

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 1962**

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# Queensland Parliamentary Debates

## Legislative Assembly

SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

(Second Period)

[VOLUME 3]

TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY, 1962

Under the provisions of the motion for special adjournment agreed to by the House on 5 December, 1961, the House met at 11 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair.

### ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Acts Amendment Bill.

Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Bill.

Dental Acts Amendment Bill.

Cremation Acts Amendment Bill.

Labour and Industry Acts Amendment Bill.

Picture Theatres and Films Acts Amendment Bill.

Local Government Acts Amendment Bill.

Brisbane Cricket Ground Act Amendment Bill.

Pollution of Waters by Oil Act Amendment Bill.

Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund Acts Amendment Bill.

Trustee Companies Bill.

Liens on Crops of Sugar Cane Acts Amendment Bill.

Land Tax (Further Adjustment) Bill.

Succession and Probate Duties Acts and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Trustees and Executors Acts Amendment Bill.

Land Acts Amendment Bill.

Crown Land Development Act Amendment Bill.

Collinsville-Townsville-Mount Isa Railway Agreement Bill.

Racing and Betting Acts Amendment Bill.

Companies Bill.

### ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

JUDGE for 1962

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from the Hon. the Chief Justice intimating that the Honourable Mr. Justice Stable would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1962.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY; MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT, MINES, MAIN ROADS AND ELECTRICITY

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.7 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that in connection with the visit overseas of the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity earlier this year, His Excellency the Governor, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 8 of the Officials in Parliament Acts, 1896 to 1961, authorised and empowered the Honourable Otto Ottosen Madsen, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers, and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Honourable the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity by any Act, rule, practice, or ordinance, on and from 1 February, 1962, and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Ernest Evans.

I lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary of 26 January, 1962, notifying these arrangements.

Whereupon the hon. gentleman laid the Government Gazette Extraordinary upon the table.

## PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

- Orders in Council under the Burdekin High Level Bridge (Finance) Act of 1958.
- Orders in Council under the Tully Falls Hydro-Electric Project Act of 1950.
- Regulations under the Traffic Acts, 1949 to 1961.
- Regulations under the Statistical Returns Acts, 1896 to 1935.
- Orders in Council under the Traffic Acts, 1949 to 1961.
- Rules of Court under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961.
- Orders in Council under the Libraries Acts, 1943 to 1949.
- Orders in Council under the Schools of Arts (Winding Up and Transfer) Acts, 1960 to 1961.
- Orders in Council under the Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act of 1959.
- Orders in Council under the Co-operative Housing Societies Acts, 1958 to 1961.
- Orders in Council under the Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1959.
- Orders in Council under the Queensland Marine Act of 1958.
- Orders in Council under the Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1960.
- Orders in Council under the Stamp Acts, 1894 to 1961.
- Regulations under the Fish Supply Management Acts, 1935 to 1959.
- Regulations under the Queensland Marine Act of 1958.
- Regulations under the Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1961.
- Regulations under the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1961.
- Regulations under the Main Roads Acts, 1920 to 1960.
- Orders in Council under the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958.
- Orders in Council under the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1958.
- Orders in Council under the Water Acts, 1926 to 1961.
- Orders in Council under the River Improvement Trust Acts, 1940 to 1959.
- Orders in Council under the Barrier Fences Act of 1954.
- Orders in Council under the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1961.

Regulation under the Water Acts, 1926 to 1961.

Regulation under the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts, 1933 to 1934.

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1960.

## FORM OF QUESTION

**Mr. HANLON** (Baroona) having given notice of a question—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I must inform the hon. member who has just given notice of a question that it appears to contain a good deal of expression of opinion. I shall have to look at the question very closely.

DEATHS OF MR. CECIL GEORGE JESSON, SIR JOHN BEALS CHANDLER, AND MR. DAVID JOHN MARLAIS DANIEL.

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Premier) (11.21 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“(1) That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Cecil George Jesson, Esquire, the late Sir John Beals Chandler, Kt., and the late David John Marlais Daniel, Esquire, former members of the Parliament of Queensland.”

