plant in this State is virtually so much pie in the sky, and I think it is grossly misleading as far as the people of Queensland are concerned. But the majority of people in Townsville will be very much relieved to hear Mr. Anthony's statement about the requirements which have to be met before a uranium enrichment plant can be established.

Having regard to the situation in the last few weeks following the Harrisburg incident, I believe it is a gross mistake for this Government to be even considering any further uranium mines in this State. We know that no-one knew what was going to happen in Harrisburg, yet here we are talking about going ahead with an enrichment plant. We see that the Minister wants to promote Queensland uranium aggressively because of the situation that arose in Harrisburg. But I believe that as Queenslanders and Australians we all ought to be concerned about such a proposition, particularly in the light of an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of Monday, 9 April headed, "Radiation danger was understated". We all know how the Press tend to grab hold of something and blow it up. In fact, it was suggested at one stage that the Press had misled the people of the world about the Harrisburg incident by suggesting that the situation there was far worse than it really was. But the article in last Monday's "Courier-Mail" stated—

"A panel of scientists . . ."

(not just one)—

" . . . claimed yesterday that the American Government was withholding information about the dangers of the Harrisburg nuclear reactor accident."

Mr. Porter: Who got hurt by it?

Mr. VAUGHAN: In reply to the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, I do not think there was one person in the world who had any information about the incident who was not worried out of his mind. If there had been a meltdown in that plant, we would have seen the escape of a 100 tonne mass of nuclear material which nobody on this earth was capable of controlling. It could have melted through concrete, steel or even the earth. Where would it have stopped? Nobody knew what was going to happen. Yet here we are in this State talking about opening our doors to, of all companies, a French company to mine and exploit our uranium deposits in North Queensland. Let us leave the uranium in the ground until we know exactly where we stand.

We know very well that at the moment an intensive investigation is going on into the Harrisburg incident. Even in this morning's "Courier-Mail" concern is expressed about other nuclear power plants around the world that are of similar design to the Harrisburg one. It is said that even now it is doubtful whether the operators in any of those power plants could handle a situation similar to the one that developed in the Harrisburg plant.

I return to the subject of uranium sales that might eventuate from the Ben Lomond deposits if we allow this French company to come in and take them. Of course, it might not be able to get Australian equity in the venture, just as Houston Oil and Minerals is having trouble in getting Australian equity in the Oaky Creek venture.

Mr. McKechnie: Why do you think Australians will not invest in mining?

Mr. VAUGHAN: Any time the honourable member wants to talk about mining, I will see him outside and talk about it.

There was an article in the Press just recently about uranium sales being under threat. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the demand for uranium is falling substantially and uranium ore is being stockpiled around the world. I read an article in the Press recently, in which it was stated that the Israelis came by a substantial amount of uranium and were able to become another nuclear power. Also in the Press recently we were told that Australian uranium companies would suffer more than any other company because of the Three-mile Island nuclear plant incident.

The Mary Kathleen project has always been under a cloud. I do not think that it has shown a profit yet. What the people of this State ought to realise—and I think that the member for Mt. Isa once challenged me to say this—is that, as I understand the position, the people of Queensland have not received one cent in royalties from the exploitation of our uranium deposits. Not one cent has gone into the Government's coffers from the exploitation of uranium. The Government has received not one cent from Mary Kathleen. I suppose that the same situation would apply with the Ben Lomond and Maureen deposits.

I firmly believe that it is wrong for the Government even to consider expanding the uranium industry in this State at this time. I should like to see the Government give more consideration to expanding our steaming-coal industry. It is a grossly neglected area. We go cap in hand in seeking contracts for our coking coal. We export millions and millions of tonnes of coking coal. We have in reserve 9 000 million tonnes of steaming coal. Yesterday the member for Isis talked about a little mine in his area. All he wants for it is a contract for 40 000 tonnes a year. Yet last year only 19 000 tonnes of steaming coal

were exported from this State, and that came from one mine, the Collinsville mine, and it went to one country, Fiji.

We have seen our Ministers go overseas. The Minister for Mines, Energy and Police has gone overseas on numerous occasions trying to sell coal. He has been to Brazil, South Korea, Japan and to other countries. Mines on the West Moreton field are closing down, and a mine outside Howard is closing down, yet we are doing nothing to develop our steaming-coal deposits. In respect of uranium, however, we are going cap in hand to the French.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (12.39 p.m.): I rise to support these amendments to the Mining Act, and I compliment the Minister for bringing them forward. Trying to overcome many of the problems of the mining industry in Queensland is a very vexed and complex matter. Later I wish to speak about some of the problems of the grazing industry, which are caused, I think, by the mining industry. I think that we are fortunate in having a Minister for Mines, Energy and Police who has a knowledge of both industries, and I think that this helps somewhat in solving some of the problems.

It is interesting to note that under these amendments a mining claim will be a tenure in its own right. I think that this will be good for the miners. It will give them more privileges, but it will also place more obligations on them. For instance, one of the privileges is the provision being made for the holder of a mining claim that has been determined as a claim to retain ownership of the stacked earth or other material that is produced on the claim for a period of one year. I think this is good. However, as I understand it, mines will now have the responsibility of notifying landholders that they are coming on to the properties. It is only right that they should do that.

Members to whom I have spoken privately about my experience in the North sometimes wonder whether I am exaggerating, but what I have said is true. Mustering cattle in large areas in the Charters Towers district presents big problems. I had a muster mucked up three days in a row because miners were on my property. The first day, a chap who had camped on the creek went to check his turkeys at the critical time when cattle had been turned over. Of course, the cattle all went in behind the musterers and we had to muster again the next day. The second day, when we tried to muster, we were going through a thick clump of sandalwood, and what happened? A miner drove along a narrow road that the cattle were going down and the cattle went everywhere in the sandalwood. The third day, when we were trying to put a small mob of cattle into a paddock, the miners' horses came galloping up the fence and caused us untold inconvenience. Things of that sort do not always

happen as frequently as they did on that occasion, but I had trouble three days in a row when I lived at Charters Towers.

We must endeavour to assist miners, particularly small miners, to get out and earn a dollar by developing some of the small claims; but they must realise that they also have an obligation to the landholder. Therefore, I am particularly pleased that, although the existing legislation allows the holder of a permit to enter upon private land to search for minerals without any notification to the landholder, the Minister said that under the proposed amendments the warden is required to notify in writing the owner or occupier of any private land in respect of which he issues a permit to enter, and that the holder of the permit to enter is also required to give due notice in writing to the owner or occupier of private land before he enters such land. That is both desirable and necessary.

I should like to see the Minister give further consideration to indemnity insurance. Whenever somebody applies to enter a property and he is driving round, some form of indemnity insurance should be provided. Although prospectors may not cause any disturbance to the earth, they can cause untold damage in other ways. A grazier may have sheep that are in very poor condition and he may be feeding them two days a week. The sheep get to know that, and they will chase any vehicle that comes into the paddock. That happens even after a drought breaks, and I have seen it happen on my father's property at Goondiwindi. Even a month after a drought has broken, the sheep come running every time a vehicle is driven into a paddock. It makes mustering very easy.

I reiterate that prospectors may cause untold damage, even though they do not cause any disturbance to the earth, if they go on to a property and sheep in poor condition chase their vehicle. Trying to keep sheep alive in a drought is a big job, and disturbances of the type to which I have referred should not be tolerated. The prospector should be allowed to come in, but there should be a little co-operation between him and the landholder.

The Opposition spokesman referred to mining in general in Queensland and, as usual, was critical of uranium mining. I do not get a chance very often to watch television, but I did watch it one night recently. I was very interested to hear that after the Harrisburg incident—I stress "after", because that is particularly important—an American State had to vote on whether or not it wanted nuclear power. Before the Harrisburg incident, it was generally thought that people would vote "yes" by a fairly large majority; but even with all the emotion of the Harrisburg incident—

Mr. Davis: Which State was that?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I forget the name of the State.

Mr. Prest: What was the name of the programme?

Mr. McKECHNIE: It was on television one night recently; it was a current affairs programme.

Mr. Prest: We will get a replay.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The honourable member can do that for himself.

What I am saying is that, despite the Harrisburg incident, people in that State in the U.S.A. still voted in favour of nuclear power—not by a very big majority admittedly. But when the whole world was worried about what would happen, if ever a State would have voted "no", it would have done so at that stage.

Mr. Prest: How did the town vote?

Mr. McKECHNIE: It was not in that particular State. The fact is that it was a big issue all over the world, and a State of America voted to go nuclear.

I have said before in this Chamber that the Opposition should not be too concerned about our attitude to nuclear power.

An Opposition Member: I am concerned, even if you're not.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am concerned; but what I am concerned about is the attitude of honourable members opposite. If they think that we are a mob of greedy capitalists, or whatever, surely to goodness they should at least take the trouble to find out what the Soviet Union is doing with nuclear power and what its attitude is to nuclear power. It is very easy to get the publication "Soviet Union", which is published by the Russians. It says what the Russians are doing. They say that they believe it is safe. Nothing is 100 per cent safe. Unfortunately, many people are killed in accidents in coal-mines. As we all know, coal is used to generate electricity. It is shocking to think that all those lives are lost in that way. No lives have been lost from nuclear power. We were worried the other day—

Mr. Davis: The League of Rights policy is a nuclear deterrent. Do you support that?

Mr. McKECHNIE: A nuclear deterrent? Of course I do. I think that Australia needs a nuclear deterrent. I should say that most people in my electorate believe that Australia needs a nuclear deterrent. When we realise just how much the United States is starting to depend on Japan economically, it is not reasonable to expect that the American alliance will continue for ever in its present form. We have to learn to stand on our own two feet. In numbers

we are a very small nation, and therefore it is necessary for us to have a nuclear deterrent.

Many people are saying that we should spend more money on defence. What I am saying is that the money we are spending on defence would be better spent on a nuclear deterrent than in some of the ways it is being spent now. Perhaps that could be in co-operation with other countries. Why not? But I am getting off the Bill, and I am sure that you, Mr. Miller, would not want me to digress for too long.

This Government is interested in providing jobs for Queenslanders. That is what mining in Queensland is all about. It amuses me to hear Opposition members talk about giving our minerals away and receiving little in royalties from this and that. Royalties are peanuts compared with what the Government gets out of mining. I am sure the Minister will agree with that.

Mr. Vaughan: What does this State get out of mining?

Mr. McKECHNIE: Fancy being the shadow Minister and not knowing that! He is not the shadow Minister; I am promoting the honourable member. He is a spokesman, and not a very good one. By his interjection he has indicated that he does not really know what this State gets out of mining. When I was a small boy and the State was governed by socialists, Queensland was called the Cinderella State. Now Queensland and Western Australia are considered all over the world as being the States with a future.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: It rather amuses me when they continue to interject. Every time they open their mouth, they get further in. They talk about Queensland's having high unemployment. That has nothing to do with the Bill. The mining industry has provided thousands of jobs in Queensland. People are flocking here from interstate to try to take those jobs. That is the only reason why Queensland has higher unemployment than some other States. The policies of the mining industry and the provisions of the Mining Act have meant that jobs in Queensland have increased at a much faster rate than in any State except Western Australia. Opposition members just aren't interested.

