

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 1982**

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

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Fire Brigades Act 1964-1982

Statute under the University of Queensland Act 1965-1981

Orders in Council under—

Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Rural Training Schools Act of 1965 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Commonwealth Games (Modification of Laws) Act 1982

Report of the Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Recreation for the year ended 30 June 1982.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITOR**

Rt Hon. Lee Kuan Yew, GCMG, CH, Prime Minister of Singapore

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are very privileged this morning to be visited by the Right Honourable Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore. He is a very busy person, but he has elected to spend a few minutes with us in our Chamber. On behalf of all honourable members, I inform the Prime Minister that we are delighted that he has made this courtesy call.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Media Reports of Answer to Question**

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (11.5 a.m.): Yesterday, in the House, I answered a question on the process of obtaining loans from the Housing Commission. Today there are reports in the media—"The Courier-Mail" and some radio stations—that I stated that the Housing Commission has a policy of lending families more money if the wife has been sterilised.

That is completely untrue and in fact I never said any such thing. Nor is it necessary for medical certificates to be provided if a loan is to be granted by the Housing Commission. I made it quite clear in Parliament yesterday that no couple is ever asked to produce medical evidence of any sort in applying for a loan. As far as I am aware, only one case has come before the commission in which a couple provided unsolicited evidence of this sort.

What the commission has to ascertain, in the case in which couples are seeking substantial loans on the basis of their joint incomes, is that they will be able to continue to service the loan over the period of the loan. This is a matter of protection for the couple themselves as much as anything, for if they fail to continue to service that loan, they could face a considerable financial loss. But, as far as I am concerned, if the family indicates, as part of the advice they choose to provide to the Housing Commission in the application for the loan, that they do not intend to have any more family, that undertaking should be sufficient and no medical evidence should be required. In any case, no number of such certificates will provide an absolute guarantee that both parties will be able to continue working during the full term of the loan.

I feel that the member who raised this question and who is now trying to capitalise on the media misinformation is really scraping the bottom of the barrel.

## Government Home Loan Scheme

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.6 a.m.): Yesterday, the honourable member for Chatsworth rose in the House and made what he would have the House believe was a personal explanation on matters relating to the Queensland Government's new housing scheme. It was nothing more than a personal attack on myself and the integrity of my statements to the media and elsewhere concerning the scheme. He accused me of being a stranger to the truth and implied that I was responsible for increasing the rate of interest payable under the scheme from 12.5 per cent to 14.5 per cent.

Those accusations are totally unfounded and can only be a source of confusion and concern for all prospective clients of the Government's new housing scheme. In the circumstances, I want to clarify the position for honourable members. The interest chargeable on all loans is the current market rate from time to time, and this is assessed by reference to the predominant building society rate. Presently that rate is 14.5 per cent. Critically, however, the amount of the loan repayments is 25 per cent of the client's household income, and if 25 per cent of his income does not equal market rate, either a subsidy or a capitalisation arrangement picks up the difference for him.

There are three basic schemes, each of them, as I recently indicated, with percentage rates as a measure of whether or not the applicant is entitled to assistance under the particular scheme. For example, under the rental scheme the relevant percentage rate is 5 per cent. Where 25 per cent of the household income is insufficient to meet an interest rate of 5 per cent on a \$30,000 loan, then the applicant may qualify for assistance under the existing housing rental scheme administered by the Queensland Housing Commission.

Next, under the interest subsidy scheme, 12.5 per cent is the relevant percentage. Where 25 per cent of the household income will meet interest of less than 12.5 per cent in respect of a \$30,000 loan (but more than 5 per cent), then the applicant is eligible for assistance under the interest subsidy scheme (provided the other conditions of value of the house or value of the house and land are satisfied). Under this scheme, the extent of the shortfall between 25 per cent of household income and the market interest rate will be subsidised by the Government and not recovered from the owner.

Under the commercial scheme, where 25 per cent of the household income will meet an interest rate of 12.5 per cent or more on a \$30,000 loan, then assistance would normally be available under the commercial scheme. Under this scheme, where there is a shortfall between 25 per cent of household income and the market rate of interest, that shortfall is capitalised to the loan. As the household income increases, families should have an increasing capacity to meet both interest and redemption charges, sufficient to pay off the original loan and any capitalised interest debt as well. Such a provision enables the family to obtain a larger loan than they might otherwise be able to obtain if market rates applied. The market rate of interest will vary according to the predominant rate charged by permanent building societies.

My statements relative to the matter of interest rates have been clear and unambiguous. The only confusion seems to exist in the mind of the honourable member for Chatsworth.

There has been no change to the interest rates originally proposed and approved by Cabinet. I repeat that there has been no change to the interest rates originally proposed and submitted by the Housing Commission. The honourable member knows that full well. The honourable member knows also that the source of his leaked information is being investigated and that, in due course, he will be dealt with for leaking information.

For the benefit of honourable members, and in particular the honourable member for Chatsworth, I seek leave to have my Press statement of 6 July 1982, to which the honourable member alluded, incorporated in "Hansard".

(Leave granted.)

6th July, 1982.

The Acting Premier and Treasurer, Dr Llew Edwards said today State Cabinet had approved a new, wide-ranging housing scheme which will inject more than \$100 million into the State's housing industry.

The package will help low-income families and people wishing to buy the family home.

It will offer a second opportunity for families who have lost their family home because of hardship.

The scheme was submitted to Cabinet by the Acting Premier and Treasurer, Dr. Llew Edwards and the Works and Housing Minister, Mr Wharton.

Investible funds in the hands of the Treasurer, such as Superannuation funds—including employer and employee contributions—will be diverted from normal gilt-edged investments and short term money market investments to help fund the scheme.

The State Government will subsidise any shortfall between the normal expected return on these investments and the current interest rate based on loans by Building Societies.

The new scheme is based on three levels of assistance.

1. The low cost rental scheme—For those whose family income precluded their entering into repayment obligations under a normal housing loan arrangement.

2. The Interest Subsidy Scheme—Subsidised home purchases (with interest shortfall subsidisation features) for those where family income excludes them from low cost rental consideration but is insufficient for them to enter long term commercial financial obligations.

3. The Commercial Scheme—Home purchases at commercial rates (with interest shortfall capitalisation features)—For those whose family income is sufficient to enable them to enter into long term home purchase commitments on Permanent Building Society Conditions.

Dr Edwards said a means test would apply for those within the Interest Subsidy Scheme.

However no means test applied to the commercial scheme which was self-restricting in that all loan repayments would be set at 25 per cent of the household income.

Dr Edwards said the \$100 million to be made available initially was expected to allow the construction or purchase of about 3 000 homes in this year.

The Queensland Housing Commission will administer the new scheme to be introduced progressively from August 1, 1982.

The Works and Housing Minister, Mr Wharton, said time was necessary to allow procedures to be finalised to ensure the new scheme worked in harmony with present building society and bank schemes.

The Treasurer, Dr Edwards, stressed that the scheme was not in competition with normal financial institutions. It is supplementary and designed to stabilize and stimulate the building industry.

Details of the three levels of assistance are—

Rental Scheme: Available to those on low to moderate incomes including those who cannot afford to commit to home purchase at interest rates of 5 per cent or above—No change to existing scheme.

Interest Subsidy Scheme: This scheme subsidises home ownership for low to moderate income earners when 25 per cent of income will pay interest at 5 per cent or more but will not pay market rates.

Those eligible must be building or buying the family home as their principal place of residence. Twenty-five per cent of the major bread-winner's income must meet interest of at least 5 per cent and up to 12.5 per cent on a loan of up to \$30,000.

The home being constructed must not be valued at more than \$30,000. But if a house and land package is purchased the limit will be \$40,000.

Applicants whose household income is assessed at below approximately \$300 per week would be eligible for this subsidy scheme.

The Government will subsidise the difference in interest between the effective rate represented by the borrower's repayment and the commercial rate. This subsidy will not be recovered from the borrower.

Dr Edwards said some of the funding for the Interest Subsidy Scheme will come from Commonwealth advances under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement, Queensland Housing Commission funds and State Government funds allocated from time to time.

**Commercial Scheme:** The third level of the new scheme, known as the Commercial Scheme, is designed specifically to help a prospective home owner to invest in his own career prospects.

The purchaser will be able to obtain a larger loan (to \$50,000 initially) even though, in the early stages, his income would only be suffice to meet interest charges of at least 12.5 per cent but less than market rates.

The interest shortfall will be capitalised and as his income increases it will cover the interest charges and begin debt redemption.

If the purchaser's income falls below that required by the scheme he can revert back to interest capitalisation, or in special circumstances or difficulty he could apply to move to the Interest Subsidy Scheme.

Actual loan levels for the Commercial Scheme will depend on each applicant's capacity to repay at 25 per cent of family income.

Dr Edwards said broadly speaking the schemes would fall into the following income ranges:

- Up to \$115 per week or in emergency cases: Rental scheme
- \$115 to \$300 per week: Interest Subsidy Scheme
- \$300 to \$600 per week: Commercial Scheme

Dr Edwards and Mr Wharton said in addition to the prime objective of maintaining a flow of housing loan funds on commercial lending conditions, the scheme was designed to maintain an even level of activity in the housing and building supplies industries.

#### Mass Immunisation Programs

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Wavell—Minister for Health) (11.11 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I wish to draw honourable members' attention to a letter in this morning's "Courier-Mail", 20 October 1982, from Anthony John Edward West concerning mass immunisation programs. The letter to the editor has the heading of "Doctor". I wish to point out to the House that John West is not a registered medical practitioner in Queensland nor, to my knowledge, has he any scientific training or qualifications from a recognised institution. He is well-known to my department as someone who for many years has publicised information which is ill-founded, ill-conceived and unsubstantiated on a wide range of topics, including nutrition, dietetics, treatment of cancer, the use of drugs and now in the field of immunology. In other words, he is just a common crook.

At no time has any of his statements on any of these topics been backed up by substantive scientific evidence. In 1977, John West was associated with selling and distributing a Schedule 4 drug to health food shops and via a post office box at West End. This was part of his campaign in respect to alternative medical practices. Action was taken by my department in respect to this distribution.

It has become very clear that Mr West has no scientific evidence for many of the philosophies and pronouncements. This was highlighted in a book which he was associated with entitled "Will The Real Quacks Please Stand Up!—The Medical Fraud Exposed". This publication dealt with wide-ranging topics. It was critical of conventional practices but no substantive evidence was presented to support the alternative opinions presented. Now he has moved into the field of immunology, again without any real evidence for the views presented.

One of the greatest advances in public health in the last half century has been the development of immunisation programs for children. This has meant the elimination of many serious diseases of childhood.

I regard this as a very important issue. It is far better to prevent a disease occurring in the first place, and also prevent any long-lasting side effects, than to suffer from it and seek a cure, however effective that cure might be.

Immunisation is the cheapest, most effective and one of the proven preventive health measures. So it makes me angry when I hear reports of non-medical people—quacks—who advise against triple antigen immunisation. In so doing, they are advocating against protection from three childhood diseases—diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough, as it is usually called.

Those quacks advise parents to take risks with their children—unnecessary and dangerous risks—when protection is readily available. They urge parents to deny their children proven protection against disease and to seek unproven methods like vitamin therapy.

It is true that there can be complications in very rare cases—for example, if the child is ill when the triple antigen injection is administered. But this very low risk—about one in 150 000—has to be balanced against the inevitable deaths that will occur if there is not immunisation against whooping cough.

The very recent epidemic of whooping cough that swept through the United Kingdom a year or so ago, and which was mildly present in Queensland during the first part of the year, was a direct result of the lowered immunisation rate of the population. In England, there has been a drastic decrease in vaccination for whooping cough. In 1974, 80 per cent of children were immunised. In 1978, the figure had fallen to 38 per cent, with the result that the population there experienced the worst outbreak of whooping cough for 20 years.

We should be able to learn from the English experience. Being immunised against a certain disease protects you from that disease by giving immunity from it. Where disease is passed only from person to person, and where there is a successful vaccine, it is possible to eradicate it. That has been done with smallpox, which has been successfully eradicated for about two years throughout the world. Yet smallpox used to be common. I understand that the famous playwright Bernard Shaw contracted it and had to grow a beard to hide his ugly facial scars, which were the result of the disease.

In the United States of America, they are looking at eradicating measles by the start of 1983. If we are to achieve that sort of aim, a far greater community support will be required.

It may be wondered whether it is worth while trying to eradicate measles, which used to be regarded as a mild childhood complaint. I am convinced that it is, when it is considered how serious an attack can be. The danger is not so much from measles itself, but from possible complications or secondary infections. Children still die from measles in one out of every 10 000 cases. The incidence of some sort of brain infection is one in 1 000 and three to five per cent of children with measles develop moderate to severe lung infection. Immunisation—just a single injection—will give long-lasting immunity from measles.

As honourable members are no doubt aware, it is not only children of two months or more who can be protected by immunisation; the unborn can also be protected. I am referring to rubella, a mild disease for both children and adults, which can have devastating consequences for the unborn. Transmission of the condition to the embryo during the first three months of life can cause viral infection to the unborn child. When this occurs there is a 40 per cent chance of the mother giving birth to a defective child. Rubella is responsible for 35 per cent of deaf babies and 95 per cent of blind and deaf babies. It also contributes to other abnormalities such as heart defects. These handicaps are costly to the community. They also result in those affected being less productive members of society.

The Health Department has a two-pronged approach in encouraging greater immunisation. We distribute live virus vaccines such as polio, measles and german measles to local authorities and family doctors throughout the State. Without the co-operation of the local authorities in running immunisation clinics and family doctors, the level of protection would be much lower.

But it is not enough for these vaccines just to be available. The community must be motivated to seek protection for themselves and their children. It is no good the

community's thinking that immunisation is a good idea if it fails to act on it. Immunisation is every child's birthright. It places him on a broad, safe road towards continued good health. I urge people not to deny themselves and their children this right.

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Amendment of Traffic Acts Amendment Bill

From Mr Muntz (491 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will amend legislation dealing with persons found to be driving with a blood alcohol content in excess of .05 per cent.

#### Rent Increases, Inala

From Mr Innes (252 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will give consideration to Inala in relation to rent increases in the community.

Petitions received.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

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

#### 1. Printing Tradesmen, Government Printing Office

Mr Milliner asked the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services—

(1) Have staff levels of tradesmen employed in the printing industry at the Government Printing Office in Queensland dropped over the past 12 months?

(2) If so, by how many in each department?

(3) What is the weekly gross amount without overtime paid to tradesmen in the printing industry employed at the Government Printing Office in Queensland?

(4) What is the gross weekly amount without overtime paid to a tradesman in the printing industry in each of the Government Printing Offices throughout Australia?

(5) How does the gross weekly wage without overtime in Queensland compare with all other Government Printing Offices throughout Australia, including the Government Printing Office in Canberra?

Answer:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Comparison of tradesmen employed by department—

	30-9-82	30-9-81
Composing .. .. .	84	89
Graphic Reproduction .. .. .	9	9
Printing .. .. .	34	38
Binding and Finishing .. .. .	28	30
Production Planning .. .. .	10	9
Mechanical .. .. .	12	13
	177	188

(3 & 4)—

**Wages of tradesmen**  
**Weekly wage as at 13-10-82**

Classification	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	SA	WA	TAS	NT
Compositor ..	\$ 284.10	\$ 333.20	\$ 322.20	\$ 307.00	\$ 301.53	\$ 309.30	\$ 277.59	\$ 287.62
Graphic Reproducer ..	284.10	344.70	316.80	298.00	301.53	301.90	271.26	276.84
Printing Machinist	274.60	343.00	313.20	293.00	292.53	295.90	271.26	275.73
Binder and Finisher ..	272.70	331.50	313.20	293.00	292.53	295.90	270.02	275.63
Reader .. ..	275.60	333.20	315.20	296.00	294.33	299.10	271.26	276.84
Printing Engineer Mechanic ..	273.80	331.50	313.20	293.00	294.60	295.90	277.03	253.83

(5)—

**Comparison of Queensland Wages with other Government Printing Offices**

Classification	NSW	ACT	VIC	SA	WA	TAS	NT
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Compositor ..	+49.10	+38.10	+22.90	+17.43	+25.20	-6.51	+3.52
Graphic Reproducer	+60.60	+32.70	+13.90	+17.43	+17.80	-12.84	-7.26
Printing Machinist	+68.40	+38.60	+18.40	+17.93	+21.30	-3.34	+1.13
Binder and Finisher	+58.80	+40.50	+20.30	+19.83	+23.20	-2.68	+2.93
Reader .. ..	+57.60	+39.60	+20.40	+18.73	+23.50	-4.34	+1.24
Printing Engineer Mechanic ..	+57.70	+39.40	+19.20	+20.80	+22.10	+3.23	-19.97

2. Pre-school Facilities, Farleigh and Glenella Primary Schools

Mr Muntz asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What action has been taken to establish full pre-school facilities at both the Farleigh and Glenella Primary Schools, having regard to the increases in enrolments of Year 1 students at the existing early education centres at these schools?

(2) Will he endeavour to have these full pre-school facilities available for the commencement of the 1983 school year?

*Answer:—*

(1) Plans have been prepared for construction of a new pre-school unit at Farleigh as part of the 1982-83 capital works program. Steps are also being taken to provide additional primary teaching space at Glenella to permit use of the existing early education centre solely for pre-school classes.

(2) Neither of these facilities will be completed for the commencement of the 1983 school year, but every possible effort will be made to bring them into operation as early in the year as is practicable.

## 3. Spinal Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital

Mr Underwood asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to the spinal unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital for 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82—

- (1) What is the average stay of a patient?
- (2) How many beds are there in the unit?
- (3) What is the total number of patient bed days?
- (4) What are the details of plans to upgrade the unit, if any?

Answer:—

(1) I am advised by the South Brisbane Hospitals Board that the average stay of patients in the spinal injuries unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital is as follows—

—	1981-82	1980-81	1979-80
Paraplegics .. .. .	19 weeks	23 weeks	18.7 weeks
Tetraplegics .. .. .	21 weeks	29.7 weeks	30 weeks

(2) There are a total of 42 beds in the unit, broken up as follows—

Ward S7 .. .. .	26
Ward S8 .. .. .	16

(3) The total number of patient bed days is as follows—

—	1981-82	1980-81	1979-80
Paraplegic .. .. .	5 544	5 957	5 236
Tetraplegic .. .. .	8 003	11 052	6 300

(4) Investigations are being carried out by the board and its architects into the facilities to be provided for spinal injury patients at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. It is expected that proposals will be submitted for the consideration of my department in the near future.

## 4. Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital

Mr Underwood asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to QE II Hospital, for 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83—

- (1) Does this hospital have serious operating problems due to (a) lack of staff (b) lack of resources and (c) lack of funds?
- (2) How many complaints have been directed to (a) the hospitals board and (b) his office and department, about deficient patient health care delivery?
- (3) For each complaint, what action was taken and what remedial measures were instituted to ensure the cause of complaint was rectified?