“(2) That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the families of the deceased gentlemen 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.”

The three late hon. gentlemen named in this resolution gave great service to the State of Queensland during the time that they were members of this Assembly. The late Mr. C. G. Jesson, who died on Christmas Day last year, was an able and popular representative of the Labour Party for a long time in various Parliaments. Those of us who sat in those Parliaments with him recognised him as an ardent fighter for the causes he supported. He represented the electoral district of Kennedy from 11 May, 1935, to the end of the 31st Parliament in 1950, for a period of 15 years. Following the redistribution in 1949, he was then returned in April 1950 as the member for Hinchinbrook and served through the 32nd, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments for a further period of 10 years, giving a total service in this Assembly of 25 years. Following a further redistribution of electorates, that took place in 1959, he stood for the seat of Albert

on 28 May 1960, but was not successful. He was Government Whip from 1 July 1950, until 10 June 1957, and Opposition Whip from 28 August 1957 to 28 May 1960. During the period that the late Mr. Jesson—affectionately known by hon. members of this Chamber as “Nugget”—was Government Whip, and Opposition Whip, I very frequently came in contact with him. He was extremely co-operative with me, in my office as Leader of the Opposition, and later as Premier of the State, in adjusting the affairs of this House. When I was Leader of the Opposition, I had at times considerable difficulty sorting out the differences between the late Mr. Jesson as Government Whip and Mr. James Sparkes as Opposition Whip. At that time they seemed to tangle fairly frequently and it was often quite a job to act as arbitrator or referee, as the case may be, but I did appreciate the great co-operation that I always received from the late Mr. Jesson during his term as Whip in this House. The late hon. gentleman was an ex-serviceman. He served in the first World War with the Royal Australian Navy.

The late Sir John Beals Chandler, whose death occurred on 19 January this year, was for many years, as all hon. members will agree, an outstanding figure in our public life. He was born in Norfolk, England, in February, 1887, and his very full and successful life of achievement and public service illustrates the opportunities this country offers to young men of energy, courage, vision and initiative. He came to Queensland at the very early age of 20 years and worked in the canefields of North Queensland. Later he came to the city, where he set up business. Subsequently, in 1925, he extended his early business interests to electrical trading, and he became firmly established in the radio-dealing business. Sir John was founder and managing director of Chandlers Pty. Ltd., Brisbane radio, television and electrical dealers. He could be rightly regarded as a pioneer of commercial broadcasting in this State for in 1930 he built and operated the first commercial broadcasting station in Brisbane, 4BC. Later he relinquished his interests in that station and subsequently he acquired a controlling interest in radio station 4BH.

Sir John took a great interest in local authority affairs. He had been a councillor in the old Taringa Shire Council before the inauguration of Greater Brisbane. He served a record term of office as Lord Mayor of the City of Brisbane from 1940 to 1952, being successfully re-elected as leader of the C.M.O. by record majorities. His great administrative skill and business acumen effected material improvement in the organisation of the Brisbane City Council and its various departments. During his term of office he inaugurated very many moves for the benefit of the City of Brisbane and undoubtedly he had not only a record term but also a very fruitful term as Lord Mayor of Queensland's capital city.

In 1943 Sir John entered State politics, first as an Independent, being returned by the electorate of Hamilton at a by-election in 1943. In the same year he became leader of the newly-formed Queensland People's Party, which emerged as a major political party following the State elections in April, 1944. He retained leadership of the party until March, 1946 and he represented the Hamilton electorate until the end of the Thirtieth Parliament. He did not seek re-election at the 1947 general elections. Hon. members will remember Sir John here as a very keen debater, particularly on civic and local government matters.

He was also actively interested in and associated with very many public welfare movements. Particularly during World War II did he give great service to the community as President of the Queensland Patriotic Fund and the Australian Comforts Fund.

In the commercial life of the city he was twice President of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce and he was Treasurer of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland from 1939 to 1940.