Mr. Vaughan: How many people are employed in the coal-mining industry at the present time?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I would not know the exact number, nor do I think many members would. What I am saying is that for every person who is employed in the coal industry, other persons are employed in the railways, the electricity industry and so on. Australia needs more export income.

Does the Opposition ever take that into account? Does it ever think of the contribution that export income makes to the standard of living of every Australian?

I have heard Opposition members condemn the grazing industry, which this Bill is aimed at protecting from certain problems caused by the mining industry. Australia's viable export industry is something of importance to every single person in the nation. It creates money, which enables people to buy things that they use and wear.

The Opposition claims that tariffs create jobs. It has been proved that in some instances tariffs have the opposite effect. In fact, it was proved recently when the Industries Assistance Commission investigated the possibility of tariff protection for four-wheel-drive vehicles. In that instance, tariffs would have done away with jobs. Twice as many people are employed in the distribution of vehicles as in their manufacture.

I support the Minister in what he is trying to do to come to grips with the problems. However, I think we should look further at indemnity insurance and other things. The Bill is a start, and I support it.

Mr. FOURAS (South Brisbane) (12.52 p.m.): I rise to record in "Hansard" my opposition to uranium mining. The nuclear-power industry has been at fault in that it has been overselling the safety aspects of the industry. It has claimed, for example, that the chances of accidents like the one at Harrisburg occurring are one in a million. The fact that the industry has oversold the safety aspects does little for its credibility.

Australia is relying for its uranium exports to America and Europe on an expanding nuclear-power industry. But now, the Harrisburg incident has put this at risk. Nations will now reconsider their nuclear programmes. Leaving aside for the moment the moral issues, I contend that the uranium industry, economically, is at risk.

The plant at Harrisburg, which was constructed at a cost of \$1,000 million, will not function again. A cost of another \$1,000 million will be incurred to make that plant inoperative and to protect society from the residual effects of the accident. The peoples of the world—the thinking peoples, not those who want to make a dollar from mining—will now demand safety from nuclear accidents. They will demand that nuclear plants be closed down, even if it means that they have to be encased in cement. Millions of dollars will be spent.

Eventually the economic ramifications of all this will get through to the investors in uranium mining. Many of them will have their fingers burned.

It has been claimed that uranium mining will create jobs. Just as the safety angle has been overstated, so, too, has the employment position. The people will see that it is a furphy or a pig in a poke. I believe it to be my duty to put forward those views in this Parliament. This country, with its tremendous coal reserves, should not even be considering the establishment of enrichment plants. For this Government to talk about it is morally indefensible. Until I am convinced that there is a chance of handling nuclear waste safely and of controlling proliferation of nuclear weapons, I will oppose uranium mining.

It is about time we reassessed our stance on uranium mining. When I asked the Premier a question about lack of credibility and the overstressing of safety angles in the light of the prospect of decreasing markets for uranium, he answered in this way—

“When a jet plane crashes, what would you do? Would you stop jet flights and go back to the horse and cart?”

Mr. Katter: You would want to.

Mr. FOURAS: That is a lot of nonsense.

The Premier's comments disclose just how much Government members misunderstand the issues. In the light of such a silly, simplistic argument, they surely misunderstand them.

Recently many reports have stressed the lack of demand for nuclear plants. I believe the industry will collapse on economic grounds; a groundswell of opinion will rise against it. The siting of a nuclear plant is akin to having an Aboriginal family move next door; nobody wants a nuclear plant in his area. After the Harrisburg experience, Governments will have to force the acceptance of nuclear plants in certain areas. I believe it has been proved that nuclear plants cannot be controlled as safely as people require. Because of the likely collapse of the industry on economic grounds and the difficulty in siting nuclear plants, I would sell uranium shares tomorrow if I had any.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (12.57 p.m.): Most speakers seem to have dealt with topics other than those outlined by the Minister. As I understood it, two of the amendments in the Bill relate to some sort of deposit on mining leases and access to station properties.

I have very grave doubts about the deposits on mining leases. I feel that when I am conversant with the details of the Bill I will be opposed to deposits on mining leases. For many years argument has taken place in the industry about whether people should lodge a deposit to repair damage caused by mining operations. However, it should be stressed that many prospectors are extremely poor. Many of them are dreamers and, judging by the number of them who are successful, it

is a wonder any of them engage in prospecting. I emphasise that, in the main, they are extremely poor. The lodging of a deposit would virtually preclude them from taking out mining leases. That is why I am very disturbed about the deposit system.

While it may be said that leaving a great gaping hole in the ground can cause serious trouble—and I accept that argument—on the credit side some of the main assets in the north-western region of Queensland have been those holes in the ground. Most of the watering points north of Cloncurry and Mt. Isa are on old mining leases. Piping is put into the water in the holes and it is pumped out.

I am sad to see the day coming when a mining lease does not entitle the owner to freedom to roam all over Queensland. Realistically, I have to face up to the fact that that day had to come. If I were to put the blame on anyone, I would have to put it on those people who used the privilege of the mining right to go shooting on station properties, jeopardising life and welfare and valuable installations on the properties. Probably the day had to come, but I regret very much that it has come. Maybe changes could be effected in this area.

The honourable member for South Brisbane seemed to dwell on the desirability of Australian ownership of mining deposits in Queensland. I believe that members on both sides of the Chamber regret that we have had to depend on foreign capital to develop mining, particularly in Queensland. When speaking about other States, and mainly about New South Wales where the vast amount of coal-mining is located, I regret that Australian finance to a great extent is confined to that State.

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

Mr. KATTER: Prior to the recess, I was moving on to the topic of uranium which, although it has very little to do with the Bill, is a very important issue to consider when we are discussing mining. On this subject, let us go first to the experts. We had the pleasure of listening in Parliament House to Dr. Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb and probably one of the world's most knowledgeable people on the issue of uranium. He is a fairly balanced sort of person on uranium, because he has condemned various safety aspects of the industry and was regarded as a radical spokesman, if I may use that term, in those areas. So, if we are talking about uranium, let us go to the world expert on it.

What he said in this place was that a uranium energy plant can be made into a breeder reactor. That means that the uranium is put into vats, if I may call them that, and plutonium is separated from the other waste products. Plutonium, which is a branch of the uranium family, is highly radioactive and can very quickly be made into a critical mass for the production of

a bomb of some description. However, as it is extremely radioactive, it is very useful for putting back into the reactor. That is why it is called a breeder reactor; it breeds its own energy source and continues, literally, forever. The other waste products can be buried and, after 250 years, they are no more radioactive than was the surface of the ground at Mary Kathleen before mining commenced there.

So, in theory, in the long term, we have the ability to work perpetually and fairly safely in the uranium field. However, let me be the first to admit that it is, of its very nature, a very dangerous and hazardous sort of industry, as was recently proved at the Three Mile Island plant in Pennsylvania, in the United States. In Queensland we are lucky enough to have an alternative to uranium—coal. Because of Queensland's coal reserves, I would not envisage that in the short term we would be looking very seriously at uranium. However, it is not for us to dictate to a lot of poorer countries in the world and tell them that they have to use not our uranium, which is a fairly cheap energy source for them, but our relatively very expensive coal. That is their decision, not ours. I do not think we have any right to enforce our views on poorer countries in other parts of the world. That is the point I put forward here.

I could not skip over the uranium issue without pointing to the fact that the people who are constantly squealing and making all the noises about uranium can never be pinned down to any scientific evidence. They can never be heard putting up a logical, critical, scientific argument based on evidence. All they have is an emotional, knee-jerk reaction. I cannot help but believe that if they were back at the start of the Pleistocene era they would be carrying around placards reading, "Ban the wheel", because it would get out of control and run over so many people that it would be extremely dangerous.

Mr. Kruger interjected.

Mr. KATTER: The honourable member over there, whose name I can never remember—the very fat fellow who comes from Murrumba—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member will refer to him as "the honourable member".

Mr. KATTER: I was commenting that the honourable member for Murrumba would be a classic example of those to whom I was referring. If he could spell the words, he would be running around with a placard, "Ban the wheel".

The only other comment I would like to make about uranium is that we still have in Queensland an immense amount of coal that has not even at this stage been developed to the point of drilling to ascertain

total reserves. I hold very strongly to the view that the petrol we will use in our cars in 10 or 20 years time will be produced from coal. Much of our coal will be needed for that purpose. So we must look very seriously, particularly in North Queensland, at hydroelectric developments. We could probably produce another 1 000 MW of hydroelectricity in the North without, in the context of overall energy costs, a great deal of money being expended. But although uranium at the present moment is a relatively expensive source of energy, Queensland may in the future, just like the energy-poor countries, have to look at some sort of use of uranium. So let us not bury our heads in the sand and join the "ban the wheel" clan of the Opposition.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have very grave misgivings about the deposit system on mineral leases, and when we have further details I would like to speak again on this issue. Regarding the question of access to properties, it is with great regret that I see this situation occurring in Queensland, although I have to admit that at this stage that sort of change probably is needed.

Finally, on the question of the ownership of our resources, Opposition members should not tell the people of North Queensland that they cannot have foreign investment. They should go and tell the rich people of Sydney and Melbourne, who spend all their money selling real estate to each other, to invest their money in North Queensland. They are the people who have the money. The people of North Queensland do not have the money to invest—

An Opposition Member: What about Western Australia?

Mr. KATTER: Western Australia was lucky enough to have a man called Lang Hancock—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. KATTER: Honourable members opposite can laugh—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: He's a crook.

Mr. KATTER: The honourable member for Archerfield says that he is a crook. All I can say is that I wish we had some crooks like him in Queensland so we could develop our resources for ourselves instead of having to depend upon foreigners to provide the finance we need. So, in conclusion—

Mr. Frawley: Before you sit down, will you answer one question?

Mr. KATTER: Most certainly.

Mr. Frawley: Would you say the former member for Murrumba was a mile ahead of this bloke?

Mr. KATTER: My first thought is about the shape of both members and, as the honourable member for Caboolture is an internationally acclaimed athlete, that is reflected in his physique and looks. I can say that the I.Q. level of the present member—

Mr. Kruger: That's a reflection on my ability to flatten somebody. I'll drop him.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! That is most unbecoming of a member of Parliament. I ask the honourable member to withdraw those words. If the honourable member for Murrumba wishes to take a point of order, he has the right to do so. He does not have the right to say what he said.

Mr. KRUGER: I will do so provided he doesn't keep stirring—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without equivocation.

Mr. KRUGER: At your request, Mr Miller, I do so.

Mr. KATTER: I can understand the feelings of the honourable member for Murrumba. I realise that he would perform far better in physical than in mental competitions.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have grave misgivings about certain aspects of this Bill, particularly the deposit on mining leases, which I think could work very much to the detriment of the small prospector. In the uranium field, I do not think we can afford to bury our heads in the sand, nor should we dictate to the poorer countries of the world.

Finally, in reply to the remarks of Opposition members about Australian investment, I could not applaud their sentiments more. But I ask them for Heaven's sake not to say that to the people of North Queensland. They should go down and say it to those rich people in Sydney and Melbourne who spend all of their time and money selling real estate to each other.