Answer:—

(1) I have been advised by the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospitals Board that the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital has virtually no vacancies within its approved establishment at the present time. This hospital is being opened on a staged basis related to established patient demands. The board, when necessary, has submitted requests for additional staff and these requests have been investigated and staff approved commensurate with perceived needs. The staff establishment is favourable by comparison with staffing levels for similar services provided at other hospitals throughout the State.

(2 & 3) The actual number of complaints received either in my department or at the hospital over the period in question is not readily available. However, in line with the Government policy, all complaints received are investigated as quickly as possible and the board takes appropriate action to rectify the matters raised if these are found to contain any element of legitimate complaint.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Retrospective Legislation on Tax Evasion

Mr CASEY: In the absence of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, I presume that the Minister for Commerce and Industry is the acting leader of the Government. I therefore ask the Minister: Does this week's unanimous Cabinet opposition to the proposed Federal retrospective tax legislation mean that every tax cheat and tax dodger will have the blessing of each and every Minister in this State, and that Queensland does not want to receive its rightful share of increased Federal tax under the existing Commonwealth-State financial arrangements?

Mr SULLIVAN: In answer to the honourable gentleman's facetious question, it is true that the coalition Government is definitely opposed to retrospectivity of any type or form.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is deliberately misleading the House. My point of order is that we have before the House in the Sugar Acquisition Act Amendment Bill a move for retrospectivity by this very Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr SULLIVAN: The Leader of the Opposition is on a razor's edge and knows that tomorrow he may not be Leader of the Opposition, so I can understand his reaction. The Sugar Acquisition Act Amendment Bill is validating legislation and in that sense is not retrospective.

The Government is diametrically opposed to retrospectivity in any form. The Government believes that under existing legislation the Federal Government has the power to deal with tax dodgers. The Queensland Government does not endorse the actions of certain people. The available legislation gives the Federal Government power to deal with those people who have been involved in bottom of the harbour schemes and who have thereby dodged their taxation liability. In that regard the attitude of the Queensland Government is unswerving.

### Radioactive Mineral Sands

Mr CASEY: I wish to ask a question of the Minister for Mines and Energy, but as he is not here and the Minister for Health seems to know a fair bit about the subject of my question, he might be willing to answer it. It concerns what at the moment in the minds of the people of Queensland is a very serious matter. I refer to the current controversy regarding the misuse of radioactive sands from sand-mining tailings and I ask: What new guide-lines have been established to apply to existing and future sand-mining leases to guarantee that no further radioactive tailings can be taken from mined areas and used where there could be a danger to the public? What new environmental guide-lines have been established to ensure that the future risk to the public of radiation from sand-mining is nil?

Mr AUSTIN: The Leader of the Opposition quite correctly prefaced his question by saying that the matters he raised should have been raised with another Minister. That part of the question related to mining leases should be asked of my colleague the Minister for Mines and Energy, and that part relating to the environment ought to be raised with my colleague the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services. If the Leader of the Opposition would like to direct to me a question about health or related matters rather than mining lease matters I would be quite happy to answer the question.

Mr CASEY: If the Minister does not think that the possible irradiation of the public is a health hazard, I redirect the question accordingly.

#### Meat Inspection and Quality Controls

Mr BOOTH: In asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to recent Press reports in regard to meat inspection and quality controls. Can the Minister inform the House whether there have been negotiations between the Commonwealth and State Governments, and if so, has any agreement been reached?

Mr AHERN: The honourable member refers to two matters which are related but not identical. The first relates to quality control. It is true that Commonwealth-State agreement has been reached on a co-operative arrangement for the implementation of carcass description, carcass classification and colour branding, and machinery should be established so that a move can be made towards uniformity throughout Australia. It would have been ludicrous to have a situation where a certain colour-branding regimen was established in this State different to that which applied in New South Wales, Victoria or wherever. So we are moving towards uniformity in relation to quality control measures.

However, the establishment of a uniform meat inspection service is an entirely different matter, and agreement has not yet been reached on it. The Woodward report has just been released, and it has found that State meat inspection services, in particular this State's meat inspection service, are without blame and that the Commonwealth meat inspection service is certainly full of blame. The report was highly critical of the Commonwealth service, and so for us simply to hand over a comprehensive service, which has served this State well, to the Commonwealth service, which has been found wanting, is not something I could agree to at this stage. However, an IAC inquiry into abattoir rationalisation is being conducted at the moment. I am watching interstate development and negotiations, and I hope that in the not too distant future an amicable settlement of the question of meat inspection services, both Commonwealth and State, can be made.

#### Employment of Disabled Persons

Dr LOCKWOOD: I ask the Minister for Welfare Services: Is it true that only 12 additional positions have been created in the Queensland Public Service for disabled persons as is alleged in the Welfare Services section of the Policy Handbook of the Australian Labor Party, which is under the control of the honourable member for South Brisbane, Mr Fouras?

Mr WHITE: It is pertinent for the honourable member to ask that question today because, for the first time, a visually impaired gentleman, Mr Ross Campbell, a constituent of my colleague the honourable member for Aspley, has been in the public gallery with his seeing-eye dog Isaac. Mr Campbell is a public servant.

The Opposition's allegation is a form of tokenism. It is unfounded and quite misleading. In the first six months of this year 44 new jobs were created in the Queensland Public Service for disabled people. Last year, as a direct consequence of the International Year of Disabled Persons, there was a marked change of attitude and a remarkable increase in employment opportunities for disabled persons. The overall Australian figures showed a 40 per cent increase over the previous year. Last year 14 000 new jobs were created in Australia, as my colleague the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations mentioned. Of those new jobs, almost half or 5 747 were created in Queensland. The Opposition's claim that the Government is not caring, is not interested in job creation and does not have a positive attitude towards the disabled is simply not true. It is a spurious attack mounted by the honourable member opposite.

It is rather unfortunate that he has attacked the Government on this point, because it has a record second to none. The figures are there to substantiate that. Almost 50 per cent of the new jobs created for disabled people in Australia were created in the State of Queensland. Many disabled people, like Mr Campbell who was in the public gallery this morning, recognise that fact and are appreciative of the Government's initiative.

## Anti-discrimination Legislation

Mr FOURAS: I direct a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. In reply to a question I asked on 9 September 1981, which sought information on whether he would introduce anti-discrimination legislation, the Minister avoided giving a positive reply, by saying—

“Queensland does not have an Anti-discrimination Act, but legislative changes have occurred in specific areas including domicile, women on juries and description of women on documents. Other legislative changes are constantly under review.”

I now ask: In the light of recent public demand for anti-discrimination legislation and the vocal support of the two female Liberal parliamentarians in this Chamber, will he give a clear indication of whether he supports the introduction of such legislation?

Mr DOUMANY: I will not attempt to recall something that I said more than a year ago. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I do not pretend to be an encyclopaedia. His second name is Britannica. He remembers everything except the things that are important. I would like the honourable member to place his question on notice so that I can properly refer back to the question that was asked and my reply to that question.

Mr FOURAS: I do so accordingly.

## Amendments to Prisons Act and Regulations

Mr FOURAS: In directing a question to the Minister for Welfare Services, I refer to a reply to a question which I asked on 29 November 1979, in which the then Minister for Welfare (Mr Doumany) stated that the Prisons Act and Regulations were under very intensive review and that amendments would be introduced in the next session of Parliament.

On 9 September 1981, following a similar question, the Minister stated—

“Although I would like to be in a position to introduce legislation this session, it is more likely to be ready in 1982.”

I ask: Will he inform the House if that commitment will be met and, if not, why not?

Mr WHITE: I thank the honourable member for his question. This is the 17th question that he has asked since I have held this responsibility. To my knowledge, it is only the third occasion on which he has raised a question directly relating to the prison service. I am grateful that he is taking an interest in that area.

I understand from my departmental officers that in excess of 120 amendments are required to be made to the Act. It is obviously silly to proceed with any amendments to the legislation. I have instructed my departmental officers in concert with the Justice Department to redraft a new piece of legislation. It is a major job. It is a major piece of legislation.

Mr Fouras: It was a major job three years ago.

Mr WHITE: It is all very well for Opposition members to say that the legislation should be rushed through the Parliament. If the Government rushes the legislation through the House, the same Opposition members will say, “Why are you rushing this legislation through the House?”

I point out to Opposition members that we are dealing with legislation that affects the daily lives of people, and that we should proceed cautiously and slowly to ensure that we have a piece of legislation that will be effective and represent the contemporary attitudes and thrust of society.

I thank the honourable member for his question and simply point out that the Government is working on the legislation and that in due course it will come before the House.

### Slump in Building Industry

Mr JENNINGS: I ask the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations: Is he aware of some recent statements that the building industry in Brisbane, on the Gold Coast and in Queensland in general is experiencing its worst slump ever? If the Minister is aware of those statements, will he advise the House of the effect of the current rate of construction of his department's activities?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am aware that statements of that nature have been made rather loosely. It is interesting to note that on the Gold Coast alone 27 tower cranes are operating successfully.

Mr Davis interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: In the electorate of the honourable member for Brisbane and in the whole of the metropolitan area of Brisbane, there are 20 tower cranes operating. One only has to go round the streets of Brisbane to see the work that is going on in the central city area.

Mr Davis: They have got good representation. Why shouldn't the cranes be operating?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I do not know why the honourable member does not spend more time in his electorate. If he did, he would find out what is happening. All he can do is travel in his big car from Parliament House to his home. He never goes near the people in his electorate. He should go and have a look and find out the position for himself.

In the two areas to which I referred, 47 tower cranes are operating. In the whole of the city of Sydney, only 27 tower cranes are operating. The work level in this State is very high when compared with the level in the rest of Australia. It is true that it is not as high as it was last year, but there is still plenty of activity in the construction industry, and more work is in the pipeline.

Mr Casey: What are the latest approval ratings?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The approval levels are improving. They are not as high as they were last year, and I am not going to try to claim that. The levels in Queensland are as good as they were in the middle '70s. The situation is extremely good. Those Jeremiahs who are going around suggesting that nothing is happening in this State, that everything has come to a standstill, should just look around them and see the action that is taking place.

### Fuel Tax Rebates

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Will he make urgent representations to the Federal Minister for Industry and Commerce (Hon. Andrew Peacock) pointing out to him the plight that primary producers and small fuel agents in the country find themselves in as a result of the time it has taken to implement the necessary legislation to enable fuel tax rebates to be made?

Mr AHERN: I am aware of the problem. The Premier has indicated to the Prime Minister industry concern about the delays now occurring as a result of legislation not passing through the Federal Parliament. The Premier has conveyed his own concern to the Prime Minister.

Last week, at a conference that I was attending in Hobart, I had an opportunity to address my Federal colleague the Minister for Primary Industry about it, and I indicated to him, as did all other State Ministers, the serious concern of fuel users in the farming sector about the delay in passing the Federal legislation. He indicated that, because of the Federal Government's difficulties in the Senate, the problem was beyond its control. He said also that the Federal Government was giving it all the priority that it could.

In answers that I have received to my representations, I have been advised that the legislation will be passed shortly and that the rebate arrangements will then be made. I will maintain a watching brief and communicate with my Federal colleagues to ensure that the problem is quickly overcome.

## Retrospective Legislation on Tax Evasion

Mr INNES: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Leaving aside the out-and-out criminal activities of some tax avoiders and looking at the phenomenon of the development of the tax minimisation industry, which has frequently involved highly sophisticated and artificial schemes and, at the lower end of the scale, a significant cash economy developing in this country, does he believe that Governments should be looking at the conditions that caused such developments, and is he prepared to urge the Federal Treasurer to require an urgent and total overhaul of the Australian income tax system? In particular, might I suggest that because of the soundness and wide acceptance of the Campbell report and its practical application—it has already been implemented—would not the Campbell committee be an excellent body to be reappointed to undertake that overhaul?

Dr EDWARDS: I totally agree with the suggestions made by the honourable member in his question. The Federal Government and the Federal Opposition stand condemned for the emphasis that they have put on retrospectivity in preference to a reappraisal of the tax laws.

Mr Warburton: What about stamp duty?

Dr EDWARDS: At no time have I ever acted retrospectively on stamp duty or pay-roll tax. I have announced that a particular program will be implemented as from a set date.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You do not believe in retrospectivity?

Dr EDWARDS: I do not believe in retrospectivity.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about when they made it retrospective for you?

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member for Wolston does not know the difference between retrospective tax legislation and legislation that validates a decision that has been taken for granted as the correct interpretation of the law. That is the difference. In many cases what has been accepted as the law and been interpreted as such has been found, because of a technicality, to be incorrect. There is then a need to validate decisions that have been accepted by all parties as being correct. The big difference is that the retrospectivity now proposed is an amendment of the law to deal with people in a particular instance. I am totally opposed to that in any form. To change a law retrospectively is an unwise and irresponsible practice. I agree totally with the honourable member in that regard.

When an interpretation of a law needs to be validated, I support that action; but I will not support retrospective legislation. I give notice of my total condemnation of any proposal for such legislation. The Federal Government and the Federal Opposition stand condemned for their policy in that regard. They have adopted that attitude instead of, as the honourable member for Sherwood suggested, getting at the basic problem of the iniquitous and unfair tax system in this nation. The honourable member's suggestion of tax reform is the correct emphasis. Australia has a cash economy because of its iniquitous and unfair tax laws.

Mr Smith: Do you propose a 20 per cent flat rate?

Dr EDWARDS: I did not say that, but I believe it has much more merit than the rubbish we are hearing at the present time. I do not support a flat rate of tax, because it has major problems inherent in it, and the honourable member well knows that those problems could not justify the introduction of such a system.

In his question, the honourable member for Sherwood suggested tax reform, to which both the Liberal Party and the Government are committed. The question makes a very vital point, and I support the continuation of the Campbell committee relative to revising the tax laws of the nation. If the Federal Government and the Federal Opposition would get off their tails and do something about a review of the taxation system, they would be contributing a great deal more than they are with all the bitterness and filthiness of the tax retrospectivity argument that is going on at present. They are doing the political system no good; they are doing the nation no good; above all, they are doing the community a disservice.

I do not support the avoidance or evasion of tax. The honourable member made a number of useful suggestions—

Mr Smith interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: The honourable member made a dreadful mess of his speech yesterday, and we know where he stands on this subject. As I said, the honourable member for Sherwood made several suggestions that I support. The Federal Government should be looking at a review of the entire taxation system, and I believe that the Campbell committee would be the ideal group to undertake that responsibility.

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

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Electricity Tariffs in Carnarvon Electorate

Mr McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (12.1 p.m.): I have been attacked by a number of Opposition members because I am standing up for my electorate, but I make no apology for doing that at any time. The matter about which I am greatly upset at the moment is the New South Wales electricity industry and the cost of the electricity it distributes across the border into over half of my electorate.

Last Monday night a public meeting was conducted by the Wallangarra-Jennings Progress Association in Wallangarra. As a matter of fact, the hall was full to the brim. People in that part of my electorate are very upset about the cost of electricity purchased from New South Wales. One woman was good enough to let me have a look at two of her electricity accounts, and they give a fair indication of what has happened to electricity charges imposed by New South Wales authorities in the past twelve months. In one quarter last year she used a total of 5 500 units at a cost of \$179.60. Knowing that the New South Wales electricity industry had got out of control, and knowing that the cost per unit would rise this year, that consumer, who lives in an ex-Housing Commission home—it is not a large home—decided that she and her family would conserve energy this year. So for the same quarter this year she cut her consumption to 3 630 units. One would expect that with a cut in consumption to that extent the bill would have been lower, despite inflation, but she was in fact billed \$234.60.

Mr Vaughan: Is that 3 000 units quarterly consumption or per year?

Mr McKECHNIE: I am talking about a bill for a three-month period. If Opposition members can add up, they will find that that is a 100 per cent increase in cost per unit.

The Wallangarra-Jennings Progress Association mounted an information display for everybody to read. It included a sample bill based on the consumption of 1 800 units of electricity, and the representative of the electricity authority who was present verified the accuracy of the figures. The percentage rise was similar.

The New South Wales Government has starved the county councils of funds. It has insisted that they introduce certain billing principles. They have also instituted a standing charge. The electricity industry in New South Wales is in a mess. Industries in Queensland, as well as those in New South Wales, are affected. The authority in question has had to meet added problems caused by the closure of the Wallangarra and Tenterfield meatworks, which has meant a considerable drop in electricity consumption in the shire.

People who normally strongly support Labor emphasised that the New South Wales Government had instituted inverted tariffs to save on electricity costs. In the case I cited, consumption was cut considerably, but costs had increased. The distributing costs are very much the same irrespective of how much power is used.

On the one hand, the New South Wales energy authority has been directed by the Government to bring in inverted tariffs to keep costs down. That applies to the construction of new powerhouses. However, the New South Wales Government has not thought the problem through. If the distributing authority sells less power it has to spread the cost of distribution over the people who buy power from it.

In relation to the efficiency of the New South Wales generating authority, I have here an official New South Wales document headed "Briefing Notes on Electricity Supply Situation". I will read to members a very relevant paragraph—

"In Australia the largest State power systems produce most of their electricity from coal. In Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, the black and brown coal used by those power systems cannot in any sense be described as a scarce resource. The scarce resource which electricity authorities in Australia seek to conserve is money,—"

That document emphasises that money is a scarce resource—not energy. The document continues—

"the capital required to construct new generating facilities, transmission lines and distribution networks. Over the next five years it will cost on average about \$1,000 of capital (at 1982 dollars) to provide the facilities needed for each 1 kilowatt of load."

The next sentence puts it into layman's terms. These are not my words—

"Thus in order to supply a 1 kilowatt domestic electric radiator the Australian electricity supply industry will have to invest about \$1,000 to serve an appliance which can be bought for less than \$20. (This assumes that the appliance is additional to those already in use.)"

That official document demonstrates very clearly the cost of providing powerhouses in New South Wales.

At the meeting held in Wallangarra last Monday night the people emphasised that they were not worried only about tariffs. If a person changes his residence he has to lodge a substantial deposit on which no interest is paid. In Queensland, interest is paid on a security deposit, or electricity bonds can be taken out at a high rate of interest.

A person who buys a vacant lot in a heavily populated part of Wallangarra has to pay \$350 to get power connected. At Goondiwindi, which is supplied by the North-west County Council, the cost is \$250. People who reside in Queensland electricity authority areas do not have to pay anything to get electricity connected. In rural areas of Queensland, the capital cost of an electricity extension, although it is far too dear, is subject to an allowance for the return that the authority gets on the money. Nothing like that happens in New South Wales.

When I asked questions about irrigation connections, I was told that for a certain 4 km extension in Queensland to a fairly large motor, the connection cost was nothing. The figures show that, in a New South Wales authority, the cost would be \$36,000. That may not be a fair comparison. I asked a question in the House but the New South Wales authority has not yet commented on it. When a fairer comparison can be made, the cost may be \$25,000 or \$30,000. However, there is a substantial difference.

