

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 1981

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon S. J. Muller, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act 1958-1979 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Act 1923-1979

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Federal Government's Education Funding

From Mr Randell (46 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will restore education funding to 25.6 per cent of the State Budget and endeavour to increase the Federal Government's commitment to education.

[Similar petitions were received from Mr Goleby (8 signatories) and Mr Lester (24 signatories).]

Information Office and Ombudsman for Disabled Persons

From Mr Goleby (25 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will establish an office to co-ordinate information and provide an ombudsman to protect the interests and welfare of disabled persons and their families.

[Similar petitions were received from Mr Booth (24 signatories) and Mr Scassola (2,793 signatories).]

Penalties for Cruelty to Animals

From Mr Burns (504 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will increase penalties for cruelty to animals.

Petitions read and received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows:—

1. Sale of "Kalpower" Cattle Property; Development by Utah of Coal Deposits

Mr Casey asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the rejection during the week ended 14 August by the Federal Treasurer of the proposed sale of a large Cape York cattle property in the Princess Charlotte Bay area known as "Kalpower" which is currently overseas-owned and the Queensland Government's promise to have this matter further investigated—

Has the rejection of the proposed sale anything to do with the fact that the American owned coal-mining company Utah has located substantial workable deposits of coal on this property and is currently evaluating the economics of developing another huge open-cut coal operation in this area?

Answer:—

The reasons for the Federal Treasurer's action in this matter have not been conveyed to me.

Utah Development Company hold two authorities to prospect over parts of Kalpower Holding and is currently carrying out investigations into the coal potential of the area as it is required to do under the terms of the authorities.

2. Safety Standards on Gold Coast Building Sites

Mr Borbidge asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

(1) Is he aware of widespread concern over the number of accidents occurring on Gold Coast building sites?

(2) Is the accident rate considered statistically high?

(3) What action has recently been taken and what action is planned by his department to ensure that safety standards are being observed?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The honourable member would be aware that the Gold Coast has been undergoing a boom in building and construction work in recent years when compared with the overall building pattern within the rest of the State. When viewed against this background of extremely high building activity, the number of industrial accidents involving fatalities and serious bodily injury is not considered high when compared with the number of accidents within the building industry throughout the State.

Recently an additional inspector of construction work commenced duty on the Gold Coast. Furthermore, I have drawn the attention of Cabinet to the need to ensure that adequate safety inspection staff is available on the Gold Coast commensurate with the rapid rate of development being undertaken. As a result, the matter of further additional inspectors of construction work has been referred to the Public Service Board and is presently under consideration.

The need to ensure that all safety precautions are being taken is being enforced by officers of my department. In this regard approval was recently granted for two inspectors of construction work to work overtime at night on the Gold Coast following reports that adequate lighting had not been provided on certain construction sites after dark.

3. Gold Coast-Barrier Reef Air Link

Mr Borbidge asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts—

At what stage is assessment by the marketing and research department of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation of the feasibility of a Gold Coast-Barrier Reef air link?

Answer:—

A deal of research has already been undertaken. The final assessment in relation to the feasibility of a direct air link between the Gold Coast and North Queensland is nearing completion and I expect it shortly. I thank the honourable member for his active involvement in this matter. I will obviously communicate with him immediately the assessment is made.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Commonwealth Games Public Holiday

Mr CASEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, I refer to the announcement last week that south-eastern Queensland would be given a public holiday for the opening of the Commonwealth Games on 30 September

next year. I now ask him: Was that decision made by Cabinet on his recommendation and can he state whether that holiday will definitely be at the expense of the Boxing Day holiday for 1982 in that part of Queensland?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The decision on whether a day will be set aside as a holiday to mark the occasion of the opening of the Commonwealth Games, and what day that will be, will be a matter for Parliament. Legislation will be submitted to Parliament in due course.

Mr CASEY: I direct a supplementary question to the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations. Because of the normal rotational system of holding the Commonwealth Games, which means that never again during the lifetime of any living Queenslander will the Games be held in this State, will the State Government give consideration to the granting of a public holiday for all Queenslanders on 30 September next year?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am sure that the honourable member will have the opportunity of putting his opinions to the Parliament when the legislation comes before it.

Payment of Wages to Part-time Staff and Teacher Aides at Schools and TAFE Colleges

Mr WRIGHT: I ask the Minister for Education: Is he aware of the growing frustration and anger amongst teacher aides in schools and part-time staff in TAFE colleges over what has been described as the bungling and obvious incompetence in the method of paying wages owing to staff? Is he aware that some staff members are made to wait for 10 days, and in some instances three months, for their pay? What action is the Minister taking to alleviate this grossly unsatisfactory situation? Is he able to comment on claims that, because of lack of finance, some local TAFE colleges are not able to pay their bills?

Mr GUNN: I received a deputation about this matter when I was in North Queensland recently. The trouble arises because, particularly at TAFE colleges, wages are paid from Brisbane rather than through regional offices. I am looking at the situation to see whether it is possible to pay wages to aides through regional offices. If that could be done, aides would receive their pay much more quickly than they do through head office.

Imports of New Zealand Perch

Mr RANDELL: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Is he aware of reports that fish known as sea perch are being caught by Russian ships in New Zealand waters and being processed in New Zealand and then marketed in Australia, seriously undercutting the prices that Queensland fishermen are obtaining for their produce? If these reports are correct, will he take the necessary action to afford legitimate protection to the State's fishing industry?

Mr AHERN: Imports of sea perch from New Zealand come under the provisions of the free trade agreement between New Zealand and Australia. They come in without any tariff or customs payments. As a result of substantially increased imports in recent times, I have made representations to the Minister for Trade and Industry in Canberra and recommended to him that he take appropriate action, in consultation with the New Zealand authorities, to curb the level of imports and also discuss with importers the question of price, which is the principal problem.

I have had discussions with the chairman of the New Zealand Fish Board, who has been in Australia. Currently discussions are proceeding between the Queensland Fish Board and the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority with a view to taking a case to the Federal Government to obtain some relief in this direction. I am concerned. I have had some discussions with the people who are importing the fish from New Zealand. The honourable member may be certain that the case put up by the industry is being pressed quite firmly with the Federal Government.

Townsville City Council Election System

Mr SMITH: In directing a question to the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police, I refer to the statements made by him on Monday about the implementation of a ward system in Townsville and to the fact that the first indication that the Townsville City Council had of Cabinet's or the Minister's decision on proposed changes to the method of electing the city's aldermen was by way of a question from a local radio station journalist. I ask: Is this the usual way the Minister informs elected councils in Queensland of matters vitally important to them?