Hon. R. E. CAMM (Whitsunday—Minister for Mines, Energy and Police) (2.24 p.m.), in reply: I have listened with interest to the many speakers in this debate. The honourable member for Nudgee, the Opposition spokesman on mining matters, did touch on some aspects of the Bill, but he then got off its subject-matter. That is quite excusable, because no-one yet knows what is in the Bill and he is at liberty to embark on a criticism of the mining industry in toto.

In replying to what he said about the provisions of the Bill, I can say that it does provide protection for landholders.

Because of the exploitation of the miners' right, at present we feel that there is not sufficient protection of landholders. Under the miners' right, miners can go onto a property and say to the owner, "We are exploring for minerals", when in fact they are using the miners' right for a purpose for which it is not intended. That is one of the main provisions of the Bill.

Another provision relates to the streamlining of the conditions under which leases may be obtained. There are other issues. When the honourable member receives a copy of the Bill, he will see that it has nothing to do with uranium mining.

The honourable member did criticise me for what appeared in the Press when I announced that the company, Minitome, had discovered radio-active material at Ben Lomond and that another company, Getty, had found radio-active material at Maureen in the Georgetown area. I think that it is my duty as the Minister for Mines to acquaint the people of Queensland and of Australia of the developments in the mining industry.

I make no apology for the fact that over the years I and the Queensland Government have encouraged exploration for minerals in this State and, as a result, Queensland has a favourable trade balance of well over \$1,000 million in the export of materials, more than half of which comes from the mining industry. The mining industry has played a tremendous part in the development of many of the outlying areas of Queensland.

I am not responsible for the interpretation that newspaper reporters put on Press statements that I issue. The statement to which reference has been made went to over 140 news media outlets throughout Australia. Some played it as I said it, and others built it up. But the fact is that this company—a French company, admittedly—has found radio-active material at Ben Lomond, and the other company has found similar material in the Georgetown area.

I did say that eventually this could lead to the development of a uranium enrichment plant at Townsville, and I was taken to task by Opposition speakers for saying that. If the world needs enriched uranium—and that is indicated by the demand for it at present—as the member for Flinders mentioned, surely we should not bury our heads in the sand and refuse to provide the world with this commodity. Are we to condemn all nations in the world to using high-priced oil, or, in some cases because of transport difficulties, high-priced coal when they have access to enriched uranium and can build nuclear power plants?

Of course, honourable members opposite played up the accident that happened at Harrisburg in Pennsylvania. I want to assure the Committee, as I have done on many occasions, that there is no intention on the part of the Queensland Government

of even considering a nuclear power station. We have decided that we do not need a nuclear power-station in this State. The price of our coal is such that for many years ahead coal will be the main source of fuel for our power-stations. We have limited hydroelectric power and, as the member for Flinders once again mentioned, that could be extended.

Honourable members opposite got on to the emotional issue of the use of uranium. Nations have been using nuclear power for well over 20 years. Russia, France, England and the United States are classic examples. More people have been killed in the generation of electricity from coal than from nuclear energy. Nuclear power-stations have been in operation for over 20 years. We have seen the accidents that have occurred in coal-mines, but as yet not one fatal accident has been recorded as a result of the use of nuclear fuel in the generation of electricity.

I stress once again that it is not the intention of this Government to press ahead with the development of a nuclear power-station in Queensland.

Honourable members claim that it is ridiculous for us to say that a uranium enrichment plant can be built at Townsville because we have a reserve of only 3 000 tonnes or 4 000 tonnes here and there. It does not require a lot of material to service a uranium enrichment plant. Honourable members opposite seem to forget that Australia has tremendous reserves of uranium in the Northern Territory and that the costs of transporting that material to an enrichment plant at Townsville would not be any more than the costs involved in exporting the uranium in its raw state. The Opposition often accuses the Queensland Government of exporting our raw material without processing it. Here we have an opportunity to process one of our minerals before it is exported, yet we encounter this criticism from the Opposition.

Honourable members opposite mentioned the fact that years ago the Queensland Government suggested that a uranium enrichment plant would be established at Beaumont. Whilst it is on the opposite bank to Rockhampton, it is a little to the east of Rockhampton downstream; it is not to the north of Rockhampton. Yes, a Japanese consortium, an international consortium, came to Queensland and indicated that it was prepared to consider building a uranium enrichment plant. The Premier took the representatives of that consortium to Canberra at a time when the Whitlam Government was in office, and they were chased out of Queensland and out of Australia, as were many other mining companies during the Whitlam regime. We are seeing the result today of the Whitlam Government's policies. We are now scrambling to get companies to come here and drill for oil because there was a complete cessation of drilling for oil and of exploration for minerals while that Government was in office.

The honourable member for Nudgee is concerned also about foreign ownership of mining activities in Queensland. The A.L.P. seems to think that because a mining company is given a lease it automatically has the right to the minerals in that lease. The Government does not give such companies the right to the minerals; it gives them the right to use the minerals in accordance with the conditions that it lays down in the leases. Similar conditions apply to any mining company, whether it be an Australian company or an overseas company that comes to this State and desires to take out a lease. Mining is carried out in accordance with the conditions that the Government lays down.

The history of mining in Australia indicates that mining development has taken place in this nation with the use of overseas capital. For example, B.H.P. was once 85 per cent overseas-owned; today the situation is reversed. Mount Isa Mines was predominantly overseas-owned; today it is 51 per cent Australian-owned. If one goes through the major mining companies that have operated in this country, one finds that Australian shareholders are attracted once a mining project is proved economic and viable. When risk capital is involved, when people are asked to invest their money in a venture with the tremendous risks associated with mining, unfortunately not enough capital of that type is available within Australia, and that has been proved over the years.

There has been criticism of the coal-mining companies. The Utah company has come to Australia and been prepared to develop the country's mineral resources. But I remind honourable members that that company is now 22 per cent Australian-owned, and that percentage of Australian ownership will increase.

The honourable member for Nudgee mentioned a mining company, Houston Oil, that has had difficulty in obtaining Australian equity. That is correct. It shows that capital is not available in Australia for risk ventures. Are we to sit idly by and not get the immense benefits that come from such developments because the finance needed initially is not available in Australia?

An honourable member opposite mentioned by way of interjection to the honourable member for Carnarvon the number of people employed in the coal-mining industry. Not only the men actually engaged in the coal-mining industry should be taken into consideration. Men are gainfully employed in Brisbane now manufacturing components for draglines to be used on the Central Queensland coalfields. Are honourable members opposite going to deprive those men of that work and say, "You cannot work for that company because it happens to be predominantly financed from overseas"? That is a negative attitude; unfortunately, it is an attitude that the A.L.P. has perpetuated in Queensland for years.

It is true, as the honourable member for Carnarvon said, that when A.L.P. Governments were in office Queensland was regarded as a Cinderella State, because no-one wanted to come here and invest under the conditions laid down by Labor administrations. That policy was projected when, unfortunately, the A.L.P. gained control of the Federal Treasury benches, but we are again seeing a build-up of interest in Australia from overseas companies. I make no apology for saying that I welcome them here to assist in the development of the State's resources. I always requested that they obtain as much Australian equity as they can, and I agree whole-heartedly with the Federal Government that impositions in respect of Australian ownership should be placed on them before they receive an export permit.

Mr. Vaughan: Isn't it a fact that during the period of the Whitlam Government the price of coking coal went from \$US17 a tonne to \$US49 a tonne?

Mr. CAMM: Is the honourable member giving the Whitlam Government credit for the increase in the price of coal? The price of coal increased because the OPEC countries in the Middle East decided that they would hold the world to ransom on the price of oil. There was a scramble right throughout the world to replace oil-burning furnaces and equipment so that coal could be used instead. Does the honourable member mean to say that the Whitlam Government was responsible for Brazil paying \$40-odd a tonne for coal? Does he mean to say that the Whitlam Government was responsible for Italy paying a higher price for coal in the United States? Does he mean to say that Japan was paying a higher price to Canada for coal because the Whitlam Government was in power in Australia? Does he think that the Whitlam Government was responsible for the coal price in the United States rising from \$10 to \$40 a tonne? What a ridiculous way of thinking!

If he adopts that type of thinking he must also blame the Whitlam Government for the tremendous upsurge in the inflation rate right throughout the world at that time. Is he giving that Government credit for that also? What a ridiculous statement to make! It is a fact that it happened while that Government was there. If the honourable member wants to claim credit for the Whitlam Government for the tremendous rise in the price of commodities and the inflationary rate which swept the world at that time, let him go ahead and do it. But I don't do that. The price of coal rose because the OPEC countries decided that the price of oil should rise. Consequently there was an upsurge in the price of the alternative fuel, coal.

We will do everything possible through the Mines Department to foster the development and export of our mineral resources in this State.

Motion (Mr. Camm) agreed to.
Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF
DEBATE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 10 April (see p. 3960) on Mr. Doumany's motion—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1978 in certain particulars."

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Welfare) (2.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. For the benefit of honourable members, I would like to clarify one point in relation to this Bill. The compensation for death, as I have said previously, is \$28,180. Each dependent child is allowed \$520 for each year between the date of death and age 16 years, and between ages 16 and 21 if a student, with an upper limit of \$2,000 in both cases.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North raised the question of reopenings of claims. All files are forwarded to Brisbane six months after date of finalisation. On reopenings, requests for return of files are made by telephone on a daily basis. The complete file is returned to the branch. This entails a lapse in time of two to three days. If the file is three or more years old, it will be on microfilm. The time for return could then be up to one week, owing to the complete file having to be recreated from film.

Identification in respect of negotiating workers' compensation cheques can have similar problems to cheques for sickness and unemployment benefits. Officers of the board will assist in identification if it is possible when approaches are made.

As far as delays in the lodgement of employers' reports are concerned, officers of the board at every opportunity impress on employers, employer groups and management associations the need for employers' reports to be lodged as expeditiously as possible in order that claims can be processed and investigated and benefits paid as soon as possible. The board does issue reminders to doctors and hospitals and, if need be, does telephone in an endeavour to expedite medical reports and hospital notes.

The honourable member also raised the question of claiming of sickness benefits. If it appears that a decision in respect of a claim will be delayed for some time,

board officers do advise claimants to lodge a claim for sickness benefits. Officers have been instructed in this regard.

The honourable member for Townsville, in his contribution, raised the matter of there being no appeal against determinations by a medical board. Let me say that the medical board's determinations are of a medical nature. Non-medical aspects, so far as the Act is concerned, are determined prior to a claim being referred to a board. The medical board is constituted by three eminent specialists in their own particular field of medicine.

To whom would an appeal be made? Another three specialists? If their determination was the same, where does the claimant go from there?

If there is fresh medical evidence produced, the Workers' Compensation Board does, and will, refer any claim back to the same medical board for a review of the original determination. Queensland is unique in regard to medical boards. No other State in the Commonwealth has such a system. I would stress, however, that where non-medical determinations are concerned there is a right of appeal to an industrial magistrate and subsequent appeal to the Industrial Court.

