

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 1 APRIL 1958

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. A. R. Fletcher, Cunningham) took the chair at 11 a.m.

PICTURE THEATRES AND FILMS ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.

Assent reported by Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS.

TARIFF BOARD REPORT ON MOTOR-TRADE
SPARE PARTS.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) Has his attention been drawn to the report of the Tariff Board in which they state wide profiteering by the spare-parts section of the motor trade is taking place and in support of such statement cited a case of a spare-part being landed at a duty paid cost of 25s. being retailed for £7?”

“(2) In view of this evidence furnished by the Tariff Board will he take suitable action to prevent this ‘racket’ being continued by bringing these articles under price control?”

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

“(1) Yes. It is noted that the report in question relates to Australia and not specifically to the State of Queensland.”

“(2) It has been reported that an assurance has been given by the Commonwealth Government that it will examine its powers to curb excessive profits on motor vehicle spare parts. The Commissioner of Prices in Queensland will be asked to make enquiries to ascertain as to whether or not excess prices for motor vehicle spare parts are being charged in this State.”

NEW STATE SCHOOL AT CHARLEVILLE.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) asked the Minister for Education—

“(1) Is he aware of the extremely unsatisfactory conditions under which the teaching staff and pupils are working at Charleville following the destruction of the State school by fire some five months ago?”

“(2) If so, will he advise the House what action the Government is taking to expedite the building of a new State school, and will he give some indication of when the work is likely to be completed?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

“(1) I am aware that, despite the efforts of the officers of this Department and of the Department of Public Works, conditions for pupils and staff of the Charleville State School are not as satisfactory as they were before part of the

school was destroyed by fire nor are they as satisfactory as I would like them to be."

"(2) Two of the original rooms that were partially damaged have been restored, and six temporary classrooms have been constructed. There is now accommodation for twelve class groups on the school site. Four new classrooms which are in the course of construction are expected to be completed in June. Plans and specifications for the remainder of the accommodation are nearly completed and tenders for this work will be invited as soon as possible."

NEW INDUSTRIES IN QUEENSLAND SINCE JANUARY, 1958.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Acting Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) How many new industries have been established in Queensland since January 1, 1958?"

"(2) Of these, how many represent capital investment from outside Queensland?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEX (Isis) replied—

"(1) One hundred and thirty new companies have been registered in Queensland from January 1 to February 28, 1958."

"(2) Thirty-nine of these registrations are 'foreign' companies, that is, providing capital investment from other States or overseas."

OIL REFINERY IN QUEENSLAND.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Premier—

"(1) Will he inform the House what efforts were made by his Government to endeavour to persuade the Vacuum Oil Company to build the £16 million oil refinery in Queensland?"

"(2) Does he believe that if the Minister for Labour and Industry had stayed in Australia he might have been successful in obtaining this project for Queensland?"

"(3) As three refineries have been built in New South Wales, two in Victoria, one in West Australia and one is to be constructed in South Australia, will he make urgent and vigorous representations to the various oil companies to have a refinery established in this State? If successful, will he urge the company or companies concerned to build the refinery at the first-class deep-water port of Urangan?"

"(4) Does he believe that, as during recent months the Ampol Petroleum Ltd., the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd., General Motors Holden, and now Vacuum Oil have launched expansion programmes involving, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" on March 27, a total direct investment of nearly £60 million, all to be completed in five years, it is clearly indicated that influential business interests have no confidence in his Government?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1) Since assuming office my Government has been very largely directing its efforts towards restoring the confidence in this State which had been so effectively destroyed by 25 years of Labour rule, and particularly by such vindictive legislative measures as the Petrol Bill and University Act, which were so enthusiastically supported by the Honourable Member for Maryborough. In my contacts with representatives of industry, I have been very frankly informed that they were not interested in establishing industry in Queensland while there was a Labour Government in office. Since the elections and the change of Government, there is a very real interest in Queensland by all sections of industry and commerce."

"(2) See Answer to No. 1."

"(3) The Government is at present energetically negotiating for the next oil refinery to be established in Australia to be built in Queensland, and I am confident our efforts may be successful. In the selection of a site, the Honourable Member can be assured that the Minister for Education (The Honourable J. C. A. Pizzex, M.L.A.) will not allow the claims of Urangan to be overlooked."

"(4) Definitely not. May I inform the Honourable Member, in case he may have overlooked the fact, that Comalco alone, as a result of the Government's assistance and encouragement, has embarked on a developmental programme in Queensland involving the investment of over three times the £60 million mentioned by him. May I suggest to the Honourable Member that instead of endeavouring to do everything possible to hinder Queensland's development he join with the Government in its efforts to encourage industry to come to our State."

COLLECTIONS UNDER THE ROADS (CONTRIBUTION TO MAINTENANCE) ACTS.

Mr. A. J. SMITH (Carpentaria) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Will he advise the House regarding details of the first month's operations of "The Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act" in respect to (a) Amount collected from Intrastate hauliers, owner-drivers and general carriers; and (b) Amount collected from Interstate hauliers?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"There are still a number of returns to come from certain outlying centres. However, dissection of the receipts to date in relation to the operation of the Act during the month of February is as follows:— (a) Intrastate, £36,601 4s. 9d.; (b) Interstate, £7,605 18s. 9d."

PRISONER LEONARD ERNEST RYAN.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron), without notice, asked the Minister for Justice—

“Has he read a Press statement in which it is claimed that Leonard Ernest Ryan, who was released on parole from Boggo Road Gaol, is innocent of the charge of murder on which he was convicted 19 years ago? In order to give Mr. Ryan a chance to state the reasons on which this claim is based, will the Government establish a commission, or a public committee of inquiry, to give him this opportunity, and to consider the evidence or any new evidence that might be brought forward?”

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

“(1) Yes, I have read a newspaper report on the subject matter of this question.”

“(2) Mr. Ryan has been informed, as far back as July, 1949, of the conditions required to be fulfilled before action can be taken by the Crown. These conditions are based on the practice of the appellate courts in dealing with appeals on the grounds of the discovery of fresh evidence, and may be shortly stated as follows:—(a) That the new evidence is in addition to that already considered by the courts of appeal; (b) That it is material, cogent and plausible; and (c) That good reason can be given for its not having been tendered earlier. I may mention that it would not be proper for information contained in official files in respect of a prisoner or a former prisoner to be made public by way of an answer to a Parliamentary question.”

PROSECUTION OF WATERSIDE WORKERS FOR STEALING.

Mr. P. R. SMITH (Windsor), without notice, asked the Acting Minister for Labour and Industry—

“Has the Minister’s attention been drawn to a news item appearing in the ‘Truth’ newspaper of 30 March, 1958, alleging that the Queensland Police Force had been instructed that in future they were to proceed against members of the Waterside Workers’ Federation by summons instead of arrest in cases of stealing?”

“Will the Minister inform this House—

(1) Was a deputation from the Waterside Workers’ Federation received by the Minister?

(2) Following that deputation was such an instruction given by an officer of the police to members of the Queensland Police Force?

(3) If so, by whom was it given?

(4) Was such an extraordinary departure from an established practice authorised by the Minister?

(5) If so, why?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

“1. No. I received no deputation of any sort.”

“2 to 5. The Commissioner of Police advises me that charges of stealing and pillaging by waterside workers are regarded as serious offences but it has been his policy in petty offences, such as possession of articles of small value suspected of being stolen, or in other petty shop-lifting offences not to arrest peremptorily the offender if he or she is a first offender and is also a resident of long standing or has other family ties, and lodge the subject in a lock-up overnight or during week-ends, but to adopt a more merciful course in allowing the offender either to be brought up on summons or to present himself or herself for charging at the watchhouse at a time when the defendant can be brought before a court without the necessity of being locked up in a watchhouse cell.”

“The Commissioner has assured me that there will be no discrimination shown by members of the Queensland Police Force in their dealings with waterside workers or any other section of the community, and that the policy in this regard has been and will be quite uniform.”

LEASE OF COUNCIL LAND FOR T.V. TRANSMITTER.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah), without notice, asked the Premier—

“(1) Is it a fact that the Brisbane City Council will not agree to the purchase or acquisition by the Commonwealth Department in charge of television of a small parcel of land of approximately four to five acres in area on the range at the rear of Mt. Coot-tha for the creation of a television transmission mast?”

“(2) Is it not also a fact that, if such Department is unable to purchase or acquire such land, that there will be a grave risk that South Australia will obtain the television transmission equipment presently intended for installation in Queensland, and that television in Queensland will thereby be delayed for some years?”

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

“I am informed that the Brisbane City Council has offered the Commonwealth Government a 30 years’ lease of an area on Mt. Coot-tha for the erection of a T.V. transmitter.”

“This is the maximum lease the Council is legally empowered to give.”

“Negotiations are at present in progress between both parties.”

“I understand that the Council by offering a lease is anxious to retain for the people control over the area concerned in case it may not at some future time be required for T.V. purposes.”

"The Commonwealth would be protected by its powers of resumption should any Council act detrimentally to the Commonwealth's interests at any time."

"I am sure everyone trusts that nothing will eventuate that will delay T.V. being established in this State."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Succession and Probate Duties Acts, 1892 to 1955.

By-law under the Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1956.

Order in Council under the Traffic Acts, 1949 to 1957.

Order in Council under the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1954.

Orders in Council under the Co-operative Societies Acts, 1946 to 1951.

Regulation under the Co-operative Societies Acts, 1946 to 1951.

By-laws under the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1955.

DEATH OF MR. L. A. WOOD.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.17 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of Leslie Arnold Wood, Esquire, member for the electoral district of North Toowoomba and Leader of the Opposition in the Queensland Parliament.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained."

I am sure that every other hon. member was just as shocked as I was to hear of the untimely passing of the late Les Wood. When the House adjourned last week he appeared to be in his usual good health; in fact, he demonstrated that by his keenness in the debates. Unfortunately, however, One higher than ourselves decided that his very useful life on this earth should be terminated.

It can be very truthfully said that the late hon. member dedicated his life to his State. His life was an excellent example of service. As a school teacher he strove to educate the young citizens of the State to fit them for their future lives. In the dark hours of war, he gave his services to his country, notwithstanding that he was a family man with family responsibilities. During his service in the Forces he demonstrated those attributes of leadership that he so capably demonstrated in Parliament. He was promoted to the rank of captain.

Following his war service, the late Les Wood entered this Parliament and served Queensland and its citizens on a high level in the public affairs of the State. All these things he did enthusiastically and well. He took his seat in the thirtieth Parliament as hon. member for East Toowoomba following the death of the late Mr. Herbert Yeates. He was defeated at the 1947 elections but he later re-entered Parliament as member for North Toowoomba and he became Leader of the Opposition in the present Parliament on 28 August, 1957.

Les Wood was a man of remarkably high principles. He had a magnificent sense of fairness and decency and at all times when speaking in the House he showed very commendable restraint even though he may have been under considerable pressure at times. He always relied on logic and reasoning and his eloquence was never of the rhetorical type that "tears a passion to tatters."