Did the Townsville City Council or the Department of Local Government draw up the proposed boundaries or are they in fact based on a submission from another political organisation? If the latter is the case, what is the name of that organisation and why has the Minister refused to adopt the suggestion from the Townsville City Council that the proposed change to a ward system be decided at a referendum to be conducted in conjunction with the next local authority election in 1982?

Mr HINZE: I have had discussions with the Mayor of the Townsville City Council (Alderman Reynolds) on a number of occasions in relation to proposed changes in the electoral system in Townsville. Yesterday he phoned me seeking further discussions, which will take place. The matter is before the Cabinet. I am giving consideration to an alteration to the Local Government Act in this respect and Parliament will be advised accordingly.

Housing Commission Houses, Gympie

Mr STEPHAN: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: With reference to statements made recently by citizens of Gympie that 30 Housing Commission homes are to be built in Gympie for Islander people, does the commission have any such plans? If finance is available for them, will he give consideration to providing subsidised housing and pensioner units?

Mr WHARTON: The Housing Commission has no proposal to build homes for Aboriginal people in Gympie, nor has the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. The Housing Commission does not distinguish between classes of people when it makes housing available. During this financial year three houses for welfare services will be provided at Gympie.

Salmonella Poisoning

Mr BOOTH: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: In view of the recent scare of salmonella infection in Victoria, following the consumption of raw goats' milk, is there a possibility of such an infection occurring in Queensland?

Mr AHERN: The consuming public should be made aware that the genus salmonella is a very widely occurring bacteria in domestic pets, wild birds, poultry and the human environment. Therefore there is every possibility that from time to time it will occur in non-pasteurised products. As honourable members will be aware, at the moment raw milk from goats is on sale in Queensland. The Newport strain, which is the particular bacteria that has created the problem in Victoria, has been found in raw milk from time to time.

The difficulty is to tackle the problem at the source. When a problem is found during sampling, my departmental officers are very active in following it up at the source. Every effort is made to control standards at the dairies to overcome the problem. Because milk is such a perfect substrate for the growth of all bacteria, no guarantee can be given for unpasteurised products. The Newport strain occurs from time to time, and the public should be made aware of that. Pasteurising provides almost complete protection against this type of infection.

Because of the nature of the bacteria, its wide occurrence and the fact that it will grow in milk very easily, it is simply not possible to guarantee the raw product. Therefore, the general public should be advised to be extremely cautious. I would have my family drink no milk other than a pasteurised product. I indicate to the Queensland public as a

whole that these problems can occur from time to time if a raw product is consumed. My department and I are endeavouring to promote the pasteurised product. Queenslanders can rest assured that, if only the pasteurised product is consumed, no problem of the scale recently experienced in Victoria can possibly occur from goats' milk.

Funding of Women's Shelters

Mr POWELL: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services: Does he recognise the valuable service to the community performed by the people operating the women's shelters in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay/Maryborough? Can he give the House any information relative to the continued funding of these and other women's shelters in Queensland?

Mr WHITE: I am well aware of the tremendous voluntary component in the welfare program. As I have travelled throughout the State, I recently had the pleasure of meeting a number of ladies involved with the program in the honourable member's electorate. I think it is fair to say that it would be very difficult for the refuge program to continue without the voluntary component. It is a matter of considerable regret that the Commonwealth has elected to depart from this area of funding. No doubt the funding of this and other programs, not only in my department but also in the department of my colleague the Minister for Health, will place a great deal of strain upon this Government in the next Budget. However, as members know, the Government has made a commitment to continue the refuge program in terms of the funding arrangements for the first quarter of the current financial year. As a result of discussions with the Treasurer, I am optimistic that we will be able to continue to fund the program in the future, but this will be subject to the State Budget.

Federal Budget

Mr D'ARCY: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Following the bringing down last night of the Federal Budget, which amounted to a severe financial attack on the States, does he still support Fraser's federalism? In the light of the Deputy Premier's comment yesterday to the effect that he supported the Federal Government's monetary policies but rejected the main plank of that policy, namely, high interest rates, does he still support the Federal Government's monetary policy?

Dr EDWARDS: Of course I support the policies of the Liberal Party and the Federal Government. I can well understand that if we had another three years of Whitlam the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be concerned. My position has always been made clear. At least we in the Liberal Party have the right and indeed the authority to criticise our colleagues—a right that is not given to members of the Labor Party in this House.

I am disappointed at the fact that the Federal Budget did not provide tax relief for the community and did not include some measures that would have stimulated the economy. I have expressed my disappointment very clearly in a letter this morning to the Prime Minister.

I believe that the increase in sales tax will indeed fire inflation. I do not believe that the Budget will do a great deal for the community. However, we will continue to press our policy of reducing taxation for the community, of lessening the burden upon society, and of reducing Government spending, which is one of the brighter aspects of the Federal Government's policy—an aspect to which, of course, the Labor Party does not subscribe.

Mr D'ARCY: In directing a further question to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on the same subject, I refer to his statement that the Queensland Budget will now have to be substantially revised and that it will bring back smiles to the faces of Queenslanders. Given the fact that the Federal Government has squeezed the States by restricting growth in State income to 8 per cent while increasing its own revenue by 16 per cent, I ask: Does the Deputy Premier and Treasurer mean that in order to bring back the smiles he intends to reduce Government services and reduce taxation?

Dr EDWARDS: I suggest that the honourable member for Woodridge wait until 17 September, when even he will have a smile on his face.

Mr D'ARCY: My final question also is directed to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer and refers to the Federal Budget. I point out that the Federal Government, in its Budget,

plans a huge increase of 22 per cent in income tax revenue and has forgotten its promises about tax indexation. Tax increases mean that the real standard of living of the average worker has dropped by approximately \$17 a week. The Liberal-National Country Party Government has presented a Budget that does nothing other than increase taxation and, at the same time, it has called for cut-backs in State expenditure. I now ask: Does the Deputy Premier and Treasurer intend to follow the Federal Government's advice and cut back public expenditure, particularly in the resources field?

Dr EDWARDS: I should have thought that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have understood that I do not intend to debate with him what will be in the Budget that I bring down on 17 September. He would be aware of the fact that it is not the policy of the Government to divulge to the Opposition in question-time the contents of our forthcoming Budget. Nevertheless, I can assure the honourable member that it will be a responsible Budget providing for good economic management.

Mr Casey: You've even changed the date.

Dr EDWARDS: Of course we have changed the date. It will now be brought down at the time of the year when the State's Budgets are usually brought down. It was only because of the election last year that it was proposed to bring down the Budget during the latter part of August. It will now be brought down on 17 September, at a time of the year when it is normal to bring down the Budget.