On maximum compensation, it should be noted that, in my introductory speech, I said the present maximum, whether for a fatal or non-fatal claim, was \$28,180. If weekly benefits have been paid and a worker dies from his injuries, the weekly benefits are deducted from the \$28,180. Weekly benefits are not deducted from lump-sum settlements in respect of permanent partial disabilities, such as the case raised by the honourable member for Townsville, unless the maximum of \$28,180 would be exceeded by such payment. The maximum is increased each time there is a movement in the Basic Wage, and at the present time the maximum is comparable with that payable in most other States.

Referring to the points raised by the honourable member for Brisbane Central—as far as owner-drivers are concerned, upon the documentation made by the Transport Workers' Union, many of the owner-drivers are independent contractors working under a contract for services and, in these circumstances, it is impracticable to cover them for workers' compensation. In the case of those owner-drivers working under an agreement which may be capable of being registered as an industrial agreement, the onus is on the union to have the agreement registered if it wishes to have compensation benefits for owner-drivers. However, by virtue of the amendment to the definition of a worker, the several thousand owner-drivers who are working under an award or industrial agreement and who, at present, have to arrange their own accident cover, will upon the passing of the Bill be covered for workers' compensation.

Replying to the honourable member for Port Curtis, might I say that it is not normal for benefits to be ceased by the board unless evidence is in its possession to the effect that the injured worker is not as incapacitated as he or she would have the board believe.

This evidence can come in two forms—

- (1) Medical evidence—more often than not by a specialist in that field of medicine which contradicts the medical certificate tendered for compensation; or
- (2) Documented proof on the lay side that the claimant is not incapacitated.

If the honourable member provides me with details of the specific case that he may have in mind, I will undertake to have the matter examined by senior officers of the board.

In respect of appeals against Workers' Compensation Board determinations, any claimant who has a claim rejected or benefits ceased has the right of appeal to have any matter heard and determined by an industrial magistrate. The claimant does not have to be legally represented at such hearing. He can present his own case if he so wishes.

The honourable member, together with the honourable member for Peak Downs, also referred to claims involving employees travelling home at week-ends from their places of employment. If details of the specific cases are provided to me, I will have these examined and let the members have advice on the interpretation of the Act.

The honourable members for Peak Downs and Rockhampton North both raised the matter of a pay office for compensation benefits. A senior officer of the board has recently gone to Blackwater, along with the manager from Rockhampton, and has spoken with officers of the companies lodging claim forms and also union representatives, and advised of the procedures necessary to ensure that delays are eliminated. The same officer and the manager at Mackay are going to Moranbah shortly on a similar mission.

No doubt the honourable member for Lytton, through his interest in this matter, is aware that the State Workers' Compensation Act recognises the susceptibility of meat industry workers to diseases associated with contact with livestock and, on the conclusive tests, allows compensation benefits to claimants. The complaint must be attested to by blood-testing. So far as Commonwealth meat inspectors are concerned, I am led to believe that sick-leave payments are initially made and subsequent adjustment made if a claim is admitted. The honourable member's remarks, however, will be examined by medical officers of the board to see any way of speeding up the process of reaching determinations.

Honourable members may recall that when I introduced this Bill I said this State would seek to relieve the pressure on the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Centre at Taringa in Brisbane, by establishing assessment clinics and by training rehabilitation counsellors to undertake field work in homes and hospitals.

All honourable members should be aware that a disability officer from the Commonwealth Employment Service visits the board office four mornings a week and interviews and counsels injured or incapacitated workers who may be medically unable to return to their former occupations, with a view to obtaining for them suitable alternative employment. For the two years ended 30 June 1978, some 150 disabled people were placed in alternative employment.

Recently this service was introduced at the Ipswich branch on one morning a fortnight, and the service will be introduced at Townsville when the new Commonwealth rehabilitation centre commences later this year. It is envisaged that this service will be introduced eventually in other provincial cities.

If any honourable members do at any time have constituents who are injured at their employment and, because of such injuries, are required to seek alternative employment, they should have such constituents contact the rehabilitation officer at the head office of the Workers' Compensation Board.

The honourable member for Lytton also raised the question of remarks on employers' reports. One of the basic documents of any claim for compensation is the employer's report of injury, Form 3. The information revealed on this form confirms the worker's rate of pay, the reporting of the accident to the employer, and the names of any witnesses to the accident.

Whilst it is competent for the employer to make any allegation that he wishes concerning the incident, such allegations are carefully examined by the board officers, and the allegations would only be acted upon if they were substantiated after investigation. The Workers' Compensation Board administers the Act and pays workers injured on the job, or travelling to or from the job, weekly compensation benefits. The Workers' Compensation Board also has the task of ensuring that the Workers' Compensation Fund is protected from fictitious claims.

For a worker to qualify for benefits, an injury must arise out of, or in the course of, employment, or if injured on a direct journey to or from place of employment. In journey claims, it must be established that there has not been a substantial interruption to or deviation from such journey.

The law on this aspect of compensation is quite complicated, and it is not my intention to delay the business of the committee by delivering a treatise on this subject. If the honourable member has queries which he

would like answered, I suggest he direct his inquiries to the general manager, who will be pleased to assist.

Motion (Mr. Doumany) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Welfare) (2.50 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Adoption of Children Act 1964–1978 in certain particulars."

This very short Bill has two purposes. The first is to facilitate formalities required for the adoption of children from overseas countries. The second purpose is to reduce the age at which a child may agree to be adopted without the consent or consents of his parents or guardians from 21 years to 18 years, that is, the age of adulthood. This will bring the particular provision of the Adoption of Children Act into line with the Age of Majority Act of 1974.

In relation to overseas adoptions, all other States in Australia have now entered into agreements with certain overseas countries for the adoption of children from those particular countries. As honourable members will be aware, the Commonwealth Government under the Constitution is responsible for international affairs. Therefore, these agreements will be given status by accompanying letters from the Commonwealth Minister to all countries concerned. However, before arrangements can be made for Queensland to enter into similar agreements, amendments are required to our adoption legislation.

It is recognised that the matter of overseas adoptions could easily become an emotive issue. However, in looking at the matter in broad principle, I would draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that there has been a sharp decrease in the number of Australian and Queensland children becoming available for adoption in recent years. Comparative figures are as follows:—

In the financial year ended 30 June 1973, 1,228 children became available;

In the financial year ended 30 June 1978, 361 children became available;

Applications in the financial year ended 30 June 1973 were 2,068. Applications in the financial year ended 30 June 1978 were 1,103.

Persons presently receiving children for adoption have been waiting between three and a half and four years in Queensland. If the present rate of decline in the number of children becoming available continues, and the present number of applicants to receive remains constant, in the 1980s Queensland will be faced with a waiting-list of up to 12 years. I should stress for the information of honourable members that this calculation has been made on the basis of present trends. It may well be that the number of children becoming available for adoption will not decrease any further and, because of increased waiting-times, the number of applicants to adopt may fall off. No-one can predict whether these things will happen or not.

In other States, similar problems are being faced. I am advised that in New South Wales, adoption authorities are telling couples who are making application that they will not be seen for eight years. In Victoria, the adoption waiting-list was closed in 1973. It was reopened in 1975, and in one month the Department of Social Welfare in that State received 1,400 inquiries. Applicants in Queensland who applied in 1975 are currently having children placed with them.

Most other States have established rigorous age criteria, which means that persons above a certain age either cannot apply to adopt or cannot have children placed with them. This has all been done in an attempt to manage adoption waiting-lists. In Queensland, we have at this stage established no arbitrary age criteria and every case is considered on its merits. I particularly want to stress this to honourable members.

A second consideration on this matter is that it must be recognised that it is the desire of a significant number of Australian couples to adopt children from Asian countries. There has been considerable publicity about the plight of children in these countries, but it should be stated that there is considerable reluctance on the part of Governments of Asian countries to release large numbers of children to be adopted outside their country of origin. This fact is contrary to widespread popular opinion.

Queensland has entered into agreements with two countries and it is hoped that we will be able, with other States, to enter into agreements with other Asian countries. If possible, these agreements will be negotiated later in the present calendar year and I am hopeful that an officer of my department will be a member of the delegation which will include officers in other departments with similar responsibilities in other States.

I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the need for confidentiality with regard to the two countries with whom agreements have been negotiated. Because of various internal pressures in these countries, the authorities there have requested

that the fact that they have entered into agreement to make children available for adoption in Australia be not widely publicised.

In presenting this Bill, I draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that, by and large, there is uniform adoption legislation in each of the Australian States. Queensland and all other States appreciate the uniformity, because it brings a number of benefits. The principle one is that an adoption which has taken place in any one of the States is automatically recognised in all other States. A second benefit is that couples assessed for adoption in one State may be placed on the waiting list without further assessment in other States, provided they meet any special criteria which may have been set in those States. Queensland is, therefore, quite pleased to identify itself with moves to facilitate inter-country adoption which are being, or have been, made in other States.

The Adoption of Children Act in general is being reviewed and, as I said at the very beginning of my remarks, this proposed measure has only the two specific purposes. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. FOURAS (South Brisbane) (2.57 p.m.): In the past, inter-country adoptions have stimulated both enthusiastic support and vehement opposition. The proponents see such adoptions as a direct humanitarian service to needy children, whilst opponents argue that no child should be transplanted from his own culture, nationality and race and be asked to bear the burden of possible rejection and loss of identity.

In 1974, there was a conference of Social Welfare Ministers who looked at a proposal to establish a national agency for inter-country adoption. At the conference set up for this purpose, it was decided that the interests of parties to inter-country adoptions would be better served by an arrangement involving the attachment of appropriate professional staff to the Department of Foreign Affairs in countries where inter-country adoptions are a matter of concern.

Earlier this year, it was reported in the media that, after years of discussion, agreement had been reached in the council of Social Welfare Ministers to amend legislation to bring about a recognition of orders of adoption made overseas. Consequently, the current series of events that take place and the legal issues involved should be substantially simplified so that, where an order of adoption is made overseas, it will have effect here.

One of the problems that is causing difficulty for those who wish to adopt from overseas is the requirement to be resident or domiciled in the overseas country at the time of commencement of the adoption procedure. However, there are cases which

do not involve an order of adoption being made overseas at all. The child comes here for the purpose of being adopted here.

Where someone has made an adoption arrangement in an overseas country and approaches the Australian Embassy in an effort to get an entry visa, an entry visa for the child to come into Australia will be available when the adopting parents have been assessed by the State welfare department as people fit and proper to adopt such a child. Consequently, support from the State department leads to the issue of a visa more or less automatically if medical requirements are satisfied. It should be noted all the same that whether or not this child achieves entry into the country is a question for the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

Where a child does come into the country with an order of adoption made overseas, currently this order is not recognised in Australia; or where no foreign order is made at all, the adoptive parents named in the foreign order of adoption are not the parents at all. In this instance, the Minister for Social Security and the Commonwealth Government, by exercising of responsibilities imposed by the Commonwealth Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act, become the guardian of the child.

Now, to return to the issue of inter-country adoptions, I would like to forcibly state that, as in all adoptions, the principle ought to be that of finding families for kids, not kids for families. I believe there is a place for inter-country adoption, but the authorities must be careful that such adoptions are free of corruption, commercialism, misplaced emotion, and politics.