The people at the meeting want us to continue our investigation into the possibility of taking that authority over again. That desire is supported by the local authority representatives at the other end of my electorate, which is served by the North-West County Council.

That shows what happens when State Labor Governments get into power. They make a mess of all the public authorities. I do not say for one moment that ours are perfect but they are a jolly sight more efficient than the authorities in a Labor State. Because Wallangarra is a Labor town, I said at that meeting that at some time in the dim distant future there could be a change of Government in Queensland. Somebody yelled out, "We will never let that happen in Queensland." That is the sort of feeling that is being generated in the border area.

(Time expired.)

#### Leadership of Opposition

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (12.11 p.m.): I have stood in this Parliament previously and criticised the Labor Party for being subject to outside direction. Although I do not necessarily change that view I must say that I have come to realise over the past few days how understandable it is. Its capacity for decision-making is wanting. If it is a matter of giving examples, one example is that the major task of any party in any Parliament is to select a leader, one man who can lead an Opposition into government.

What has the Opposition done in this regard? Following the last election, it selected one, Ed Casey. He is a kindly man who has done the party well. No sooner did he get into power than Opposition members started wheeling and dealing behind the back door, in the bar, in the garage and round the traps to get rid of him. He had been there for five minutes and they tried to knock him off. It is accepted in every Parliament that party members have a right to elect their leader.

Mr Frawley: Not every week.

Mr PRENTICE: Not every week.

If Opposition members could wind up their energy, get people to talk to one another and decide on a person who should be elected as leader—even if they did it every week—I would say that they had the ability to make a decision. But no, they have not even got that far.

Mr Jones: We will have to get you in as an adviser.

Mr PRENTICE: I think I could offer a few tips. I must declare my interest in the matter. I am supporting Mr Davis for leader, backed by Mr Hooper. They would make a reasonable team. The whole mess in which the Opposition finds itself results from those members being about the best that could be found. They would do a fairly good job. The honourable member for South Brisbane is offended but it is the Davis/Hooper ticket for me. They could be no worse than others that the party has.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr PRENTICE: We must look at their performance in the House. I know that the honourable member for Sandgate has aspirations and I am told that he is 6-4 on. Really Mr Hooper is the man. I believe that the ALP knows that the honourable member for Archerfield is the best it could have.

Mr Scassola: Isn't it a coincidence that tomorrow is the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar?

Mr PRENTICE: We are on the eve of the Battle of the ALP. It will be interesting to learn who disappears into the mire, never to raise his hopes again. Probably, the plotting will start again next week. The Leader of the Opposition might go this week and another campaign will start next week.

With due respect to the "Telegraph", it sums the matter up well. Today's "Telegraph" cartoon depicts a man with a long box underneath his arm. Another chap has obviously said to him, "What's that?" He is told, "It's the ALP election kit. You wind it up and it falls to pieces." That sums up the Opposition. I do not like wasting time on the Opposition, but I thought it was worth a mention or two.

A Budget document should show a Government's overall economic approach. It is a major news item. It is something that is subject to intense analysis by economists and journalists because those persons want to present to the people of Queensland or the nation the direction of that State in economic terms, where it is going and, by examination of the accounts, where it has been; in other words, make an assessment of the Government.

Unfortunately, in this State a Budget does not really show a true picture of the economy. It does not fail to do so because of a deliberate attempt within the document to mislead. I have no doubt that the figures presented are entirely accurate. A Budget covers only certain aspects of what a Government does.

In this State the Government has managed to generate many other areas of expenditure and many other areas of taxation in one sense or another that are well outside the Government's control, such as statutory authorities, boards and committees. All of those bodies have an economic impact on the future of this State. It is my contention that those bodies and the various funds that the Government controls should be subject to a total and open scrutiny by this Parliament.

The first information that must be ascertained is the number of those bodies. I understand that the Government has conducted a review of the various statutory authorities, boards, committees and other like creatures within this State. As far as I know, that report has been finalised but has not been made public. The first step would be to let this Parliament know exactly what committees, boards and authorities exist.

This morning the member for Mt Gravatt and I asked questions to ascertain what the different authorities are. The Swan Lagoon Advisory Committee has a great name. I would be interested to know what it is and what it does. It may well serve a very important purpose within the community. It may be of great significance, but that body might be like the body on parthenium weed or the Pyramid Selling Schemes Elimination Committee, which presumably relates to pyramid selling.

Members of Parliament should be able to examine the activities of those bodies in detail and to make an assessment as to whether they are doing their job, as to whether money is spent wisely and as to whether the fees and charges they levy upon the people of this nation are indeed formulated wisely.

Recently the Young Liberal Movement prepared a report on statutory authorities in this State. It points out that, in 1980-81, statutory authorities employed 54 623 people or 5.41 per cent of the State's work-force. By contrast, 48 219 people worked under the Public Service Act in that year.

In 1980-81, the total income of statutory authorities was almost \$3,000m, only slightly less than the total of depositors' balances in savings banks in the whole of Queensland as at 30 June that year. Each year those bodies—the various statutory authorities and committees—effect an estimated 25 per cent to 30 per cent of new capital investment in this State. Therefore, public bodies are the major influence on the State capital market. In 1979-80, they spent \$920m on new fixed assets. By contrast, the total value of new homes completed in Queensland that year was \$700m.

Those bodies must be subject to scrutiny by this Parliament. That can be done in a number of ways. In the past, we have dealt with the setting up of a public accounts committee. I have supported that proposition in the past, and still support it. Those bodies should be subject to limitations in that there should be a sunset clause in the relevant legislation so that their need can be reviewed by this Parliament every five years. Wherever possible, they should be established by legislation and not by Cabinet decision. This Parliament, and, to some extent, the Government, is losing control of the State when bodies of that magnitude exist outside Government control.

(Time expired.)

#### Authorities to Prospect

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (12.22 p.m.): Mr Speaker, in this Matters of Public Interest debate today I want to speak about authorities to prospect.

According to the 1981 annual report of the Department of Mines, as at 31 December 1981, 649 authorities to prospect for minerals were issued in this State. That is more than at the same time the previous year and 299 more than at 31 December 1979.

Under the provisions of the Mining Act, an authority to prospect is granted to allow exploration and investigation of large areas of land by intensive prospecting on a large scale. The maximum area of an authority to prospect for minerals other than coal is 100 subblocks—320 sq. km—for which applicants are required to pay an annual rental of \$40 a subblock, plus \$2,000 deposit.

However, I believe that authorities to prospect are not being used by some people for the purposes for which they were intended and I therefore take this opportunity to call on the Government, through the Mines Department, to conduct an in-depth inquiry into all authorities to prospect that have been issued to ensure that the terms and conditions under which they were issued are being complied with.

To illustrate my concern, I want to refer to the authority to prospect that was recently granted over an area of 4 000 sq. km in the Georgetown area. In "The Sunday Mail" of 11 July 1982, it was reported that such an authority to prospect had been granted to a consortium consisting of two Perth-based companies, West Coast Holdings and Command Minerals, Duval Mining Australia Ltd (a subsidiary of its American parent), Picon Explorations Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of Pioneer Concrete) and Howard-Smith Exploration Pty Ltd.

The report further stated that Mr Ian Howard-Smith (who was previously a partner in Millmerran Coal Pty Ltd) was the executive director of the project which was called the Gregory Range Project.

In answer to a question I asked in the House on 15 September 1982, the Minister for Mines (Mr I. J. Gibbs) confirmed that the area of the authority to prospect is 4000 sq. km and stated that the reason such a large area was granted was that the authority to prospect is removed from areas of known mineralisation with any prospective targets obscured by younger sedimentary rocks.

He went on to say that, accordingly, there was a warrant for a large area to be examined in the exploration program in an effort to define prospective targets for detailed investigation. He also admitted that the authority was for all minerals excluding coal, and therefore it effectively tied up the whole area. So much for the recent amendments to the Mining Act to give the small miner a go!

The area covered by this authority to prospect is twelve and a half times the maximum area of 320 sq. km prescribed by the Mines Department for an authority to prospect for minerals other than coal. I cannot see how such an area can be "explored by intensive prospecting on a large scale", as required by the provisions of the Mining Act.

According to an advertisement in the Queensland Government Mining Journal of February this year, holders of authorities to prospect for minerals other than coal of an area of 320 sq. km (the maximum area) are expected to expend \$50,000 in the first year, \$80,000 in the second year and \$120,000 in the third year.

On this basis, this consortium should be required to spend more than \$3m over three years and much more if the authority to prospect is for a period longer than three years. Although the consortium has indicated that it will spend several million dollars on exploration, I am sceptical that it will.

Even so, such expenditure over an area of 4000 sq. km over a period of three years is not "intensive prospecting on a large scale" in my book. Unfortunately, whereas most details of the authority to prospect are available for public scrutiny, details of expenditure are not.

An authority to prospect covering such a large area will also further "lock up" the Georgetown mining district to the exclusion of small miners. As the warden for the area stated in the 1981 Mines Department annual report—

"Again this year most of the Georgetown mining district was at one stage or another held under authority to prospect and this aspect put a 'damper' on the activities of the small time 'bona fide miner'."

Substantial gains can be achieved under certain circumstances by holders of authorities to prospect, particularly when such large areas are involved. For example, one of the people associated with this consortium, Mr Howard Smith, is reported to have received \$4m plus royalty rights amounting to many more millions of dollars when he and his brother-in-law, Mr Alan Thiess, sold their company, Millmerran Coal Pty. Ltd., which held an authority to prospect for coal covering 6279 sq. km, to the Amax Iron Ore Corporation and Mitsui Coal Development (Australia) Pty. Ltd. Unfortunately, as far as the Government of this State is concerned, that was a private transaction and, as the Premier told me on 22 May 1980, the Government does not delve into private transactions. Therefore, although in accordance with the provisions of the Mining Act assigning, transferring, mortgaging, charging of an interest over or creating any interest in an authority to prospect is not permitted except with the prior written approval of the Minister, a similar result and considerable gain can be achieved by such a "private transaction".

Of course, members of the Government are well aware of how authorities to prospect can be used to achieve substantial gain. Let me quote a classic example of this. In November 1958, a prominent member of the Government applied for and was granted an authority to prospect for petroleum. He paid his £2,000 deposit and £723 rental. On 25 May 1959, he entered into an agreement with the Lucky Strike Drilling Company to form a company and to transfer the authority to prospect to that company for a nominal consideration in accordance with the requirements of the Mines Department.

Under the agreement, the Lucky Strike Drilling Company undertook to purchase from him 51 per cent of the company for £12,650 and to pay him 51 per cent of the deposit and first year's rental, that is, 51 per cent of £2,723. On the same day, that person formed the Artesian Basin Oil Company Pty Ltd, which today would be known as a \$2 company, and held a meeting of directors of the company, of which he was the sole director; so there was a meeting of directors, of which he was the only one.

At that so-called "meeting", he reported he was willing to sell his authority to prospect to the company for a nominal consideration of £2. The "meeting" resolved to acquire the authority to prospect from him for £2.

On 26 May 1959, a letter was forwarded to the Mines Department requesting consent of the Minister to transfer the authority to prospect to Artesian Basin Oil Company Pty Ltd, for £2. Ministerial approval was given on 1 June 1959. However, on 26 May 1959, another "meeting" of directors was held at which, after an address by the sole director to that meeting of one and at his suggestion, it was decided that the authority to prospect was worth more than £2 and it was resolved that it be revalued to £24,804.

To cut a long story short—on 4 June 1959, by decision of the "directors", Artesian Basin Oil Company Pty Ltd declared a dividend of £24,802 out of the profit of the revaluation, which was distributed in the form of fully paid-up £1 shares to shareholders. As the sole director had the only two issued shares of the company, he received 12 401 shares directly, with the other 12 401 shares being held in trust for him.

As per the agreement with the Lucky Strike Drilling Company, 51 per cent of Artesian Basin Oil Company Pty Ltd was then sold to the Lucky Strike Drilling Company for the sum of £12,650. This is a prime example of how the provisions of the Mining Act can be defeated. In the case I have just referred to, an authority to prospect was obtained, no intensive prospecting on a large scale took place but a substantial profit was made by the person to whom the authority to prospect was issued.

I believe that in view of the revelations about bottom of the harbour tax evasion schemes and the incidence of tax evasion in this nation, authorities to prospect could be being used as a means of tax evasion. After all, the particular case I referred to involving a member of the Government was the subject of court action by the Taxation Department involving attempted tax evasion. I therefore believe it is time that the provisions of the Mining Act relating to the granting of authorities to prospect and mining leases were tightened up.

For any member of the House or any other interested party who wants to check on that particular case, which was heard in the High Court on 30 September 1962 and 5 October 1962, and was *Bjelke-Petersen v. the Federal Commissioner of Taxation*, I point out that it is reported in volume eight from pages 589 to 599 of the *Australia New Zealand Income Tax Reports*.

It is a well-known fact that two ex-Ministers of the Government upon retirement sought authorities to prospect. One of them was the ex-Minister for Mines and Energy, who, after a public furore about it, decided not to proceed with his application for an authority to prospect. I understand that the other retired Minister proceeded with his authority to prospect. Of course, there is no guarantee that the previous Minister for Mines and Energy, who said he would not proceed with his application, will not in fact do so.

(Time expired.)

#### Education Facilities in Caboolture Electorate

Mr FRAWLEY (Caboolture) (12.32 p.m.): Since 1972, when I became a member of this Assembly, the ALP has continually criticised the Government's policy on education. That party's efforts were not very good, because in the last ten years of Labor Governments in this State, which ended in 1957, the allocation to education increased from 10 per cent to 13.3 per cent of the Budget. This year the Government has allocated 22.8 per cent of the Budget—\$838m—to education, which is an indication that the Government has the welfare of children at heart.

Far be it from me to blow my own trumpet, but since I became the member for Caboolture great advances have been made in education in the Caboolture electorate. Of course, previously I was the member for Murrumba, which encompassed parts of the Caboolture electorate.

An Honourable Member: What school are you pushing for now?

Mr FRAWLEY: I push for all the schools in my electorate, and that is why I continue to be returned to this place.

As I said, since I became the member a number of new schools have been built. The best and most expensive is the Morayfield State High School, which cost \$2.63m. More additions have to be made to that. That figure sounds unbelievable, but it is correct. The Caboolture State School was constructed at a cost of \$1,031,000. The Deception Bay North School cost \$860,000. At present, the Golden Beach State School is under construction at a cost of \$843,993. I had much to do with that school. It was through my efforts and those of the member for Landsborough, the Minister for Primary Industries, that that State school has been commenced.

Mr Davis: Would you be honest? You have to admit that natural growth would account for it.

Mr FRAWLEY: I am always honest. Because of the interjection of the honourable member for Brisbane Central, I must say that I oppose his appointment as leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party. He is not leadership material. The National Party people in Caboolture said to me, "Whatever you do, for heaven's sake push the claims of the member for Sandgate and the member for Lytton because, in our opinion, they are the ones who would make the best leader and deputy leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party." So that is what I am doing. As I sit on the same side of the Chamber as they do, I have even offered them my proxy vote. In the division I called the other night, they all supported me. Through their support, I was able to give back-benchers the right to speak. I am disappointed that most of my own back-benchers did not help me.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr FRAWLEY: I call to mind the words of the old poem—

"Just for a handful of silver he left us,  
Just for a riband to stick in his coat . . ."

I suppose people saw their ministerial chances going down the drain, so they decided not to vote with me. Never mind; I might as well continue to give the Labor Party a bit of a serve for a bit longer.

I understand from my informants in the Labor Party that the election for the leadership will be held tonight. I am a bit concerned that the member for Rockhampton might manage to hypnotise some of his colleagues—he is a well-known hypnotist—into voting for him. As I said, I think the members for Sandgate and Lytton are two good men—a credit to the Labor Party—who will go a long way in the Labor Party. They have my whole-hearted support. It would be pretty safe to quote them at 6 to 4 on. Their chances are so good that I would not take a cent on them.

I have been distracted enough by Opposition members, who always try to disrupt my speeches. I want to return to the very important subject of education in my electorate.

Mr Jones interjected.

Mr FRAWLEY: The member for Cairns would make a good leader, but he just does not have sufficient support.

As I said, the number of schools that have been constructed in my electorate are an indication of the Government's concern for education. They give the lie to some of the statements made by Mr Schuntner, the president of the teachers union, for whom I have not the slightest regard.

Mr Scott: He's a Liberal.

Mr FRAWLEY: I do not care what he is; he's a dill.

Mr Wilson: That's why he's in the Liberal Party.

Mr FRAWLEY: Opposition members will not get me to say anything about my Liberal colleagues, for whom I have the greatest respect. A Liberal candidate stood against me at the last election, and she was a very nice woman. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to say that she conducted herself as a lady should.

Mr Jones: That's why she lost.

Mr FRAWLEY: That could be so, but I believe in equality of the sexes, and she had every right to stand for Parliament.

Because this might be my last speech in the Matters of Public Interest debate, I intend, at the risk of being tedious, to list the pre-schools that have been constructed in my electorate. They have been constructed at Deception Bay and Deception Bay North, both strong Labor areas. I am the only National Party or Country Party member ever to top the primary vote in Deception Bay. Pre-schools have also been constructed at Woodford, Caboolture State School, Caboolture East, Bribie Island, Burpengary, Narangba, Beerwah and Mt Mee. Early education centres have been constructed at Dayboro, Wamuran, Beerburum and Elimbah. I say with all modesty that most have been constructed following my strong representations. As the member for Brisbane Central said earlier, some were constructed because of natural growth in the area, but it helps to have a member who has the ear of Ministers and is not afraid to speak up. That is why I say that it will be a sad thing for Caboolture if a member of the Liberal Party or of the National Party—preferably the National Party—is not elected to carry on the representation that I have given Caboolture over the past 10 years and to continue that great effort.

I did not bother to take out a great many figures on this subject, because I knew most members would be bored with them. Many honourable members do not understand figures, although there are a few, such as my friend from Cook, who do. He is a pretty talented man and another who should be in the leadership stakes. He would make a pretty good leader, but I hate to tell him that he does not have a chance.

Getting back to the important subject of education—almost \$14m has been spent on education facilities in my electorate since I became the member. From 1 July 1977 to 31 August 1982 a total of \$10,967,000 has been spent on education facilities, which shows that the Government does consider education a very important part of its responsibilities. The Government has purchased land in Manley Street, Caboolture, north of the Caboolture East State School, for a college of technical and further education. Because Caboolture is a growing area, I believe that college should be established there in the near future.

Mr Vaughan: If you get electric trains you will not look back.

Mr FRAWLEY: I agree. Recently, in answer to my question, the Minister for Transport raised my hopes about electric trains for Caboolture. When the work on the line to Petrie is completed, I believe that Caboolture will be next on the list.