Again I say that our Budget will be a responsible document and it will enable Queensland to continue to grow economically. No doubt it will receive the praise of most of the people of Queensland, though not of members of the Opposition. But, of course, no-one considers any opinion that they express to be worth while.

Destruction of Rain Forest adjacent to Kuranda Railway Line

Mr TENNI: I ask the Minister for Transport: Has his attention been drawn to the destruction of the rain forest on the hill slopes above the Kuranda railway line? If so, has he taken any action to ensure the preservation of the scenic beauty of this popular tourist attraction?

Mr LANE: I thank the honourable member for his question. While I was in Cairns recently on an inspection tour of transport facilities with members of my parliamentary transport committee, I held discussions with representatives of the Cairns City Council, the Mulgrave Shire Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the honourable member for Barron River about this very matter. From my personal observations of the rough nature of the terrain, with its steep banks and gullies, it was obvious that it was impractical to try to control the vegetation by mowing or other mechanical means. Because this is a lush, tropical rain forest, as, I am sure, many honourable members know, growth is fast during the wet season. Controlled burning is the only practical method of inhibiting that growth. The Railway Department is co-operating with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Forestry Department in this matter.

I share the concern of the honourable member for Barron River and appreciate his efforts to preserve the landscape. Indeed, I endorse his appeal to the public to be aware of the danger and to refrain from throwing cigarettes out of train windows on the tourist route from Cairns to Kuranda. I have issued instructions to the Railway Department to continue full co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other departments using the control-burn method in the area, and I urge the public to extinguish cigarette butts before throwing them out of train windows.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Northern Freeway

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (12.1 p.m.): Earlier this week my colleague the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police made a major public announcement regarding the Northern Freeway, which was to run between Albion Road,

Albion, and Gympie Road, Kedron, traversing the area round Rose Street, Kalinga. The Minister for Main Roads made that statement to the public after a review of the Government's requirements regarding road systems in that area.

As far back as 1972—a year or so after I was elected to this Assembly—the Main Roads Department, acting on the recommendations of the Wilbur Smith Transportation Study, distributed a detailed brochure to the people in that area advising them that a freeway would be constructed in the area and listing the properties that would be affected by that work. The brochure was letter-boxed throughout the area and, in addition, was posted to the owners of the properties so that people would know just where they stood in this regard.

Following that initiative by the Government, I, together with other Liberal members of Parliament, door-knocked along the route of the highway and spoke personally with most of the people who would be affected by the proposal.

Negotiations took place over a period of years. The Main Roads Department acquired approximately 200 properties along the route and held them in reserve for the construction of the freeway at a later date. As members would know, there was quite a deal of protest at that time against the construction of a freeway in that area. It is quite understandable why that should be so. We can understand the massive disruption caused by the construction of a freeway and the problems caused to people who are moved or uprooted and resettled. Their lifestyle would be disturbed. A great deal of emotional feeling was generated in the area. It resulted in a number of protests against freeways as a whole. The protests in the Markwell Street area became quite violent, as members will remember, resulting in clashes with police, and so on.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr LANE: I am talking about protests against freeways. Of course, they took place during the time of the Whitlam Labor Government in Canberra. That Government's policy was to construct no more freeways. I can well remember Mr Tom Uren, the Minister for Urban and Regional Planning, coming out publicly against freeways. Indeed, it was as a result of his initiative that money for freeways was cut back and freeway work that had been commenced, apart from the work at Markwell Street, Bowen Hills, and the South East Freeway, was immediately stopped. Nothing further was done.

Since then, there has been a change of Government. Because of the existence of a map that showed the freeway or arterial road running across certain properties, a hardship was caused to some property owners. So the Fraser Government introduced a system under which the Minister for Main Roads could spend money provided for freeways to acquire properties where a real hardship could be shown. Individual cases were put to the Government and decisions were made by the Minister on an individual basis.

I, as the local representative for the area, personally put many of those cases. That resulted in the acquisition of the properties and allowed people to get out of the area when they felt that they could not dispose of the properties on the normal real estate market.

That has been the situation for a number of years. A shadow has been hanging over that part of the proposed freeway, but it was put aside earlier this week. Prior to that, on 21 August last year, the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Hinze) announced that the Government had decided, in view of the circumstances then prevailing, to review the construction of the Northern Freeway and to decide whether it wished to proceed with it. Of course, he was influenced by the significant reductions in federal road funding, particularly for urban arterials, which had resulted in the indefinite deferral of freeways throughout Australia. As I said, the uncertainty produced cases of personal hardship and general community blight. The Main Roads Department was stuck with the proposal. Commencing in 1972, it had purchased by negotiation 200 of some 350 properties that were originally required in the corridor that was set out in the brochure.

Following that review, which was carried out over the last 12 months, the Transportation Policy Committee, of which I am now a member, together with the Minister for Main Roads, the Lord Mayor of this city (Alderman Sleeman), the departmental heads of the Departments of Railway, Transport and Main Roads and the senior departmental

officers of the council, met on 14 May this year and decided to recommend to the Government that the freeway not be proceeded with, but that it be scaled down to an arterial road, and I am very pleased to have been part of the announcement to that effect. The Minister for Main Roads made the very firm announcement that the proposed freeway would be downgraded to an arterial road. That has removed the uncertainty in the minds of many North Brisbane residents.

I particularly welcome the cut-back in the freeway on the Woolloowin-Albion section in my electorate and also the fact that the Government's decision now positions the arterial road alongside the railway line between Woolloowin and Albion, which means that fewer people will be affected. The cruelest part of the whole proposal was that the people in that particular area did not know where they stood, and that included the many tenants who had rented properties from the Main Roads Department during that period.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LANE: I am pleased to have the support of the honourable member for Brisbane Central. I know that his home was one of those properties affected by the freeway proposal. I am sure that he would welcome the announcement about the arterial road or perhaps even the abandonment of the freeway in his particular area. He was one of the leaders of the protest movement back in 1972, which fought against the construction of freeways. He joined with Charlie Gifford, the secretary of the Communist Party, and three other members of the State executive of the Communist Party at that time. I remember very well the violent protests generated by the honourable member and his friends back in 1972. I will not go into that, because we should not have politics in this discussion.

Of the properties that are affected, 115 already owned by the Main Roads Department will now be surplus to its requirements. These include 99 houses and 16 cleared blocks. About half of those houses are situated in the electorate of Wavell, which is represented by my colleague the Minister for Health, and the other half are in my electorate. In addition, 110 properties in the original proposal have not yet been acquired by the Main Roads Department, and they will no longer be required. There is a direct benefit to the people who own those 110 properties. Their properties will not be acquired by negotiation, compulsory resumption or any other method. That announcement is also welcomed.