From 1968 to 1976, the numbers of children adopted from overseas in each year were: 1, 0, 9, 55, 144, 331, 190. Inter-country adoption was very small numerically prior to the Vietnamese airlift.

Of the 250 babies who came in the airlift in 1975, South Australia took 119, of whom 90 are now adopted, and I am told the other 19 will soon be adopted. New South Wales took 57, of whom 28 have been adopted. Victoria took 49, and 10 have been adopted. Queensland took eight, none of whom have been adopted. Western Australia took five, one of whom is now adopted. Tasmania took five—all adopted—and the A.C.T. took 13—two adopted. Finally, the Northern Territory took one child, who has not been adopted.

The children not legally adopted are living with families but are still formally wards of the Commonwealth. Lack of documents to prove whether the child is really available for adoption has stopped most of the children from being adopted. The only State that deserves praise on this matter is South Australia, which has positively tried to deal

with this problem and has passed legislation to dispense with the need for parental consent to adoption in situations such as this, provided that a period of 12 months has passed. I ask the Minister to see whether similar action can be taken regarding the eight Vietnamese children who are in Queensland at the moment.

I am of the opinion that inter-country adoption is not a viable solution for children in emergency situations brought about by war or disaster in their homelands. Decisions in such situations tend to be hasty, inadequate and often political.

An important principle that must always be remembered is that each family adopting a child from overseas should have a complete home study done, with special attention given to the family's attitude toward the child's race and culture and methods to be used to help the child cope with discrimination. I think that that is very important.

I also believe it is preferable that priority be given to checking to see whether the child can be returned to the biological family in its own country or placed with members of the extended family in the country of origin. These aspects should be explored before attempting to place the child with an adopting family overseas.

Much has been said, of course, about the situation in Australia and other developed countries, where the sources of babies for adoption are drying up. More and more unwed mothers elect to keep their babies and relaxed abortion laws see that many more are never born. To make this point, in 1971 Queensland approved 1,200 adoptions, and this has now fallen to around 350; and, furthermore, the number of couples wanting to adopt has not decreased at all. In fact, it appears to be increasing.

I, myself, have been personally aware of the heart-break of a childless couple whom I know who are dreaming of a child that they can love. But, again, it must be said that adoption is about finding families for kids, and not kids for families.

Korea has been a great source of overseas adoptions, which originated during the Korean War. I have read that Americans and Scandinavians have been adopting Korean babies at the rate of 6,000 babies a year for over 20 years. With the frightening precision required to supervise such mass adoptions of its children, the Korean Government has authorised four agencies to organise aspects of the transactions, which have carved up the world between them.

I hope that the attitude of the Korean Government is one of allowing rather than encouraging inter-country adoptions. In the case of Korea, the child travels to Australia in the care of an escort. The adopting parents then receive the child immediately

on arrival at the international air terminal, having paid in advance for the child's fare, cost of the escort and Korean administrative fees. The last figures I got for costs are: \$640 for administrative fee; \$365 for the child's air fare; and \$416 for the escort's fare.

Other countries, of course, insist that either one or both of the applicants travel to the country of origin and remain there for a period of about one month until the order is made. There is no doubt that either alternative is very expensive, but it is also true that many childless couples would pay any price for a child to love.

An article in "The Bulletin", which I read, gives some shocking examples of pitfalls in Asian adoptions. One example was that some Vietnamese orphanages kept stocks of birth certificates of dead babies, which were allocated to live babies without birth certificates so that they could be sold for adoption. Another example was that of an Australian couple about to sign adoption papers for a baby and who found that they had been lied to and that the baby was a result of an incestuous union. There have been other stories, too, from Asian people who sign their children over for adoption in the mistaken belief that it would allow them to emigrate to Australia after the baby.

What I urge in this debate is that all steps be taken to stop abuses in the overseas countries, but also to properly screen adoptive parents in Australia.

It is to be hoped that the current alterations to State adoption legislation would require the overseas country to sign adoption orders only to Australians who had previously been given formal approval to adopt by the State.

There is also the controversial question of whether the adoption orders of other countries should automatically be recognised in Australia. I have read that a solution has been proposed whereby each State would have up to 12 months after the child arrived in Australia to issue a certificate recognising the overseas adoption orders, and if the certificate had not been issued in the 12 months, the State Director-General of Welfare in each instance would have to go to court to justify the withholding of it.

I would like now to quote from a study entitled "Born in a foreign country—adopted in Denmark", published in the *International Child Welfare Review* in March 1978.

The principal aim of the study was to find out whether transracial and transcultural children adopted by Danes will have personality development disturbances or experience serious difficulties in adjusting to the adoptive family and Danish society. The study involved 168 children born in foreign countries—92 German mulatto children (that is German/Negro offspring), 68 Korean

children and 8 Vietnamese children. The children had been in Denmark for not less than two years at the time of the investigation, but most had been there much longer.

The main results of the study are of interest. Firstly, it found that transracial adopted children born in foreign countries have no serious personality development disturbances and adjustment problems; and they have not been referred to authorities for counsellor treatment to a greater extent than might be expected for a corresponding group of Danish-born children. The study also found that these children are at ease in both family and school relationships and that they meet few instances of serious negative discrimination.

Another finding that was interesting to me was that the study provided no evidence supporting a correlation between young age of arrival and a favourable adjustment and personal development. The adopted children in this study were divided into groups of 0-2, 2-5 and over 5 years according to their age on arrival in Denmark, and this study positively showed that age is not correlated with the children's well-being or the occurrence of problems. Nevertheless, an assumption that the child preferably should be as young as possible was very widespread among adoptive parents.

This leads me to say that if these findings are correct—and there is no reason to doubt them—they should be used in an endeavour to place into adoption children even up to the age of seven or eight years. It is sad that in this State we have a severe shortage of foster homes for children aged 7 to 8 years of age who have even the slightest disability. This is a serious situation and greater efforts, particularly of an educational nature, must be made to give these children a home and family environment.

Getting back to the issue of screening of parents—it must be policy of the Welfare Departments that we do not owe a lesser duty to children from another country than we do to children from our own country. Consequently, when one looks at the racial and cultural problems involved with inter-country adoptions, it is imperative that we do find families for kids and not kids for families.

Prejudice is alive and well and thriving in Australia and should not be ignored. There is no doubt that there would be a group of people, although not necessarily a large group, who would not be suitable to adopt overseas. So, in simple terms, with inter-country adoptions we must simply ensure that children available for adoption from overseas really are available and have not been bought, stolen, or whatever, and that the people who are to adopt them are very definitely able to meet their needs.

As to the second purpose of the Bill, which the Minister said was to reduce the age at which a child may agree to be adopted without the consent or consents of his parents or guardians from 21 years to 18 years, that is, the age of adulthood, and I agree completely that it is necessary.

I reserve further comment till I sight the Bill.

Mr. BOOTH (Warwick) (3.9 p.m.): I intend to speak principally on the part of the Bill that sets out to facilitate the formalities for the adoption of overseas children.

I commend the honourable member for South Brisbane for some of the comments that he made. He attempted to point out some of the difficulties that might face us, and I think we all agree with him on that.

Mr. Moore: None of it was his own work.

Mr. BOOTH: Well, whether it was his own work or not, I commend him for bringing it before the Committee. It is a complex Bill, and I doubt whether any political party in particular is allied to it. It is a humane Bill, one on which I think honourable members can make a contribution without being too abrasive. Perhaps the honourable member was worrying a little too much about what might happen. I do not say that on the basis of anything he actually said. Indeed, he brought up some very good points. I base my enthusiasm for the Bill on what I know of the history of Queensland, including the history of adoption and the welfare people in this State. Perhaps we have had misfits at times, but I doubt whether anyone could say that adoption has been mishandled. Therefore I believe that the amendments to the Adoption of Children Act will be a success. They will bring to some families who have been denied children the opportunity to adopt and nurture children, and provide for those children opportunities that would not have been available to them in their own country.

In introducing the Bill, the Minister pointed out that huge numbers of children are not available. He was correct in doing that. That indicates their country of origin has the welfare of the child at heart, and will ensure to the best of its ability that it is adopted into a good home.

On one or two occasions the Minister made the point that the welfare of the child was paramount. I agree. However, I did not quite agree with the honourable member for South Brisbane when he said, "It's not kids for families; it's families for kids." If the life-style of a family can be made just that much better by including a child in the home, then those are people who are likely to give that child a good start in life. If they have been on the waiting-list for a long time and are looking forward to adopting a child, they will make just that much bigger effort to bring that child up, educate it, give it culture and make it fit into the community. I believe these children will fit into the community.

The Minister and his department will ensure that the parents are properly screened and that the children are properly available for adoption. I do not think the honourable member for South Brisbane need worry that there will be any skulduggery or chicanery.

The Bill is one that we should endorse. I think it is one that will do a great deal of good for Queensland's image overseas. It will be good for all of us to be able to say, "Queensland is doing its fair share." I am not quite sure that results can be judged on numbers. If one looked at the statistics throughout the world, no doubt one would see a great difference in numbers.

I think the real basis of judgment is the success of these children in the homes, and the success the Department of Welfare Services has in putting them into homes.

There are people in the community who are looking forward to receiving and looking after children. They are prepared to go to a great deal of expense to get them into their homes. Some persons who wish to adopt children may not have a huge amount of money, but they may make excellent parents. Probably they will give them love and security, and sometimes that is more important than wealth.

I conclude on that note and commend the Bill.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (3.13 p.m.): Most Australians will welcome the Bill. When we look at Australia as a whole, we realise that it is probably the only country that has welded itself completely and easily without any racial friction. We have drawn from multiple European groups as well as from Asian groups, and we have blended together. It was not until the 1972-75 period, when proteges of the A.L.P. such as the Grassbys appeared on the political scene, that we ever heard the word "racism". Racism is an extraordinary thing. It is very hard to define, but basically it is an inborn dislike of the configuration of another person. It is a physical dislike. It is sometimes based on education or lack of education; it is sometimes based on inherent racial dislike or racial antagonism. It is extremely hard to explain, but it is a word that is banded around all to often in Australia today.

When we look at our forbears, we find that they came from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Some of them came as free settlers; others in chains as bonded persons. They were accompanied by a hierarchy of military and naval personnel and a small percentage of rich yet venturesome English, Irish and Scottish free settlers. Their standard of education was not high, but they immediately set about to establish what is now our education system, which is among the best in the world. They realised the value of children and they decided that they would educate their children.

They also realised the advantage of having God to look to and to pray to. They set up churches and church schools. In our areas the church schools were the first to be established.

Later we had a great influx of European immigrants, many of whom could not speak English. Queensland did very well. In the North we had the Italians, many of whom came to this country with \$4 or \$5 in their pocket and are now wealthy men. They bear us no animosity because we are English, nor do we bear them any animosity because they are Italians. All of us are Australians.

In Victoria, the Germans settled in large groups and maintained certain distinctive features of their own. However, they blended with us and during World War I they volunteered to fight with us against the common enemy at that time, the Kaiser.