Sir John's outstanding service to the community in the wide field of public endeavour was recognised by the knighthood conferred on him in 1952. He was a very distinguished citizen and a man whose keen sense of duty and devotion to the public weal should furnish an example to the young men of today. Small in stature but big in vision and in heart, he has left an enduring record of service in the annals of the State.

Sir John and Lady Chandler had four sons. Unfortunately two of them were killed in action in the second World War.

The final hon. gentleman mentioned in the motion, the late David John Marlais Daniel, died on 5 February this year. His death removed from the scene another member of pre-war and wartime Queensland Parliaments. The late Mr. Daniel was given leave by the House to serve in the militia, and later with the A.I.F. overseas. He held a commission in the A.I.F. with the rank of captain. He was elected as Country Party member for Keppel in a by-election on 4 April, 1936, succeeding his late father, Mr. Owen Daniel in the representation of that electorate. He served the electorate efficiently until the end of the 29th Parliament, a period of eight years. He did not seek re-election in 1944.

I remember him well, as will other hon. members who were in Parliament at the time. Dave Daniel was a very loyal colleague, and though he did not speak very frequently in the Chamber, when he did make contributions they were worth while. He had a very full sense of responsibility to his constituents and to Parliament, and at the time of his retirement I thought that the Parliament had lost a member whom it could ill-afford to lose.



In moving this motion, I should like you, Mr. Speaker, to convey, as the motion does, the condolences and sympathy of all hon. members and my condolences and sympathy to the relatives of the three hon. members who gave many years of service to the State as members of this Assembly.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.52 a.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I join with the Premier in extending condolences to the relatives of the recently deceased former members, some of whom were associated with this Assembly for very many years, notably the late Mr. Jesson, who was a member of the House for 25 years. He was indeed a most colourful personality. "Nugget", as the Premier called him, was a name that Mr. Jesson liked to have applied to himself, and he was known by that name to many thousands of people throughout the State. Although he did not have a formal education, he was a person who learned from experience the value of coming up in life the hard way. He had many family responsibilities, financial difficulties and other problems to overcome prior to his entry into this Parliament. He showed here not only that he had qualities of wit but also that he had abundant common sense, and he applied himself very industriously to matters of debate in the House.

I do not think I should be guilty of any disrespect to his memory in saying that there were many stories told about Mr. Jesson. Some, like Mark Twain's death, were greatly exaggerated. I recall that on one occasion there was a debate on methods employed in oil exploration. The late Harry Walker, I think it was, said that he much preferred the water-divining method—an old stick in the hand which twisted when it was near water. The Shell Company thought that it was time hon. members learnt something of the more modern methods of oil exploration and Dr. Crick, an internationally known geophysicist, came here with lantern slides and gave a lecture at the Belle Vue Hotel. The late Mr. Jesson was anxious to indicate the war service that he had given, and when Baku in the Russian oil fields was mentioned he said, "I was there in 1916 as a member of an oil crew. I don't know what the condition of the local people is now, but when I was there they were very 'emancipated'—the flesh was just hanging to their bones." Stories of that kind about Mr. Jesson are legion. I also recall an occasion when Mr. Lack, the Premier's publicity officer, was writing in the gallery and a very long botanical name was mentioned that Mr. Jesson had some difficulty in pronouncing. Mr. Lack took him to task on the matter, and the following morning Mr. Jesson rose on a question of privilege and said that he did not mind legitimate criticism but he did not like people being "fastidious" at his expense.

"Nugget" was highly regarded by us all. Even in a quick flare-up of temper he would

subside very quickly, and many tense situations in the Assembly and outside it were eased by his being able to break the tension. He worked very hard for his electorate, and the Italian community were indebted to him because, in him, they had a very real friend. In the early years there was reluctance on the part of Italian settlers to seek Parliamentary aid. Mr. Jesson went out of his way to help them, particularly during the war years when some of them thought there was a set against them. During that period Mr. Jesson proved himself a great friend to members of the Italian community in his electorate.