He was completely unselfish. At no time in his public career did he have any thought of personal gain or advancement. He thought only of the principles for which he stood and of his Party's welfare. That was evident from his offer to stand down from his office in the Parliament because he thought that if his friend and colleague over the years, Mr. Duggan, was returned to Parliament he would be a more capable leader than he. That demonstrated that he thought only of what he considered to be best for the Party of which he was such an excellent member. He took over the leadership of the Opposition at a very crucial stage of his Party's history. The way he handled the office was another example of how the occasion finds the man. During the time that he was in the Government parties he was a prominent back-bencher and he showed his latent ability; but it was not until he became Leader of the Opposition that he showed us his great qualities of leadership and his undoubted ability to weld his Party into a solid body. He carried out his duties splendidly and created a tremendous impression on all hon. members and on all those interested in the affairs of Parliament.

He was one of the most popular members in this Parliament. His happy disposition and engaging manner endeared him to all hon. members of all shades of political thought and all public servants who came in contact with him. He had a particularly kindly disposition. He thought only of others. That was evident when on the last night he spent in this Assembly he took the opportunity to refer to my wife's illness.

He was a good family man and the upbringing of his family is a credit to him.

He was also prominent in sporting circles.

No greater tribute could be paid to any man than was paid by the people of Toowoomba who turned out in such tremendous numbers yesterday to honour a worthy son of that city. With his death on 29 March the State lost an excellent citizen

and a potential brilliant leader and I am sure all hon. members join with me in expressing deepest sympathy with his widow and young family.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.24 a.m.): It is with very deep feeling that I rise to second the motion that has been so wonderfully moved by the Premier in conveying the sympathy of the House to Mrs. Wood and her family.

As members of the Australian Labour Party we are grateful to the Premier and to the Government for the wonderful and gracious tribute which has been paid to Mr. Wood, an honour which I am certain he deserved, just as he deserved the wonderful and gracious tribute paid to him by the people of Toowoomba and Canon Ward yesterday.

The shock sustained by every member of the Australian Labour Party, all other hon. members of the House, and indeed I am sure every member of the public in Queensland, could not possibly be compared with the terrible shock his passing must have been to Mrs. Wood. The circumstances of his death must have placed a terrible strain on her.

Les Wood was the type of man we read about down through the pages of history, whether it be our own national history in Australia or anywhere else. It has always been found that in times of crisis men who previously were so humble that they did not make their mark, men unassuming in their manners, never proud in their approach to people or in any other way, have been able to take their place amongst the great men of history. In this way I am certain that Les Wood will take his place with the many great leaders in the annals of the Australian Labour Party. Maybe his record of achievement will not be followed by great Labour social reforms and other benefits which generally have made the achievements of many Labour men so famous in this country, but he will be remembered for the part he played in a grave time of crisis within the Australian Labour Party in Queensland. When he assumed the leadership he undertook a heavy responsibility which he accepted with calmness and dignity. The manner in which he did so will long be remembered by many members of the Labour Party in Queensland. They will remember the part he played in holding together a loyal team, a team which was completely and rigidly loyal to him in every way, and in turn he was loyal to it. On this side we all shared a loyalty to him. His loyalty has shown itself in many ways. He served his country for years. He had a great devotion to his country and his family. I do not think a greater tribute can be paid to any man than that. Possibly he did not possess the brilliance of some people but I think his unassuming approach was much more effective. He impressed people by his quietness, dignity and wonderful manners.

He impressed people much more effectively than others who, through their own confidence, have made mistakes. He will undoubtedly be remembered by many of us for many years to come. His criticisms in the House were always quietly made. On many occasions he has caused embarrassment to his opponents because of the very quietness with which he criticised hon. members in the Chamber. I have never seen him lose his temper. He always had that quiet dignity which made him beloved of us all. The Australian Labour Party in Queensland, indeed in Australia, has lost a great man, a man who, I am sure, was destined to be of great importance to Queensland and Australia. We have lost a man who will be very hard to replace within our organisation. I believe that in all things he was a good true Labour man. He did what he thought was right. He never harboured hatred or bitterness; he never hated anybody, nor did he openly display anger towards anybody. He approached matters from a logical and common-sense point of view and never showed that hatred or bitterness that has affected the judgment of others.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane) (11.31 a.m.): The members of the Queensland Labour Party desire to be associated with the motion of condolence moved by the Premier this morning. Like the Premier, members of this Party, including myself, suffered a great shock at the sudden and untimely death of Mr. Wood. Mr. Wood was a conscientious and assiduous representative of the people in this Parliament. As a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party under my leadership, I always found him to be a genial, courteous and respectful member. Even on occasions when he saw fit to differ from my opinion or the decisions of Cabinet he always presented his case with respect. As the Premier said, Mr. Wood served his State well as a school teacher in the moulding of character, as a member of the A.I.F. and of latter years as a representative of the people in this Parliament. Although his life has been terminated at an early age, it can be said that he served his country and his people with distinction.

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (11.33 a.m.): I rise to support this motion of condolence because of my very sincere desire to be associated with the expression that we intend to send from this House to Mrs. Wood and members of the late Mr. Wood's family. As one who possibly came more in direct political contact with Les Wood than most hon. members of this House I had more opportunity of judging his sincerity. He always accepted criticism in the spirit in which it was given and he respected the views of those who differed from him. My first direct political contact with Les Wood was during the 1947 State election campaign. On that occasion we fought a hard battle in the area that embraced part of the city of

Toowoomba. After that campaign I have always paid this tribute to Les Wood, that on the night the poll was declared he was the first to congratulate me on having won a victory.

His defeat did not deter him. He continued to adhere to the views he had expressed while a Member of Parliament and in 1950 three years later, he successfully contested the new electorate of North Toowoomba. Although we differed in political outlook, we became firm friends. On many occasions I discussed with him problems of our city, on many of which we were able to see eye to eye.

The news of his passing on Saturday morning was a severe shock to me. I had spoken to him only about three hours earlier. At that time we discussed matters affecting the advancement and development of his area and the betterment of the people of his locality. He expressed a view that was dear to him, that something should be done to relieve certain cases of distress that had been brought to his notice. That was typical of the man. He was always keen to do all he could for those who elected him to Parliament.

He was also very interested in the development of the State. Those who have been in this Chamber for a number of years know the grave responsibility that was thrust upon him after the 1957 election campaign. During that campaign he demonstrated to the people of Toowoomba that he was a man of outstanding character and ability, a man who was not prepared to become embroiled in some of the major issues that arose during that campaign. In my opinion he was successful at that time because he would not associate himself with the hatred and turmoil that arose in his city. Because he was successful he was entrusted with the responsibility of leadership.

In that capacity he demonstrated ability to keep his Party together, to advance the views of his Party and to see that debates were conducted on a high plane of dignity.

As one who has worked in an adjoining electorate for many years, I know that the people of Toowoomba have lost a very strong advocate and that the State has lost a parliamentarian who gave of his best for the State. As a parliamentarian he will be remembered for many years to come.

Mr. WINDSOR (Fortitude Valley) (11.39 a.m.): I join in the remarks of earlier speakers. As a latecomer to this Chamber, I had known Mr. Wood only a short time, but that was long enough to enable me to realise his qualities. As late as last Thursday I felt admiration for the masterly way in which he handled all the Bills that had been introduced. In debates he opened the attack for the Opposition but he did it with grace and charm. He was never bitter; his questions were not vicious; they were asked in a kindly manner sincerely seeking information.

Although we will not see him again I suggest that we take a lead from him as an example for our future behaviour.

Mr. SPEAKER: As one who is in a position to evaluate the effect of individual effort in debate in the House I feel that I owe the late Mr. Wood a debt of gratitude. In this I speak also for the Chairman of Committees. The late gentleman had a temperate and moderate approach to debate in the House and he contributed a great deal to orderly, dignified and effective exchange of ideas in debates. The Chairman of Committees and myself owe him quite a lot.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that as a mark of respect to the late hon. member the sitting of the House be suspended until 2.15 p.m.

VALUATION (SHIRE OF BUNGIL) VALIDATION BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

QUEENSLAND PLACE NAMES BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 27 March (see p. 2115).

Clauses 20 to 32, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—New headnote and ss. 151A, 151B and 151C inserted; Petition for local option vote—

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.18 p.m.): I do not object to this clause. There is only one part of it with which I am concerned. It reads as follows:—

“A local option vote shall not be taken in a locality unless not less than ten per centum of the electors in that locality have petitioned for that vote as prescribed by subsection two of this section.”

The clause says that a local option poll shall be held within an area defined by the commission. It seems unusual to have that provision and also the one that states that 10 per cent of the electors may petition for a local option poll. It is rather puzzling. The Minister may be able to clear up that point. We are concerned with the defining of the

area. It is defined in the Act but not very clearly. I should say that 10 per cent. may not be enough, because some of those people may not be in the defined locality.

In a locality within an electoral district 10 per cent may not mean many people. In that case a greater percentage than 10 per cent. may be required. I am rather puzzled by the provision. It could be related to the district or a locality in a district.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (2.21 p.m.): I shall deal briefly with the first point, the requirement of 10 per cent. The local option provision is merely in the nature of an additional safeguard. An earlier clause provides that the Licensing Commission must consider each case. There is provision for objection. This requirement is an additional safeguard. The primary requirement for the holding of a poll is a petition signed by 10 per cent. of the people.

Mr. Lloyd: What would happen if the majority of those 10 per cent. were not in the area eventually defined?

Mr. MUNRO: I shall come to that. I am dealing first with the requirement of a petition signed by 10 per cent. The decision does not depend solely on the result of the option poll. That is an additional safeguard. There should be some indication of a reasonable feeling against the granting or transfer of a licence before the local option poll is held. Apart from other factors, it would not be desirable to involve the State in the time and expense of a local option poll unless there was an indication of the need for it.

The second point raised by the hon. member, that of the locality, can perhaps be explained by referring to Clause 33 of the Bill, which provides that—

“Unless otherwise determined by the Governor in Council, the electoral district under ‘The Elections Act, 1915 to 1952,’ or in the case of such an electoral district which is divided into divisions, the division thereof wherein the premises hereinbefore mentioned in this sub-section are, or are to be, situated; or

Such area as the Governor in Council (who is hereby thereunto authorised) may, by Order in Council published in the “Gazette,” determine which area may be defined by reference to electoral districts, local authority areas, divisions or parts of any of the aforesaid, petty sessions districts or parts thereof or otherwise as the Governor in Council deems sufficient to identify the same.”

That gives the machinery for defining the locality. As this procedure has not yet been put into operation, I am not in a position to describe it in detail, but my understanding of the position is that the locality will be defined in relation to each particular poll on an application for a new licence.

Mr. Coburn: When will it be defined?

Mr. MUNRO: At an early stage. In fact, it will be defined at the time the Commission indicates favourable consideration to the proposal. The 10 per cent. of the people who will require to lodge a petition would be 10 per cent. of the people in the same locality who ultimately are involved in the local option poll.