In Queensland we had a rather interesting set-up. We had Bishop Breen, an Irish Catholic bishop. It got to the stage where Queensland was known as "Breen's land". He had a definite tendency towards favouring Irish immigrants to Queenslanders. My great grandfather was one of them.

Then came gold, and that was when we had our first trouble with racial hatreds. The Chinese were doing the same to us as they did on the Californian goldfields.

Mr. Davis: What year are you up to now?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: One of these days the honourable member might sit down and read some history.

The Chinese put fear into the hearts of the people and the Italian settlers, who had seen what happened in California. They introduced the White Australia Policy, which was aimed not only at the Chinese but at other people as well. It was directed mainly at the Chinese settlers and gold-diggers. It was an iniquitous and racist policy. Eventually it was phased out and its place was taken by a selective immigration system, which was fair, equitable and reasonable.

After all this great expansion brought about by a natural birth rate and immigration, Australia has suddenly become a mentally, morally and physically sick nation. We replaced God with a sort of humanistic ideology and philosophy; we have accepted and adopted a genocidal attitude to our own children. The result is that one of every five pregnancies in Australia is aborted and thrown into the bucket. At present our abortion rate is 2½ times that of the United Kingdom. Australia has the highest abortion rate in the Western hemisphere.

Mr. Frawley: That crowd opposite support it, too.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Not only that crowd; some of ours do, too. The debate in the Federal House on abortion showed that

just as many Liberals as others favour it. So the Liberals have no cause to hold their heads high in pride over that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member has had a good run. I would like him to get back to the Bill.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: This is very relevant, Mr. Gunn.

The Federal Minister for Health claimed that the great decline in our birth rate was due to abortion and contraception. In fact, last year a total of 60,000 abortions were performed in Australia. You and I and all other taxpayers have to meet the cost. The abortionists reaped \$1,000,000 in income. In certain States abortion is a really flourishing business. In fact, it is so flourishing that one man is earning \$1,000,000 a year.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: He is earning that from abortion?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: That is what he is earning. The cost to the taxpayer is \$6,000,000.

The leading airlines, that is, T.A.A. and Ansett, are vying with each other in offering to the various abortion groups cut rates so that they can transport women on their planes to the places of abortion. When the details of "Murder Incorporated" were first realised and published, people shuddered at the thought that such wilful, planned murder could take place, but we are doing exactly the same in this country through organisations such as Children by Choice, and the American company Preterm. All of them have a multinational basis; they are financed in America and have now spread throughout the world and are reaping a rich harvest in Australia. Another abortion group is called Population Services International. It is a multinational company that originated in New York and is funded by American money. Its chief director in Australia is a man named Dr. Davis who, at the moment, is earning great wealth.

When it comes to killing, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were babes compared with these people. If we do not wake up to the problem, we will have a greatly reduced population. That is borne out by figures published by the Commonwealth Statistician, who pointed out that the registration of births has declined each year since 1971. From July 1970 to June 1971 there were 271,295 births. From July 1977 to June 1978 there were 226,346. The natural increase in population in 1971 was 165,712, whereas in 1977 it was 117,501, representing a decrease of 29.1 per cent in six years. That is a colossal fall in the birth rate.

We need children in this country if the country is to survive. That is the whole basis of my comments and I believe it is the whole basis of the Bill. If we do not populate, we will perish. Because we cannot get adults to come to this country, let us take the

children that people are quite willing to send us. Let them grow up as we did, in freedom and health.

When I was in Vietnam in 1968-69, I used to visit a Buddhist catholic convent weekly. It was running an orphanage. The nuns told me that each week they were sending as many children as they could to France and Switzerland—mostly to mothers who had had an abortion and found that they were barren. They still wanted children. One of the dreaded common complications of abortion is barrenness. These children were pure Vietnamese or of Vietnamese-American extraction. They were all vetted by us. They were all healthy children and as fast as the nuns could get them on a plane to Europe they were adopted. That was a very wise precaution.

France, like many other European countries, had practised abortion on demand for some time and contraception was rampant. As a result, countries like France, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Eastern Germany suddenly found their populations in decline. Only recently France realised that its population of 53,000,000 will decline to 14,000,000 in 50 years' time. That means that France will disappear from the map of Europe. France's politicians have wakened up to this, but some of my critics of a moment ago are not aware of what will happen to this country if we do not wake up. This is the type of Bill that will save our country.

The French Government at the moment is running extremely well-padded welfare schemes to support mothers and encourage them to produce more children. Any family over three receives special social service and other payments. Rumania and Yugoslavia are doing this. Russia, which thought that abortion on demand and contraceptives were very desirable, has now tightened up its laws. In Russia there is now no such thing as abortion on demand. It is only under special conditions that contraceptives can be obtained. It has suddenly been realised that to continue as it was going would have meant racial suicide.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I take it you don't favour contraception?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I don't favour abortion. There are rules on abortion that have been laid down according to medical knowledge.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What about contraception?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: Contraception is a matter of individual choice. One thing must be realised about contraception: no nation can survive unless each family produces three children. It is a natural process and can be worked out statistically. If families do not produce three children, the nation will gradually slip back. This is what is happening in France, as it has realised 25 years too late. It will take 25 years to re-educate the people.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I've got six. Does that entitle me to a Bjelke-Petersen good conduct medal?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: My wife has had seven!

Mr. Davis: Is there any advance on seven? Can I get a bid?

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the provisions of the Bill.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: There is one other aspect that I wish to comment on. I am very pleased indeed to see the introduction of this Bill. The Department of Welfare and the Queensland Government have shown to the nation that they have the interests of the people at heart and the interests of the nation at heart; that they are not parochial but have a national outlook. I must say something about our Premier. He impressed me very much when I entered Parliament. Someone asked him about abortion on demand. He shook his finger, as we know he does when he is really angry, and said, "There will be no abortion on demand while I am Premier." I hope he stays as Premier for many years.

I would like to mention the attitudes of a well-known parliamentarian from this State—one by the name of William George Hayden, M.P. He considers that it is much better to pay \$67 to abort a woman under item 6469 than it is to spend \$76,000 in bringing that child to adulthood. I leave it to the Committee to decide which is the most useful and the most worthwhile.

Mr. Davis: Why don't you be a little bit fair?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I will read his speech—

"The alternative is a supporting mother's allowance, a guardians' allowance, a dependants' allowance, a family allowance and supplementary assistance for accommodation because most of the women receiving the supporting mothers' allowance draw on that benefit—a total cost over 16 years in current terms of \$61,000."

Human life and money cannot be collated. This is why I admire the Minister for bringing in this Bill. It is one of the most worthwhile pieces of legislation I have seen brought before the Parliament.

Mr. GOLEBY (Redlands) (3.29 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on introducing this Bill. I welcome its introduction. Like the previous speaker, I completely abhor the number of abortions that have been carried out in this country. I hope that Queensland will never agree to abortion on demand. Each one of us realises that according to certain medical advice (if an abortion means the saving of the mother's life) it may be tolerated. However, we can see that what

is being carried out in the southern States has become a racket and a tremendous market for the unscrupulous medical practitioners who are performing abortions.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. GOLEBY: I know that members opposite welcome abortion. We only had to listen to the recent debate in the Federal House to realise the A.L.P.'s attitude. I was as shocked as many thousands of other Australians at some of the things that were said and what little value was placed on human life.

I turn now to the matter of Vietnamese children. I suppose each one of us has had people in our electorates who have wanted to adopt Vietnamese children. Until this Bill becomes law, it is not possible for those children to be legally adopted and welcomed into a family where they will be given a home and brought up like any other child in the family. At the present time they have been able to be cared for only as foster children.

I commend the Minister on his introduction of this legislation. Perhaps it is a little late, but better late than never. I say this because in my electorate there are families who have welcomed these Vietnamese refugee children and are just waiting for the opportunity to adopt them and call them their own. We also know that there are many childless couples in the community who are waiting to adopt a child, but the outlook is very bleak and the longer the present situation continues the longer these couples will have to wait. As every member knows, this situation has been brought about by the fact that during the Whitlam era the benefits to unmarried mothers were increased, so that today very few unmarried mothers are making their children available for adoption.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. GOLEBY: Opposition members know as well as I that many of these children will never be given a fair go in life. One only has to see the circumstances in which some of them are living.

Mr. Fouras: How can you prove that?

Mr. GOLEBY: The honourable member must walk around with his eyes closed. I know, from some of the cases I have seen, that some of these kids are never going to get a fair chance.

I completely disagree with some of our social workers who, even with pregnant women in extremely poor circumstances, where they can see that the unborn child is obviously going to have very little chance in life if it stays with the unmarried mother, advocate the mother's keeping the child. We have all seen adopted children, and I am sure each of us knows that such children are much better off in an adoptive environ-

ment, where they can be given a good home and true love, than they would be if they remained with their unmarried mothers.

If people wish to have children, it is up to them to make sure that they provide for them, give them a go in life and treat them with love and care. I think we all know that many children born to unmarried mothers in our community today are unwanted as soon as they reach the age of one or two years. Statistics clearly show that when the children of these unmarried mothers reach the age of 18 months or two years, they are taken to the Children's Services Department and left on the doorstep, as it were, to be put out for fostering. Their mothers do not want them. Somebody else has come into their lives, somebody who is interested in them, and so they quickly lose interest in their children.

If it was not for foster mothers, many of whom are caring for more than one child, the Government would be embarrassed in its provision of children's homes and institutions. There are large numbers of children who are unwanted by their single parents and they create social problems for the future. Surely to goodness it is more important to consider the children and make sure that they have decent homes and loving care so that they may grow up to be useful citizens. I give full marks to the foster parents in our community who have a deep sense of responsibility and are offering homes in which children are brought up with love and care.

But we have all seen cases within the community where, once these children reach working age and are of some worth from a monetary point of view, the original parents turn up and want them back. I have seen such cases, as have other members on this side, and they show just what little value is placed on many children by their parents. They are wanted for their first 12 months, and then they are forgotten until they become of some use in a monetary sense. I would like to think that as the Minister goes through the Act he will tighten up some of the provisions to ensure that children receive love and attention and cannot be exploited by parents who refuse to have them adopted yet have no love for them and will not even care for them until they reach working age.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (3.35 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in his introduction of this Bill to amend the Adoption of Children Act. I think that every member who has been in this Assembly for three or four years or longer would have been approached by a couple seeking his help to facilitate the adoption of a child from overseas, particularly from Vietnam. This was especially the case towards the closing stages of the Vietnam war. In those days we had to advise couples who came to see us with the particular wish to adopt a child from overseas that

there was no way in which we could facilitate the adoption here in Queensland. This Bill will put into motion some of the machinery matters that are necessary to enable adoptions from overseas countries, particularly Asian countries.

I say right at the outset that I support the Minister when he said that Asian people are not keen to see their children leave their countries. In the main, those people have no social security system, and the child's security is to be found in the extended family circle. But everyone knows that no matter how far the extended family circle goes—from the parents to aunts, grandparents and so on—in Asia, in particular, there are natural disasters, wars and skirmishes and the extended family circle might be disrupted or even completely lost. I need only refer to the devastating floods that have occurred in countries in South East Asia to point out that a survivor of those floods might have no living relatives.