The long period he served as party Whip indicates that he had the confidence of his party. The Premier indicated that he was most co-operative. All I can say is that he must have had a happier relationship with him than some of the recalcitrant members on this side who wanted to absent themselves when Mr. Jesson felt it was unnecessary for them to do so. He was a hard task master, setting a good example of attendance in the House himself. I think we are all unanimous that not only was the late Mr. Jesson a colourful person but also a genial man who was aware of the trials and tribulations of the family man and of the difficulties of the ordinary man in the community. He sought frequently to help people. I think that the Premier overlooked his association with the Legion of ex-Service men in which he held office at Federal level where his contributions were listened to with respect. We could go on for a long time recounting some of the facets of the late Mr. Jesson's character, but I think sufficient has been said to indicate that he was held in very high esteem by us all.

The late Sir John Chandler was also a very colourful personality. In my view he was a man who relied entirely upon his innate qualities of being a very sound and successful business man possessed of an analytical mind. He was able to cope with the problems of life because of the qualities of mind he possessed including a determination to push things through to their logical conclusion. His is the case of the penniless migrant coming to this country and applying himself with great industry, learning the rudiments of business the hard way. I think he went around selling methylated spirits in a go-cart in his early years here. Through these early vicissitudes he learned the value of the pound. Thrift was one of his guiding motives and this was applied not only in his private business but also in the conservation of the funds of the Brisbane City Council over which he presided as Lord Mayor for a long time.

He was a philanthropist in many directions, some of which are unknown to many people. He was not one given to a great public manifestation of his generosity. I know of some assistance that was given anonymously and the recipients were very grateful for his kindly interest.

His interests embraced a wide range of subjects. He was a very keen orchid grower. He was interested in music and had other hobbies that interested him quite considerably.

He was Lord Mayor of the city at a time when the guiding hand of the business man was able to be applied with advantage to the community. I do not think he was quite so happy in the Parliamentary environment. It was an atmosphere somewhat foreign to his earlier training. I do not think he was very sorry to leave the precincts of Parliament House when he retired in 1947.

He was indeed one of Queensland's outstanding business men and, of course, the firm that carries his name is continuing operations and will remain for a long time as a testimony to his contribution to the business life of the community.

Mr. Daniel was indeed a quiet unassuming man who was interested particularly in the problems affecting the farmer. He often brought before the notice of members of the House the difficulties confronting men working on the land. He made his contribution in an atmosphere free from any party rancour. His submissions made in a quiet way were listened to with great respect. He conducted a tobacconist business in Rockhampton and on the occasions I was there he was always very happy to talk about the affairs of Parliament. He took a very keen interest in the affairs of the State until the very end. He too was privileged to serve in this Parliament and made his contribution during his lifetime.

I join with the Premier in extending our sympathy to the relatives of the deceased members.

**Mr. HUGHES** (Kurilpa) (11.59 a.m.): I should like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed about the three deceased gentlemen and particularly to relate my remarks to the late Sir John Chandler, to Lady Chandler and to members of his family. I had a strong personal affection for Sir John. I served with him in community affairs for a number of years, particularly in matters connected with the Brisbane City Council. Apart from that, I knew him personally as a family man and friend, and I have every reason to associate myself with this motion of condolence and to record my appreciation of the many acts of kindness that he bestowed upon me, my family and many of my friends. I am indeed indebted to him. He performed many acts of charity that benefited the community greatly. Sir John's character and honesty of purpose were to me a wonderful example that will be worthwhile guidance in my remaining years. I can never hope to emulate his great deeds but at least I can follow to some extent his wonderful examples. He was a great man. He was the best Lord Mayor this city has ever had or ever will have. For his

contributions to society, to the city and to the State in general and for his personal kindness to me I wish to associate myself with the motion.

**Mr. SPEAKER** (12.1 p.m.): I, too, should like to add my personal regrets by speaking to the motion of condolence before the House. I know it is unusual for the Speaker to do so but I wish to make a few observations.

I knew only two of the hon. gentlemen mentioned in the motion and I want to refer particularly to the late Sir John Chandler. I admit quite freely that I owe my start in the business world in Queensland to the late Sir John.