An Opposition Member: Even before Kingston-Beenleigh?

Mr FRAWLEY: I believe that it will be connected even before Redcliffe. Eventually an electric rail service will go to Redcliffe. I am the member for Caboolture and I am supporting an electric train for my area.

Irrespective of what is said about education by all the knockers in Parliament—especially by members of the Labor Party—by the Queensland Teachers Union and a few other people who use education for political purposes, it is disgraceful for any member, at any p. and c., to engage in politics. At one p. and c. in my electorate the school principal said, "For God's sake stop politicking on this p. and c. association". His remark was prompted by the remarks of one of the Labor candidates for Caboolture who used p. and c. meetings as a political platform. I do not carry on in that way at p. and c. meetings. When I am asked to talk to the parents I do not engage in politics. I simply tell them the truth when I am asked questions.

Mr Jones: It is not politics on those boards and committees when a Labor man is on them.

Mr FRAWLEY: Some of the things that are done are reprehensible. P. and c. meetings should be held for the good of the children attending the schools, not for political purposes. The main function of a p. and c. is to see that children get every possible advantage.

#### Establishment of Queensland Institute of Sport

Mr SCASSOLA (Mt Gravatt) (12.42 p.m.): I rise to advocate the establishment of a sport institute in Queensland. The Treasurer voiced his support for that concept some time prior to the Commonwealth Games when he indicated that the Government could support the establishment of such an institute as long as the emphasis was on a Statewide scheme.

It is timely, following the Commonwealth Games, for the Government to give very serious consideration to establishing such an institute. Over a period of 10 years, the State Government has made a significant contribution to the coaching of juniors in a variety of sports. A considerable sum of money has been spent on that. A system of specialised coaching for athletes showing promise of achievement at international level and specialised courses for coaches for such athletes is now warranted.

The State Government's assistance to sport generally, together with the Commonwealth Government's recent support in the form of the Institute of Sport in Canberra, was rewarded by the outstanding performance of our athletes in several sports at the recent Commonwealth Games. That commitment was also reflected in the performance of school athletes from Queensland at the South Pacific Games which preceded the Commonwealth Games. Those successes, in my view, justify the support that has been given to sport. In my view, those successes warrant further support for athletes who show outstanding talent and appear to have a bright future on the international stage and also for coaches.

The highly successful Institute of Sport in Canberra was established some years ago under the then Liberal Minister for Home Affairs, the Honourable Robert Ellicott.

The community is tremendously proud of the fine effort of our athletes who took part in the Commonwealth Games. The Games have generated a keen interest in sport and in the future of our sportsmen and women. The community is now looking forward, in sporting terms, to the Olympic Games in 1984.

The performance of our sportsmen and women at international gatherings, such as the Commonwealth Games, is used to determine the level of our country's sporting prowess. As in the case of other pursuits, athletes who represent their country and those who show outstanding talent and promise should be given every assistance, in terms of facilities, specialised coaching and advice in other forms, to help them perform at a level which is commensurate with their ability.

One way to do that is to establish an institute of sport in Queensland, firstly, to encourage the development of sport; secondly, to improve the expertise of coaches and administrators; and, thirdly, to identify promising athletes who can be developed through specialised training and coaching programs. They are the three important objectives of any institute of sport.

One of the legacies of the Commonwealth Games is that Brisbane is now blessed with world-class facilities for a number of sports. Those facilities should now be put to use for the benefit of our young athletes to enable them to attain high standards of excellence in their chosen field. It is no real argument to say that the Institute of Sport exists in Canberra and that the matter should be left at that, because a number of matters indicate that we ought to have an institute of sport in Queensland.

The fact is that those persons who desire to attend the Institute of Sport in Canberra are obliged to travel long distances interstate. It is a great imposition on young athletes to have to travel those long distances and to be removed from their families, their friends and their environment. Some of them are people of very tender years. In many instances, particularly the swimmers, they are in their early adolescence and I wonder whether it is appropriate for those young people to be away from their homes, the advice and supervision of their parents and relatives and the general constraints which their homes impose. That is one important reason why an institute of sport is warranted in Queensland.

The climate in Queensland lends itself all year round to the conduct of an institute for the training of athletes and coaches in the field, as it were. The facilities at QE II and Chandler are built.

Of course, they will require maintenance. The maintenance costs will be incurred whether they are used or not. There is an obligation to use them in the interests of the community, particularly in the interests of sportsmen. What better way is there than to use the facilities for the purpose of improving the expertise and talent of our young athletes and coaches? I could not envisage any reason which would preclude some arrangement between the State Government and the Brisbane City Council for the use of those facilities at QE II and Chandler.

At the time of the establishment of the National Institute of Sport in Canberra, the then Federal Minister said that he envisaged that that institute would only be one of a number throughout the country. At that time it was envisaged that the institute in Canberra would only be one and that there would be eight or nine other institutes throughout Australia.

The Griffith University is in close proximity to the QE II complex, which is an outstanding facility. It is close to other learning institutions. Some of the accommodation areas of Griffith University could be made available to accommodate young athletes who wish to come to Brisbane and coaches who want to undertake specialist courses at the institute. Those persons would be accommodated in close proximity to the Mt Gravatt College of Advanced Education, the Queensland Institute of Technology, the TAFE college at Mt Gravatt and other learning institutions. They could pursue their specialist training and at the same time undertake whatever tertiary course they wish to pursue. They could also undertake some form of employment.

(Time expired.)

#### Glue-sniffing

Mr WILSON (Townsville South) (12.52 p.m.): I wish to refer to the problem of glue-sniffing by young and teenage children. It is a real problem in my electorate. I congratulate the "Townsville Advertiser" for giving the matter publicity, bringing it out into the open, making more people aware of it and bringing it to the attention of at least the people of Townsville. The edition of 14 October carries the headline, "Glue-sniffing is rife—here's proof!" Other headlines in the article are, "Where were your kids last night?", "The little battlers nobody knows . . .", "Sniffing is perfectly legal", "Add a toxin to the glue?" and "Cabinet to restrict the sale of glue".

Mr Fouras: The Welfare Minister withdrew his legislation because it was a hopeless piece of legislation, and he has come up with nothing better.

Mr WILSON: It is time that the Government did something in that area because the health of our youth is being destroyed.

Mr Hewitt: How have the hardware stores in Townsville responded to that?

Mr WILSON: They have responded in the same way as they responded to the selling of methylated spirits to alcoholics.

Mr Hewitt: How?

Mr WILSON: I reckon they're selling it. It is as simple as that. The kids are not stealing it.

The newspaper clearly depicts two teenagers carrying out the dangerous practice of glue-sniffing. Although the two teenagers shown in the photograph are Aborigines, I assure the House that it is not only Aboriginal children who sniff glue; white children sniff glue, and they come from all strata of society.

The Parliament has just passed legislation to lower the permissible blood alcohol level from .08 to .05 because the Government believes that that will lower the accident rate and the number of deaths and permanent injuries caused by road accidents.

Children as young as eight years old are sniffing glue. Glue-sniffing is dangerous because it can cause brain damage, which can lead to death.

Although there is a law against getting drunk on alcohol, getting high on marijuana or LSD or taking heroin, cocaine and such drugs, we find that there is no law against the sniffing of toxic glues by our children. It is ludicrous that the Government has legislated to protect people from being killed by drink drivers but is failing to do anything about an equally dangerous, or even more dangerous, problem, that is, the sniffing of glue as it, too, causes death and makes permanent cripples of people through brain damage.

Let me quote from an article in the "Townsville Advertiser" dated 14 October 1982 relative to glue-sniffing. It reported that the Health Minister (Brian Austin) said that changes would require an amendment to the Poisons Regulations and that this would require approval from the Governor in Council. The Minister said that the new regulation would mean some types of glue would not be directly accessible to shoppers, and that that would ensure that people wanting to buy these types of glue had to ask for them.

I would like the Minister to explain what he meant by that. Does he mean that shops with shop assistants serving behind a counter would be the only shops permitted to sell that type of glue? Would not the person shopping in a cash-and-carry type store have to go through a check-out counter to pay for the glue?

The Minister went on to say that these glues would still be readily available to industrial users and home handymen. He also said that the changes would impose some control over the present situation in which youngsters can just walk into a shop, pick up some glue and walk out. Is the Minister suggesting that the children are stealing the glue? It seems to me that that is a further indictment not only on the children concerned but also on the storekeeper.

The article went on to say that the Minister said he hoped that shops selling glue would give full support to the new conditions and help stamp out glue-sniffing. He said that that was not the complete answer to the problem, and that the State Government would continue to monitor the situation.

What are the new conditions? Does the Minister intend to bring down legislation to control the manufacture and sale of toxic glue? What support does he expect to get from storekeepers in the retailing of those toxic glues? Will it be the same type of support that we find in the selling of methylated spirits to alcoholics? For how long does the Government intend to monitor this very serious problem? The Minister's proposal is not only not a complete answer; it is not an answer at all.

In another article headed "Add a Toxin to the Glue", Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the James Cook University, Eddy McEvoy-Bowe, said that the provision would be extremely difficult to implement. He went on to say that if something more toxic than the solvent was introduced into the glue there would be a danger of affecting legitimate users of the product. If it could be done, one would have to find a precise level at which the agent would not affect normal users but would make glue-sniffers ill when they tried to inhale the fumes.

Professor McEvoy-Bowe said many glues contained solvents closely related to chloroform, which was widely used as an anaesthetic. Chloroform is no longer used, because it was discovered it had side effects such as kidney damage. Many of the solvents have similar effects.

Here we are allowing to be manufactured and used a glue that contains a substance related to chloroform that causes kidney damage. If the medical profession no longer uses chloroform because it damages the kidneys, surely we should not allow to be used a glue which, when inhaled, is likely to cause kidney and brain damage, and possibly death.

We have in these glues dangerous substances that are a danger not only to the children sniffing them and who become addicted to them, which can cause kidney damage, brain damage and even death, but also also to workers using them in the industrial field. They should be banned and not allowed to be manufactured or sold.

The regulations hinted at by the Minister are so weak as to be helpless. We have stringent regulations governing highly poisonous substances so that they are not available to the general public, and certainly not children. We have just passed a law on alcohol as it relates to driving. We have regulations that stop juveniles from purchasing a rifle or a hand-gun. But we do not have a law to protect our children from toxic glues.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 August, the time allotted for the debate on matters of public interest has now expired.

*[Sitting suspended from 1.1 to 2.15 p.m.]*

#### JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Jury Act 1929-1981 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

## Second Reading

Hon. S. S. DOUMANY (Kurilpa—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.16 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Jury Act in certain particulars. The Jury Act 1929-1981 is an Act which provides for the selection, summoning and empanelling of qualified persons to constitute juries in both criminal and civil trials in Queensland. Persons who are qualified to perform jury service are generally those persons living within certain distances of court towns who have not been convicted of certain offences or otherwise disqualified and who are aged between 18 years and 65 years of age and entitled to vote at elections.

Difficulties have arisen in both the Brisbane and Cairns jury districts in ensuring that a sufficient number of qualified persons are available at all times as jurors. Both districts are presently restricted to all places within an 16 km radius of court-houses of the respective towns. It is proposed that the Brisbane district will comprise various electoral districts and divisions of electoral districts within the metropolitan area, and the Cairns district will comprise electoral districts, divisions of electoral districts and other areas with a view to ensuring that sufficient numbers of qualified persons are available for jury service.

With a view to swelling the pool of potential jurors, it is considered that persons aged between 65 years and 70 years of age who presently are not qualified to perform jury service should be so eligible if they so desire to serve. Provision is made in the Bill to raise the upper age limit from 65 years to 70 years, and to enable persons in that age group to seek exemption from jury service by notification to the sheriff in the same manner as a female may presently seek exemption.

Considerable publicity has been given recently to persons performing jury service who have been convicted of certain offences. Some doubt exists in regard to the manner of determining whether a person convicted of particular offences is disqualified from the performance of jury service. Accordingly, provision is made in the Bill to remove doubts and to clarify and extend the present provisions of the Act relating to the disqualification of persons from the performance of jury service on account of convictions for certain offences. The Bill categorises offences and specifies the particular period of time during which a person who has been convicted of the offences so categorised in the Bill, is disqualified from the performance of jury service.

To ensure that the sheriff is in possession of all relevant information to determine the eligibility of persons selected as jurors, a more rigorous question procedure will be introduced. The Bill makes provision for the imposition of penalties upon persons who do not truthfully answer questions asked of them by the sheriff to assist him in his inquiries in determining eligibility.

The jurors presently empanelled in the Russell Island criminal trial have complained of the monetary and other losses suffered by them as a consequence of the performance of jury service by them. The trial has been continuing since July last year and, in order that justice may be done to the jurors, it is proposed that compensation in addition to the compensation already paid to them be made available.

Provision is made in the Bill for the payment of additional compensation from the time the trial commenced, based on a specified formula. The formula relates to a percentage loading applied after fixed periods of time to the amounts of compensation already paid to them so as to determine the additional compensation payable. The formula will also have application to all lengthy criminal trials so that persons who serve as jurors in those trials will benefit from the arrangements.

Provision is also made in the Bill for persons who serve as jurors in lengthy criminal trials to make application for *ex gratia* payments to recompense them for any financial loss suffered by them through jury service. Persons who served as jurors in lengthy criminal trials are entitled to some additional compensation and this principle is recognised in the Bill.

The grounds upon which excusal from jury service may be sought have been widened in the Bill to include things such as economic hardship likely to be caused to a person through jury service, business commitments, matters arising in work arrangements and other factors relating to a person's life-style.

The Bill also provides for an employer to seek excusal on behalf of an employee in certain circumstances, as well as enabling a person who has received a second or subsequent jury notice in a period of 12 months to seek excusal on receipt of the second or subsequent notice, if he so desires. It is therefore important that persons in employment who receive jury notices should always bring the jury notice to the attention of their employer so that the employer will be aware of the likelihood arising of the performance of jury service by the employee, as well as enabling the employer to consider if, in the circumstances, excusal on behalf of the employee should be sought.

As a quid pro quo, provision is made in the Bill for the commission of an offence by an employer if he terminates the employment of an employee on account of the performance of jury service by the employee. The offence is punishable on summary conviction, and heavy penalties are provided as a deterrent to that practice. I have from time to time received complaints from persons whose employment has been terminated by their employer on account of their performance of jury service. Jury service is a community responsibility and it is necessary that all concerned should keep that in mind.

It is considered that the provisions of the Bill will assist in establishing some significant improvements to the jury system of Queensland. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

## NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 19 October (see p. 1572) on Mr Elliott's motion—  
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (2.22 p.m.): I am very pleased to join this debate, because my own firm belief is that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is one of the most important departments of the Government. For one reason that stands out above all others, national parks are extremely important, that is, for leisure.

In this highly mechanised age in which jobs are scarce, people are constantly told that one of their biggest problems will be leisure hours. Unfortunately, because of the administration of the present Australian economic system, too many people have too much leisure. There is a tendency to get away from the question of how those leisure hours should be spent, because at present they are considered to be hours spent looking for work. However, when the economy recovers it will again become an important question.

Use for leisure is not the only use of national parks. They are used also for science and to promote conservation and like matters. In the clause that deals with specialised management, the Bill sets out some of the important features of a national park and makes provision for setting aside such things as a primitive area, a primitive and recreation area, a recreation area, a scientific area, or an historic area. So that is a range of things that apply to national parks. The term "recreation" allows for a whole series of different categories and headings.

This is an important Bill. I would even say that it is a pregnant Bill. I ask: Why has it been so long in gestation? I wonder what happened after the department was set up. Did departmental officers expend their energy on the practical side of setting up the department? Unfortunately, no-one knows and there is no way of finding out. To many people, that might not be relevant; but I think it is important in understanding how Government departments operate, particularly under the present Government.

Did the officers of the department then worry about the legislative side? That is why my terming it a pregnant Bill and my reference to the gestation period are quite apt. If the officers are only now worrying about the legislative side, the people of Queensland, and certainly the members of this House, have quite a lot to worry about.

I wonder what is wrong with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It seems to have a great many troubles, and they seem to extend from the very top to the very bottom. I will do my best to be constructive in this debate because I am gravely concerned about national parks. There are many in my electorate and, if one can correctly read the signs, there will be a lot more. That causes part of my concern.

I would like to see a good service, one that is operating efficiently, practically and without trouble, and I would love to see an efficient Minister in control of it. Which brings me to state that I am very happy to support the remarks of the member for Sandgate. He spoke very well. He has a lot of talent and has applied himself very well to this portfolio. I will listen with great interest to his contribution at the Committee stage. That is not a panegyric because of events that might unfold during the day.

It is rather interesting to talk about what might be wrong with the service. To start with, the biggest problem is that the wrong party is administering national parks. The National Party as such has no great grasp of the broad concept—the whole idea—of national parks. It is true to say that in the days when it was known as the Country Party—I am almost reluctant to mention that term because it caused a furore here, and a mountain has been made out of a very small molehill over of the name of a party—the members of the Country Party and their parliamentary representatives considered national parks to be as nothing. They thought that so long as small areas of the State—the right areas—were set aside that would be all right. They could tolerate that. Apparently in those days cattle could not be grazed in national parks and grain could not be grown in them. So they were dismissed along with other things to which the National Party gave little thought.

Then along came the Premier. He had been a member for a few years before he took up the cause. At times he can be a very trendy man, so he took up the issue of national parks. He did this as a way of showing that he enjoyed some sort of rapport with conservationists and that he was not the old bogey man that they tried to make him out to be—the old Philistine with no interest except in making money. However, he has not fooled the people of this State, because the future of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Forestry Department, or the remnants of it, is still totally confused. They do not know where they are going; there is no light on the horizon. I am sorry to say that the Minister is a boy in the job. He has a very tenuous hold on his job, and at the first opportunity that the Premier has to carry out a reorganisation, Mr Elliott will, unfortunately, be removed from the position. He has already been criticised by the Premier.

Mr Prest: He's like a boy with his first girlfriend; he doesn't know what to do.

Mr SCOTT: That is not a bad comparison. At times he has been like a dog with two tails. He cannot control the service. He does not have a constructive approach. By way of being constructive, I urge the Premier to put a more responsible Minister in charge of this most important portfolio. I do not want to extend the birth metaphor, but I think there is something wrong with the baby that has been born. Is it lack of money? It certainly was not born with a silver spoon in its mouth. The service is underfunded, and that can be seen right from the top to the bottom. I have urged better salaries for the people who work their soul cases out for the service. The morale is very low, and that is a shame, because there are a lot of good people in the service trying very hard to make something out of the great concept of national parks. Esprit de corps is very low and money is needed for the proper operation of the service.

Mr Powell: Where is the money coming from?