As far as we can determine, after this Bill is passed, there will not be a flood of applications to adopt Asian children, and I do not see that this Bill will in any way allow a sufficient number of children into this State to satisfy the long waiting-list for adoption in this State.

I believe that those people who have come to see members of Parliament in the past few years seeking the adoption, initially, of children from Vietnam were quite sincere and genuine in their wish to adopt. Indeed, many of them have already displayed their total lack of a racist problem in their families by fostering children of races other than their own, children from countries where English is not the main spoken language. They have, out of the goodness of their hearts and their desire to be parents, come forward to offer themselves as adoptive parents for children from overseas. In the main, they wish to adopt the children. Not one couple who have come to see me have said that they would like to foster a child just for three or four years. I certainly think that those people who have come forward have been sincere and genuine and, in every case that I have encountered, quite capable of being extremely effective parents.

For our part, we have to realise that eventually there might come a time when these children wish to know about the country of their origin. I think that this should be facilitated at the Government level. I think that as the international barriers are being broken down year after year, these children could well serve as ambassadors in the country from which they came. They might in fact return to that country later and serve as ambassadors for Australia.

Already in this debate a great deal has been said about the inability of the welfare departments in the various States to meet the wishes of couples who wish to adopt children. One plea that I make to the Minister—I have already made it to the department—is that the doors never be shut in the case

of couples who wish to adopt, because circumstances do change. I have been to the department before about cases in which people have been refused adoption because a near relative has committed a crime. I just point out that the near relatives of some members who have sat in this Parliament have committed a crime and that has not reflected on the integrity of the particular member. Nor should the fact that a near relative of a couple who wish to adopt a child has committed a crime be held against that couple. Nor should reports that are made in confidence to the department ever be shown to the people who make applications for adoption, because they make their applications in the very best of faith.

In one instance that I remember, the reason was offered point-blank that "there would not be an adoption because"—and the reason was rather harsh. It related to a crime committed by a relative who, as I understand it, was never proved to be associated in any way with the applicant.

Certainly the department would have been well justified in saying that no adoption was available as yet. That would be true in almost every case, and I think that the department would do well to leave the door open. It could observe the couple. Even if they are to be successful, the adoption will still take four or five years, and if the couple prove to be of good conduct and good morals and if they have sufficient means and the health to see a child reared to adulthood, I believe that the adoption should be allowed to proceed in its turn.

The A.L.P. spokesman, the honourable member for South Brisbane, dwelt overly, I think, on the overseas abuses that he mentioned. In almost every case the abuse was a ruse or trick to aid a child in gaining an adoption overseas; whereas in this country almost every trick and ruse is to damage a child. I refer, of course, to abortion. It is no use talking about adoption without talking about abortion, because abortion is one of the biggest single factors cutting back adoption rates in this country today.

The honourable member for Townsville mentioned that all too often one of the tragic side-effects of abortion is sterility. He probably has seen, as I have, young women who have been aborted and have become sterile. It is a very severe penalty that the abortionists do not like talking about. In my opinion, there is too high a sterility rate attached to abortion.

Some honourable members did not realise that abortion resulted in the killing of a foetus—a baby—that was clearly recognisable as human and that could even be determined to be a boy or a girl, and I suggest that this State should look at every possible means of preventing the interstate trade in abortions. It would be easy to do that in America, where a person could be arrested in connection with interstate transport to commit a felony. I have raised the matter with the

Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, but he does not think that action could be taken under provisions relating to interstate transport.

Everyone knows that in this State a person wishing to have an abortion goes to Children by Choice, which arranges an abortion so quickly that it is not funny—seven days flat. And that brings me to the point that I wish to make: that people who wish to adopt children have to organise themselves into bands at least as efficient as Children by Choice. In seven days—and that is all they have—they have to counsel a girl to have her baby, with a view to either keeping it herself or having it adopted out.

That does not mean, Mr. Gunn, that you sit down and have a little chat and say, "Righto, girl, we have solved your problem", because you have not. It is much easier to abort a girl than to carry her through the 40 weeks of pregnancy and the six or so weeks immediately afterwards before she is fit and able to return to work. It is a thousand times easier. That is why it is happening; people are taking the easy way out.

An Honourable Member: There is a bigger proportion of married women.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: I do not know about that. The honourable member can make his own speech later. My opinion is that most people having abortions are taking the easy way out.

Mr. R. J. Gibbs: What about the trauma suffered by the girl who does not want to carry the baby for nine months?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Well, she can think about it before she gets pregnant, and a heck of a lot of them do not. If the honourable member has any sense, he will realise that and admit it from the start. I have spoken to a girl who was so dedicated to her civil rights that she became pregnant, so she told me, so that she could exercise her civil right to have an abortion. That is a disgrace, not only to the girl herself but also to anyone associated with the Children by Choice movement.

Opposition Members interjected.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Honourable members opposite can make their own speeches later.

As I said, there is a need for people who wish to adopt children to band themselves into dedicated groups to offer support to girls. In the first seven days they have to persuade her to keep the baby—that is the first thing—and not to have an abortion. In the next 30 to 40 weeks they have to make arrangements to support that girl through her pregnancy. That might involve getting her work inside a home where she can get the necessary rest and be able to make visits to a doctor or hospital. It might mean a change of address. She might work for 10 weeks for one couple and perhaps 15 weeks for another.

If people are going to be able to make adoptions, they have to band themselves into such groups. They have to get out and meet girls and offer them very real support. They must offer moral, financial and family support to pregnant girls who might in other circumstances end up having an abortion. When that sort of thing is done, I think we might see a quadrupling of the number of babies offered for adoption in this State. It is as simple as that.

It is no use a couple just saying that they want to adopt a baby. They have to get out and stop a girl from having an abortion. That is the issue. It is no good appealing to the Minister. He and his department are just not kidding any more. I have said that there might be a marginal increase in numbers as a result of the Bill, but if a childless couple wish to adopt a baby they have to roam the streets, go through the coffee lounges, get pregnancy-help organisations going in their district, and get worthwhile aid and counselling for the girls who need it. As I said, they have less than seven days to make first base, that is, to persuade the girl not to have an abortion.

There needs to be a proper teaching of respect for sex. It will have to come in our schools.

An Opposition Member: Ooh!

Dr. LOCKWOOD: The honourable member can say "Ooh", as if it were a bogey. Nevertheless, it will have to come in our schools. In our schools there has to be a proper respect for sex. It was there when I was there; I don't believe it is there now. Children today are bombarded with sex. Many girls become pregnant because of lack of precise knowledge. We need to give children a full and proper understanding of sex. By that I do not mean an explanation of the detailed mechanics of sex, the infinite variations of sex or its infinite pleasures. I am talking about the basic facts of fertility, and how impregnation takes place. Mistakes are still being made, in the main by young people. They end in tragedy. I regard abortion as a tragedy for the three people concerned: the father, who may be a schoolboy; the mother, who may be a schoolgirl; and the baby itself.

Mr. I. J. Gibbs: Would you include contraception as part of that?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: No, I wouldn't, but I would make sure that conception was fully understood. The teaching of contraception to schoolchildren is way beyond the scope of the school.

Mrs. Kyburz: Who should do it?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: That could be done through organisations outside schools. In schools there has to be a clear understanding of impregnation and how pregnancy occurs.

Mr. Milliner: You are telling them how to do it but you are not telling them how to avoid pregnancy.

Dr. LOCKWOOD: There is a subtle difference.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! Will the honourable member come back to the Bill?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: As I said, there is a need to emphasise respect for sex, not so much the mechanics of it. That is what is missing today in schools. It is missing in the whole of the advertising world and the whole of the news world. The whole of the publishing world has contributed to the present position.

There have been ample demonstrations that the people of Queensland can accept children of a different race for adoption. I support the Minister's introduction of the Bill, and I look forward to a slight increase in the number of children available for adoption.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (3.50 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the Bill because I am patron of an organisation known as the International Adoptive Parents Association of Queensland. This organisation is trying to bring about a better understanding of the need for inter-country adoptions and of the problems associated with them. The secretary of the organisation is Mrs. Pam Smith, who lives at Railway Street, Stanthorpe.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North has in his electorate a couple who are interested in inter-country adoption and he took my advice and directed them to that organisation. The result is that, thanks to the co-operation of the honourable member for Rockhampton North, that couple are now members of that organisation. I would urge other members with constituents who are interested in inter-country adoption to send them to that organisation.

Inter-country adoption can be an emotional experience. Anyone who is considering inter-country adoption should talk to people who have already adopted children from overseas. Such people have gone through all the problems associated with trying to bring a child into the country and have it accepted by the community.

As was pointed out to me by a member of the organisation, a well-meaning couple might say, "Wouldn't it be great to adopt a little baby from Asia?" and in their mind put such a child on a pedestal. They think the child could do no wrong. However, when they adopt such a child they find out that it is like any Australian child; it plays up just as much and is really no different. The couple tend to become disappointed emotionally. This organisation could give advice to a couple who intend adopting a child from another country.

Mr. Davis: What about the problem when they grow up?

Mr. McKECHNIE: This is what I am saying. An organisation of people who have

adopted children from overseas and have experienced all the problems can forewarn a couple of the problems that will arise.

It is quite a tragedy that many couples who cannot have babies have to wait for a lengthy period before they can adopt an Australian-born child. The position is getting worse. I say quite frankly that anybody who is opposed to the Bill does not have the right to stop people who want to adopt children from so adopting them simply because children are not available in Australia for adoption.

I commend the Minister for the broad-mindedness of the Bill and for his introduction of it. A great many children will reap the benefit of it.

Mrs. KYBURZ (Salisbury) (3.54 p.m.): In speaking to the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill, I congratulate the Minister on his introduction of this, his first Bill. I hope it is the beginning of a series of welfare Bills to come before this Parliament. I cannot recall even one major welfare Bill coming before the last Parliament. I hope that we will see other Bills of this nature, and I know that a few are in the pipeline.

The purpose of this Bill is twofold. Firstly, it is to facilitate the formalities required for the adoption of children from overseas countries. This will bring Queensland into line with other States. In that respect the Bill is not innovative; it is simply following the line.

Mr. Fouras: Last in the line again.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I do not know whether we are the last in the line. The facts are that the Minister in charge of this portfolio has been changed and Queensland has a relatively small population compared with that of other States. That may have something to do with the introduction of the Bill at this stage.

The second purpose of the Bill is to reduce the age at which a child may agree to be adopted without the consent of his parents or guardians. The age is to be reduced from 21 to 18 years—the new age of adulthood. That brings this legislation into line with other Acts.

Of prime significance to this Bill is the fact that quite a few Australian parents wish to adopt children from Asian countries for other than selfish reasons. I am sure everyone knows what I mean by that. Many children suitable for adoption are orphaned by earthquakes and other natural disasters, or they are political refugees, such as Tibetan children. In those situations, families have to be found for them. Obviously far too few of these children come to Australia. I hope that the Bill will make it easier for people to adopt children.