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) (2.26 p.m.): The Acting Leader of the Opposition has raised the question of defining the area where the local option poll will be taken and he has asked the Minister to outline what area would be involved. The position is as clear as mud after the explanation given by the Minister. Nobody knows what the area will be. The Minister has not told us in specific terms what the area will be. I understood from his remarks that the Licensing Commission will declare a licensed area and having done that it will advertise in the Press for objections, and any person who wishes to object may lodge an objection to the Commission. The hon. gentleman also said that this clause was put in as a safeguard but I really think it is to help the Government and the Commission to get over local option polls because the area has not been defined. The area may be from George Street to Leichhardt Street in Spring Hill bounded by the river and by Gregory Terrace. The Minister has to define the area. How will people know whether they are entitled to vote or not? We are asked to vote on this clause without being given much information as to the area and the people who will be able to vote. I personally think that it is an obnoxious clause and I repeat that whilst the Minister said it was a safeguard it is a protection for the Commission and the Government. I do not think the Commission will get 10 per cent. of the people to sign a petition.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (2.28 p.m.): I have already explained this clause. The interpretation given by the hon. member for Brisbane is not correct. I said that the locality would be determined at an early date.

Mr. Mann: By whom?

Mr. MUNRO: By the Commission. I might add that the Commission is required to publish a notice, and a petition requesting a local option poll may be presented to the Commission not later than a date specified in that notice. In that notice the proposed locality will be specified. I might mention that 90 days must be allowed from the publication of the notice in the “Gazette” for the lodging of objections or the lodging of a petition for a local option poll. I suggest that the difficulties mentioned by the hon. member for Brisbane are illusory and that when he examines the details more carefully he will find the provisions are easy of understanding.

Mr. Lloyd: If you are advertising that a licence is to be granted in any particular area you could also define the area where the local poll could be demanded by the people.

Mr. MUNRO: That is the position as I understand it. Surely hon. members opposite do not expect that in a Bill such as this, which covers the whole of Queensland, we should define each locality in detail.

Mr. Lloyd: You have not been very helpful in telling us how an area will be defined.

Mr. MUNRO: I have been as helpful as possible. In explaining legislation in the Chamber, naturally one cannot go any further than give a general explanation of it. I feel quite confident that in the administration of the legislation the procedure for defining a locality, which, as I say, is a matter for the Licensing Commission, will be quite satisfactory.

Clause 33, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 37, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

SUPREME COURT FUNDS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (2.34 p.m.): I move—

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

As the Bill was fully explained on the introductory stage, I do not think any further explanation of it is required at this stage.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

SUPREME COURT ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL (No. 2).

SECOND READING.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (2.37 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is a very simple one. It was explained fully on its introduction and I do not think there is need for any further comment now.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES
BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (2.41 p.m.): I move—

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

I have already given hon. members a fairly full explanation of the Bill and the methods by which the Government hope to introduce a considerable fund which so far has not been available to this State to assist the home ownership programme. Hon. members expressed general assent to the principle of the Bill but doubt was expressed whether it would result in any worthwhile increase in the volume of funds available to support the home ownership programme.

There are already indications that there will be additional co-operative building societies. As a matter of fact quite a number of applications are being held against the passage of the Bill; they will be dealt with after it becomes law. They will be added to the list of societies whose names appear in the schedule to the Bill which deals with those already registered. In Committee I intend to move an amendment to add two further names to the list. Their registration has made it necessary to include them in the schedule as societies now in being. In addition to these two societies there is a clear indication that there will be a number of additional societies quickly registered once the Bill becomes law. The mere registration of additional societies will not in itself ensure that extra funds are available. Hon. members will have observed that the Bill does two things: first of all it provides for the incorporation of co-operative housing societies in terms of the Act, and registration, of course, brings the societies into function. The second part of the Bill makes provision for the Government to provide funds by way of guarantee to assist the societies with the sinews of war with which they will operate. I have already had indications from financial institutions that funds will be available. Some have already been promised and in other cases funds are waiting to be promised to the new societies. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that there will be the injection of quite a substantial sum of money, amounting certainly to many hundreds of thousands of pounds very quickly, climbing to £1,000,000 or more, as a consequence of the passage of the Bill.

At this stage I do not wish to add anything to what I said at such length on the introduction of the Bill, about the Government's view on the virtue of home ownership and the desirability of doing everything possible to encourage home ownership as against mass tenancy by people who are prepared to buy homes. We consider that it is the duty of any Government to see that people who are prepared to buy a home get the opportunity, rather than that the shortage of funds should compel them to remain as tenants.

One further point I should like to make is in relation to the permitted limits of advances laid down under the Bill. I rather tersely indicated on the initiation that the limits on advances, both in the sum of money that can be advanced and the percentage of advance payments to the security are not inflexible. As a Government, the last thing we wish to do is to start a movement off on the basis where we would immediately go to the limit of fine limits on the maximum amount of advance and the smallest security requirement. Here is a new measure and it will be a very desirable thing after the first year or two after incorporating these societies and arranging funds to help them function that we should develop and train a body of men within the movement who have experience in building societies and who know the test to be applied in the supervising of the erection of houses. If we can see a body of experienced men connected with these housing societies we can increase the amount of the permitted advance and drop the percentage that the owner has to put in. We feel that during the initial period the operation should be handled on the safest basis, and that we should commence to take risks only with a background of tried and experienced men.

Mr. Mann: If a person wishes to erect a dwelling on land which he owns he can get an advance of £2,500, and a person who wishes to convert an old building into two flats can get an advance of £5,000?

Mr. HILEY: £3,500 and £5,000 are the present limits. They will not be inflexible. The man who wants to convert a dwelling into flats and add to the capacity to provide accommodation, has to provide a much heavier equity than the man building a new home. Because of the position of the old home on a block of land close to the city, it is very desirable to increase accommodation capacity in that area. We will have a number of cases, and the building societies expect a number of applications under that section. We should first of all meet the case of the people who have an old home.

Mr. Mann: I wondered why the discrepancy between the amount, and I think the answer is reasonable.

Mr. HILEY: There is nothing inflexible about the percentage of deposit or the limit of advance. When we have societies functioning well with a team that is well trained,

the Government believe that that will be the time to let them lend more money and insist on a finer measure of deposit.

I wanted to make that supplementary explanation in the light of some observations which the Acting Leader of the Opposition made to me during the luncheon adjournment. The Bill has been in the hands of hon. members long enough for them to study its provisions. I have nothing more to add to the basic principles which I outlined on the initiation.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.50 p.m.): We appreciate that an attempt such as this is to help relieve the acute shortage of housing in this State. It cannot be denied that the rate of home building has decreased, particularly in the last 12 months. Shortage of finance is the main reason.

Any criticism we have to offer of the Bill should be taken as constructive, not destructive. The policy of the Australian Labour Party at the last State elections contained similar principles.

There is a need for legislation to encourage home building. The people who require homes can be put in two categories. It is important that young people should receive encouragement; the working-class family, who can afford only a low deposit. The other type consists of those who have larger capital resources and can afford to put down large deposits.

The Bill is an initial test of the feeling of the community in the matter of co-operative housing. It will encourage building of houses by co-operative societies. Later the scheme can be examined and analysed so that it can be amended to embrace a greater number of people.

I said at the introductory stage that it was unfortunate that there was a need for legislation such as this before finance could be made more freely available for this purpose. In this State, Governmental schemes for housing have been very successful. The workers' dwelling scheme is unique in Australia, but with a decreased amount of money for that purpose the demand for workers' dwellings could not be met. Legislation such as this was necessary in order to remove some of the load from the State. When that is done the Housing Commission may be able more easily to cope with the demand for homes.

There can be no arguments against the main principles of the Bill. The arguments to be advanced will be in relation only to some sections. The Bill contains a number of safeguards for the Government, shareholders and societies and in relation to the amounts guaranteed to co-operative building societies. It will be necessary to establish new terminating societies to enable the money to be distributed. If the trading banks divert greater sums than at present for housing, we shall give the legislation our blessing, but I think there will be some diversion to this new

source of money that is now being made available for housing. At the introductory stage I mentioned the example of the Commonwealth Trading Bank. We shall discover later whether all of the money available under the Commonwealth Trading Bank's housing scheme will be diverted to that avenue. If the Bill means that an additional amount of money from the Commonwealth and other trading banks will be available, it will have our blessing.

The growth of co-operative building societies in New South Wales was possible because of the financial policy of the Commonwealth Bank immediately following the last war. I refer to the 1945 Commonwealth Bank legislation. I shall not test the patience of the Chair, but I point out that the low rate of interest on money made available by the Commonwealth Trading Bank following the last war made it possible for co-operative housing societies to commence and expand. They grew rapidly and supplied the huge demand that occurred in Australia following the war, but the growth of housing schemes has levelled off quite considerably in recent years. At present in New South Wales there is considerable disquiet amongst co-operative housing societies. We should attempt to provide homes for all people.

If money is to be diverted from insurance companies and trading banks it will be at a rate of interest higher than the rate at present being charged. If an owner of land wishes to build a home he may get an advance from a trading bank of, say, £2,700, on which he has to pay 5½ per cent. interest. Under the Government guarantee scheme it is only natural that the trading banks will take advantage of the position, and it will be unnecessary for them to carry out a good deal of administrative work. By making money available to co-operative housing societies they can absolve themselves of a lot of administrative requirements in the construction of homes, supervising work, plan inspections, and other administrative details. On the other hand, the home-builder will be required to pay a higher rate of interest. He will not be paying 5½ per cent. but 6 per cent. I think it would be taken for granted that the building societies will be charging 6 per cent. The money will be diverted at a higher rate of interest by allowing the banks to get rid of a lot of the administrative detail. The most undesirable feature is that the home-builder has to pay the extra ½ per cent. I am sure the Treasurer has considered that aspect.

Criticism may be put forward on the definition of "approved standard" as specified on page 3 of the Bill. That definition states—

" 'Approved standard' means a standard of construction and equipment approved by the registrar."

Under the Bill it is proposed to establish a co-operative housing committee and to appoint a registrar. No doubt there will be staff at his disposal. He will then have the right

to state whether plans and specifications are up to the approved standard and whether the construction of a home is up to the approved standard. There will be the problem of staff available to the registrar. The Treasurer could clear this matter up quite easily. In country areas it will be necessary to use the staff of the Queensland Housing Commission. No doubt the registrar will be stationed in Brisbane. If an application is received from Charleville, will the plans and specifications have to come to Brisbane for approval by the registrar? Will officers of the Queensland Housing Commission approve of the plans and specifications and supervise the construction of homes, or will that work be done by somebody else? In the past the Queensland Housing Commission has been very slow in approving of plans and specifications. Although the War Service Homes Division and other housing authorities have been able to approve of plans and specifications within a fortnight, frequently that work takes up to six months in the Queensland Housing Commission. If the extra work resulting from the Bill is to be thrown on the officers of the Queensland Housing Commission, it is probable that it may delay still further the work that they are now called upon to do. The Registrar will need a competent staff to handle the plans and specifications and the supervision work, and if it is necessary for his staff to come from the Queensland Housing Commission it is the hope of the Opposition that the Commission's work will be streamlined.

The main point that I am raising now is whether the approved standard will be that as laid down by the Registrar or that laid down by the Queensland Housing Commission. If it is to be the standard laid down by the Registrar, it will be necessary for his staff to be competent to handle supervision work as well as the examination of plans and specifications.