Out of the original corridor, the Main Roads Department will still have to acquire 42 properties that it has not already acquired, but they will be 42 properties belonging to people who have had notice of some requirement over their properties since 1972. So it should not come as a shock to any of those people.

I am sure that they will receive fair market value for their properties as well as a disturbance allowance. If anybody has any inquiries about this matter he can ring Mr John Bell, the right-of-way engineer at the Main Roads Department, who will be able to tell him whether his property is affected and what the future holds for him. If he has any complaints or needs any further support on this matter, he can contact me at either my office as Minister for Transport or my electorate office, and I will take up the cause for him, just as I did in 1972 when I dealt with the individual on the merits of each case.

(Time expired.)

Beef Industry Exports

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (12.11 p.m.): I am concerned that the future of the beef industry not only in Queensland but also in the rest of Australia depends so much on the United States beef market, which is worth somewhere in the vicinity of \$800m to us. I understand Australia provides more than 40 per cent of United States meat imports, of which Queensland provides the major proportion. That trade is vital to Australia and, of course, has equal importance to Queensland, which has more cattle than any other State in the Commonwealth.

The recent reports of the alleged finding of horse meat in beef shipments to the United States—

Mr Hooper: That was shocking, wasn't it?

Mr RANDELL: I must say that at this stage it is only alleged, but it could highlight how vulnerable we are to violent fluctuations in our export trade, regardless of whether the allegation is proved to be true. It is essential that Australia's high reputation as a reliable supplier of quality beef be retained. If any company is found breaking regulations, I strongly urge the imposition of harsh penalties.

We had the ludicrous occurrence of a Western Australian processor being fined \$100 for placing mutton in beef cartons. That is simply not good enough. Such a penalty is totally inadequate.

Mr Casey: Don't you think it is an indictment of the inspection system?

Mr RANDELL: I am getting to that.

As well as the imposition of monetary penalties, export permits should be cancelled. If the American market is damaged the local industry will find it extremely hard, if not impossible, to find other markets. One has to look only at the subsidies provided by the EEC and the difficulty of competing with them. If this sort of thing goes on, think of the damage to our Japanese exports.

That leads to the obvious consideration of meat inspection. The present two-tier system of meat inspection, with the State being responsible for the domestic market and the Federal Government for export, is not a satisfactory one. I was most disappointed that the meat inspection problem was unresolved at the Darwin meeting. The Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Mike Ahern) fought hard to resolve it but the Commonwealth vetoed his suggestions. A service covering both export and domestic beef could be operated more effectively and economically by the State. That would ensure closer co-operation between those responsible for meat quality, grading and classification, quality control, disease and residue recording.

However, whatever is resolved in developing a uniform system for meat inspection, I make it quite clear that no additional costs should be borne by producers, who have enough to contend with now without further impositions. The retention of a strong and viable industry for the benefit of all our people is vital not only for the industry but for Australia as a whole.

Queensland has 38 licensed abattoirs, 130 slaughterhouses and, with other business related to the beef industry, over 13 000 people are employed in beef slaughtering. I pay a special tribute to those men and women whose expert knowledge and dedication have helped to make this a great industry. My concern is not only for the grazier who, contrary to popular belief, is a hard-working man, particularly in areas such as my Brigalow III area, and battles the elements with the high-risk factor of seasonal conditions. I also think about stockmen, transport drivers, yardmen and all the other people right through to the boner on the floor of the meatworks.

Violent fluctuations in the meat trade must be halted. To achieve this it is absolutely essential that all sections of the beef industry get together and speak with a strong and united voice, which they have not done up till now. I call on the industry to work towards that end. Look at the massive lobby in the United States, with seemingly inexhaustible funds to support its efforts, whose strong voice forces that Government into the imposition of beef quotas and protection for the industry. It is that very protection which has contributed in no small way to the closure of abattoirs and the loss of jobs in this country.

I am concerned about the beef industry as a whole, but my obvious concern is for the industry in my own electorate and its immediate surrounds. The recent agricultural show at Mackay—and the Leader of the Opposition would know this—was vital proof of the importance of the beef industry in that area. The figures I have been given—and I am certain of their accuracy—reveal that that show attracted the biggest entry of fat cattle for a show anywhere in the State.

Mr Casey: It went ahead of Rockhampton, which was supposed to be the beef-cattle centre of the State.

Mr RANDELL: It was a marvellous show, and it just goes to prove what we have in that area. Of course, the major proportion of the cattle comes from my own electorate of Mirani. The development of tropical breeds in the district round Mackay, in through the hinterland and down to Rockhampton has surpassed that in every other area in Australia. The value of that alone makes the industry vital, and the area deserving of protection.

The associated meatworks at Bakers Creek has a daily kill of over 500 cattle and employs more than 450 people. Honourable members can realise the importance of rumours such as the ones I am speaking about. They will put an end to the jobs of those people. We have to work together to try to kill those rumours. In the current circumstances, that abattoir is in as much jeopardy as many other meatworks in Australia. The price of cattle has dropped substantially in the last few months. I understand that the price has just fallen a further \$5 per 100. That is of great concern to everyone in the industry. We must face up to the challenges that will inevitably beset us in the future.

Mr Hooper: What are your answers?

Mr RANDELL: We have to get together as an industry and try to resolve our differences. We must ensure that the industry speaks with one voice, something that has not been done in the past. That is the only way we will get anywhere. The beef industry should follow the example of the sugar industry. We must get together and speak with one voice. I hope that people heed my plea. I am confident that, whatever happens in the future, we will work together and overcome our problems, as we have in the past.

Legionnaires Disease

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (12.18 p.m.): In August 1976 the world was notified of a killer disease—Legionnaires Disease—that affected 181 people at a convention held in the Bellevue Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia in the United States of America, and eventually caused 29 deaths. In addition, 39 people in the vicinity of the hotel at the time were affected, of whom five died. Penicillin proved to be totally ineffective. The existence of the Legionnaires Disease bacterium was first recognised in laboratory investigations of the large outbreak of pneumonia among persons associated with the Bellevue Stratford Hotel incident.

The earlier documented outbreak of Legionnaires Disease occurred in 1965 at a large psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C., when 81 patients became ill and 14 died. In September 1978, in the Manhattan garment district, another outbreak of Legionnaires Disease was reported. Statistics do not reveal the exact number of deaths caused by the disease in that area. Since those outbreaks and the acceptance of the existence of Legionnaires Disease, previously unsubstantiated epidemics have been attributed to the disease, notably in Britain and Spain.