Mr SCOTT: All that is needed is a redirection of resources from the south-east corner of the State or other parts of the State. Very keen and extremely hard-working people are employed in the National Parks and Wildlife Service. I have had a great deal to do with them; I see a lot of them. I say with pride that they are typical of the many public servants in Queensland who work hard and who often are underpaid. They have a keen sense of what is needed in their job. All they are looking for is guidance and direction. As well as being underpaid, they are under-equipped. That, again, is a reflection on the administration of the department. A stronger Minister and a bigger bite of the apple is needed to create greater happiness in the department and greater benefits for the people of the State.

Some of the most important national parks in Queensland are situated in the Cook electorate. They attract visitors from all over Queensland and all over Australia. I will not enumerate them, but it is a shame that many Government members do not know their names and never visit them. They have no idea of their potential.

All of the matters to which I have referred are relevant to this legislation. The honourable member for Sandgate showed clearly that the Bill merely provides for the transfer from the Forestry Act to the National Parks and Wildlife Act of provisions relating specifically to national parks. Why should that be happening now? It is a shame that the National Parks and Wildlife Service should be constituted and then be ordered around as it has been. A sensible Minister, in a sensible Government, would have had the legislation passed setting out the guide-lines and patterns to be adopted so that the department could build up properly. Because the cart was put before the horse, many things are wrong in the department.

The honourable member for Sandgate outlined the way in which the Government has abandoned the Native Plants Protection Bill. I add my protest to this relative to the Government's allowing the Bill to lapse. Perhaps the Minister will tell us in reply that that is not so, that the Government intends to do something about protecting native plants.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will read the very important words spoken by the Minister relative to the native plants legislation. He said—

“Not only conservation organisations but also concerned individuals, nurserymen and groups interested in growing native plants, as well as botanists and nature conservation authorities, have expressed concern at the large numbers of Australian native plants, especially orchids and ferns, which are being removed from the wild and offered for sale, often under circumstances in which the plants sold are unlikely to survive. The Bill which honourable members are now asked to consider aims at providing better control over the removal of such plants from the wild and overtrading in such plants.”

Where has the legislation gone? What have the Minister's wonderful words led to? Why has the Minister drifted away from those ideas?

The Government has a very poor legislative record. Cabinet is composed of the worst administrative backsliders in Australia.

Government Members interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I say in all honesty that repeatedly the Government has introduced legislation only to abandon it. Countless amendments that have been foreshadowed have not been proceeded with. Its legislative record is so bad as to be unbelievable, and I should like to see it set out.

The Government has no idea how to draft legislation in a form that is acceptable to the people. I emphasise that, time and time again, Government members, as well as Opposition members, have rejected legislation. Too often Bills have been introduced before the necessary homework has been done. Far too many Bills are introduced and taken no further. What has happened to the amendments to the Education Act? Where is that legislation? Will honourable members ever see it again? No-one has heard any more about it, and I am sure that no-one will hear of it again. Certainly the Native Plants Protection Bill should have been debated in this Chamber long ago.

The Government has introduced incredibly rigorous legislation that has not been needed in Queensland. The worst legislation in Australia has been introduced in the Queensland Parliament, mainly at the behest of the National Party. It is shameful that the people of Queensland should be subjected to such a legislative process.

An Opposition Member: Do you realise that Mr Litchfield described it as a junta?

Mr SCOTT: That is a very apt description of the Government. The trouble is that the Press in Queensland treats the Government too kindly.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister does not think that the Press treats the Government kindly. They treat it very kindly. When I think of the publicity that has been given to the Minister for Health lately, I can only say that it is hard to imagine his having got a better display of his features and more favourable comments in the newspaper if he had asked for them.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr SCOTT: I am not talking about how the Press treats the Opposition. I know that the Press gives us the rough end of the pineapple at all times. I am speaking about the way the Press treats the Government. It is given an armchair ride all the way. There is never any in-depth criticism of the Government by this sycophantic Press. I have used that word many times in describing the Press. It is the only word to use because it so aptly applies to the Press.

The Press is happy with the status quo. It promotes the status quo. Its examination of this legislation is typical and classic. Did the speech of the honourable member for Sandgate get a mention in the newspaper? No! No publicity was given to his remarks on the shortcomings of the department, and there is not likely to be. The Press likes to play at personalities. It makes a shallow examination of the issues and what it likes to think is an in-depth examination of the personalities. The Premier has entered the Chamber. He has been given the kindest run of all by the Press. The Press loves him and thinks that he is fantastic.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Miller): Order! The honourable member will get back to the legislation.

Mr SCOTT: I think that I should, Mr Deputy Speaker. I could not resist making the comment, because it is true. The Press gives the Premier a wonderful run. He does not deserve it. He does not have the talent to deserve that sort of Press treatment.

I add my voice to the protest about the dropping of the Native Plants Protection Bill. I shall wait to see what the Minister says about it. He is paying close attention today, so it is obvious that he is looking for direction or guidance, and the Opposition is prepared to give it to him. It was important legislation but it was let go by the board.

Mr Austin: You are talking about conservation so—

Mr SCOTT: I am concerned about conservation. There is no doubt about that.

No reference to inspectors is made in the Bill that is being debated. Reference is made to forest products and to certain officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, but no reference is made to inspectors. That is what is needed.

Reference is made in the Bill to search and examination. That appears under the general powers of field officers. They can search and examine in regard to native plants, but no guide-lines are laid down. The Bill has no teeth. It has no strength. Those matters could have been amplified in the Bill and the protected species could have been defined. Why were the two Bills not combined? Will we again be subjected to some sort of legislative harassment by being made to wait for the introduction of that Bill? Is the Minister waiting for the fuss to die down? I may be making too much of it, but it is important.

We on this side of the Chamber agree basically with the legislation. Our spokesman, the honourable member for Sandgate, said that very clearly. However, I have serious reservations about certain aspects of the Bill. I have enumerated some of them and I shall outline some more.

I am concerned about new section 35 in clause 22, which deals with permits, etc. The new section establishes very wide powers to issue permits for all sorts of things. It is particularly relevant to stock and grazing permits in my area. It is a wide-open section. It is open to all sorts of misuse by the Minister or by people with a vested interest in using national parks for the wrong purposes. I am not at all happy with that section.

Very wide powers are given to the director concerning permits, leases, other authorities, agreements and contracts. Those words conjure up pictures that are very troubling to me and others who have suspicious minds about the Government's motives, and also to the other people of Queensland. Those wide-ranging powers extend to the private use of public land, and that is what concerns people in my area.

No doubt those powers will be included in the regulations. They are like the sting in the scorpion's tail. Regulations are always of great concern to the community because regulations can be changed without reference to Parliament. We must be very watchful.

Mr Powell. Regulations are tabled in Parliament and are subject to disallowance.

Mr SCOTT: That is right, as long as they are not missed or disguised as something else. Again, the Government has the numbers to push them through in any case. They are not good at all.

The provisions relating to the private use of public land are set out in the new section 24, the one that concerns me and the people in my electorate. It says that land for tourist purposes can be excluded from the park. I draw the attention of honourable members to a very pertinent point about the legislation. Once the land is excluded, it reverts to Crown ownership. It can then be used by the Government in any way that it likes. Quite often, it is handed out to friends of Government members. The Opposition does not want that to happen. The concept of the section is bad. The deficiencies of that concept, which are epitomised in subsection 3 are, of course, totally undesirable. The concept is not wanted by the people of Queensland.

I should like to speak at some length about what has happened at the Lakefield National Park. I am certain that the Government is aiming at excluding a prime piece of the park. Lakefield National Park has great potential. I have visited the area that is most likely to be excluded and handed over to private enterprise. I understand that tenders have been called for the establishment of a tourist development, and I have seen a list of names of some people who might be interested in tendering for it and building something in that area. If the land was given to the right type of people for the right type of development and if the land was outside the park, I would have no objection.

Mr Elliott: You are telling us that you are against the proposal at Lakefield.

Mr SCOTT: Absolutely. I have said that publicly, and I have made statements to the Press about it. I am certain that officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service have drawn my statement to the Minister's attention.

Mr Elliott: You have less common sense than I thought you had.

Mr SCOTT: I am dead-set against it because prime public land is being handed over for private use.

There is plenty of land for sale in the general area of the Lakefield National Park. The Minister's officers are looking for further land to purchase. The Government should put its private enterprise principles, as against its hidden low-key socialist principles, into practice and tell developers to obtain their own land. The Government should not give away Crown land. If it comes to pass—and the Government has the numbers in this Chamber to ensure that it does—and that bad aspect of what is otherwise fairly good legislation is introduced, I hope that the right people—and they will not be the people that the Government would generally support—are allowed to do something constructive in that area. Some proposals may fit into the concept of a national park. In principle, what the Government is doing is totally wrong, and I am very much opposed to it.

A large area of land is available. The area is suitable for the grazing of cattle. The Government is trying to alienate unspecified cattle-grazing areas from the Peninsula. That was raised at the time of the second World Wilderness Conference. A great deal of concern was expressed about the concept that was floated at that time. It was to put all the Peninsula area aside as an environmental area. No-one knew what was going on. There was a fear that it would be taken away from the cattle-raising people. I supported the cattle people in that case.

A proper study should be carried out so that everyone knows what area of national park is needed for the people of Queensland at any time in the future. Demographic studies should be carried out. Population growth trends should be studied so that the Government knows how much land should be excised in Queensland for national parks. That has not been done.

The department has its eyes on other land in that area. Reference has been made to the provision of a belt of national parks extending across the Peninsula. To do that, it would be necessary to buy existing viable properties. The Government has already purchased "Rokeby" station. I have been informed that the man who sold that property to the department obtained a position as a park ranger. I do not know whether or not that is true.

The amount of cattle-grazing that should be allowed on national parks is a question that exercises my mind. I am not totally against cattle-grazing on national parks. That would be compatible with the concept of a national park. Cattle fit in with the other animals.

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr SCOTT: Cattle fit in with other animals.

A concept for national parks, particularly for national parks in tropical areas, should be developed and publicised. The national parks in the north of Queensland are different from the national parks in the electorate of the member of Warwick. He has referred to national parks. I do not want to do him an injustice. He referred to mowed areas and smooth, open areas for the tourist. I can understand that. Perhaps that is what tourists who go to the honourable member's area want. However, that is not what is required in Far North Queensland. By way of interjection, I did criticise the honourable member for his lack of grasp of these matters.

More needs to be known about the grazing of cattle in national parks, and a great deal more needs to be known about the leases that the Government has granted in national parks. Recently, I asked a question about this matter, and I shall quote part of it because I think that it is important to record it in the report of the debate on this Bill.

I tried to find out what is happening with the occupational permits that have been granted in Far North Queensland, and also with the persons who have been given those permits. Company names were given in the answer. I also wanted to find out for how long the permits were valid. Apparently, they are renewed on a yearly basis. The people living in the area have been given no idea of how long it is expected that cattle will be grazing in the park. They are not given the information that will allow them to judge whether grazing is a good thing and they do not know for how long it will continue. In part (4) of my question I asked—

“Have the people referred to now sold the rights to run cattle on the Lakefield National Park to another party?”

I was referring to the people who had sold the property to the Government and then made an offer for the occupational licence. I was told that the right to graze cattle on the former Lakefield aggregation had been transferred as from 20 July 1982. It entailed the sale of the issued capital of Stereotype (No. 212) Pty Ltd and the stock to Liddle Holdings Pty Ltd. Who in goodness name is Liddle Holdings Pty Ltd? We simply do not know.

I also asked—

“What is the name of the new permit holder, what was the transfer price and how long will private owners have the right to run cattle on the national park?”

I should have added, “to trade in that land”, because it is really the people's land. I was told that the stock grazing permit issued in favour of Stereotype (No. 212) Pty Ltd expires on 30 June 1983. Of course, the implication is that the permit can be renewed, and that is what the Minister said. He added—

“The re-issue of any further permit will be reviewed on or after the expiry date of the existing permit.”

How do we know? Is the Government calling tenders for those apparently quite valuable rights? I do not know, and I would like to know. This question is an extremely important one in the light of the apparent ambition of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to continue to buy those vast areas in North Queensland.

I have referred to “Rokeby” station and to the belt of properties possibly to be bought right across Cape York Peninsula. What I do not know are the areas that the Government has in its sights for purchase. I know that the Government cannot give that information—to make it available would mean an increase in the price of the land—but that is one of the problems with that type of system of purchasing land.

The Government can wait until the leases expire. That is why I said before that if proper studies had been done so that the Government knew the demand for that land in terms of what is needed for a national park, it would know where it was going.

I have said before that there is underfunding. I have often spoken about the situation at Chillagoe. That is a star in the national parks' crown. It is a prime area; it attracts people.

Mr Elliott: That is the first thing on which I well and truly agree with you.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister would agree with what I said about underfunding, but I do not think that he has the courage to say that because he still has aspirations to go further.

There are not sufficient employees in that national park, and they lack equipment. Perhaps the shortage of staff there is caused by the Government's failure to pay the employees properly. The Government is just trying to save money, and it is requiring the employees to do more work than they should be required to do. I have been to the parks frequently and have spoken to the employees.

Mr Warburton: Would you agree that Lakefield is also understaffed?

Mr SCOTT: I was just about to come to Lakefield. Yes, of course it is understaffed, and it suffers from a lack of equipment. A tractor was bought for the park, but it did not have a slasher attached to it. The honourable member for Warwick spoke about mown lawns in national parks. Up there, the employees have to slash the grass to protect the parks from fires.

I have spoken before about the boat that was supplied up there. The staff were given a boat that is dangerous to use. They are expected to sail out of the mouth of the river to look after the islands in the Flinders group. There is a national park there, but the Government simply has not provided adequate equipment to allow the staff to look after it, which is a shame.

Visitors to the parks in the North are interested in fishing and camping, and that should be allowed to continue. I repeat that it is absolutely essential for the Government to define its goals on national parks. I will be listening carefully to everything the Minister contributes to this important debate. The officers in the department are trying very hard, but they have limited resources.

I ask the Minister for his views on the employment of Aboriginal people in national parks. They have the very skills needed, whether they are those of a basic working person in a national park, guiding, or working at the administrative level. It is time that the Minister did something that the other arms of government seem most reluctant to do. He should find the right Aboriginal people. There are plenty of them up there. He could advertise and encourage them to apply for the jobs. He could do even better than that by seeking them out. They are diffident about applying for jobs which they feel they might not have the competence to handle. However, some Aborigines up there could do those jobs very well.

My experience has been that the department is not employing Aboriginal people in national parks in my area. There is great scope for that, and I would like to see the Minister do it. The DAIA employs some Aborigines as rangers, which shows that the work can be done by them. However, that department does not employ nearly enough of them, because it does not have a constructive approach to the employment of Aboriginal people. I urge the National Parks and Wildlife Service to do it. It would be extremely good for the employment of Aboriginal people in Far North Queensland. It would show that the Government is genuine in its regard for those people, and it would allow them to set their sights a little higher instead of their being continually pushed down under the conditions existing in Queensland's society.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (2.52 p.m.): I support the Minister's introduction of the Bill. It surprises me that Opposition members are so out of touch on national park matters. Of course, it really should not surprise me, because they are devoid of experience in all matters related to land use.

National parks management is in fact land-use management. I commend the Minister on the way in which he has handled his portfolio and continued with an exciting new venture in this State. By "new" I am referring to the way it is being managed now, and the use of the resources. Instead of being combined with Forestry, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is now a department in its own right.

In 1975 a director was appointed to administer part of the Forestry Act; national parks were still covered by that Act. What we are doing now is separating the two functions so that there are separate Acts. Even after the Bill has been passed, no doubt refinements will need to be made. There will be some criticism that those refinements have not been made at this stage. However, it is always easy to be wise after the event. We can come back at a later date and make those amendments.

I shall illustrate many absurdities and contradictions in the speech made by the member for Cook. He referred to grazing and the next minute he said, "No. You can't go onto the parks."

Mr Scott: I didn't say that.

Mr SIMPSON: That is what the honourable member said. Those are two contradictory statements. He spoke about nobody being given a lease—that people must be outside the park on their own land—but the next minute he was talking about grazing on the park.

Mr Scott: You didn't listen.

Mr SIMPSON: The member was trying to mislead the House.

On the management of national parks we can learn much from countries such as the United States of America, which has experimented with the involvement of private enterprise in guest-houses and transportation systems within parks such as Yosemite and the Grand Canyon. The United States has learnt what happens when the pressure of tourists becomes too great. The pressures created by the number of people who enter a park can be controlled through the transportation systems. Because most people are rather lazy, that is the simplest way to control the pressures. People will not travel a great distance under their own steam; they have to be transported to any area of interest.

The previous Minister for National Parks and I visited the Ferntree Gully National Park in Victoria, a park of only 1 000 acres, which by Queensland standards is very small. A survey was conducted to establish the movement of visitors from the car-park. Ninety per cent of visitors did not move more than 200 yards from the car-park. That quite clearly demonstrates that if the access of people is controlled, so too is their movement.

Park management must ensure that geological, flora and fauna highlights are preserved. The first requirement for Queensland is to set aside areas that cover as widely as possible the geological and flora and fauna highlights that are found nowhere else. There must be a good reason for the duplication of national parks. Such a reason could be proximity of the area to population. A clear requirement for the proclamation of a national park is that it should have something new and unique to offer. Usually, when one looks hard enough, one finds that in our national parks.

Management of national parks must give serious consideration to access and the various recreations such as bush walking, camping and bird-watching. Some people even extend their activities to hang-gliding. Fraser Island, Cooloola and Moreton Island have escarpments that are ideal for hang-gliding, which is a very dangerous recreation.

That leads me to another point for consideration. As the Minister knows, this week in a national park in my electorate, a 10-year-old boy who wandered off from his parents lost his life when he fell over the Kondalilla Falls. That was very sad. All accidents cannot be prevented, but some thought must be given to saving and maintaining life. Consideration should be given to the erection of warning signs and protective fencing where they are necessary. Such man-made items may offend some people who consider that they should not be in a national park. That was the second loss of life this year at Kondalilla Falls, so if accidents occur repeatedly at the same place, especially if they involve loss of life, some preventive action must be taken. Hang-gliders often seem to come to grief so perhaps that activity should not be permitted in national parks.

Park management must also provide areas accessible to those who are not very agile. Persons who are elderly, handicapped or unable to walk should be able to enjoy some aspects of a park. Therefore access roads into parks are needed. As I mentioned previously, the pressure on that 200-yard area surrounding the car-park at the Ferntree Gully National Park is a known factor. That area did not extend for miles. The honourable member for Cook spoke about not having access for vehicles beyond the edge of Lakefield National Park. That is a ridiculous state of affairs.

Mr Elliott: A marathon walker would be the only person who would be able to go there.

Mr SIMPSON: That is true. It is about 70 miles to the other side of Lakefield National Park, and it is ridiculous to think that ready access to those places should not be provided to enable the public to enjoy this heritage, and that is what it is. We should think of setting aside areas that are readily accessible; other areas can be provided with a lesser degree of access so that they can be used by bushwalkers; and again other areas with no ready access will become wilderness areas, that is, areas that are seldom visited by man. It was suggested that part of the Cooloola National Park should be a wilderness area, even though a river travels through the middle of the park and roads encircle it. Obviously, it is too readily accessible to be maintained as a wilderness area.