Another matter relates to the maximum advance that co-operative housing societies will be able to make to a prospective home-builder. The legislation says that the maximum advance shall be not more than 80 per cent. of the valuation of both land and house. In the case of a maximum advance of £2,750, if the land is valued at say £300 or £400, in many cases it will be necessary for an applicant to have a capital of approximately £,000 before he can own his own home. The Opposition believe that we should do everything possible to enable everybody who wishes to do so to enjoy the benefits of legislation such as this. If the benefits are limited to those who have a fairly large amount of capital, many people will be deprived of them. I admit that the operation of the scheme should drain away a number of applicants to the War Service Homes Division and the Queensland Housing Commission, but it would be far more effective in doing that if it followed the lines of the New South Wales legislation. I understand that in that State the Government can give guarantees for

advances of over 80 per cent.; I have been told that in some cases building societies can advance up to 100 per cent. of the valuation of the dwelling. I cannot see any obstacle to including a provision for the granting of an advance of up to 90 per cent. where the amount of the advance is limited to £2,750.

The legislation provides for three specific cases: firstly, a maximum advance of £2,750, secondly, an advance in excess of £2,750, where the maximum is limited to 70 per cent., and thirdly, an advance for multi-unit dwellings. My suggestion is that the maximum advance should be increased from 80 per cent. to 90 per cent. We intend to move an amendment along those lines during the Committee stage. The third section of benefit relates to dwellings that may be purchased or converted to multi-unit dwellings. That in itself may relieve the housing shortage but it does not go far enough. The Bill allows an individual member into a society and limits the number of ordinary shares he may hold. That is a safe guard against numbers of people joining a society and taking the whole of the finance available for individual home-building. But take the case of two or three or maybe five people who wish to purchase a dwelling house and convert it into five flats if they themselves can become joint owners of the property. At one sweep accommodation can be provided for five members of the one society. Numerous people in the community, including many childless couples, prefer flat life to life in a home with all the problems of its upkeep. We do not believe in too greatly encouraging flat-living but, where there is a demand for it, it can help solve the housing problem. I ask the Minister to give that consideration. He has assured me that amendments can be made by regulation to a great deal of the legislation.

The term of repayment ties up with the maximum advance. The Bill lays down a maximum period of 31 years for repayment of a housing loan. That is not entirely desirable. I accept the Treasurer's statement that it is necessary to go slowly. It may be necessary to go slowly at the commencement of a scheme but experience with co-operative building societies in other States has been that, as the rate of interest has increased and as the cost of construction of homes has increased, it has been necessary to compensate the applicant for home purchase in some way. The method adopted has been to extend the notional period of repayment of the loan. Originally, in the South, with the low rate of interest and the comparatively low construction cost, the maximum period of repayment was 25 years. That has been extended, I understand, to beyond the 31 years in the Bill. Most of the people participating in these schemes will be unable to afford heavy weekly or monthly repayments. Having to pay off, say, £2,750 at 6 per cent. interest over 31 years can be a heavy burden. The wage or salary earner has to cope with times of temporary distress through death, unemployment or other causes. No family occupying a house at present can

know what lies ahead. The family income may be £25 a week or more but no-one can forecast what it will be in a few years' time. By putting a very heavy burden upon a family we will not be helping it in any way. I am sure that the co-operative building societies would treat them as leniently as possible if they could not meet their repayments at any particular time. But with terminating building societies in particular, whereas profits are distributed on the termination of these societies, and so are losses, would these societies bear any losses entailed as a consequence of non-paying home-owners? After the commencement of the scheme I would suggest that the Minister give very great consideration to extending the period of repayment from 31 to 45 years as is the case under many other building schemes. The Minister would have power to do it by regulation. I do not think that the risk to the State Government is very great. When he introduced the Bill, and on other occasions, the Minister referred to what has happened in New South Wales and Victoria where the Government have not had to bear any loss because of guarantees given. In many instances they have given guarantees up to the limit of the valuation of homes. With home-building costs still rising every consideration should be given to making the amount of loan, the terms of repayment and rate of interest as favourable as possible to the home-builder.

The machinery of the Bill is sound. I cannot see any argument against it. It is definitely a worthwhile Bill which may give impetus to the flow of finance for home-building. If it does it will be doing a great service to the State. In the last 12 or 18 months the rate of home-building in Queensland has decreased greatly. The rate of home-building has fallen off more in Queensland than in many of the other States, possibly due to the fact that there have been no Government guarantees available to co-operative building societies. If the Bill helps to increase the rate of home-building it will be doing a great service to the people.

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (3.13 p.m.): I was very pleased to hear the words of the Acting Leader of the Opposition. In all sincerity I say that because of his comments today—and I think that his party believe what he says—it is a great shame that in the post-war years they were not able to make their presence felt in the Government of which they were a part, to see that what is being done today by the present Minister was not done so many years earlier. Evidence in other States would indicate that had we had this enabling legislation for terminating building societies the housing picture would be vastly different from what it is today.

Mr. Hilton: Are you arguing that terminating building societies could not function here?

Mr. DEWAR: Now that the hon. gentleman has come into it let me say that there was enabling legislation of a type within the co-operative field, but it was not until

Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement in 1955 which actually laid down that a certain percentage of the moneys made available by the Federal Government to the States would be earmarked specifically for building societies, that the Queensland Government took any cognisance of that type of home-building. They were forced to do it because it was laid down in the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement that a certain amount should be made available. Any suggestion that prior to that date there was any wholehearted effort on the part of the Government to encourage this type of home finance is so much poppycock. The Acting Leader of the Opposition said it was the responsibility of the Government to encourage the young people to build their own homes. I am in complete agreement with that. Adequate housing which helps young children to grow up happy and contented and become good citizens is of the greatest importance to society. The hon. member for Kedron also referred to the desirableness of amending the section now or at a later date so that the amount advanced would be 90 per cent in respect of loans up to £2,750. Again I agree with the hon. member because I believe in the principle of low-deposit homes. That has been my stand while I have been a member of this House. The Minister pointed out there is provision in the Bill for changes in the setup, in regard to deposits and periods of repayment to be made by Order in Council. The hon. member for Kedron said it would allow more young people to come under the scheme. Whether I believe the Bill goes far enough or not is not the point at the moment. The fact is that there is a £250 deposit scheme operating within the framework of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. In theory that should take care of all the young people to whom the hon. member refers. There is a vast difference between a £250 deposit home and the figure of £1,000 which the hon. member said was the necessary capital to enable a young couple to get a home within the co-operative building scheme.

Mr. Hanlon: There is a long wait for the £250-deposit home.

Mr. DEWAR: The Minister would say that anyone who wanted to buy one could get one at Inala tomorrow. I agree with the hon. member for Ithaca if he says there is a long wait for £250 deposit homes at Cherm-side, Stafford and Grovely. In 1927 the Queensland Housing Commission was building homes at Stafford at the Stafford tram terminus, and in 1948-49 it was building at Cherm-side. It moved over to Grovely and came back to Trout Road at Everton Park. Having used up all the available land it is inevitable that it should look to the South side and it went to Servicetown in the Inala area, Mt. Gravatt and Seven Hills where the land potential for home building is very great. It is correct to say that there is a great demand for £250-deposit homes in

Cherm-side and adjacent areas. There is no particular demand for houses at Inala by those who want to participate in the £250 deposit scheme. I think that is so?

Mr. Hiley: That is so.

Mr. Houston: What is the reason?

Mr. DEWAR: Hundreds of homes are being built there, compared with dozens elsewhere.

Mr. Lloyd: Some at £4,700.

Mr. DEWAR: But they would not come within the ambit of the 1955 agreement which provided for a deposit of £250. The average two- or three-bedroom cottage can be bought on that deposit. There is a great demand for houses on the North side. I get phone calls every day from people who want houses in those suburbs. Many homes are at present out of use because of the fumigation scheme, but even when those homes are available there will still be a great demand for homes on the north side. If a man works in Fortitude Valley or Ashgrove, it is obvious that he would not be interested in a home at Inala. Inala is too far from his work. Many requests for homes on a deposit of £250 could be fulfilled but the people will not accept homes at Inala for that reason.

The clause providing for an advance of 90 per cent. on homes of £2,750 is ideal, but I agree with the Minister that we should hasten slowly, particularly as people without much capital are catered for under the £250 deposit scheme.

When the Acting Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that a person would require a capital of £1,000, he was no doubt thinking of the deposit and the amount needed to provide linoleum and other essential items in the home. He may have a block of land worth £500 in one of the better suburbs of Brisbane, such as Cherm-side. Land in that area is worth £400 to £600 a block.

Mr. Hiley: You are lucky to get it at that figure.

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. The average block would be worth £500. For an advance of £2,750 an applicant would require £650, because the land would be taken as part deposit. Taking the amount suggested by the Acting Leader of the Opposition, he would still have £350 to provide the essential items in his home. He would require only £650 of assets to build a home.

In another place I and my colleagues have been taking evidence on youth problems. Suggestions as to cause and effect have been given. On two occasions we have been told that the young people today have far too much money. I neither dispute nor uphold that suggestion. If it is a fact that young people have too much money, I think they should be encouraged to do what a number of young people are doing today. I refer particularly to young men. I know quite a few

young men of about 19 years who have in recent years bought blocks of land on time payment. There are very few irresponsibles in the community, either through heredity or environment. The percentage is extremely low. These young people should be encouraged to take this step in their teenage years rather than waste the surplus money available to them. If they adopted the suggestion, by the time they were 21 or 22 years and were thinking of marrying and rearing a family, they would have an asset which would go a long way towards providing the deposit on a home under this scheme. That is the first point. The second is, I understand that in the United States of America, I am not sure whether they are terminating or permanent building societies, but I am inclined to think that they are permanent—the societies not only build the homes but actually fit them out. The home is built and equipped with a refrigerator, washing machine, and all the electrical appliances and necessaries that the particular community believes are necessary for the woman of the house to conduct her domestic affairs in reasonable comfort. The society provides it all and the purchaser who provides the deposit is actually paying off every article in the home as well as the home itself throughout the 30 or 40 years in his repayments. That would be one way to counteract what is an iniquitous practice in the hire-purchase set-up. Colossal rates are being charged to the person who borrows to provide the necessaries in the home. If co-operative building societies were able to think in terms of providing every item essential for the domestic life of the occupants of the house we would be able in the long run to curb the problem in regard to hire-purchase. At the same time we would be going a long way towards making it easier for the young people to own their own homes. As the Acting Leader of the Opposition said, one would need £1,000 capital to pay a deposit on a house and equip it with necessaries. The £1,000 would only provide the deposit on the home and the purchase of a refrigerator and perhaps the linoleum. If the purchaser thinks in terms of a washing machine and other appliances, he has to tie himself to the hire-purchase companies. He has to do that to buy the lawnmower, the Electrolux, and so on. If an all-embracing scheme could be introduced into this country such as operates in America, it would go a long way towards solving the problems of the young man in the community who is anxious to provide a proper house and equipment for his wife and family.