Expert opinions have determined that air-conditioners and/or stagnant waters are the suspected sources of the spread of the disease, the sources having originally been contaminated by airborne particles being deposited and developing in favourable conditions. There are strong indications also that excavation sites are the source of contamination, as the bacterium lives in the soil.

The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, USA, the recognised centre for correlating information on Legionnaires Disease, has collaborated with the Conference of State and Territorial Epidemiologists to establish a reporting system for the disease in the USA. Also, the air-conditioning industry has formed an informal association with CDC to assist and advise it during field investigations and is looking to the Environmental Protection Agency to establish procedures or protocols for preventive maintenance of cooling towers, evaporative condensers and other associated air-conditioning equipment.

Regretfully, I believe that many property developers and government and semi-government builders have settled for less expensive and, consequently, less thoroughly engineered systems to cut their costs. I suspect poorly designed air-conditioning systems cause unnecessary health problems to workers with significant numbers of working days lost. Deficiencies in humidity control and inadequate filtration would be prime examples of the problem.

The complexities of air-conditioning systems were not usually common knowledge to the public at large, but awareness of some of the equipment has been brought about with details from published reports since the discovery of Legionnaires Disease. Many people are now familiar with the terms "cooling tower" and "evaporative condenser".

In the perfect situation, all plant, equipment and associated machinery in a building or property is maintained by in-house maintenance staff, contract maintenance, or a combination of both. The equipment is generally maintained according to manufacturers' recommendations or according to the working requirements of particular items of machinery.

Property investors, like everyone else, expect a return on their investments. Experts determine what the recommended proportion of operating costs to property income should be. It would, however, be interesting to see a table setting out the ratio of actual maintenance costs to property operating costs relative to income over the last 10 years. These figures would serve to illustrate that the percentage increase in maintenance staff salaries, wages and operating costs, far surpassed the percentage increase in rentals received.

Over the last few years, economic progress has demanded the introduction of such activities as rationalisation programs, quality control and economic performance ratings. In the building and property maintenance industry, these activities constituted budget cuts. Funds were reduced; staff numbers were reduced; short cuts were taken; tasks normally carried out regularly were either put off or left undone completely; and breakdown maintenance in some instances has become the common practice, particularly in older buildings.

A situation has been reached whereby building and property owner/managers, through economic progress, are indirectly the creators of a public enemy in the form of unclean, contaminated, so-called conditioned air. Of course, property owner/managers will be quick to justify themselves, as will maintenance personnel; but as with every instance, there are exceptions to the rule.

With respect to maintenance, not every property is understaffed nor is every cooling tower contaminated. It seems that the property maintenance industry will carry a stigma and be held responsible for the dangers to public health through neglect of maintenance procedures. Because there are so many unknown factors in property maintenance and the risk to public health is known, a reasonable compromise must be reached.

Modern health requirements have brought about strict rules and regulations setting out guide-lines that help to ensure the health, welfare and well-being of the community in general. In Australia today, however, and in Queensland in particular, with the ever-increasing threat of contracting Legionnaires disease through inhalation of conditioned atmospheres, there are no health regulations determining the quality of that air. Air-conditioning is now the norm for any new building, so daily the risk becomes greater.

Little is really known publicly of the incidence of Legionnaires Disease in Australia. South Australia and Victoria have, however, reported several cases of the disease, with resultant deaths, and earlier this year it was suspected that the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, had contracted the disease in Canberra. Secret tests were conducted that prompted questions from the Freedom of Information Committee. Few people in the industry doubt that the Prime Minister was, in fact, a victim.

The Victorian Health Commission is presently conducting a survey to quantify the existence of Legionnaires Disease in Victoria and has already discovered the bacteria in water storage areas in two Melbourne hospitals.

Control measures need to be brought into effect, but let us examine a few situations within buildings and properties and define the reasons why particular areas are subject to contamination. The construction of modern properties and buildings frequently incorporates the installation of water-storage areas within the air-conditioning systems as well as in other plant systems. Unless these water-storage areas are properly maintained, they will become stagnant and subsequently create microclimates ideally suited to the development of the Legionnaires Disease organism. Fans are the instruments of dispersal whereby contaminated air is directed and circulated throughout a building. Winter is the most likely time that cooling towers, in particular, will be lying idle. The water contained therein is even now becoming stagnant, and when the machinery is brought back into operation with the onset of warmer weather, those water environments that would have become contaminated will be spreading the disease throughout buildings and properties.

It has been reported that the Australian air-conditioning, heating and ventilation industry and the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction have offered to assist the Victorian Health Commission in any examination of proposed control measures to minimise the potential risk from cooling towers and evaporative condensers.

I believe that a centralised investigation committee should be established within the property maintenance industry and in association with manufacturers of air-conditioning equipment and systems, property and building designers, and medical and chemical research organisations. Such a committee would be in a position to correlate information gained from surveys already carried out and to instruct and advise future surveys and tests on an Australiawide basis.

In the near future it will be of utmost importance to have surveys carried out using standardised procedures in order to control the situation. Too many variations in maintenance procedures could result in confusing the issue and in masking the true situation. Even now there is confusion as to which chemicals should be used, in what concentration and over what intervals.

In order for a centralised investigation committee to operate with full efficiency and control, it may be necessary to bring into effect certain maintenance procedures by way of statutory regulations. Property owner/managers should certainly be held responsible for quality control of water-storage areas within buildings and properties. Of course, an enforcement body will be necessary to enforce any statutory regulations.

I draw the attention of the House to the situation that exists in Queensland within buildings and properties through the enforcement of the Fire Safety Act and Regulations. Officers of the fire brigades are empowered to enter properties and buildings to inspect records of maintenance that is carried out to fire-fighting equipment and to determine whether in fact regulations are being adhered to. They are empowered to issue notices of breaches of the Act should it be found that regulations are not being adhered to. Failure to correct such breaches could result in the cancellation of the certificate of approval, which, in turn, could result in the closure of a building or property until such time as breaches of the Act are corrected.

Similarly, public health inspectors could be empowered, for the purpose of conducting water tests, to enter buildings and properties wherein air-conditioning systems are installed. Building owner/managers would be required to record the details and frequency of chemical applications to water-storage areas.

Some conscientious maintenance personnel have, on their own initiative, been examining their own situations and have taken steps to eliminate possible danger areas. However, I feel that these small sections of the industry are only practising basic cleansing procedures without concentrating greatly on the standardisation of procedures.