The only other successful way to isolate such an area is to surround it with barbed wire, but when people see barbed wire in the bush it offends them. Those are the delicate sort of problems that occur in the management of national parks. Barbed wire obviously has to be used at times. For instance, it is used in the Kondalilla National Park. A track winds down from the car-park to the falls, and children will slip through the bush to save time. If barbed wire is cleverly disguised so that it cannot readily be seen from the path it will not offend those who use the path, but young children would find that they could not get past that barrier. It would obviously be better to build a barrier out of natural timber, but that is more expensive and we do not have enough money. That has already been mentioned in the debate.

A boarded roadway has been used in the Cooloola National Park as an experiment. It was expensive to build and may prove too expensive to maintain. It is most important that a boarded roadway be built across the narrows between the lighthouse at Double Island Point and the rest of the national park. That area is used not by park visitors but by fishermen and others who travel to Fraser Island to enjoy its national park. They have to cross the headland, and so the area should be readily accessible to take the pressure off the park. When vehicles get bogged drivers pull out bushes and place them under the wheels to give them some grip. Overloaded vehicles often become bogged when even experienced drivers try to carry more on them than they should. That occurs more often during dry weather. Some members opposite would not know that it is very difficult to drive a vehicle through dry sand.

It concerns me that this legislation has not altered the provisions relating to environmental park management. At the moment we have an antiquated system under which a person who stands on a plant in an environmental park is committing an offence unless he has permission from the director or the Minister to be there. If the Minister decrees that a picnic area should be built then everything is all right, but if no facilities are provided a visitor is not allowed to kick a football, ride a horse and so on. I think that is the wrong use of an environmental park. When one raises such matters with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, one often sees a knee-jerk reaction from service officers. I have seen pine trees cut down in an environmental park because it offended an officer that there were pine trees growing in an environmental park. Surely pine trees are no more exotic than members of the public who want to enjoy such parks.

The Minister is well aware of what is happening to our native plants. He has taken action to prevent our flora being flogged off by people who are ruining some of our parks and forest areas.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: The honourable member said that nothing was being done. His ignorance is astounding. He just does not understand. He would probably encourage people to act in that way. I know that they commit offences, and I do not like seeing our flora abused in that way.

I hope that with the passage of this Bill the running of the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be smoother and that the resources will be used more fully. The department should consider tapping the band of trained, dedicated, volunteer interpretative workers who would be willing to carry out duties in our parks. After the passage of the Bill, I hope that the Minister will consider that suggestion and the others that have been made to extend this legislation and keep it in line with the tremendous advances in Queensland.

Our national parks are second to none in the world. They provide an opportunity to employ many more people in these days when so many persons are being put out of work by the effects of high wages and technology.

Jobs aplenty are available in the tourist industry. If we bring together and encourage tourism and national park development, we will have the best of both worlds for future generations. I commend the Minister for forthrightly pushing those two points.

Mr SCASSOLA (Mt Gravatt) (3.7 p.m.): This afternoon I wish to speak of an area that I will describe loosely as Toohey Forest. The area to which I refer comprises the Mt Gravatt Reserve, bounded on the east by development on the eastern side of Mt Gravatt, and Toohey Forest, which is owned by the Brisbane City Council. The Mt Gravatt Reserve is held in trust by the council. Toohey Forest runs from the western side of the Mt Gravatt Reserve, across Tarragindi to the western side of Moorooka. The northern boundary, in effect, is Mt Gravatt West and Nathan. On the northern side is a small portion of Crown land.

That area is the largest remaining area of bushland on the southern side of Brisbane. I firmly believe that it ought to be set aside for use, in a recreational sense, by persons living on the southern side of Brisbane. I have long advocated that the whole of the area should be placed under the umbrella of the Brisbane Forest Park so that it can be used and developed for the enjoyment of the people on that side of Brisbane.

I envisage walkways being provided. In fact, some rudimentary walkways presently exist. Rest areas and barbecue areas should be provided, as well as tracks for cyclists. I would certainly ensure that trail bikes and motor vehicles were excluded from it. At the moment, the area is largely unused, except for invasions, particularly at week-ends, by trail-bike riders. It is a great pity that it has not been developed for recreational use by families.

Some time ago I advocated that that view be taken. The Minister for Lands and Forestry made an approach to the Brisbane City Council to incorporate the whole of the area in Brisbane Forest Park. Obviously the council, as the owner of the land, is an important organisation. Unfortunately, it has not acceded to the approach. I do not know why. The council has seen fit to refuse to incorporate that area in Brisbane Forest Park. I cannot imagine why it refuses to do so.

Brisbane Forest Park has been a highly successful venture. The council is involved in it; the Government is very much involved in it. The venture has been to the eternal benefit of the people residing in the western and northern suburbs of Brisbane, as well as to those who live in Ipswich and other places. It has attracted many people who have used it in a proper way for recreational purposes. I fail to see why the Toohey Forest area cannot be used in a similar way.

People on the southside of Brisbane look forward to it and would welcome it. I am sure that it would be used properly and that families would go there, enjoy the bushland setting and walk through it. They may have barbecues there. Perhaps children could ride bicycles through it and not run the gauntlet, as they do now, of being confronted with unlicensed trail bike riders speeding through the area.

I again appeal for the whole of the Toohey Forest area to be incorporated in Brisbane Forest Park. I know that it would cost some money, but steps should be taken in the interests of the people on the southside of Brisbane to make that very large tract of hundreds of acres of land available to them for recreational pursuits so that they can benefit from it instead of simply allowing the area to lie idle, largely unused, and be a haven for trail bike riders.

Mr POWELL (Isis) (3.14 p.m.): The Bill is simple. However, a lot of nonsense has been spoken about it. It simply removes from the Forestry Act all references to national parks and transfers them to the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

The honourable member for Cook spoke about the Government putting the cart before the horse. He claimed that the Government had set up the National Parks and Wildlife Service without there being an Act to cover it. The honourable member was not in Parliament in 1975. That is when the Act was passed; that is when the service was set up legislatively. The Minister at the time was the Honourable K. B. Tomkins, who did an excellent job as Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The honourable member for Cook criticised the Government because the legislation was under the control of National Party Ministers. Nobody in this Parliament is better able to administer land tenure than the people who use the land and work it to its best advantage.

The people who live on their quarter-acre block in suburbia have no conception of how land should be used. The member for Cook and others like him do not have the foggiest idea what they are talking about. The member for Cook castigated the Press and used a term that escaped me. He used a derogatory term in relation to the Press, because he said—

An Opposition Member: What about the other day?

Mr POWELL: I did not use derogatory terms; I used accurate terms.

The member for Cook said that the Press, in dealing with matters relative to the Labor Party, deals with personality and not with fact. If one reads the speech made by the member for Cook, it will be seen that all he did was refer to the Minister for National Parks. He did not refer to the Bill. He referred to the Premier. All he did was castigate people. That is the problem with members who range away from debates and who do not listen to what the Bill is about. It is time that control was exercised over a few members of Parliament to make them confine their remarks to the debate before the House.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr POWELL: The member for Cook and others laugh because they could not speak to the Bill; they would not know how to.

The matter before the House is a fairly simple one. It is a logical progression that the National Parks and Wildlife Service should take all the little bits and pieces in other Acts and insert them into its own Act.

The reference to permits was criticised by a couple of Opposition members. I hope that the people who use national parks will understand the permit system. If there was no permit system, all sorts of things could happen to national parks because they could not be controlled.

Those members who have national parks in their electorate—and I am one of them—have a problem with squatters. People think that they can just go along and set up some sort of building for their own pleasure anywhere they like. Of course, they cannot do that. They think that it is OK to do that in an isolated area. That problem has occurred on Fraser Island. Officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service are diligent in keeping such people out, and so they ought to be. If they did not have the Act behind them, they could not do that. It is quite clear that, legislatively, we must provide them with the muscle that will enable them to do that.

One of the minor criticisms of this and many other Acts is that they retain the British unit of measure. Reference is made to 1.6 kms, which is the direct conversion of one mile into metric measure. Why on earth do we not say 1.5 kms or 2 kms, or round off to the nearest kilometre, rather than stick to 1.6, 3.2 and 4.8? To me, that seems stupid.

In the Forestry Act there is a designation of beauty spots. I do not know how many people recognise where those areas are. There are a number of beauty spots on Fraser Island within the forestry section. Pile Valley is one; the ghost area is another. There are many places of that type on Fraser Island.

Mr Davis: How many times have you been to Fraser Island?

Mr POWELL: Often enough to know far more about it than the member for Brisbane Central.

The beauty spots are areas set aside under the Forestry Act so that nothing will happen to them. The National Parks Wildlife Service will not take control of them. There is probably a very good reason for that—possibly management. It is something that the Minister could well recognise, because it is an important feature about which the Government should be careful.

The management of national parks has been referred to during debates on this and previous legislation. Many members have said that they wish that more money could be spent on national parks so that management would be made more effective. By way of

interjection, I asked the member for Cook where he would obtain the money. He said that he would redirect it. I do not know from what source he was going to redirect it—possibly from the amount provided for roads in the Cook electorate.

Mr Scott: You don't know very much, do you?

Mr POWELL: The honourable member did not make one constructive comment in his speech; he made only destructive comments. Clearly, if national parks are to be managed in the way that they are managed in the United States, Canada and other countries, and indeed interstate, people who enter them will have to be charged a fee.

Mr Davis: I would not say that Fraser Island is well managed.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member would not be qualified to say what happens on Fraser Island. He has been there only once in his life, and on that occasion he stayed for only a couple of days. He did not catch any fish, because he was not capable of doing so.

Many persons throw up their hands in horror when it is suggested that people should pay to enter national parks. If people are going to demand national parks, the management of them and interpretive stations in them, they should be prepared to pay for them.

There is a particularly good camping area at Dundubera on Fraser Island. That camping area, along with others to be established on the island, will be of great advantage to the management of the island as a whole. I cannot see why people should be allowed to enter national parks for nothing. The Government has a capital investment in national parks and it should be charging people to enter them. In that way the Government would be able to recoup some money to pay for more effective management of national parks. I hope that the Minister can convince his department that that is the way in which the Government ought to be going. It is important that national parks should be managed effectively.

The other thing that the Government should be doing is using people engaged in the tourist industry as much as possible to effectively manage national parks. That is done in other States and overseas. A tourist entrepreneur is given a lease over a small area in a national park. He establishes tourist facilities, such as a hotel. That is the place in which people live and from which the operator conducts tours into the national park. That would do two things: firstly, it would give people the opportunity to see the national park and, secondly, it would give the National Parks and Wildlife Service the opportunity, through honorary rangers, to effectively manage national parks.

Along with other people, I am worried about the over-use of national parks. It does not matter where the national park is situated, if too many people go to one area it will become over-used. A classic example of over-use is to be found not in a national park but at Central Station in the forestry area on Fraser Island. Each year, thousands and thousands of people are going into that area and it is becoming over-used. The Lake McKenzie area is also becoming over-used. Greater management needs to be provided in many areas on Fraser Island so that there is a greater spread of people.

If an area becomes over-used, it should be closed for a period to allow it to regenerate. Fragile areas are to be found in sand, drought-prone and rain-forest areas. For example, if too many people use a particular path in a rain-forest area, they will destroy its pristine value. If a tourist entrepreneur were given control over an area, people would be able to use the national parks in Queensland far more effectively.

I congratulate the Minister on the attitude that he adopts.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: Naturally our Ministers are effective. The honourable member is not effective. That is why he is on the Opposition side, and will always stay there. This Minister is energetic. He gets around the State and looks at what is happening in national parks. He does not bung on any airs and graces when he visits national parks. He goes to those places as an ordinary citizen.

A previous speaker said that the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service are demoralised. Quite clearly, that member has not spoken to officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service who use their initiative to show people round the parks.

I have heard only praise for those officers who go out of their way to help people; but I have heard nothing but condemnation for those officers who decide that their jobs last for only eight hours a day and that is all they will jolly well work. Clearly, attitudes are responsible for the delineation between the high morale of some and the demoralisation of others. Some officers have a will to do something for national parks and others lack that will. Clearly, the willing ones are the ones who bring credit not only on the National Park and Wildlife Service but also on themselves.

The Bill is a very good one. I hope that other members who want to contribute to the debate will introduce some new matter. Some members of the Opposition seem to carry on with the same sort of rhetoric. I look forward to this department's becoming one of the best recreation departments in the nation.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (3.26 p.m.): My colleagues from Sandgate and Cook covered a very wide scope in the debate. The member for Cook and I have very diverse electorates. There are many misconceptions about the term "national parks" as it applies to Queensland. In North Queensland there are rain forests with unique species of timber and plant life, and in South-west Queensland and other parts of the State there are national parks containing eucalypt forests. Some areas have been declared national parks for environmental purposes and for the preservation of native plant life. I agree with that. Such plants have to be preserved for the future benefit of the State. National parks are an asset belonging to all Queenslanders. They are no more my asset than they are the Minister's asset or any other Queenslanders' asset.

Mr FitzGerald: The Minister is representing us, isn't he?

Mr EATON: He is, yes.

National parks should be cared for in the interests of all Queenslanders. People should be made aware of the difference between the various national parks. The problems faced by the Government and the rangers should be pointed out. The member for Cook referred to the problems facing those involved in the area of national parks and wildlife.

I am very pleased to say that, when I have been to the department for advice, particularly on occasions when I have taken overseas business people looking for film locations and other projects, I have received nothing but the utmost co-operation. Officers even accompanied us to Lakefield. The pleasing aspect of that trip was the knowledge of wildlife of the national parks ranger. Queensland lacks people who have an in-depth knowledge of our natural plant life and bird life. I compliment the Minister for the steps that have been taken at Lakefield and for the appointment of wildlife rangers and park rangers. They are doing a very good job. However, as was pointed out by the member for Cook, they are handicapped in what they can do. I hope that by the next time I go back to Lakefield Park some of the severe problems experienced there have been overcome. The member for Cook has already made the Minister aware of those problems.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the Bill is that it separates the National Parks and Wildlife Service from the Lands and Forestry portfolio. I feel sorry for the Minister for Lands and Forestry. No other section of the Government is subject to so much outside interference. I emphasise "outside interference". I have had a number of constituents complain about the fact that they have had titles or leases issued on the approval of the Lands Department and have found that objection has been lodged by the Main Roads Department, a local authority, the Mines Department or any one of a number of other departments, which all have an influence and a certain amount of authority on matters pertaining to the Lands Department. Subsequently, a decision of that department may be overruled by one of those authorities.

As recently as three months ago a person told me that he had received a letter from the Lands Department informing him that he would be granted a certain area of land. He asked me to contact the local authority and the Lands Department to gain access to the block. On one boundary there was a limited access highway and on another boundary there were blocks between the property and a main road.

I made representations to the local authority and the Lands Department. This person received a letter from the Lands Department pointing out that it had withdrawn its approval and that he would be given a block in another area. Because he had received prior approval from the Lands Department, he had gone ahead and made certain arrangements. That is an instance of the overlapping of departmental responsibilities.

Even if the control of national parks is placed in one department, occasions will arise when discussions have to be held between that department and the Lands Department, but one of the problems that are caused by the Lands Department being subject to advice or permission from the National Parks and Wildlife Service would be alleviated.

My colleague the member for Sandgate mentioned the conflict in the control of national parks when they were under the control of the Lands Department. They still are, but we hope that they will not be for much longer. The conflict is between the interests of conservation and the use of available resources. In all honesty I must say that I am not very popular with the conservationists or the sawmillers. I have refused to take sides with either extremist group. One wants to kill all the humans to save the trees and the other wants to kill all the trees to save the humans. Because I have refused to take sides, I am not popular. A commonsense compromise must be reached. I stand firm in my belief and it is an area in which the Government will have to stand firm. Regardless of the Government that is in power, it will cop a certain amount of criticism.

As the Opposition spokesman pointed out, things will level out when the sustainable yield in the timber industry is reached. That will result from the harsh economic times that we are entering. In Northern Queensland—and in other parts of Queensland—sawmill workers are being paid off. That will help to reach the sustainable yield stage in the harvesting of timbers from rain forests and other areas.

The very diverse national parks in North Queensland contain unique species of trees. As I have many dealings in them, I know something about two of the species—black walnut and maple. Although similar timber can be found in other countries, scientific tests reveal that a particular texture is found only in North Queensland. Because the areas of rain forest are gradually diminishing, I must side with the conservationists on this matter.

Only a couple of weeks ago I was informed of a satellite picture of the whole of North Queensland that shows the remaining rain forests. The photograph was taken on infra-red film and shows where rain forests have been cleared. In the next week or so I hope to be able to view that picture so that I can contribute something towards ensuring that, while we utilise some of our resources, we retain certain areas of rain forest.

I hope that only benefit will come to Queenslanders from this Bill and that satisfactory arrangements can be made to satisfy the people in the National Parks and Wildlife Service. From time to time I am associated with them and up till now I have had nothing but help from them. As the member for Cook pointed out, the Government will have to make a great deal more money available to that service.

I agree with the claim that the Government has from time to time conducted publicity campaigns to appease the people who are fighting for more progress. The Minister and the Government have to take cognisance of the fact that more money has to be made available to the service, because the most grandiose plans can be drawn up but, unless money is made available to carry them out, we will go backwards instead of maintaining the status quo.

Dr LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (3.35 p.m.): I support the Bill, but I say at the outset that, if we are to have the kind of national parks we want and deserve and if we want to preserve them, a great deal more money has to be provided.

As was pointed out by the honourable member for Isis, one of the problems with national parks is that if there is a great deal of access to and through them, they will suffer. On the other hand, if the access provided is adequate, thousands—indeed millions—of people can visit a national park without it suffering any ill effects.

This Bill will allow the Minister to make the arrangements necessary to provide adequate roads to national parks and adequate paths and walkways through national parks. He will be able to arrange financing through the Forestry Department or the National Parks and Wildlife Service, to make grants or to enter in to financial arrangements with his colleague the Minister for Welfare Services, who has the responsibility for the Queensland Recreation

Council. He will be able to enter into agreements with local authorities. All of them are appropriate to ensure that paths through national parks will be able to handle the desired volume of vehicle traffic.

It will be necessary to provide, where necessary, firm footpaths composed of rock, gravel or concrete to enable people to walk through the parks. If those footpaths are not provided tremendous erosion will result and parks will suffer in three ways: people will not be able to get to them; there will be a loss of soil and a collapse of valuable plant-breeding space, and there will be pollution of less elevated areas with mud and even landslides. This work must be done if our parks are to cope with pedestrian traffic and get people where they want to go.