Mr. HART (Mt. Gravatt) (3.28 p.m.): As I spoke on its introduction, there is not much I can say at this stage of the Bill. The Acting Leader of the Opposition gave the measure its blessing and hoped that it would help the flow of capital into co-operative building societies and building generally. I have every reason to think that it will have

that effect. Since I have been a member of this Assembly I have spent much time endeavouring to get houses for people to occupy. I have got in touch with the Queensland Housing Commission and from its commissioner and officers I have had much courtesy and co-operation. There have not been enough houses, however, to go round. The problem has upset me as no doubt it has upset others. I made up my mind when this Bill was introduced to see if I could do something myself. I investigated the position and Mount Gravatt Co-operative Housing Society No. 1 is being formed. The A.N.Z. Bank has told us that we can have £100,000. I have approached another institution, whose name I will not mention. As the Treasurer has said, it is waiting for the legislation to go through before making a final decision on giving us a loan to form Mount Gravatt Housing Society No. 2.

Mr. Thackeray: At what rate of interest?

Mr. Hiley: At 5½ per cent.

Mr. HART: That will be the rate of interest. Anyone who wants to borrow money to build a house at Mt. Gravatt can approach me or Mr. Arthur Scurr of Mt. Gravatt. If he has the necessary security, we will do everything possible to help him.

Mr. Davies: That is not as good as the £25 deposit that you promised.

Mr. HART: Has the hon. member himself done anything?

I mention these matters in the hope that anyone who wants to build a house in the Mt. Gravatt area will approach either me or Mr. Scurr.

From my dealings with the financial institutions, I have no doubt that the Bill will stimulate greatly the flow of money into housing in Queensland. Hitherto it has all been flowing South. Financial institutions like to have some security before they advance money, as times may not always be good. If Governments encourage them by giving them security, they will give service to the community.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (3.32 p.m.): Co-operative societies are no novelty. When introducing the Bill the Minister said that the development of co-operative societies in New South Wales during the past 10 years had been phenomenal. I do not propose to go into the history of co-operative societies, but on looking at the New South Wales Act I notice that sections of it go back to 1902.

No matter what problems may arise in implementing the legislation, it must have the effect of enlightening the people generally on the value of co-operation. I sincerely believe that next to Christianity, the co-operative movement offers the world more than anything else. I would even go so far as to say that without it we will never achieve world peace.

We are dealing now with a branch of the co-operative movement, which is concerned with the building of homes. It is instinctive in the human race for a man to want his own home. Even the aboriginals, who anthropologists tell us are virtually the lowest race of all, have an instinctive desire for a roof over their heads. It is that instinct that drives people to own their own homes.

Mr. Windsor: The mating instinct.

Mr. BURROWS: I do not know whether that comes into it. I shall leave it to the hon. member himself to elaborate on that.

As I say, it is the inherent desire of everyone to own a piece of land with a home on it. It can be embarrassing economically and can pose a huge problem to a Government. Supporters of one group want large holdings whereas other pressure groups want them cut up because there is not enough land to go around. All such conflicting interests spring from the instinct to own a piece of land and have a roof over the family, which is in itself very commendable and uplifting. How many of us could really say that acquiring an equity in a home, not necessarily owning it, did not give us some inspiration, or did not improve our morals? In other words, it keeps us home on Saturday afternoon whereas otherwise we might be out at Albion Park or down at the village pub.

Then we have the danger of the man who wants to exploit the instinct and who will say, "This chap wants a home so badly that he will sign on the dotted line no matter what." The applicant does not consider the financial aspects enough and commits himself, innocently or otherwise, to heavy instalments which really amount to a sentence for the rest of his life. He does not allow for the possibility of illness or the need for a holiday, and a man is very fortunate indeed if he does not meet with some misfortune within a period of 20 to 25 years. Someone has said that it is impossible to protect the fool from his folly. I do not like the expression and I prefer not to use it but we have to protect a man from committing himself to the life-long drudgery of paying off a home or even of paying anything off it.

Mr. Windsor: He is enhancing his asset.

Mr. BURROWS: He might be, but there should be a limitation to the extent to which he must go. Through misfortune, whether accident or sickness, he could lose his equity in the home, which could frustrate all his efforts and be very damaging. The Bill deserves support for those reasons alone.

I should like to see some of the details altered and made more attractive. I do not for a moment doubt that the Minister would, too. I will not tie him down to a figure for interest but for the purposes of the debate we suggest it will be about 5 per cent. We do not think it will be any less and it might be a little more. Coupled with the high capital cost of a home, interest puts a heavy

burden on a home builder. I am not charging the Minister or the Government with any direct responsibility for it. We have to realise what an insidious and iniquitous thing interest really is, not only on home costs but on everything else. To clearly understand the co-operative movement we have to understand the principle behind it. I would not pose as an authority but since the scheme was first mooted by the Treasurer, and in particular since notice was given of the Bill, I have made it my business to find out something about the workings of co-operative building societies. When you become a member of a co-operative society you are a lender as well as a borrower. You elect to take so many shares. Say that you estimate that you will require £2,500. As a preliminary step you take out 50 shares at 5 per cent. Based on the New South Wales figure of a 26-year expectancy for the life of the society, your contribution would be 1s. 7d. a month from the moment you joined. The 1s. 7d. a month, 19s. a year, invested at 5 per cent. compound interest amounts to £50 at the end of 26 years. It looks after the repayment of the principal at the end of 26 years. When it comes to the time that you borrow the £2,500, from what I understand, for every £50 you pay an additional 4s. 2d. which covers interest at 5 per cent., in other words 12 times 4s. 2d. equals £2 10s. and £2 10s. is 5 per cent. or £50 per year. It takes 4s. 2d. to cover the interest on £50 each year but requires only 1s. 7d. invested at 5 per cent. to cover the whole principal at the end of 26 years. Once people understand that, they will realise what an enormous burden interest is on the home builder, just as it is on anybody who is more or less forced to pay it on money borrowed for any other purpose. I have no quarrel with the lending of money. Money is a good servant but a bad master. Once the interest rate rises above 2½ or 3 per cent. we become its slaves. That is my view, but many people differ from it. I have known many men to be crippled financially by heavy interest payments. Interest absorbs a big proportion of the revenue of local authorities and churches. Inflation may stall it off for some time, but sooner or later there must be a day of reckoning. Germany really won the war because she got the benefit of the cancellation of her war debts. We are still paying interest on a war debt that occurred 100 years ago. Red tape and officialdom will retard the implementation of any well thought out scheme, but the major evil is heavy interest rates.

Mr. Windsor: If you lived in a rented house at the end of 26 years you would have nothing.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member is a student of the bible and I remind him that the only time Christ ever showed evidence of losing his block was when he entered the moneylenders' temple.

Many factors were responsible for the development of the scheme in New South Wales. I do not think the scheme envisaged

here will come up to our State Housing Commission scheme. We all know what happened; we were told the money was not available, and we must now look for other means of providing the necessary housing. Primarily the Government's duty is to see that more houses are built. No matter how enthusiastically people respond to the building societies, the stimulus will not be as great as it was in New South Wales during the war years when the rate of interest fell to about 3 per cent. Societies established on a 5 per cent. basis found that they were able to wind up after 10 or 15 years because of interest and inflationary factors. My house cost £530 28 years ago and nobody would hesitate to give me three times that amount for it today. Those factors have had a bearing on values and the work of building societies in New South Wales. In many cases the owners were able to relieve themselves of their obligations to the building societies by selling their homes at attractive figures. They were able to liquidate their liability to the societies and still have a substantial amount.

We must not be carried away by the fact that a great deal of money was advanced in New South Wales. We should not expect similar happenings in this State. I sincerely hope that under this or any other scheme we shall be able to build a surplus of houses, but I am not over-optimistic. A man who borrows £2,500 at even 5 per cent. has a burden around his neck.

Without trying to detract from the value of the Bill, I am of the opinion that it will not completely solve the housing problem.

I am not very enthusiastic about the multiple type of dwelling of which the Minister spoke enthusiastically. Flats have a bad effect on the morals of the community. I know that some retired people and others mentioned by the Minister are physically incapable of looking after big back yards, but we should not encourage the building of flats for young people. A flat for a young family is just a step above the gonyah of the aborigine.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has been given a great deal of latitude. I ask him to confine his remarks to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. BURROWS: The Bill provides for advances through building societies for the building of multiple dwellings. I realise that I have been given a deal of latitude. I am not very sympathetic towards that portion of the Bill. There are several other features I should like the Minister to explain. Clause 11 prohibits the use of certain words such as "Royal" and "Co-operative" in the name of building societies that may give a false implication. The Minister with his business experience will understand my point. Although it may be too late to prevent it entirely, we may be able to stop it in future. There is a danger that investment companies and go-getters will take advantage of the

virtues of this measure. They may use in the names of their companies words similar to those of existing co-operative societies. For instance, the average man would think the Darling Downs Building Society is a co-operative society. That is far from the fact. An applicant for a loan of £2,500 from that society would have to pay a very much higher interest rate than a borrower from a co-operative building society, and the loan would be for a much shorter term. While I do not expect that names at present being used could be prohibited, it may be possible to prohibit the further use of similar names. The Minister could perhaps consider preventing further copying of names for more or less ulterior purposes.

There is another feature of the New South Wales Act that I am not able to find in the Bill, but I commend it to the Minister. It says—

"(1) No fee shall be chargeable for the registration of a society or of its rules or of any alteration of its rules.

"(2) No stamp duty shall be chargeable upon the certificate of incorporation of a society or upon any share certificate or any instrument or document issued in connection with its capital by a society. . ."

Mr. HILEY: You will find it in Clause 12 which says that no fee shall be chargeable for the registration of a society or of its rules where the society adopts as its rules the prescribed model rules, and so on.

Mr. BURROWS: If it goes that far, I am pleased to accept the Minister's assurance. I do not think we can go too far in these matters, as building societies require all the encouragement possible from the Government. I have been in communication with a friend in New South Wales seeking information concerning the Act of that State. He informed me that much of the success of the New South Wales scheme depended upon the public spiritedness of the members. That seems to be quite obvious. If directors are to be paid fees and everybody else is to be paid for what is done the society will have to allow a 1 per cent. or 1½ per cent. margin to work on. A spirit of co-operation is required; people have to assist one another. The Government might make a gesture in that direction by exempting building societies from stamp duty and other charges. If we cannot go further than New South Wales we should at least go as far as that State in exemptions.

Another matter has caused me some concern and it is the difficulty of getting proper men. The Minister has indicated that the Government will maintain a staff, but there will be a lot of raw material upon which to work. I have deliberately mentioned points today which I did not know a fortnight ago. I simply mentioned them in the hope that somebody would read my remarks and remember them. Every hon. member should make it his business to understand this Bill and be able to explain it to people. Perhaps

we cannot offer the advantage of the small deposit that is accepted under the present housing scheme. Under the State housing scheme we can expect smaller deposits than under this method. Further, we cannot give the purchaser the advantage of life insurance without adding to his costs. Our main objective is to have more houses built, which should inspire every hon. member and every other public-spirited man to give the Bill his blessing. Nobody should oppose the Bill merely because he disagrees with some of its details. We should push the spirit of co-operation, which in the ultimate is to the advantage of everybody concerned.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (4.1 p.m.): The contents of the Bill seem to conform generally with the very full outline that was given by the Treasurer on its initiation. Even at this stage, the desire has been expressed by at least one member of the Government party to have the terms of home purchase under the legislation made comparable with those offered by the Queensland Housing Commission under its home-purchase scheme.