When I came to Queensland I was looking for work like many others in my day, and the man who put me on the right track was Sir John Chandler. With his financial help and advice, I was able to succeed to some extent in the business world. Whether or not that is for the benefit of Queensland has, perhaps, yet to be seen. Sir John Chandler was, as the Premier said, a man of vision. Perhaps one of the greatest and most lasting monuments to him is Gympie Road, Chermanside. Well do I remember the abuse levelled at Sir John by the ratepayers when he first suggested there should be a four-lane highway at this entrance to the city, and the necessary resumptions were made. Much abuse was levelled at the then City Council and the Lord Mayor but I believe that that highway will always be a monument to that administration and to Sir John. It is an outstanding approach to this city.

The Leader of the Opposition has reminded us of some of the sayings by the late Mr. Jesson. One statement that stands out in my mind and one that I shall remember all my life was made by Sir John Chandler, not as Lord Mayor of Brisbane, but as a businessman, at a time when unemployment was rife. It was his message to a sales convention in the city. I was present with the salesmen on that occasion when he said something from which I think we could all take a lesson. He said:

"Gentlemen, you are the ones in touch with the people; you are the ones in closest contact with the people and you are the ones to whom I look to instil confidence into those people. Instil confidence into yourselves; state your confidence in the product you sell, and above all state your confidence in the future of this great State of Queensland, and by so doing you will instil confidence in the people. That is the only way in which we in this State can survive under present conditions."

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

## QUEENSLAND MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Queensland Marine Act of 1958, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

## HARBOURS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

## LAND TAX ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### INITIATION

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Land Tax Acts, 1915 to 1959, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

## SWINE COMPENSATION FUND BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry) (12.9 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the establishment of a Swine Compensation Fund and for the compensation of owners of swine which may be destroyed, and for the control, eradication or prevention of disease in swine, and for purposes connected therewith.”

The pig industry in Queensland continues to make a valuable contribution to the State's income from rural production. With the growth of the dairying industry, the pig industry has expanded greatly. Further, in recent years production has increased through the association of pig raising with grain growing. It has now developed into a very important industry.

In the year ended 30 June, 1961, approximately 550,000 pigs were slaughtered in Queensland for a return of a little more than 27,000 tons of edible pigmeats. The total value of the industry's production for the year was £7,928,000. Apart from the problems normally associated with pig husbandry procedures and general management, the industry's chief preoccupation is with the treatment or prevention of disease. The Stock Acts, 1915 to 1960, and the Pig Industry Act of 1933 give a considerable degree of protection to the industry in this respect, as they contain provisions which enable officers of my department to take prompt action in the event of an outbreak of disease, to eradicate it and prevent its spread. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to prevent outbreaks of disease and in addition to those ailments that are the normal lot of pigs in Queensland there is the constant threat of the incursion of exotic disease from overseas. This threat, of course, has risen greatly because of air transport. I believe that we have been fairly fortunate in the Commonwealth in that we have been able to keep out many of the exotic diseases that affect livestock generally.

The particular disease that is causing great concern to the pig industry at the present time is swine fever, as this serious, exotic disease has once more gained entry to Australia and has been active in New South Wales since April of last year.

The disease also has been diagnosed in Victoria in the vicinity of Corowa near the New South Wales border.

Including the present outbreak, swine fever has broken out in Australia on four occasions—the first three outbreaks being in 1903-6, 1927-28 and 1942-43.

On these occasions the disease was eradicated by the application of strict quarantine measures and the slaughter of all pigs on affected properties.

Similar measures have been adopted by the New South Wales and Victorian authorities to deal with the current outbreaks.

On this occasion, however, the disease did not exhibit its usual explosive character but was more insidious in its onset, so that it became widely established before being diagnosed. The position was further complicated because there was at the time no rapid, reliable test to aid field diagnosis. To the end of 1961 some 12,000 pigs were slaughtered in New South Wales and a sum of approximately £150,000 paid in compensation. Swine fever is a virus disease specific to pigs.