I seek the support of the Minister for Health and ask him to initiate an immediate investigation into the danger to public health from Legionnaires Disease. It is my intention to pursue this matter until I am convinced that protective safeguards are in place and are operational.

(Time expired.)

Fencing of Parklands

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (12.28 p.m.): Government action should never be taken without the Government's being aware of what the people believe or desire. Indeed, children in Queensland schools are taught that their elected representatives in this Assembly and in council chambers are there to represent the views of the people. This is an ideal with which I trust we would all agree. If that ideal is to work, people must be aware of matters that will come before government.

In yesterday's debate on the report of the Committee of Subordinate Legislation, I spoke about the need to publish regulations in advance to allow public scrutiny and public participation. It should be obvious to all but the most cynical that, where there is a situation in which the decisions of elected representatives can affect the very quality of life and local surroundings of people, those people should be aware of the fact that a decision is to be taken. Where people already have a right not only to know but also to

object and then to appeal against a decision, it would appear to be the height of arrogance and cynical political manoeuvring to take away that right. Yet that is what the Brisbane City Council is seeking to do.

Currently the people of this city can play a role should any attempt be made to change their local environment. At this very moment, the Labor aldermen in the Brisbane City Council are acting to steal the right of every citizen to keep his or her local parklands available for public use—for the use of Brisbane families.

I say "steal" because the rights of Brisbane people to know, object and then, if necessary, appeal, are items of the greatest value. The Labor council, like a thief in the night, is attempting to rob the people.

The question of fencing off parklands has been a contentious issue over the years. Perhaps, as a result, under the present town plan, advertising should be required so that people can know what is proposed and can then lodge an objection. Should council approval be given notwithstanding an objection, an appeal can then be made to the Local Government Court. What would be wrong with that? It is a major exercise in open government, with people being informed, having the right to participate in the decision-making of government and then the right to object to proposals. What would be wrong with that? Absolutely nothing!

Yet the Labor Party council now proposes a scheme that will allow parkland to be fenced to prevent public use, and this will be done without advertising so that objections can be made. In other words, that means, firstly, that the people of Brisbane will be kept in the dark. They will not be told. They cannot know when these parklands are to be locked away from them. Secondly, the Labor council will refuse to allow them to participate in the decision-making process because they will not be able to object. Their right of appeal will disappear.

This is from a council currently controlled by a party that professes to believe in open government. What hypocrisy! We hear all the apparently high-principled speeches by Opposition members in this Parliament, yet when Labor people get power, what do they do—surreptitiously steal the rights of the citizens of Brisbane. I say "surreptitiously" because the public notice proposing these changes that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" was most misleading. The public was unaware of any proposed changes to the town plan until Alderman Denver Beanland, who represents Auchentflower, gained some media publicity on this issue a few days before objections closed.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr PRENTICE: It is all very well for Opposition members to mutter now, but where were they when their colleagues in the City Hall were taking away the rights of the people of Brisbane?

If the proposed amendments had been advertised more fully (thus giving the public details of what they really meant), the public would have known and had its say by objecting to the amendments.

The fencing of parkland is not the only intrusion that the Brisbane City Council makes on the rights of the citizens of Brisbane. Others relate to the deletion of the requirement for consent to construct stands, grandstands and parking spaces in areas zoned open space. It is one thing to allow sport and recreation to take place in open-space zones when consent is granted, but it is another to erect stands and grandstands that can be of enormous size and have detrimental effect on the environment of a locality. As such construction is allowed in a sport and recreation zone, there should still be a requirement for rezoning, as is presently the case.

Mr Davis: Did you ever win a case in court?

Mr PRENTICE: The honourable member would be surprised.

In the provision relating to open-space zoning, I am opposed to the deletion of the existing words and the proposed substitution of "park, child care centre and club." The inclusion of "child care centre" and "club" will greatly broaden the scope of the as-of-right uses in this zone. The definition of "club" is very broad and will certainly lead to the indiscriminate use of parkland and cause problems for local residents. Therefore, the

present as-of-right uses should remain. However, there can be problems with Girl Guides and Boy Scouts huts. Because they could come under the definition of "club", I believe a separate definition for these two groups needs to be used in column 3 in the town plan. These groups could have as-of-right uses in the open-space zone.

Finally, there is a series of interrelated amendments on shopping complexes and shopping groups to which I strongly object. These amendments will allow for the development of shopping complexes in residential and industrial zones with consent use only. At present they are prohibited and rezoning is required to have them constructed.

On 1 July 1980 amendments were made by the State Government to stop the proliferation of shopping complexes. These amendments gave objectors the right of appeal under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act in relation to rezoning applications. They also included the mandatory provision of economic impact assessments in relation to shopping complex development where the land exceeds 2.5 ha or the gross floor area of the development exceeds 4 000 sq. m.

These new amendments that the Labor council brings forward will virtually negate the amendments made on 1 July 1980. At present, as shopping centres require a rezoning, the State Government would get a copy of the economic impact assessment. However, under the amendment, as only a consent use would be required, the State Government would not get a copy of the economic impact assessment. People living in residential A or B zones do not want to suddenly find that, solely with consent use and without rezoning, they have a shopping complex next door with disastrous effects for their locality.

In short, it could be said that to rezone changes the planning intent for an area, while consent use is in accordance with planning intent for zones generally.

A degree of certainty as to the use of land in a neighbourhood should go with the town plan. With only a consent use required for a shopping complex, this is taken away. It will make a farce of the town plan and the amendments of last year.

The effect on small business, which some of these amendments were designed to protect, would be disastrous, as small business would again be at the mercy of shopping complex development.

It is imperative that all shopping complex developments remain a prohibited type of development and all such developments must be subject to a rezoning application. Failure to do this will mean that the very contentious issue of proliferation of shopping complexes will again become a fact of life, to the detriment of the small business community and the public at large.

This issue is a matter of real importance to the people of Brisbane. It is not a matter that should be allowed to be amended by stealth.

The Minister for Local Government is in a position to provide the people of Brisbane with a say in this matter. I ask the Minister to allow the people of Brisbane a say in this matter by not approving any change until after the next election. Let the people have an opportunity to put their views on this matter. Let the people decide. If the Labor Party is so convinced that it is right, it should make this issue a major part of its election campaign next year.

(Time expired.)

Disabled Persons

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (12.38 p.m.): I wish to raise the issue of disabled persons. A recent survey showed that 13.2 per cent of the population—more than 1 250 000 Australians—are disabled. More than 500 000 of them are classed as being severely handicapped.

It must be realised that the incidence of disablement in our society is increasing. This is due to three main factors. The first is that accident rates are increasing with expanding industrialisation and technology. For example, for every road death, 30 people are injured. The second is lower birth rates resulting in a progressively older and less mobile population. The third is that medical science is contributing to increased life spans for disabled people.