The Treasurer has written into the legislation provisions that could make the scheme attractive from the point of view of the percentage of the deposit. However, as it has been claimed that the co-operative societies in the South have been such an outstanding success and as the Governments in the other States have never been called upon to honour a guarantee, one would think that the Treasurer would have found it possible to make the deposits under this legislation comparable with those applicable to the Queensland Housing Commission for workers' dwellings erected under the State Advances Corporation scheme.

I am constrained to refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Chermiside, who made the charge against the former Government that they did not allow terminating co-operative societies to function. The Treasurer knows that that is incorrect. The only factor that has cropped up recently is the subject of guarantees, and I have yet to receive an explanation as to why they are necessary. I have sought information on the subject, but looking at it from an honest banking point of view, I have yet to hear one valid argument why the banks should be guaranteed.

Mr. Herbert: You should have listened to the earlier debates.

Mr. HILTON: I did listen to the earlier debates, and I challenge the hon. member for Sherwood to give me one valid reason.

Mr. Herbert: The Minister is quite capable of doing that.

Mr. HILTON: I shall be very happy to hear one valid reason from him. It has nothing to do with the fact that the associated banks have recently been given a charter to form savings banks. It was ordinary practice for the associated banks in the South to make advances, and they always de-

manded a guarantee from the Government. I challenge the hon. member to advance one valid argument, from the banking point of view, for giving that guarantee. If the business is sound the banks, as they are getting a profit from it, should be prepared to stand up to their responsibilities.

Our attitude is not, as the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt said recently, one of pig-headedness. Of course, he was confusing the amount of money made available by the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for housing with the amount that was offered in very recent times by the savings bank sections of the associated banks. It was only in very recent times that any of these associated banks were given a charter to form savings banks, as the hon. member should know.

I should like some amplification from the Minister on one point affecting interest. The Bill provides that the Government may even guarantee the repayment of interest to the bank or any lending society for moneys advanced to the co-operative building societies. But interest rates are very high now. What will be the position of the home purchaser if in five, 10 or 15 years' time there is an appreciable decline in the rate of interest? As the Government are extending the guarantee they should write into the Bill a provision to ensure that the home purchaser will have the rate of interest reduced if the general rate falls below the present level. In the past the Housing Commission, under the direction of the Government, has always given that reduction of interest when it has occurred. As it is so important to the home purchaser, and as the Government are taking the power to guarantee payment of interest as well as of principal, some definite steps should be taken to ensure that the home purchaser will not be slugged 6 per cent. right through the 31 years while others, perhaps buying a house through the Queensland Housing Commission, will pay 3½ or 4 per cent. when interest rates are reduced.

Sub-paragraph (a) (iii) of Clause 6 (1) reads—

“To acquire land upon which is situated a dwelling-house which has been erected within the period of twelve months preceding the date of acquirement and which has not been occupied.”

We suggest that it might be altered to read “which has been recently erected and not occupied”. It will be ludicrous to debar a man from the provision simply because the house has been erected for 13 months. I agree that it should be a new house that has never been occupied but the use of the expression “recently erected” gives a measure of elasticity that the express period of 12 months does not. I commend the suggestion to the Minister.

As I said in the earlier debate, I do not quarrel with the Bill. I hope that it will function 100 per cent. satisfactorily and I

hope that it will mean the building of more homes in Queensland. I hope that in the course of time the co-operative building societies, with Government assistance, may be able to make the terms available to home purchasers as attractive as those offered by the Housing Commission.

In conclusion, let me correct the hon. member for Chermiside when he referred to the £250 deposit as being within the framework of the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. The Commonwealth Government will never lay down a deposit of £250. The final alteration to the agreement left the terms of sale entirely to the respective State Governments. It was the previous Queensland Government, to encourage home ownership—as they had done for years—that laid down this most attractive deposit of £250. The Commonwealth Government had nothing whatsoever to do with it. Unfortunately, the hon. member for Chermiside is not prepared to give credit where credit is due, and he distorted the facts about the administration of housing in Queensland by the previous Government.

Again I commend the Bill and trust that the Treasurer will see that adequate protection is given to the home purchaser by a reduction in interest rates in the future.

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (4.11 p.m.): Any measure that will assist in solving the problem of housing as it exists in Queensland today will meet with the approbation of all hon. members and the public in general. Although we have seen past Governments, not only in Queensland but in other States of the Commonwealth, endeavouring to solve housing problems, despite all their efforts housing problems are still with us today, brought about to a great extent by the natural increase in population, the intake of migrants, and the earnest desire of most young people who are getting married to become the owners of their own homes.

While the Bill will assist to some extent, I do not think it will be the complete answer to the problem. It will be admitted that past Governments made a very fine contribution to the home-ownership programme. I do not think that co-operative societies now existing, or those that will be formed after the Bill is passed, will be able to give the same measure of assistance and security to those who desire to build homes as Governments in the past have been able to offer. Anyone who has had experience in home building, whether under Government schemes, private banking schemes or co-operative schemes, will realise that Government schemes are the most generous and in the end command a greater degree of security. In times of prosperity it is quite easy to meet repayments. When money is plentiful no-one is greatly concerned. It has occurred in the past, there is nothing to say it will not occur in the future, when people have not been able to meet their repayments. My mind goes back to the depression years when

I was one of many who were paying off a home and found difficulty, because of lack of income, in making repayments to the Government on the home I had built.

The hon. member for Carnarvon asked whether adequate protection could be given to people who were paying off homes in the event of a depression. The Bill should provide that during a time of depression when the purchaser is unable to meet his payments the society should not be able to take over his property. During the depression years, 1929 to 1932, the Government funded the arrears of rent and extended the period of repayment, therefore the purchasers were able to continue their repayments when they found employment. During a period of depression building societies or banks may resume properties on which payments have not been met. The high cost of home construction has prevented a large number of young people from putting a deposit on a home. Thousands of young people are forced to live in flats and sub-standard dwellings because they cannot undertake the responsibility of repaying the large sum necessary to build a home. The terms offered by the co-operative building societies will not be as generous as the terms under the Housing Commission scheme. Co-operative societies are allowed to charge three-quarters per cent. over and above the rate at which the money is borrowed from the bank. Recently I brought a case before the notice of the Minister where a purchaser of a Housing Commission home was charged three-quarters per cent. additional interest on £3,000 and over a period of 30 years it amounted to £675. The Government should make it as easy as possible for young people to acquire their own homes.

This legislation will help those who have the necessary deposit, but unless we cater for those who have a much lesser amount we shall not solve the housing problem. It is not right to ask these young people to take on a liability of £2,500 or £3,500 for a home. The repayments can be made while they are employed, but the difficulty arises during a period of depression. It would be a great advantage if money was available at a cheaper rate of interest and for a longer period. I think under the Housing Commission agreement the period has been extended from 35 to 45 years. Multi-storied flats will not solve the problem. We believe that individual housing units are essential for domestic happiness and contentment. There is more likelihood of strife when people are forced to live in dual-unit homes. We should encourage the building of single units. That can only be done by giving greater assistance to young people. In Queensland Governments have done a tremendous amount of work to overcome the problem, and I suppose that could be said of Governments of other States and the Commonwealth. The remarkable feature is that under this scheme banking institutions are prepared to lend sums up to £100,000 for home construction, whereas Governments have been struggling

to get sufficient finance for that purpose. By loaning money to co-operative building societies, private banks will get a much higher rate of interest than they would get from money invested in Commonwealth loans or loans to the State Government for housing.

I hope the scheme is very successful. It will not do any harm, because those able to take advantage of it will probably get advances much quicker through co-operative societies than they could through the Government or the Housing Commission. I hope the scheme will be as successful as the Government hope it will be.

Mr. WINDSOR (Fortitude Valley) (4.22 p.m.): As a member of the Housing Committee, I compliment the Minister on the introduction of the Bill. The sooner it becomes law, the sooner the housing shortage will be relieved. Many people are anxious to get homes. I am sure every hon. member has heard of young people who have saved the deposit for their home and, after finding that they cannot buy a home, have used it to purchase a motor car. The motor car is a liability to them. Later, probably when the first baby arrives, they have not had a deposit for a home.

The Commonwealth Government have been spending £2,500 to bring each migrant to this country. It must be admitted that the best new Australians are our own babies. We should try to institute a scheme for the encouragement of home-building and the rearing of families. Assume the interest rate on a loan to a young couple is 5 per cent. I suggest that on the birth of each child the interest rate be reduced by 1 per cent. After the young couple had five children, the loan could be interest free. For every child above five, the young couple could be given a credit of 1 per cent. If that scheme was adopted, it would not cost £2,500 for each additional member of the community. We would get five, six, or even seven additional people for less than £2,500. Young people would be encouraged to marry and rear families, thus increasing the security of the country.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (4.25 p.m.), in reply: It is encouraging indeed to find that this measure has been studied closely by so many members of the House as is apparent from the very pertinent questions posed in the course of this debate. Let me say that in all my personal assessment of the various means of helping people to build homes nothing in our history has been better than what I prefer to call the old workers' dwelling scheme. It has been the best and still is, and one of the things which perplexes me is to find that there is a dearth of applications for workers' dwellings. I have had the Commissioner seriously examine the position to ascertain why this is so, to see what steps we can take to bring back this most desirable

form of housing assistance. Investigations show that the applications have been falling away.

Mr. Hilton: When did that occur?

Mr. HILEY: It has been happening in the last six months. Investigations show that there were grievous delays in dealing with applications from the point of view of checking applications architecturally. Many people got a hammering. Young people who made their marriage arrangements made them feeling confident of having their applications approved and feeling that tenders would be called in, say, three months' time. They accordingly set their wedding date for, say, November. In practice, month after dreary month went by and they could not get their plans dealt with by the architectural section, and this caused many young people to be browned off what I regard as the best feature of our housing assistance.

Mr. Burrows: It killed the old workers' dwellings.

Mr. HILEY: When I took over, the delay in the architectural section was six months, but today it has been reduced to three months. Mr. Galvin is confident that by 30 June next we should have no delays in dealing with applications architecturally.

Mr. Walsh: How do you say the delay has been overcome?

Mr. HILEY: By a concentrated effort in the section. We have borrowed staff to help the architectural staff, some from the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, and by better organisation in the office. Mr. Galvin has been able greatly to overtake the lag in the architectural branch.

Mr. Hilton: The lag was caused by the great upsurge in the number of applications.

Mr. HILEY: And it caused a browning-off of the public generally. They got the feeling that it was no good going for a worker's dwelling as you could not get the help required within time.

Mr. Burrows: If a young couple started off the first child had left school before the application was granted.

Mr. HILEY: I think the hon. member is speaking in exaggerated terms.