The legislation will allow small volunteer groups to spend small amounts of money on national parks. Such groups already do a lot of voluntary labouring work. That is not to be decried. A large number of volunteer groups who work in national parks have reported to me that they would like to carry out work in places like Bunya National Park to allow greater public access. Until now they have not been allowed to do so, mainly because of the multiplicity of administrative authorities in national parks. Under this Bill the Minister or his director will oversee the design of such work to ensure that it does meet a need and they will be able to make arrangements for funding. I hope that such work can be done, in some cases with material provided on site, because it would further open up our national parks.

If the Government is to provide the avenues of recreation that people want, hiking trails should be built through our national parks. Some visitors to national parks only want to drive in, stop, take a photograph and continue on to another spot and have a barbecue, whilst other people want to walk right through the parks. Naturalists or keen bushwalkers want to look at different plant species and, although they have to be provided with facilities, in the main they would be unhappy with the hard, graded tracks that are provided in some parks. Those people are perhaps more venturesome than most and, therefore, the same standard of facilities need not be provided for them. Some parks would have a much lower volume of pedestrian traffic, and work could be done in them by volunteer groups.

I have visited a number of national parks and have been disappointed to find them infested, apparently for all time by lantana and prickly pear, and so little is being done about it. They are introduced pests. I impress on the Minister the need to immediately control lantana and prickly pear in national parks.

Some areas in coastal parks are absolutely impenetrable. There is no more justification for showing visitors a garbage dump and saying that the white man was responsible for it than in taking them to a national park that is obstructed by lantana and prickly pear and saying that the white man is responsible. In my view the two are white man's garbage. The prickly pear and the lantana must be eliminated from our national parks. They severely restrict access to the parks. They make it virtually impossible to walk in and enjoy the parks.

Prickly pear is a real problem. A great deal of trouble has been experienced in trying to combat it in inland areas. I urge the department to examine the latest chemical controls. If the job is too big for the department to handle with existing funds, funds must be obtained from the people who want to visit national parks. We could well enlist the aid of volunteer groups that are prepared to make local national parks into beauty spots, rather than let them remain as eyesores. With Government assistance, direction and control and with the provision of the necessary sprays and equipment, these groups could eliminate most of the lantana and prickly pear and take the necessary follow-up action to ensure that they do not regain a foothold.

At many places on Double Island Point, people cannot walk above the high-water mark because of the prickly pear. It is not a great joy to young children to go running barefooted through what they think is nice sand only to run into big clumps of prickly pear half buried in the sand.

Mr Elliott: Especially if it is tiger pear.

Dr LOCKWOOD: I think it is tiger pear. It is the long, thin variety. It is very prevalent and it is very nasty. We must eradicate it.

On Fraser Island, prickly pear and lantana are a serious nuisance. They have a foothold on the dunes behind the surfing area. Something must be done about these pests or many other species that belong in the zones just above the dunes will be displaced. National parks are not being preserved in the way that we would like people to see them.

Land round the northern part of Toowoomba through to Crows Nest and Ravensbourne must be secured for national park purposes. This area could become a second Scenic Rim. The Scenic Rim runs along the mountains east of Warwick to the border ranges. It provides difficult walking even for experienced bush walkers. In the area from Toowoomba to Ravensbourne a magnificent series of walks with views and camping spots could be provided. The walks should not be confined to the Scenic Rim. They should include the two lakes that are part of the Perseverance and Cressbrook Dams. The Toowoomba City Council has set aside land at Cressbrook which is not under the Minister's control for the establishment of a national fitness facility. These facilities, as I said, are very closely tied to the bush walks, overnight camping facilities and huts in the surrounding national parks that are controlled by the Minister.

A national park exists at Ravensbourne. If the Cressbrook Gorge is not in a national park, it should be. A national park is also to be found at Crows Nest and in the Valley of the Diamonds and other parts of the catchment areas of those two dams.

In conjunction with the huts a modest system of walking trails should be provided so that families can enjoy the parks. They would not need to be superb mountaineers. It would be a wonderful facility for the people of Toowoomba and the southern inland district.

I am pleased that this legislation brings the administration under the control of the Minister's director. I have been concerned about the multiplicity of controls over the taking of forest products. That usually gets back to ornamental plants.

It concerns me and also the members of a large number of orchid societies that the Government requires unique species to lie in parks and revert to very valuable compost when those species are becoming rare and could reach the point of being irreplaceable. Some of the orchids that the societies seek to collect have no commercial value. The societies seek to collect orchids the bulbs of which are no bigger than pin-heads. A magnifying glass is needed to examine them. They are a special species of orchid and the societies would welcome the chance to collect them.

I wrote to the Minister concerning the orchid societies' wish to have the right to gather those orchids. They would not gather orchids by the truck load as would the commercial scavengers of the forest. The societies would seek out certain species of orchid to protect them from extinction. I am pleased that the Bill will allow the Minister and his director to permit the societies to take the orchids, because otherwise they would be lost. The societies are not interested in commercial quantities of orchids or even the commercial species. They leave the King Orchid alone. But many species of orchid are unique to our rain forests and national parks. The societies hope to have the right to preserve them. The members of the societies would be very good volunteer rangers. They decry the desecration of forests by commercial plunderers and would readily report them to the Minister.

I support the Bill and hope that the Minister notes the matters I have raised, particularly the invasion of national parks by the man-introduced species, lantana and prickly pear.

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (3.47 p.m.): I do not want to say too much on this Bill. When all is said and done it merely removes a number of matters from the Forestry Act and places them in the National Parks and Wildlife Act. However, I do want to raise a few matters of interest, particularly the management of national parks and the direction that the department will take.

I received a letter from the Queensland Conservation Council Incorporated which reads—

"The Cape Tribulation National Park represents one of the major conservation initiatives of the Queensland Government.

However, the conservation value of this Park has been reduced by the omission of a number of key areas, and management problems have been increased by these omissions. A major, and unnecessary omission from the National Park is an area of Crown land known as Cow Bay.

I understand that Cow Bay is under consideration for a Land Administration Commissions subdivision, and that land dealers in the Daintree area have offered to bulldoze natural vegetation to create a camping ground."

A photograph is included with the letter. It shows what a nice area Cow Bay is. If the Government is honest about national parks, it will include that area in a national park.

Possibly, because of other usages, some areas could be taken out of national parks. To do the job properly, a full land study of those areas should be undertaken. That was mentioned by a previous speaker, and it is quite true. If the Government does not know which way it is heading, it will not achieve the best results. If people are to use national parks in the correct way, such as driving or walking through them, the facilities must be provided to enable them to do so.

I have asked questions in the House about the complaints that I have received concerning the omission of that area from a national park. I was surprised with the answer I received. In my question I asked whether the area of Crown land would be developed and what would take place. I received the following answer from the Minister for Lands and Forestry—

"No subdivision proposals are at present before the Land Administration Commission and no such investigations have yet been undertaken.

If the area was developed there is no doubt that some machinery would have to be used.

Any development would be carried out by the Land Administration Commission. It can be expected that an esplanade/buffer area would be retained and that land reserved for public use would be placed under the control of the local authority.

The matter of Cow Bay has been discussed with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Virtually the whole of the coastline and adjacent land from the mouth of the Daintree River northerly to the north of the Bloomfield River is national park. In comparison, Cow Bay is a small parcel of Crown land adjoining the national park on its northern boundary and partly on its southern boundary. Adjoining the western boundary and inland therefrom are numerous parcels of freehold land which have access to the ocean frontage via the subject land.

Yes, it is possible to develop in compatibility with the environment."

Following that I received a letter from the Minister which spelt out quite clearly how the problems could be controlled. I was surprised to discover that the land was being developed by a private developer and that he was using the land to obtain access to his development. It means that the two departments, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Land Administration Commission, looked at an area that was available. They decided that they were not going to use it. They told me that the area would be controlled by no-one other than a Government department. Later I asked a question and received a reply which indicated quite clearly that a private developer had been given access and was permitted to bulldoze a wide road through that area. That was contrary to what the Minister had told me. We must know in which direction we are heading. It must be done in a way that is acceptable to the people of Queensland. The Government is getting itself into trouble with people who are trying to do something good.

A recent article in "The Cairns Post" slated the Minister and spelt out those matters that I have just mentioned. There has been a hue and cry from conservationists about national parks and rain forests. We must look at methods of obtaining access to national parks. We must know what to expect by way of damage. The construction of wide tracks is not acceptable. On the other hand, it is not acceptable to have a large area of national park from which nobody can derive a benefit.

The undergrowth in the national parks in North Queensland grows very quickly. When the member for Mourilyan visited the area it was not possible to see a kangaroo because the grass was so high. Possibly, stocking of the area would be one way to keep the grass under control. That would also reduce the fire risk in the area. An investigation should be carried out to learn what areas could carry cattle and other animals. In that way we could provide a safety factor and, at the same time, a habitat for animals that would normally live in that area and give them a chance to move around. Large areas of long, overgrown grass do not have any use, apart from the mulch that is obtained from them.

Recently, in "The National Times" the member for Barron River received a mention. The article stated—

"A Forestry Department white paper, tabled in Parliament a fortnight ago warned that 'the occupation, temporary or otherwise of sections of remote Crown lands (eg, Cedar Bay) by squatters was having a detrimental impact on rainforests.'"

The Government's attitude to the squatters at that time was quite unreasonable. The Opposition does not believe that squatters should have a free run in those areas, but consideration must be given to people who might move in and stay for short periods. It is not possible to say, "You are a squatter", when one is not sure how long that person has been there. The National Parks and Wildlife Service should sort out that matter and determine a policy.

The big advantage with this Bill is that it spells out clearly all the provisions that were contained in another Act. Any Government should look at its policies in a realistic way and should be able to work directly from an Act. In that regard, the Bill has a great deal of merit.

The Opposition will not raise a great number of matters at the Committee stage, but our spokesman on national parks will raise a few points. At the end of the Committee debate, everyone will know exactly where we are heading.

Hon. J. A. ELLIOTT (Cunningham—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (3.56 p.m.), in reply: I shall reply to the honourable members who took part in the debate last night and today. I think it would be fair to say that many members have spoken about matters that are really irrelevant to the Bill before the Assembly, and I think that they would concede that point. However, I give them an assurance that their comments have been noted by me and that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been told of them. Their suggestions will be followed up.

Firstly, I turn to the comments of the member for Sandgate. He criticised the Bill for not increasing the penalties for the removal of native plants under the national parks legislation. His point has been noted. However, at this stage I think it is important for honourable members to realise that it was considered essential to first take the provisions relating to national parks out of the Forestry Act and amalgamate them with the National Parks and Wildlife Act. As I explained in my second-reading speech, the Bill merely transfers from the Forestry Act the existing provisions relating to national parks. It was considered that any attempt to change or to add to those provisions would have resulted in extensive argument and delay.

I guess it could be said that nature conservation and national parks have become very emotive public issues, and if the Government wanted to change or to add to the provisions, it could go on ad infinitum. If for no other reason than to give the Forestry Department an Act free of the encumbrance of national park provisions, I believe it is essential to avoid delay. That is another good reason why the present course of action has been taken.

I would welcome the opportunity to allow those people who are presently unemployed to help with the development and operation of national parks. The honourable member for Sandgate and I are not poles apart on that concept, which he raised last night. I support it. However, it must be remembered that the self-esteem and self-confidence of young people who have been out of work for a considerable period could be destroyed. Quite frankly, I believe that they could reach the stage of wondering whether there is any good purpose in their existence.

I whole-heartedly agree with the philosophical point of view that the honourable member has advanced, but I think there are two impediments to doing what he suggested. Firstly, the Australian Workers Union has expressed strong opposition to the use of volunteers for any work that would usually be done by its members. All wages staff working in national parks are required to be members of the AWU. Secondly, if funds were available to enable some of those who are unemployed to be employed, accommodation and other conditions stipulated by the Forestry Employees Award would have to be met.

In fact, the conditions are quite onerous. There must be accommodation in barracks, huts or caravans that are lined and sealed. Wardrobes, mirrors and rubber or inner-spring mattresses must be supplied; also electric or gas stoves and refrigerators. It is not practicable to go to the expense of providing those things other than on a reasonably permanent basis.

Problems such as that did not exist for Roosevelt when he implemented his plan. He would have been able, with the minimum of ancillary equipment, to utilise the pool of unemployed. That shows clearly the difference between those times and now. I would add that, in spite of Roosevelt's activities, parks in the United States of America were in such a bad state in the 1950s that that country's parks service introduced "Mission 66", a 10-year program to get public support and funding in order to bring the parks up to a satisfactory standard.

The honourable member for Sherwood expressed the view that it is undesirable to make the director responsible for the carrying out of works to improve the grazing or productive capacity of national parks. Naturally, I agree. As with the matter of higher penalties, that will be dealt with later. It is included in the Bill only because it is in the existing Act. As I have stated already, it is desirable to avoid making any changes at this stage.

I do not agree with the objection by the honourable member for Sherwood to the inclusion of the term "quarry material" in the definition of "forestry products". Clause 21 sets up new section 34, which makes it an offence to interfere with forest products on a national park. A definition of "forest products" that includes quarry material makes it clear that it is an offence to interfere with such material. Nowhere in the Bill is there any provision for quarrying to take place, which I assume is what concerns the honourable member and other honourable members.

The definition of "wildlife", to which the honourable member for Sherwood referred, is in the existing Act. As a matter of convenience in drafting the Bill, a new interpretation section was prepared instead of merely amending the old section. However, the definition of "wildlife" remains the same except for the deletion of reference to the Forestry Act, which, of course, no longer applies.

The point made by the honourable member about the need to establish national parks while land is available, even if development has to await future funding, is pertinent and has been noted. That is largely the basis of the parks on the Peninsula, which the member for Cook mentioned also. I share the view of the honourable member for Sherwood that they are destined to be of world significance.

I turn now to the speech of the honourable member for Cook. In his usual vindictive best—or should I say "worst"—style, he knocked the department. He obviously has not done his homework on what the Government is trying to do. It is a simple operation.

Mr Scott: You didn't listen.

Mr ELLIOTT: It does not become the member for Cook to carry on in such vindictive style. I was interested to note that some of his colleagues on that side of the House made contributions without going to such lengths.

The power to grant permits under section 35 is in fact qualified by the restriction "for the purposes of this Act". Those purposes are set out in other sections. In relation to section 24, which refers to Lakefield, the Government's policy is to give long-term special leases for tourist resort development, with the land remaining as national park. That has been done, of course, on Lizard Island and on Hinchinbrook Island, which were the last two tourist developments to take place on national parks.

Possibly the honourable member for Cook has failed to see the real significance. He spoke about lack of vision. I find it quite incredible that the honourable member cannot envisage the tremendous scope for people from all walks of life, whether they be Australians who go into those areas in four-wheel-drive vehicles or visitors from overseas who have saved for a life-time to see something different and who fly by light plane from Townsville and land at Lakefield, to enjoy the park without having all the ancillary gear that he probably has when he travels in those areas by four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Mr Scott: Will you answer the question? Why can't they put those developments on adjacent land?

Mr ELLIOTT: If the honourable member will listen for a second, he will realise what we are getting at. The object of the exercise is to utilise the existing facilities, including the very good airstrip, on which I have personally landed. I have been to the river and travelled the area; so we are both speaking of areas that we know.

It is important for us to be able to get people on the spot. If we were speaking about a tiny, pocket-handkerchief national park with a paucity of land, I would probably agree with the honourable member's philosophy. However, in relation to Lakefield National Park, to suggest that it has some sort of shortage of land or that it is some dreadful rip-off of the public to allow persons to set up facilities there for the public is a spurious argument. It is the public for whom the facilities are being set up. They are not being set up for me or some high-flying executives who might get something for nothing. I am talking about the public—overseas, interstate and intrastate tourists, who wish to enjoy the tremendous attributes of Lakefield. My personal belief is that the parks have to be for the people; so it is extremely important that people have access to them.

By locating the facilities in close proximity to the airstrip and to the rangers the operators will be able to take tourists out into the park. At night-time, with the use of spot-lights, they will be able to point out to visitors the various animals, such as crocodiles, in the wild. That is an experience which, in many instances, people would give their right arm for. Particularly as the member for Cook is the local member, it ill behoves him to criticise the park. I would have thought he would wholeheartedly support the concept.

In rather disparaging terms the member for Cook tried to make out that since I became the responsible Minister the funding of national parks has suddenly plummeted.

Mr Scott: That is not true.

Mr ELLIOTT: Basically the honourable member said that I was a lightweight and was not able to get any funding for national parks. The honourable member suggested that control of national parks should be given to a more responsible and heavier Minister—I am not sure whether he meant in weight or in stature. Perhaps the member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger) would have much more weight but not so much stature.

All jokes aside—if one looks at the figures and goes back to 1978-79, one sees that even then the Government was concerned about national parks and increased its Budget allocation by 16 per cent. The following year that was increased by another 21 per cent. In the last two years while I have been Minister, the allocation has increased by 23 per cent in both years. When those figures are compared with the allocations across the board to other areas, obviously they show that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been well looked after.

Not for one minute do I suggest that there are not areas in the National Parks and Wildlife Service in which we could not do a better job if more money was available. But we have to be realistic. Many other areas of Government are equally as important and need money; so we cannot get carried away.

The honourable member for Cook also raised the purchase of "Rokeby". The former owner, Mr John Broinowski, was not given the job. The fact is that the former manager, Mr Jim Gordon, has continued as manager for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A similar situation exists in other places and has worked very successfully. The tremendous amount of bush knowledge and expertise in the particular locality of these people should be utilised. I put to the honourable member that those sorts of parks are very different from small parks closer to metropolitan areas.

On previous occasions I have gone on record in the House as saying that the Government is very supportive of the concept of Aboriginal employment. In fact, the service is working on it at the moment. The chief officer, Mr Wilder, has just returned from discussing with the New South Wales service its training program for Aboriginal rangers.

It is anticipated that the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be recruiting Aborigines and sending them to New South Wales to be trained as rangers; so the honourable member cannot say we are being parochial.

The honourable member for Cook also expressed his concern that regulations can be made or changed without reference to Parliament. That, of course, is incorrect. If the honourable member refers to clause 33, which creates a new section 74, he will find that it states—

“Section 28A of the Acts Interpretation Act 1954-1977 shall apply with respect to Orders in Council and Proclamations made for the purposes of this Act and, for the purposes of such application, that section shall be read and construed as if references to regulations were references to Orders in Council . . .”

That means, of course, that regulations will be tabled here and can be disallowed if the Parliament so desires.

I now turn to the contribution of the member for Cooroora, who, unlike the member for Cook, had obviously taken the trouble to do his homework. He has grasped exactly what we are trying to do, and his contribution was balanced and reasonable. He made the interesting point that he had visited national parks in Victoria and said that it had been suggested that some 90 per cent of visitors to those parks did not travel any great distance from the point of access. That is a good point and demonstrates that we have the ability to control use simply by planning the point of access.