The Minister made it clear in his opening remarks that Governments of Asian countries are reluctant to release large numbers of children for adoption overseas. When I travelled quite widely in Asia, I found that

the attitude of those Governments was contrary to widespread popular opinion. That is very sad. Perhaps we should try to change their attitude. Children should come here not only from Asia, but also from Africa and the Middle East. Children who are orphaned by various disasters often have little hope of support other than acceptance by countries such as Australia. In Central America, many thousands of orphans have little other hope. They grow up in orphanages without developing fully, and they have little hope for the future. They can be seen there at any time.

This is a humanitarian Bill in that it facilitates inter-country adoptions. I have referred to disaster situations which, I believe, create an urgent need for adoptions. It is well to record that small numbers of children came to Australia prior to the Vietnamese airlift of babies. I hope that far more Vietnamese children come to Australia rather than a lot of men, as has happened in the past.

It is very sad that we have not been taking children from other countries. When the Minister held his committee meeting I mentioned this matter to him and we discussed it quite widely. I hope that we can stop the corruption in certain Asian countries that is involved in the sale of children. The member for South Brisbane mentioned that. Some Asian countries work on the greasy-palm theory. It works very well in those countries and it seems that it is increasingly finding its way into Australia. I sincerely hope that, by reason of our Government-run adoption agency, we will not see it here.

The honourable member for South Brisbane referred to a study in Denmark and cited statistics to show that no negative discrimination was occurring against these children in that country. I applaud him for the research that he obviously undertook in preparing his speech. He is grimacing; I suppose he is not relating to the part of his speech to which I am referring.

I hope that the same lack of negative discrimination will be experienced in Australia. However, I am sure that we will hear criticism from the community loud and clear. I have noted, particularly in Queensland, that we have a few griping whingers and moaners who will scream and loudly berate this legislation and the Government on the basis that we will have a flood of Asian babies. We will probably even hear from the religious bigots, whose say is always louder than that of anyone else. They will say that, because the children are coming from places with a different religion, they should not come here. I say to them loudly and clearly—I hope that they hear me, just as we have to tolerate them—that children are not born with a religion. It is their upbringing that gives them a religion and a cultural heritage. I hope that we do not hear from those critics and that the Minister will not be accused of some form of misanthropy towards the white, supreme race in this country.

The honourable member for Townsville gave us an historical precis of the absence of racism in Australia.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I have found it very interesting listening to the speeches today. I can assure the honourable member for Townsville that racism is alive and well in Australia, and there is no doubt that we in the Liberal Party—

Dr. Scott-Young: If you had listened, you would have realised that I said that.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I am sorry; I misinterpreted the honourable member's speech. I am pleased that he has said that. As he comes from Townsville, I am quite sure that he would realise that what I said is quite true.

The strength of the Liberal Party is in the fact that we are allowed to have a diversity of opinion. That is tolerated. When the Liberal Party changes its attitude towards that diversity of opinion, I shall no longer be a part of it and I know there are others who will follow suit. However, it is sad to see various people running down Mr. Grassby's role in Australia.

Mr. Moore: They're dead right.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I am tolerating the honourable member's little whipper-snapper comments for the reason that he is allowed his divergent opinion—apart from the fact that he is the Deputy Whip.

Some of the statements that Mr. Grassby makes are totally, absolutely and utterly to the point.

Mr. Austin: What do you think of his clothes?

Mrs. KYBURZ: I would hope that, when people pass an opinion on me, they listen to what I am saying rather than look at my clothes. It is a pity that people do not do the same with that gentleman.

Some members have mentioned that, because we are not encouraging a larger natural increase in population, we are committing racial suicide. Racial suicide means to me the supremacy of one race over another. I do not believe in that in any shape or form. I do not care if we get a flood of these children and I do not care where they come from. I believe that they have a right to be here and to live a life with as much dignity as possible.

I hope that the entry of more children will be facilitated. I believe that under this legislation the Minister is expecting only about 100 children. I am sure that in the future we will see far greater numbers of children coming from different sources. After all, the United Nations has a refugee organisation under whose auspices orphanages are run. I know of one in Mexico City; I know of one in Bolivia; I know of one in Buenos Aires. Children in those orphanages are in need of families such as the many, many families in Queensland who could bring them up with a

very high standard of living and in a far better manner than they are presently able to live. I hope that next year, perhaps, or even the year after, we find it necessary to amend the Bill to give it wider scope and to allow children to come from all over the world, including countries that are predominantly black.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (4.4 p.m.): I will be reasonably brief in my observations, but I would like to make a few comments on the Bill. It is very sad that we have to take steps such as these. It makes me very sad to think that we have to look overseas to obtain children for many of our parents who so desperately desire to have families.

Mr. Fouras: Is that a racist comment?

Mr. KATTER: No, it is not a racist comment at all. The honourable member's remarks are fair, and I will accept them. What I am saying is that there are many people in the State of Queensland who are desperately looking for children. In my few short years in office, many have passed through the doors of my office and pleaded, begged and requested that somewhere, somehow children could be found for them to bring up. It was very, very pleasing to hear so many of them say that they were indifferent to whether the children were dark, crippled or whatever.

The fact is that there is a desperate shortage of children for adoption in Queensland. It is again very pleasing to note that many people, both in my electorate and elsewhere in Queensland, have expressed a desire to secure the adoption of children from overseas. I know that at least two families in my area have had such a request refused in the past. It is very pleasing to see the Minister moving in this direction.

I agree with the observations that have been made by previous speakers. I must pay great tribute to the excellent speech made by the honourable member for Townsville. It very much captured the sentiments of so many Queenslanders who regret that so many areas of our State, particularly the Gulf area, are terribly empty. I dare say that there are very few such places in the world. One can travel north from Cloncurry to the Gulf, through land which is rich in virtually every environmental characteristic for supporting life, and yet see very few people. In fact, one can travel the whole 230 miles from Cloncurry to the Gulf and, with the exception of one small building, not see a single sign of civilisation.

In closing, let me reflect upon the eternal debate about whether we should or should not have a larger population. The area that has been occupied by my family for almost 100 years was once inhabited by the Kalkadoon tribe, the only tribe in Australia that successfully held off white occupation for almost 50 years.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. KATTER: My family makes its contribution.

This tribe worked on the basis of infanticide and population control, as did all the other tribes in Australia. They believed very profoundly in birth control; in keeping the population down. The British race, across the other side of the world, did not believe in population control. They believed in people, in competition, so that their race could go forward and produce more goods. Eventually those two cultures clashed in North-west Queensland. It is with great regret that we reflect upon the complete demise of the Aborigines in that area, which, to a large degree, was brought about by different decisions made by the two cultures on the question whether they should allow an increase in their populations. I applaud the Minister on his introduction of this Bill.

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Welfare) (4.8 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the introductory debate on this significant piece of legislation.

In reply to the honourable member for South Brisbane—I would like to stress that the Bill will enable the adoption of Vietnamese children already in Queensland or, for that matter, in Australia. The question of problems with overseas adoptions that was raised not only by the honourable member for South Brisbane but also by several other members, including the honourable member for Warwick, will in fact be dealt with far more effectively under the provisions of this legislation and in accordance with the procedures that will be developed when it has been proclaimed than was possible previously. It is important that we have formal arrangements that are backed by Governments—by the Government of Queensland, the other State Governments and the Federal Government—to give support to and protect the interests of people who will ultimately, after assessment, go to other countries and seek to adopt a child. It is extremely important that we have Governments backing those people rather than have them going on their own.

Mr. Fouras: Would they be chosen by stating the country they wish to choose from or will they be given an across-the-board right to go to whichever country they like? Will they be looked at on the basis of the country from which they want a child or not?

Mr. DOUMANY: The arrangements that we are entering into on a formal basis will relate to specific countries that have indicated that they will enter into a formal arrangement with the State and Federal Governments. If people want to go outside that arrangement, there will be procedures of a slightly different nature under which we cannot offer the same degree of backing

and protection. But we will certainly do our best to help those people as much as possible.

Further to what the honourable member for South Brisbane has said—I should like to assure the Committee that action will be taken to set up appropriate health-screening procedures. I think that this will eliminate some of the fears that people have, for instance, about children who may come from situations where health risks may be involved or where genealogy may be a consideration or a matter of some concern, such as the possibility of children being the result of an incestuous relationship, as has already been mentioned.

I should like to deal with one point that the honourable member for Warwick raised, that is, that the screening procedures generally, the assessment of applicants and the overall control of the arrangements for inter-country adoption will have to be pretty strict. That does not deny the need for flexibility for which some speakers have been looking. I recall that the honourable member for Toowoomba North was anxious that we maintain a humane and flexible approach. None the less, we must have a very strict and controlled approach. We will have to make sure that we do not end up with results that will do detriment to the child involved and possibly to the applicants.

For that reason I would counsel those people who are very excited about the prospect of being able to apply for this type of adoption that there will be some disappointments, and that is inevitable. Certainly we will look at each case on its merits, and we will look at it with as much compassion and humanity as possible, but there will be factors that may well make it impossible to grant overseas adoptions in certain cases.

Mr. Fouras: You will be careful not to build up expectations too high, won't you—expectations of a lot of kiddies being available?

Mr. DOUMANY: I think I made that point clear in my introductory speech, when I said that I do not believe that an enormous pool of youngsters will become available quickly. The honourable member for Salisbury has expressed her disappointment at this sort of expectation and, to a degree, I share that disappointment; but this is, regrettably, the result of the first-hand observations of the delegation that visited several of these countries and spent quite a deal of time discussing the possibilities and the prospects. Certainly in the first stages I believe that a fairly meagre supply of youngsters will be made available by the Governments that enter into the arrangements, but once we demonstrate our good faith and capacity to handle the procedures effectively, we might see an easing in that situation. That is quite possible. Let us hope that Queensland and the other States will prove over a period of time that we are capable of handling this

type of adoption and, in so doing, protecting the interests of the children who come to this country.

I should like to thank the honourable member for Redlands for his words of appreciation of the role that foster parents are playing in our community. They are certainly offering many children the chance for love, affection and care that they would not otherwise get. I also assure the honourable member, as I have assured the honourable member for South Brisbane, that the Vietnamese children now in this State will be placed in a position where they will be adopted legally when this Act is applied.

I should also like to thank the honourable member for Carnarvon for his efforts, particularly his leadership of the Inter-country Adoptive Parents' Association over the last few months, and for the help that he has given me and the department in communicating the feelings and experiences of those people in the association. I hope that we can continue with this sort of co-operative relationship in the future.

The honourable member for Townsville gave some fairly pertinent statistics relative to what is happening to Australia's population and the demographic situation. In the light of the trends shown in those figures, I should say that the proposed legislation is extremely important. It may have only a marginal effect initially; none the less, it establishes another factor in the consideration of future population trends in Australia.

In summing up the introductory debate, I would say that I am delighted to have such unanimous support for the Bill. I believe that it is something of a landmark, not only for Queensland but also for Australia generally. We are entering a new phase, and I trust that the good management, and the very careful management, exercised by my department in implementing these arrangements and procedures will ensure that what is done in this State will also be to the ultimate benefit of Australia and of children who are brought into this country under these arrangements.

Motion (Mr. Doumany) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday next.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.18 p.m.