Governments as well as the community have a responsibility to ensure that adequate resources of finance, manpower and facilities are provided for the disabled. The disabled,

whether they be children or adults, have a right to receive appropriate assistance and support at each stage of development to ensure that they are able to live in the community and to participate in community life to the maximum degree feasible. The community has a responsibility to create and maintain an environment which is receptive to them and will enable them to fulfil their potential and live with dignity.

We are not doing anywhere near enough to create public awareness or to provide access to and use of our built environment, education facilities and accommodation or to support the voluntary sector that deals with the disabled. Many of the difficulties of handicapped people stem from community attitudes to their disabilities rather than the disabilities themselves.

The chorus of a song just released by the New South Wales Committee for IYDP, entitled "Take a Look Inside", says to people—

"Take a look inside
You'll be surprised at what you find
Just another human being
With another human dream."

In order to create an awareness of the disabled of lasting significance, we must truly break down the barriers. We need more than a 12 months' commitment. It is to be hoped that Government funding of awareness programs will be not a one-off event but a continuing reality. Furthermore, prejudice and discrimination are best broken down in the schoolroom and the schoolyard. Our education system must be geared to create this awareness.

Let us have a look at access. One of the many programs for IYDP has been to work on the incorporation of mandatory legislation to give disabled people equal opportunity to gain access to and use of our built environment. I would hope that the building industry would support the IYDP access program and review all buildings that it is currently designing or building. In most cases simple changes can be made to make buildings more accessible to, and usable for, everyone. Voluntary incorporation of access requirements now will facilitate incorporation when the requirements become mandatory. The access needs of disabled people have now been determined. It is now the turn of the private sector and the building industry to co-operate in giving disabled people an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy a built environment that able-bodied people take for granted. A survey in Melbourne showed that 98 per cent of the public buildings in that city were inaccessible. Toilets for the disabled were provided in the Arts Centre. When a disabled lady went into the building she was told quietly by another lady, "We have a loo here for you." That is the simple way in which able-bodied people see the problems of the disabled.

Let us have a look at education. The current position is that handicapped children, other than those who are deaf or blind, have no right to education. This is intolerable. The Ahern Select Committee on Education recommended that the Education Act be amended to provide education for handicapped children to 18 years of age. This recommendation should be implemented forthwith. Education for disabled people, as indeed for all individuals, should be concerned with the total development of the person. This should include provision for intellectual stimulation, social, emotional and sexual growth, and cultural and recreational pursuits. Vocational planning and training should also be part of a comprehensive education program.

I now look at employment. In June of this year the Minister for Welfare announced that the Queensland Government would create 12 extra Public Service jobs for disabled people. He then said—

"If disabled people are to be totally integrated into society this should include the work-force.

As a major employer of labour in the State, the Government is very conscious of its role in this area."

I say to the Minister: those are fine sentiments, but the provision of 12 jobs can only be considered as an appalling tokenism. I am very much in favour of businesses being given assistance to provide employment for the handicapped outside sheltered workshops; but if the Government does not put its own policies into practice, will the private sector take notice? Obviously not.

Accommodation is the next matter. Under the Handicapped Persons Assistance Act, the Commonwealth provides subsidies on a \$4 for \$1 basis for the purchase, construction, extension, alteration, rental and maintenance of premises for the disabled. However, funding is on a triennial basis. The next grants will be made for 1984. This is intolerable. I shall give just one example. The organisation known as the Independent Living for the Physically Handicapped—ILPHA—now has three houses, with four to six persons in each house. It is receiving 80 per cent of the rent for only one house and subsidies for someone to live in only that one house. There is no funding for the other two houses. In fact, they are rented from the Housing Commission and the organisation pays full rent on them. Many more of these houses should be provided in Brisbane to enable handicapped people to live more independently.

Moreover, the Government should play not only a financial role but also a publicity role in order to make the public more aware of the needs of these people and to encourage groups in the community to support such houses in their area.

There is also a pressing need for an independent living allowance. If people move out to a flat or a house they now have to depend purely on volunteers. Such an allowance would make the disabled more independent.

A group of northside residents who are concerned about the incredible strain on the parents of handicapped children who have chosen to keep their children at home rather than send them to an institution have a program ready to go. They want to provide support and relief to those parents who keep their children at home.

Under their proposal children could be left for from a couple of hours up to three weeks as close as possible to their own environment. No funds exist for this group to obtain a house or even to rent one. The State Government institution "Halwyn" has 80 beds but, unfortunately, 74 of those beds are for permanent residents. The other six beds are used to give relief to parents who have their children at home.

The voluntary sector has much to contribute by way of rehabilitation. In Queensland, without them, the present rehabilitation services would collapse. However, there are problems which revolve around funding, employment of professional staff, standards and co-ordination. Centralised planning and funding is required.

There is great scope for a co-operative effort between Government agencies and the voluntary sector to survey needs, rationalise services and funding, and obtain community involvement for the disabled members of the nation. I have one example of that in my electorate. The Brisbane branch of the Better Hearing Association of Australia has raised sufficient funds to buy a house in an effort to do some worthwhile work for partially deaf people. In New South Wales the branches of that association receive \$16,500 a year for a co-ordinator and a State secretary and \$11,000 for on-going programs. Queensland gives nothing to these people, although they do a marvellous job.

This State's contribution towards the International Year of Disabled Persons is nothing short of scandalous. Queensland's allocation of \$150,000 for this year is paltry and mean. New South Wales has allocated \$536,000.

The programs that can be run on the small amount of money provided by the Government pay only lip service to concern for the disabled. We ought to be a little bit more fair dinkum about it. It is time that the services provided by the State and Commonwealth Governments were co-ordinated.

In June the Commonwealth Government announced that it would give aids such as access ramps, door widening, wheelchairs, domiciliary oxygen and other such things to those disabled people who at present are ineligible to receive them. However, what has happened? The provision of those services has not been advertised. The community does not know about them. When I checked on this the Commonwealth advised me that doctors were aware of the services. This program provides \$102,000 and an ongoing \$30,000 per month. That money has not been spent. It is high time that the co-ordination of which I speak was implemented. Because the States wanted an assurance that the program would be ongoing the Commonwealth and State Governments had a lot of difficulty agreeing to it. That is fair enough. The States also wanted administrative costs. When we come to providing these services for the disabled, Governments have a penny-pinching attitude.