The casual organism, which is too small to be seen with the ordinary microscope, can live for lengthy periods in pigmeats derived from animals that were carrying the infection at the time of slaughter, even though they might have appeared healthy at that time.

Australian veterinary authorities consider the three earliest outbreaks were due to infected pigmeats introduced from overseas countries and although the cause of the current outbreak is not definitely known, it is most likely that it arose in the same manner.

Uncooked scraps of infected pigmeat can readily transmit the disease and once established, it can be spread by direct contact of one pig with another, and by contaminated food, water, bodily excretions, vehicles, straw, feeding utensils, boots and clothing.

**Mr. Duggan:** Is that so, even when the meat is under refrigeration for a long period?

**Mr. MADSEN:** Yes.

Experiments have shown that the infection can be carried mechanically by birds, and flies also are regarded as a possible means of transmission of the disease.

Most of the affected holdings in New South Wales are in the county of Cumberland and the Maitland pastures protection district, but outbreaks also have occurred outside those areas at a number of places including Goulburn, Narrandera, Bathurst, Oaklands, Corowa, Narrabri and Tenterfield.

In addition to quarantining affected properties and slaughtering the pigs thereon, the New South Wales Department of Agriculture has declared a protected area in the northern part of the State embracing five pastures protection districts. It has acted as a buffer to Queensland to some extent.

Protective action under the Stock Acts has been taken by my department by prohibiting the introduction of pigs or pigmeats from both New South Wales and Victoria, with the exception of processed pigmeats that have been heat-treated in such a way as effectively to destroy any virus that may have been present at the time of treatment.

Field officers of my department are keeping very careful watch for the disease throughout the State and particularly at those piggeries where garbage is fed. They seem to offer the greatest risk with the food given to the pigs.

So far the precautionary measures adopted appear to have prevented the spread of the disease into this State, but there still remains a very real risk that some infected pigmeats will have found their way to Queensland in the early stages of the outbreak. These could still cause trouble if fed to pigs in an unboiled state. There is also the risk that some misguided person will introduce the disease by bringing pigs into the State in contravention of the prohibition order. Should an outbreak occur in Queensland results could be very serious, the more so as there is at present no legislation on the statute book to enable adequate compensation to be paid for pigs ordered to be destroyed. This could mean heavy loss or even ruin for those growers whose herds had to be slaughtered.

Because of the danger to the industry the Government could not allow this state of affairs to continue and steps were taken to obtain the reaction of various organisations associated with the industry to the Government's proposal for the introduction of a Swine Compensation Act. Without exception these organisations strongly supported the Government's plans, and so the Bill is now before the Assembly.

Similar legislation has been in operation in New South Wales and Victoria since 1928 and in South Australia since 1936. The best features of those Acts have been embodied in the Bill, together with a number of provisions specially applicable to the methods of operation of the pig industry in Queensland.

Under the Bill, it is proposed to set up a compensation fund that will derive its income from the sale of duty stamps to be charged upon every pig sold in Queensland. In many respects this is similar to the buffalo fly control stamp duty that is currently charged on the sale of cattle in Queensland.

Although the main emphasis in the Bill is upon exotic diseases such as swine fever, the opportunity is being taken to provide for the extension of the principle of compensation to other diseases of pigs should such a step ever be deemed desirable. It is not envisaged that compensation would ever cover all pig diseases as this might have the effect of making farmers careless of piggery hygiene and ordinary disease-control measures. However, if funds were available, it might be considered an advantage to extend compensation to cover certain diseases that would be prescribed. That is to say, as we go along we may have other diseases that we wish to cover quite apart from those introduced or exotic diseases.

I turn now to some of the main principles of the Bill. At the outset a number of terms and their meanings are given, some of which are self-explanatory, while others require explanation. Among the most important in the latter category are the terms "agent," "disease," "exotic disease" and "statement."