Mr. Burrows: That is what they used to tell me.

Mr. HILEY: There was a delay of some months, and unfortunately the impression spread. I have spoken to Mr. Galvin and we intend to prepare special articles to despatch to the whole of the syndicated Press in Queensland telling the public not only that the workers' dwelling scheme is the finest means of assistance to home-builders but that the department is up to date with its work and welcomes applications from prospective home-builders. Not only is the interest rate

the best, but the supervision is equal to anything, and the structural standards cannot be faulted but in addition there is the benefit of free life insurance. From all points no other scheme can look at the workers' dwelling scheme. The plain fact of the matter is that there has been a decline in applications. I am determined to get to the root of the trouble, to bring the scheme back into prominence. It is not unrelated to the deposit requirements. The price of a block of land today is rising and for a person to provide a clear deed—

Mr. Thackeray: You have stirred up the builders who build homes now. They have to build them in accordance with the plans and specifications and they should realise that they have to comply with the regulations.

Mr. HILEY: I was not aware that that was not always so. I have seen no evidence that there is anything new in that. I have merely carried on the department's accepted practices.

Mr. Thackeray: It was never carried out in Rockhampton previously.

Mr. HILEY: That may be so, but it is news to me. I have had no evidence of it.

Mr. Burrows: There was a raw staff and, in addition, there were many raw builders. They have now become experienced.

Mr. HILEY: That may be so.

Mr. Lloyd: Many builders have left the trade lately. It is possible that only the efficient ones are still in it.

Mr. HILEY: We have been getting numerous tenders. What pleases me most is the number of tenders we have been getting for work in country towns. We have had as many as five tenders for work in a country town, which is very good.

Mr. Lloyd: That may be because there is a good deal of unemployment today.

Mr. HILEY: Unemployment is not too bad at present. The position is much better than it was previously.

The hon. member for Kedron referred to a matter that I touched on only lightly during the initiation stage. He said that the Bill would divert funds that would have gone into housing in any case. If I thought that the only thing the Bill would do would be to divert moneys from other sources, I would not bother to pass a fresh Act of Parliament and set up an entirely new institution merely to leave us as we were. I have tried to make it clear that whilst there will inevitably be some diversion, I am entirely convinced that considerable sums of new money will be made available for housing.

Mr. Lloyd: You must have misunderstood me. I said that there would be some diversion of moneys, but that I hoped that other large sums would be available.

Mr. HILEY: The money will not come only from the trading banks. In the light of southern experience, substantial sums will come in from insurance companies and superannuation funds, which have not been supporting housing programmes in the past to the extent that I think they will in the future.

I again remind hon. members that this is merely one of several ways in which houses can be obtained. We already have the workers' dwelling scheme and the workers' homes scheme. Although one applies to homes built on freehold land and the other to homes built on leasehold land, they are fundamentally the same. Then there is the sale of Commonwealth-State houses on deposits as low as £250. In the case of large and relatively expensive homes, of course, the deposit is more than £250. In addition there is the rental of Commonwealth-State houses and the wide field of private construction. In its best year the State built or financed only one-seventh of the houses built in Queensland. In other words, six-sevenths of the houses were built by people who got their finance either from their own resources, or from banks, insurance companies or some other private lender.

Mr. Walsh: The information that you have just given us includes State rental homes?

Mr. HILEY: And State-financed homes. Workers' dwellings and Commonwealth-State houses represented only about one-seventh of the total housing for the State.

The hon. member for Kedron spoke also about the power of the Registrar to lay down standards. He wanted to know what standards the Registrar would set. I do not intend to set up in the Registrar of Co-operative Building Societies an architectural section and a building supervision section. To my way of thinking, that would be a needless duplication. It will be purely a registry and a supervisor of the financial operation of the societies. For any advice needed on building standards or the supervision of buildings, with the officers of the Housing Commission where it is established, with the supervision offered by some of the lending institutions and with the supervision that will be carried out by the directors of the societies themselves, we hope to have sufficient control over those phases within broad standards, which the registrar will indicate to the various lending institutions.

Mr. Burrows: New South Wales has a printed standard. I presume you have a copy of it?

Mr. HILEY: Yes. We have had tremendous assistance from the registrars in the other States. They have helped us by giving us copies of their model rules and their standards. Only last week the Commonwealth Bank was again kind enough to come to our assistance and send up Mr. Conley,

who is regarded within the bank as their expert on such organisations. Mr. Conley helped Mr. Galvin and Mr. Gibson, who is the registrar of co-operative societies, to prepare draft rules and other provisions designed for the operation of these societies.

Mr. Burrows: Do you propose to issue a list of standards?

Mr. HILEY: That would be my intention. I have not seen the result of their work yet.

Mr. Burrows: I would commend it to you.

Mr. HILEY: I quite agree. I think it has a great deal to commend it.

Mr. Power: Will you make this point clear? The Government guarantee loans. Who is going to have the final say as to whether the home is correctly erected?

Mr. HILEY: The final say is in the hands of the registrar if he wants it because he is entitled to call for such information as he may desire on any particular advance.

Mr. Power: Suppose an advance is made and guaranteed and the house is built by the co-operative building society. Who is going to certify that it is correctly built? Seeing that Government money is involved, will there be an inspection by an officer of a Crown department?

Mr. HILEY: Not necessarily. In many cases we will rely upon the certificate of the society itself, supported by check certificates from the lending institution, that is, the bank or the insurance company. The whole purpose of that is to avoid the need for sending the plans and other particulars down to Brisbane. Let us suppose it is an institution in Longreach and one of the banks there lends the money. They have officers on the spot trained and experienced in judging and valuing securities and supervising. In a case like that, unless something happens to draw our attention to difficulty, we should accept the supervision of the banks' officers on the spot with the certificates, in turn, of the directors of the society and not make it necessary to send the whole of the plans down to Brisbane to be examined with all the possible delays.

Mr. Walsh: There might be some weakness in that.

Mr. HILEY: I realise that, but we will watch it carefully. And we reserve in the hands of the registrar power to demand from any society such returns and approvals as he stipulates. Where the registrar sees that a society is functioning well and is well backed, he can drive it on an easier rein than another about which he is not so satisfied.

Mr. Power: I am concerned about the actual construction.

Mr. HILEY: That is right.

Mr. Lloyd: Will the supervision of construction be done through the inspectors of the Housing Commission in the country?

Mr. HILEY: That could be done where we have inspectors present. We have not got inspectors in every town and village in the State. Where we have the facilities of the Housing Commission available we will use them. Where we have not, I do not want to make it necessary to have irritating delays and frustrations through having to send plans and everything down to Brisbane and then having to shoot inspectors out while building is going on.

Mr. Lloyd: And the society will bear the cost of the inspection?

Mr. HILEY: That is one of the ways in which I hope to keep down the cost of inspection. Anyone familiar with the building society movement up to date will recognise the principle. I have spoken previously of building up an experienced body of personnel conducting the societies. The other types of society we have working have men with wide experience in these matters, men who have served the building societies faithfully and well for years and years.

Mr. Donald: With no remuneration.

Mr. HILEY: With no remuneration at all and at no cost to the borrower. I do not want to throw the advantage of that away. I want to walk carefully. That is why I do not want to give the last mile of latitude, either of the amount to be lent or the percentage of deposit required, until we are sure we have men who are doing in the co-operative building society movement what some of the men in the Bremer movement are doing at the moment and have been doing for 30 years.

Mr. Donald: Competent tradesmen.

Mr. HILEY: Competent tradesmen, men of experience, men who have proved their ability. When we can command that on a co-operative basis, free of charge to the State and free of charge to the home-builder—that is the element of co-operation that the Government are very anxious to command. We want to walk quietly and see whether we cannot command the same quality of service which has served the building-society movement so well.

Mr. Burrows: To overcome any possibility of looseness in inspections, could there be a standard set of specifications as in New South Wales? The inspector could then certify that in his opinion the building was consistent with the specifications.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. I think there is a great deal of wisdom in a standard set of instructions. I shall certainly look into that.

As to the maximum advance, hon. members will see at page 19 of the Bill that the Government can extend the 80 per cent., the 70 per cent., the 60 per cent. and the amounts of £2,750, £3,500 and £5,000. The Government have every intention of extending them the moment we can see that we have developed these experienced people, against which background only do we believe it is safe to make such extensions. Hon. members have my assurance that it is my desire to reach that stage just as speedily as we can be sure we are not running undue risk.

Mr. Lloyd: That would satisfy us. If you do extend the amount of loan would that also be subject to government guarantee?

Mr. HILEY: Yes. If it were not it would defeat the whole purpose.

The hon. member for Kedron raised an interesting point about multi-unit development in the possibility of making advances direct to joint owners. That brings me to one of the troubles of the system of land tenure in Queensland. When I say "one of the troubles", please do not imagine that I condemn the system of land tenure in Queensland, because I do not. We are fortunate because we have the Torrens system operating in respect of 99½ per cent. of the lands of the State, a system of registered ownership recorded on a register. We have no question of equitable ownership, implied ownership, adverse possession or any of those disadvantages of other systems of land registration. The Torrens system of titled registration is one of the best things ever introduced into the Australian practice of land recording and land titles. I for one have nothing but admiration for it and I respect it. However, one of the difficulties is that you cannot have a subdivisive title under the Torrens system. Let us suppose that the Acting Leader of the Opposition and myself jointly owned the land on which this room stands and that we were registered in the Titles Office as Eric Lloyd and Thomas Hiley as joint owners of this block of land. As joint owners neither of us would be able to draw a line on the floor and say, "That is your portion of the land and this is mine." In other words, the system of joint ownership implies that together we own what is called an undivided moiety. We have a half interest but it is not a physically divided half. Each of the number has an undividable part of the total area.

An Opposition Member: You do not chop the house in halves.

Mr. Walsh: You do for electoral purposes.

Mr. HILEY: I remember a celebrated case where a man said, "If I am having my bath I am in Buranda, and if I am having my lunch I am in Yeronga." Because of that difficulty, and not being able to give subdivisive titles, there is only one method

open—the method practised by the Torbreck Company at Highgate Hill and also in regard to the Craigston Flats—and that is to form a company and divide the shareholding up into as many classes of shares as there are separate units. If you own "A" shares you have to get an occupancy of an "A" flat. If the hon. member for Ithaca has "B" shares he has the right to occupy "B" flat. Let us suppose that the hon. member wishes to dispose of his interest in that block and he sells his 1,500 shares. He must sell the 1,500 as a complete unbroken parcel. The person who buys becomes the shareholder and succeeds to the right to occupy "B" flat.

Mr. Thackeray: Must he sell at the same price?

Mr. HILEY: Not necessarily. He can sell it for what he pleases. There is this difficulty from the building society and the Government guarantee point of view. If the building society makes a contract with the hon. member for Kedron and the hon. member for Ithaca and down to X, Y, Z, there is nothing to stop the company from mortgaging the land. The result would be that the underlying security on which the Government and the institution rely to find the money to buy the shares could be frustrated because of that interposed mortgage by the company. I have applied myself to finding some way in which we could bring these multiple unit dwellings into a scheme such as this. Either it is impossible or my wits are not sufficiently alert to discover by what method it could be accomplished. I have looked into it and I have not been able to discover a way of bringing something to the House and saying, "This is something concerning which it would be safe for the Government to extend the guarantee."