It is time to pay more than lip service to the disabled. We should have ongoing programs. An increasing number of people in the community are disabled. Those people need equal opportunities and the right to express themselves as full members of the community. It is vital that the programs initiated through IYDP be ongoing, and that we have a greater commitment to help the voluntary sector provide these resources.

(Time expired.)

Beef Industry Exports

Mr HARPER (Auburn) (12.48 p.m.): I commend the Federal Government, and in particular the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Peter Nixon), on the positive action taken following accusations of horse meat from Australia being sold in the United States as Australian boneless beef.

It is pleasing to know that both the Australian and United States Governments are acting in conjunction to establish the facts of the matter relating to the deception. At this stage we do not want to do anything that would prejudice the present investigations.

In the United States positive sightings of horse meat have been made in cartons that were labelled as being boneless beef from Australia. The cartons carried export establishment number 140C and Mr Nixon promptly suspended and then deregistered that exporter, which effectively stopped the export of any meat from that establishment to any part of the world.

Dr Scott-Young: What about the inspectors?

Mr HARPER: At the present time investigations in Australia are being handled by the federal police and the Australian Bureau of Animal Health, so whoever was included should be apprehended. So far the Australian Bureau of Animal Health has impounded some 1160 cartons of export beef from establishment 140C. Tests are currently being conducted to establish the nature of the meat contained in those cartons. I understand that the establishment itself is one where boning and packaging only occur.

A previous interjector questioned the role of inspectors and, I assume, other members of the work-force. Of course, the work done in that boning and packaging establishment is carried out under the supervision of Government inspectors. It is a matter of conjecture, until inquiries have been completed, as to what actually took place and where and when the deception occurred. I have no doubt that the investigations being carried out by the police and the bureau will eventually establish those facts.

It was pleasing to hear the Minister for Primary Industry indicate that maximum penalties would be imposed. I think he used an expression such as he would throw the book at whoever was responsible once the facts had been established. It is to be hoped also that not only will punishment be meted out to the company involved in any malpractice, if it is established that malpractice took place in Australia, but also that penalties will be imposed on any official, employee or other person found guilty of being an accessory to an act which could very well prejudice Australia's national economy. It is inconceivable that such an action could take place without the knowledge of many people. Many people must have been involved, wherever the deception took place. It would not have been the act of a single person or a small group of persons.

In Queensland we are very fortunate that our laws are strictly enforced. Occasionally we hear comment that our health laws and the supervision of health products, food and other such commodities are too strict. However, at such times as these the actions of our Department of Primary Industries and our own Government are vindicated. With the strictness of the supervision of our food products, the consumer is aware that this Government takes all possible action to ensure the maintenance of a high standard.

Queensland has three knackeries—horse slaughterhouses—situated in Brisbane, at Laidley and at Bauhinia Downs, west of Biloela. The operations of those knackeries are very stringently supervised. They are regularly inspected by officers of the slaughtering and meat inspection branch. All horsemeat is dyed with methyl violet so that it can be readily identified. Of course, the dyeing also makes it unsuitable for blending with any other meats. Consequently, consumers in Queensland and those in other countries receiving beef exported from Queensland may be fully assured that there can be no deception with meat exported from this State. Of course, as in the South, the law prohibits the treatment, boning or slaughter of horses or other animals for pet foods in the same establishment as beef or mutton is treated for human consumption.

Obviously, something has occurred that has enabled people to get around the law. If people set out to defeat the system, very often they find ways and means of doing so. I repeat my commendation of the Federal Government and the Federal Minister for the action they have taken. I repeat my assurance to the people of Queensland that the standard in this State makes it virtually impossible for a similar situation to occur here.

Of course, we do not know where the deception took place. We know that the meat that was treated in establishment 140C was finally packaged under supervision and that an inspectorial stamp was affixed to the package. We do not know what happened then. We will not know the circumstances until the police and the bureau investigations are completed.

I repeat that it is the earnest hope of all Australians that the Government will act responsibly to ensure that maximum penalties are imposed on all those involved and that we will have the support of the United States Government in that respect, as we have its support in investigating the whole episode.

Take-over of J. C. Hutton Pty Ltd

Mr HOOPER (Archerfield) (12.57 p.m.): The matter of public interest that I desire to bring before the people of Queensland is the insidious take-over of Huttons at Oxley, which is one of the largest meat-processing companies in the State.

Recently 27.6 per cent of Hutton shares were acquired by that notorious corporate raider Ron Brierley, chairman of Industrial Equity Ltd. Under Queensland stock exchange rules, Mr Brierley was required to make a total take-over bid. Even the honourable member for Windsor would know that any person acquiring more than 20 per cent of the shares of a Queensland company is required to make a take-over bid. I believe that Mr Brierley has done that, and his company now controls Huttons at Oxley.

I suggest that the future will be very bleak indeed for the 400 Queenslanders employed by Huttons. About 200 workers have already lost their jobs. The modus operandi of Mr Brierley is to buy under-capitalised companies and then strip those companies of their assets and sell their valuable land for real estate development. I believe that that is what he intends doing in Queensland. When that takes place, God help the workers at Huttons!

It certainly makes a mockery of the speeches made in this debate by the honourable members for Mirani and Auburn. Both honourable members shed crocodile tears for the meat industry. The honourable member for Mirani was worried about the plight of the meat industry in Queensland. The honourable member for Auburn criticised a certain company for sending horse-meat to America. What those honourable members should be concerned about is the cut-back in the abattoirs and meatworks industry in Queensland. I have it on good authority that this year about 1 200 members of meat industry unions have been retrenched. The contributions by those honourable members were humbug.

When Provincial Traders was taken over by the southern-based firm IXL Henry Jones, assurances were given that no jobs would be in jeopardy; yet 12 months later the plant was moved south and another 450 Queenslanders joined the ever-increasing dole queue.

The silence of the Bjelke-Petersen Government in this take-over of Huttons has been deafening. Honourable members will recall that when Evans Deakin was threatened the Government moved in very quickly and took over that company. Evans Deakin repaid the generosity of the Government by engaging Melbourne-based brokers when it floated shares on the Queensland share market. It is quite obvious that if J. C. Hutton Pty Ltd had been a multinational mining company or an engineering company, the Government would have immediately mounted a rescue operation. Unfortunately, Huttons is only a food-processing company. The Premier is prepared to allow a company that provides a major source of employment in the south-western suburbs of Brisbane to be raped by that corporate crook Ron Brierley. If Huttons had contributed quite heavily to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation, no doubt the Government would have immediately mounted a rescue operation. The Government stands condemned for its inaction during this take-over of Huttons.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 10 March, the time allotted for the Matters of Public Interest debate has now expired.

The House adjourned at 1 p.m.