The honourable member also referred to Kondalilla Falls. Earlier in the year we erected signs that in words and pictures warned of danger. All members will recall the tragedy that occurred recently when a lady was swept over the falls in a flood. We will have another look at the site where the latest tragedy took place. As a parent of young children, I know only too well how dreadful it would be to have a child killed in that manner, and all of us would obviously sympathise with the child's parents. As I said, we will have another look to see if there is something more we can do. However, in wild terrain it is fairly difficult to protect people, particularly young children who should be in the care and control of their parents.

The honourable member also referred to a balance of park types. It is important that easy access to our parks be provided so that families can come in by car and enjoy themselves. However, there are also people who are keenly interested and fit enough to get involved in bush walking, so it is important that we have parks which cater for such activities. Other people have a scientific interest and want to look at the hairy-nosed wombat or the bridled nail-tailed wallaby. We have set aside specific areas to ensure the continued existence of those species.

I now turn to the honourable member for Mt Gravatt, who raised a subject which, although interesting, was not directly related to the Bill. I commend him for his interest in Toohey Park. The honourable member made a very good point about the Brisbane Forest Park, which has been a very successful concept. I commend him for his interest and persistence in trying to ensure that the Toohey Park area is amalgamated with the Brisbane Forest Park.

The honourable member for Isis has shown tremendous interest over a long time in national parks. He is particularly interested in the Great Sandy National Park on Fraser Island, which is in his electorate. He, like the honourable member for Cooroora, is au fait with the task we are trying to handle. I think he understands the importance of parks being available to the public, and the need for tourist activities in them, without damage being done to the parks. I thank him for his contribution.

He made a very good point when he referred to the morale of the service. In his own area, and elsewhere throughout the State, most National Parks and Wildlife Service officers are unlike the average people who do not really understand the situation. They are not simply 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workers. They honestly and truly believe in the service. They are dedicated to the job. They think it is worth while, knowing that they are doing something for their children and future generations. The honourable member has a good grasp of the fact that most of the people working for the service are very dedicated to it. They are not interested in the hours they work. They want to present the parks in the best possible way. It is essential that we get sufficient funds to allow them to do their job properly.

I compliment the honourable member for Mourilyan on his more reasoned approach to the debate than that of the honourable member for Cook. He has a very practical,

commonsense approach to national parks. He has magnificent, beautiful areas in his electorate, some of which I have visited. I thank him for his contribution. His attitude towards conservation is balanced.

Mr Moore: He must have changed.

Mr ELLIOTT: I agree that it is a change.

His approach indicates his common sense. He understands that there are two sides to these questions and does not get carried away on either tack.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North is a Sunday fishing colleague of the honourable member for Isis. He loves Fraser Island as do other honourable members. He and his family have spent a great deal of time in the various national parks throughout Queensland. He made some very good points in relation to access and roads. One of the best examples of what he referred to can be seen in the Noosa National Park. That park provides a very good example of modern technology being used to good advantage. A bitumen road has been built through the national park without knocking down many trees. The trees grow very well on what would be the footpath of that winding track through the national park. That is an example of a balanced, sensible approach that could well be used in other areas.

The honourable member for Murrumba read a prepared brief that someone had sent him. Probably he had it in his desk for five weeks, found it, and said to himself, "I will give this a bit of a trot." He read about Cape Tribulation. I point out to him that the Cape Tribulation National Park received world-wide acclaim when it was gazetted. Apart from some small areas that are held under freehold title, or belong to the Crown, the park stretches from one river to the next. It stretches from the Daintree River to the Bloomfield River. I have personally walked through some of the areas. I have been north of the Bloomfield River. I have walked the tracks in the area.

Mr Davis: You saw it from a plane.

Mr ELLIOTT: No. I travelled by four-wheel-drive vehicle and on foot. I was even in a 10-ft dinghy in the open sea.

Those areas are incredible. Anybody who has been there could not help but be immensely impressed by them. The project has been really worth while and I was surprised that the honourable member for Murrumba would comment adversely on such an area.

Motion (Mr Elliott) agreed to.

#### Committee

Mr Powell (Isis) in the chair; Hon. J. A. Elliott (Cunningham—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Repeal of and new s. 3; Interpretation—

Mr WARBURTON (4.22 p.m.): The honourable member for Sherwood raised a very salient point about the definition of "forest products". The Minister has indicated that he agrees with what was said by the honourable member and that at some time he will rectify the position.

As I pointed out yesterday, one of the problems that has confronted a procession of Ministers in charge of this portfolio is that their predecessors have not honoured their commitments. I should like the Minister to put on record when he intends to amend this and any other provisions that are deemed to require amendment as a result of the debate.

Mr ELLIOTT: What I said was that the Bill already provides that no-one will be able to quarry in a national park. I am not suggesting for one minute that we will not study the legislation in detail to try to improve it. Obviously that is a long-term project. Some unnecessary provisions could be repealed by degrees. I repeat that what I indicated to the honourable member for Sherwood was that no-one is allowed to quarry in a national park.

Mr INNES: I accept the Minister's assurance on this matter. The problems arise from the exercise of literally taking from an Act words that are designed for another purpose.

I refer to the taking of timber out of a State forest and putting a reference to it into an Act governing national parks. I accept the reference made by the Minister to the prohibition on the taking of forest products. Honourable members will recall that the query I raised related to the connection between the definition section in clause 8 of the Bill and the new section 10 relating to the functions of the director. In particular, I highlighted the fact that the director has the power to determine areas which from time to time may be leased. The new section 10 refers to "the objects of this Act", but it goes on to say that leasing can be for such purposes as grazing and the improvement of the grazing or productive capacity of the national park. The phrase "the objects of this Act"—if I might be excused for being the lawyer on this occasion—raises some interest because there are not defined objects of the Act. There are certain matters which can be extracted, but sometimes an Act contains an object section and says, "The object of this Act shall be to do such-and-such."

There is a principle in relation to the management of national parks in the new section 25. It states—

"The cardinal principle to be observed in the management of National Parks shall be the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent, of their natural condition and the Director shall exercise his powers under this Act in such manner as appears to him most appropriate to achieve this objective."

There will be a power to lease for the development of such things as tourist facilities, which of course are not directly for the preservation of the park. Notwithstanding the fact that the Minister rightly says, "You are forbidden to take forest products generally from national parks", there is a power to lease. One of the things that could be extracted under the terms of a lease is quarry materials.

I accept the Minister's assurance. The problems that have been highlighted by me and other members relate to this simple exercise, which is an attempt initially to clear the decks. Obviously, in a review of the legislation those matters should and would be clarified, because the Government does not normally allow quarries to operate in national parks, and it is not intended to do so. The explanation given by the Minister does not satisfy totally some of the reservations I have expressed.

I know the track record of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is good. I look forward to the time when all the eggs are in one basket so that we can sort out the eggs in that basket.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—New ss. 12-14—

Mr SCOTT (4.28 p.m.): I would like some advice from the Minister about the "branches" and "agencies" that are referred to. Would he give me an indication of the type of activities that are envisaged? It is quite an interesting concept.

Mr ELLIOTT: It could relate to the regionalisation concept of national parks. The best I can do for the honourable member is to investigate that matter and give him a written reply. Obviously it has been in the Act for some time. It is certainly not something that I have had incorporated in it.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 and 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—New ss. 23 and 24—

Mr SCOTT (4.30 p.m.): Again, I have a question about proposed new subsection (3) on page 12, which states—

"No recommendation for the setting apart of any land (other than sea bed) situated on a mineral field shall be made without the approval of the Minister of the Crown . . ."

Again, that is an interesting idea. As I understand it, there is some sort of joint administration of an area in the Iron Range area. I ask the Minister to comment on the future of mining in a future national park. It is rather difficult to know what the department has in mind, and I say that fairly because the department cannot foreshadow

its punches. How compatible are mining and national parks, particularly in the Iron Range area? I understand that a committee of joint jurisdiction is looking at what is likely to happen up there?

Mr ELLIOTT: My understanding is that once a national park is declared, no mining is allowed in it. The only activity that could take place would relate to petroleum. Once again, I will check that for the honourable member, but I think he will find that that is the position.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Clause 24—New ss. 41 and 42—

Mr SCOTT (4.32 p.m.): I do not intend to repeat what I said earlier. I had a little go about the Minister's sensitivity and the thinness of his skin. Government members are able to dish it out, but they can seldom take it. Whenever an Opposition member stands up in this Chamber and tells some home truths, Government members do not like it very much.

I must indicate my total opposition to this concept. There is ample land available. The only thing that the Minister could come up with was that there is an airstrip. I know that airstrip well, and it is not of exceptional quality. It is able to handle only small aircraft; possibly DC3s. I want to know who is going to spend money on upgrading that airstrip.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Powell): Order! I point out to the honourable member that clause 24 deals with the control of fires. That is on page 22 of the Bill. The Bill is badly printed, and it is difficult to follow.

Mr Warburton: Mr Powell, the honourable member is referring to the part numbered "24", on page 14, dealing with land for tourist purposes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: That is clause 19, and the Committee has already agreed to the clause. If the honourable member looks at clause 19 on page 13 of the Bill, he will see that it refers to new sections 23 and 24. In that clause, "24" refers to the new section in the Act, not to the clause that we are debating now.

Mr SCOTT: Mr Powell, I take your point.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I am duty bound to remind the honourable member of that point.

Mr INNES: I rise to a point of order. That confusion with the printing of the Bill exists almost on every page. If any member wishes to speak to a clause, he has to double read everything. The way the Bill is printed is terribly confusing. Almost every clause has identically numbered new sections in it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I take the point raised by the honourable member for Sherwood. I was pointing that out to the Committee myself. It is a problem. I ask honourable members to be careful, because it makes it difficult for the Chair.

Clause 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—New ss. 43 and 44—

Mr WARBURTON (4.35 p.m.): I am one who was confused, and I admit to it. With respect, there is a very important matter on page 15, which I read as clause 26. I do not know whether it is possible to overcome the problem. If it is, I would ask you to bear with us on this occasion. Perhaps we could then go page by page. It is not easy.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The clause before the Chair at the moment is clause 25 on page 24. If the honourable member for Sandgate wishes to make remarks about an earlier clause that he has missed because of the confusion, I am prepared to allow him to make those remarks.

Mr WARBURTON: I thank you for your indulgence, Mr Powell, I wish to speak to clause 20 on page 15. New section 26—"Specialised management within National Parks"—states—

“ . . . subject to this Act, from time to time recommend to the Minister that the whole or a part of that Park be declared—

- (c) a primitive area,
- (d) a primitive and recreation area,
- (e) a recreation area,
- (f) a scientific area, or
- (g) an historic area.”

I put this to the Minister. I notice that there is no reference there to “environmental park”. Perhaps it is not fitting for it to be there. Perhaps it is meant to be something apart from a national park. The problem I have is to find out exactly what is meant by “environmental park”.

Let me explain what I am getting at. Nothing appears there, but there are references to “environmental park” when we eventually get to the part of the Bill dealing with fire control. At the beginning of the Bill under “Interpretation” environmental park is mentioned, but the proposed section simply says—

“Environmental Park means land reserved and set apart as an Environmental Park under the Land Act 1962-1981”.

I took the opportunity to have a look at the Land Act. One then becomes totally confused, in that there is no interpretation of “environmental park”, except the mention in the interpretation section of environmental parks under the heading “public purposes”. Again, however, there is no definition. Within the Land Act itself, of course, there are many references to “environmental park”. There was even an Environmental Park Fund to be established and maintained by the Treasury. There are many references to “environmental park”, but no interpretation. The National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 makes mention of “environmental park”, but only in section 9 which is headed “Disposal of moneys in the Environmental Park Fund”. In other words, under the enabling Act special provision was made for the Environmental Park Fund set up by the Treasury—heaven only knows for what—to be completely scrubbed. Therefore, the position is that the Bill contains reference to “environmental park”, but we have no definition or interpretation of it.

What brings it very definitely to my mind is that the Government has announced that if mining ever takes place on Moreton Island, that ravaged section, whether it be on the north-east corner of Moreton Island or the section near Bulwer, will become an environmental park. I can place my own definition on what an environmental park is and I am sure many other honourable members can do the same, but my point is that it is not good enough in this Bill to simply refer to the Land Act, because that Act is wanting and therefore this Bill is wanting. If the Bill is to proceed, it is extremely important that “environmental park” be defined.

Mr ELLIOTT: First of all, I assure the honourable member that I will consider the definition of “environmental park”. If he would like it spelt out in greater detail, I am sure that can be done. What the honourable member must try to understand about an environmental park is that usually it is a smaller area of land than would make up a national park, and is not of quite the same significance as a national park in terms of being in a pristine state. Therefore, in layman's terms, that quite considerably changes its status. In probably all instances environmental parks would be under the trusteeship of the local authority. Those are the differences between a national park and an environmental park.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 26 and 27, as read, agreed to.

Clause 28—New ss. 51-53—

Mr SCOTT (4.43 p.m.): Now that we have resolved the rather difficult question of the numbering of the clauses, I can quite freely go back because this clause is wide open and deals in part with the depasturing of stock in a national park. Although I shall refer back to the clause relating to wild stock, I am not departing from this clause

because it is relevant to stock on a national park. Clause 27 gives the director power to require a muster or musters of all wild stock in a national park. I am wondering how well the department is geared to carry out that sort of a muster which, particularly in the Lakefield National Park, is very difficult and expensive. I am quite certain that the Minister will tell me that it will be done by contract muster.

Mr ELLIOTT: It depends where it is. On Lakefield we have an adequate number of people who can do that sort of thing. In the Carnarvon Range area we have more than enough people who can be brought in.

Mr SCOTT: I am very pleased to hear that. I don't know whether the people on Lakefield National Park to whom the Minister referred would be suitable because I do not think any of the three officers there would particularly shine on horseback. They are extremely good in applying themselves to their given task. Nevertheless, I accept the point that among the staff are people who are able to muster stock.

Roads will also be needed if depastured stock are to be controlled. The Bill states—

“The Director may from time to time subsidise any Department of the Government, any Local Authority or any person to the extent he thinks fit in the construction, improvement, maintenance, operation or protection of roads..”

Roads are essential in the parks in the north. I was taken to task by one Government speaker who said that I did not know what I was talking about in regard to access to those parks. Obviously, he did not listen, and I can understand that because members opposite are asleep as often as not. I did not make any reference to access of that type to national parks. There are roads to those national parks, but they are not good and I have spoken frequently about the need for adequate funding to upgrade them. That will certainly be relevant to any discussion of this clause and the move that will be necessary in the future to get rid of depastured stock.

The only equipment on Lakefield National Park that is capable of improving roads is a flat blade fitted to the tractor; yet the Minister expects his staff to do something about the formation of roads. That is one of their tasks. At present, their basic task is fire control, and that is very important. I hope a good slasher is purchased for the park so that the staff will be able to carry out fire control. That will be a necessary part of the control of depastured stock.

Something must be done about the state of the roads. I am aware of the Government's parsimonious attitude in handing out money through the Mines Department to people who badly need access to their mining leases. Only small amounts are handed out, and they are handed out very carefully; in fact, they are totally inadequate. It worries the Cook Shire Council, for example, that the people who visit national parks are not those who live in the shire and who use the roads the most. I am certain that that point has been made to the Minister previously. The national park has removed a large area of rateable land from the shire, and even though people with cattle permits will be paying rates, the problem is so complicated that I am certain the Minister cannot see his way through the maze—certainly the people in the Cook Shire cannot see their way through it. As they see it, the roads will be used excessively—that is in terms of the Far North—by tourists visiting the parks. The shire's ability to raise funds has been reduced greatly because large rateable areas have been removed from the shire, so the Government must now take action. One flat blade for flat-blading road construction, which is not the way to build roads, is not nearly good enough.

I ask the Minister to apply himself to obtaining more funds. He has just been telling the Committee how well he has done in gaining increased funding, but some of the very mild and demure things I have said seem to have put his nose out of joint. I again ask the Minister to take that point on board. Although he said that he has been able to gain increased funding for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, he did not say that the service has grown like topsy and that the area to which he referred is far in excess of that which was involved in earlier years.

The Minister should not skite about the increase in funds that he has obtained, otherwise the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the people whom he intends

using to control depastured stock will ask for better rates of pay. They are being overworked and underpaid. I am not being unkind in saying that; I am being fair and just. People in the parks are working long hours and are not being paid the correct rates. The people who are taken there to control depastured stock will also have every right to complain. Those who are working there now have complained to me and to other members of the Opposition who have visited the area. So the Minister should not say that I have a sharp tongue or that I am taking him to task unduly. If he cannot stand the heat, he should not stay in the kitchen.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I have a couple of points relative to the use of national parks under the new section 28, and particularly relative to the obtaining of permits, on which I would like the Minister to elaborate. When people apply to visit a park, usually it is virtually a formality for them to obtain a permit other than in cases of overcrowding, which is quite understandable. Have there been any instances in which permits have not been granted, and what were the reasons? Is a time limit placed on people camping in parks?

My other query relates to beehives in national parks. Obviously, what I might describe as exotic bees would be a pest in a park, but I suggest that in the Scenic Rim Park, beekeepers place their hives at the edge of the park close to the suitable flora. The park is virtually full of wild beehives. Has action been taken to eliminate them? If not, it would not cause any problem if beekeepers were allowed into the park.

Mr ELLIOTT: The first thing to realise about the permits is that, in normal circumstances, it is not difficult to get one. However, as the honourable member indicated, at Easter and other long week-ends, ballots are conducted because of the potential, tremendous overcrowding at places such as Freshwater, the Bunya Mountains National Park and the Girraween National Park. There are quite a few of them.

As to the time limit, three areas come to mind. Shute Harbour is one of them. The time limit was imposed on the areas because people were establishing permanent camps in the national parks. I am sure that most people would agree that national parks are provided not for people to live in but for people to enjoy. I do not think we are about to say, "Thou shalt not be there for more than a week." However, national parks are not provided for squatters or for people to live in permanently.

Mr Scott: What happens if the fishing is very good?

Mr ELLIOTT: That, of course, encourages people to stay longer.

I believe that people become a little carried away about bees. Generally speaking, so long as people do not get right beside a beehive, there is no trouble. The honourable member referred to the native bees. Anyone who lives in the country or does a lot of bushwalking understands that bees are almost everywhere. Feral bees, as the purists may term them, are not really likely to attack people unless they actively encroach on the hive area.

Mr Underwood: Are beehives not allowed onto the parks because of the danger?

Mr ELLIOTT: That is probably a large part of the reason. As the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General said this morning, I am not a walking encyclopaedia. I cannot go back in my mind to the history of why all these matters were decided on in the first place. Young children, in particular, who are allergic to bees could be stung and die before medical attention could be given to them. By and large, I think a certain amount of overreaction is involved. Beehives should be allowed within a reasonable distance of national parks so that the bees can collect the honey from the trees. Opinions are widely divergent on this issue.

Clause 28, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 64, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

The House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.