Mr. Burrows interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I am responding to a serious suggestion made by the hon. member for Kedron which has a good deal of merit behind it.

Mr. Hilton: Could not the Articles of Association be amended to prevent any other mortgage?

Mr. HILEY: You would have to go further. The Articles could be altered but you would have to do it by making a prohibition against mortgaging in the Memorandum of Association.

Mr. Burrows: You might be doing something against the public interest.

Mr. HILEY: That might be. It is a difficult subject. I have not found anything that I could recommend.

Mr. Walsh: There would be difficulties under registration.

Mr. HILEY: I assure the hon. member for Bundaberg that there are all sorts of dangerous possibilities. I have always thought that Government guarantees should not be lightly entered into. The recognition by the financial world of gilt-edged security is important. It still attracts much more favourable interest than most other forms of borrowing. We shall continue to enjoy that position as long as Governments act in a responsible manner in the commitments they undertake.

Mr. Burrows: And not give guarantees too freely.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. If we gave out guarantees as freely as pamphlets at election time, it would not be long before the gilt-edged market would be completely ruined, because people would say there was no security in it.

Mr. Walsh: The solvency of the State could be endangered.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly, and because of that I cannot make any suggestion in regard to subdivided titles. It does not follow that at some time a more agile mind than mine will not discover a solution. That could be a very useful instrument in solving the housing problem. I hope that from the discussion hon. members will be provoked into trying to discover some other way of overcoming the problem of providing sufficient accommodation.

The Acting Leader of the Opposition mentioned the maximum term of repayment and expressed disappointment at the fact that it was only 31 years. I am as concerned as he is about the total interest over the term of borrowing by a house-purchaser. There is no doubt that the longer the term the greater relatively is the burden of interest. In fact the difference in interest between a 31-year period and a 45-year period is greater than the relative difference between the periods. The increase is much more than 50 per cent. A quick study of the graph would convince any hon. member of that.

Mr. Lloyd: I was referring to the suggestion of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. The Acting Leader of the Opposition with other hon. members referred to the hazards of illness, death and unemployment and said there should be no lighthearted foreclosure under those conditions. Apart from a statutory limit of, I think, 14 ordinary shares, all the rest of the capital of co-operative societies and all the management and control are vested in the borrower-lenders. There is no separate investment capital as distinct from membership capital. Who is going to profit by a hurried foreclosure if some poor fellow is unemployed, is ill, or dies? I can understand that argument being advanced if substantial investment capital was involved, but

in co-operative societies the whole of the control and almost the entire capital invested is not pure risk capital but investment capital of the owners themselves. The degree of solicitude of a board of directors of a co-operative society in my opinion would be infinitely greater than under any other system. It is true that at times under the co-operative system the odd borrower will be found whose conduct thoroughly disgusts his fellow members. That type of person does not represent a big percentage. I find that the percentage of bad tenants, that is tenants who can afford to pay and do not pay the Housing Commission, is very small. There is still the odd person of that type. He is helped to a point, but, when it is discovered that he is a confirmed evader and will not be fair, he must be put out. That will occasionally arise in the co-operative building society movement and inevitably you will find that those giving of their time and effort all voluntary to the movement, will occasionally have to face the disagreeable task of dealing with one of their brethren who has not played the game. I am certain that every member of a society will get every chance; he will get a greater chance under this type of movement than under any other form of lending. That is my conviction. Those with experience tell us of the great tolerance and kindness extended by the co-operative movement to the brother in distress, and that is a heartening feature of the movement.

Mr. Hanlon: There should be no exploitation.

Mr. HILEY: No. The hon. member for Chernside discussed the question of area demand and pointed out that the Housing Commission according to the land available to it has been building more on the south side than the north side of the river. That is true. We have nearly run out of land on the north side of the river. There is one block now being cleared at Stafford Heights. Perhaps hon. members have had the opportunity of seeing Taubman's house of ideas situated there. The Commission's land is on the ridge straight behind it. There is quite an area of elevated land which will be cleared and improved. I reckoned that the person who bought that land must have ridden over it on a mountain goat. It is quite handy to transport. That land will be developed. In addition to what we have done at Inala and Mt. Gravatt, I have asked the Commission to try and get some land on the south side fringing the area where industrial expansion is about to take place. The hon. member for Bulimba raised this question with me and I told him that we were trying to get land at Bulimba behind the abattoirs. With the growth of industrial development along the south side it will be good to have areas of land nearby for housing settlements so as to avoid the crushing burden of transport from place of residence to place of work. I have asked my colleague the Minister for Labour and Industry to endeavour

to establish industries out around Rocklea. If we could get factory development close to Inala it would overcome the burden for those who have to travel to and from work. I have also asked the Commissioner to look for land for development about the new railway workshops at Redbank. There will probably be a steady demand for housing in that area. He is looking at land close handy to Redbank.

Mr. Donald interjected.

Mr. HILEY: Mr. Galvin is looking at land on the other side of the Rifle Range area. It would be within easy walking distance of the workshops. I have a phobia about the transport costs to workers traveling to and from their occupations. The number of shillings to come from the man on the basic wage for transport constitutes a serious problem. If we can command living space close to avenues of employment it would mean great saving.

Mr. Power: If you put Scott & Company into the railways the railways would probably reduce fares.

Mr. HILEY: If the hon. member is advocating that that be done, I shall be very pleased to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Windsor: Could land be bought in the Nundah and Nudgee areas to serve Geebung?

Mr. HILEY: I am not enamoured of the idea of putting immense housing settlements on low-lying land. However, I shall have that area examined.

Mr. Donald: Is there any possibility of getting the Federal Government to remove the rifle range from Redbank?

Mr. HILEY: There may be, but I should not like to build homes on the low-lying parts of the rifle range. There are enough ridges on either side of it to take care of what is needed.

Mr. Hanlon: There is a very desirable area at Rainworth.

Mr. HILEY: I will get Mr. Galvin to have a look at it. The hon. member for Chermiside raised the problem of young people with too much money to spend and suggested that one way of overcoming it would be to get them to buy land on time payment. I should think that that would be a useful form of saving for any young people who contemplated marriage. But I should be very reluctant to have Commission money tied up in land awaiting development. What we can spare at present must go into homes that are to be built now. We could not spend thousands of pounds that will not be used in providing homes for another seven or eight years. I favour the hon. member's suggestion as long as the Commonwealth does not have to tie up its funds.

Mr. Dewar: The idea was to educate them to do it themselves.

Mr. HILEY: I agree, as long as they go to other sources than the Commission to borrow the money.

Reference was made also to some housing estates in the United States of America, where the homes are fitted with every possible convenience before they are sold. I recommend to hon. members that they read a book in the Parliamentary Library entitled "Through the Picture Window". It is a satire on a settlement of that type in one of the residential suburbs of Washington. Developments of that nature have been fostered not by the State, but by private people, and from what I have heard they are no credit to those responsible for them.

Mr. Burrows: Many of the amenities included in the homes would not have a life of 20 or 30 years.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. The main difficulty that I see in providing every amenity in a home from the start is that you lift the initial capitalisation of a young couple to such a level that they can never get out of it. As I say, the book is written in a satirical manner and I am not suggesting that all the illustrations in it are typical. However, a young couple have a big enough battle in getting a house and land without saddling them with the cost of a refrigerator, a hot-water system, a radiogram, and so on. That would make their financial burden quite intolerable.

I should have liked to cover the other points that were raised, but my time has almost expired and I do not intend to seek an extension. I thank hon. members for the way they have received the measure.

Mr. Hilton: Could you comment on the interest rate before you finish?

Mr. HILEY: On the question of interest rates, I have to find out whether the banks are prepared to give a fixed rate or a flexible rate. If it is a flexible rate, quite clearly I will insist that if the rate fixed by the Central Bank goes up I will accept it; if it goes down, the borrower has to get the benefit. If, on the other hand, they are prepared to give a fixed rate—and a fixed rate is not without advantage from the point of view of organising the society itself—then they have to stick to it whether it benefits them or hinders them. All I can say is that we will discuss it with the lending institutions and find out what their aims are. I should think some would plump for a flexible rate while others would favour a fixed rate over the 31 years. Whichever it is, we will have to accept it as a calculated risk and follow it.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—Objects of a society—

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (5.8 p.m.): My suggestion concerns a relatively minor alteration to subparagraph (iii.) of Clause 6 (1) (a) with the idea of giving a little more elasticity than is permitted with the rigid statement of a period of 12 months.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (5.9 p.m.): I had a note of the suggestion. I am sorry that time prevented me from dealing with it in detail on the second reading. The period of 12 months was fixed to make it quite easy for the Registrar and for the societies to know exactly where they stood. The use of a loose term like “recently erected” involves an administrative judgment each time as to whether a house should be accepted. The matter was discussed at some length by my officers and they felt that a clear yardstick would mean that the society could inquire when an application came in, “When was the house built?” and instead of saying, “This may or may not be acceptable. We will have to submit it and see whether it comes within the definition,” they would know immediately whether it was in or out.

Mr. Hilton: There is the over-riding condition that it has not been occupied, of course.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. The period of twelve months will date from the time of completion and it was thought that that was a fair latitude to give. If a new house stands empty for 12 months there is usually something wrong with it. Perhaps it has been badly constructed or there has been some mess-up over the title or it is in an area where no-one wants it, or something of that description.

Mr. Hilton: It could be tangled up in an estate.

Mr. Lloyd: It takes about that long to sell them now, anyway.

Mr. HILEY: Oh no. I think it is of advantage to give the officers of the building societies, the Registrar and the commission officers a precise yardstick to work to. If it presents any difficulties in practice I will be prepared to do something about it.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 11, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—Fees for registration of a society—

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (5.11 p.m.): I wish to speak only briefly on my

point about registration of rules. Would the Minister go as far as the New South Wales provision?

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (5.12 p.m.): I would rather not do it in this Bill. The clause deals with fees payable under the Act. The other fees would arise under the Stamp Duties Act or the Real Property Act. If the Government consider that there are grounds for giving some relief from either stamp duties or fees in the Titles Office, the matter will be submitted to the relevant Ministers, myself as to stamp duties and the Minister for Justice as to the real property fees. If necessary, legislation could be introduced at an appropriate stage.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 80, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (5.13 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 44, after line 27, add the following:—

‘Australian Netherlands Co-operative Terminating Housing Society (Queensland) Limited	20th March, 1958
Stanley Co-operative Terminating Housing Society No. 1 Limited	20th March, 1958.”

I indicated previously that when the Bill was printed there were a number of applications that were in the half-and-half stage. We have been able to hold most of them back and they will come in as new registrations after the Bill becomes law. In two instances registration was pressed and the Registrar had no alternative but to register these societies. Now that the Bill has been printed, if we do not include them they will be like Mahomet’s coffin—they will be neither included amongst the old registrations nor amongst the new. I do not know quite what their position would be.

Amendment (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 15 April, 1958”.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.