The term "agent" applies to stock agents and auctioneers who ordinarily buy and sell pigs for stockowners. It also applies to certain other purchasers of pigs, for example, persons who buy pigs "over the scales" at country centres and proprietors of bacon factories who purchase pigs "on consignment" direct from the purchaser without their going through an agent or being handled by an agent in any way. A wide definition is necessary as "agents" are required, in certain instances, to write out "statements" giving details of sales of pigs and to affix swine sales duty stamps to them. That is very similar to what is done with statements provided now by auctioneers and commission agents where the buffalo fly tax stamps are affixed.

The Bill provides for the declaration of two classes of disease, one covered by the straight-out term "disease" and the other by the term "exotic disease". The former term refers to a disease that normally occurs in Australia, the latter to a disease introduced from overseas. A distinction is necessary because it is not proposed to pay as much compensation for pigs destroyed because of "disease" as for those destroyed because of "exotic disease".

The Bill provides for the writing out of a statement on the sale of pigs by either the owner or agent, showing the number of pigs sold, the date and purchase price, and the addresses of both vendor and purchaser. The statement is for stamping purposes and is being used instead of a receipt because in some transactions ordinary receipts are not issued—for example, pigs forwarded to a bacon factory for slaughter on a weight-and-grade basis. They are often slaughtered before the price is actually known and paid to the producer.

An important provision is for the establishment of a swine compensation fund. The fund will derive the major part of its income from sales of duty stamps. In addition, any moneys received by the State by way of subsidy or contribution from the Commonwealth Government or any other source will be paid into the fund. I might mention that it is hoped that the Commonwealth Government might acknowledge exotic diseases as something of national concern. We sincerely hope that we may get some assistance from them.

**Mr. Davies:** Put a claim in now while they still have a clear recollection of the results of the recent election.

**Mr. MADSEN:** We already have a claim in. I am happy to say that at the recent meeting of the Agricultural Council, all States supported New South Wales in its application for financial assistance. Although we are not directly concerned at the moment, we believe that the principle is correct. We sincerely hope that it might apply to all States should an outbreak occur in States where a fund is established.

In the event of an outbreak of disease for which compensation is payable occurring before there is sufficient money in the fund to pay the required compensation, the Treasurer is authorised to make an advance from Consolidated Revenue. Any advance made in this manner is to be repaid from the fund as soon as practicable. When one realises that the compensation paid in New South Wales in a few months was about £150,000, it will readily be seen that a large sum of money is involved. Funds could be made available from the Treasury and repaid from the fund as it progresses.

The main provision of the Bill is for payment of compensation to owners for pigs destroyed.

**Mr. Duggan:** Is it a self-financing fund?

**Mr. MADSEN:** Yes. In the event of an exotic disease being diagnosed on a holding, all pigs thereon must be regarded as suspected of suffering from the disease and would have to be destroyed. For example, if it is diagnosed on a particular property, the slaughter-out method has been adopted to deal with it. This is in accordance with recognised veterinary practice in eradicating past outbreaks of exotic disease in Australia. The rate of compensation will be half market value for pigs destroyed because of disease and full market value for those destroyed because of exotic disease. We have made that distinction.

The principle behind the provision is that many of the diseases that affect pigs can be prevented by proper piggery hygiene, housing and general management.

In the event of pigs having to be destroyed because of such a disease, the owner should be prepared to accept some responsibility in the matter and in such a case half market value is considered appropriate compensation.

This principle also could be extended to pigs condemned in slaughter houses for such diseases as tuberculosis, erysipelas, parasitic ailments, etc. In such a case only one or two head would usually be concerned at any one time. With the incidence of tuberculosis in dairy cattle being reduced somewhat, the incidence of tuberculosis in pigs has been considerably reduced. In the case of exotic diseases, however, all pigs on an infected holding must be destroyed irrespective of the owner's financial or other circumstances, and a farmer could be ruined if full compensation were not paid. Further, a disease of this type may find its way even into the best-conducted piggery through no fault of the owner. Moreover, when full compensation is payable there is less risk of an owner's attempting to cover up an outbreak. That is particularly important. The early reporting of the existence of the disease is necessary in order to prevent its spread.

The industry as a whole benefits from the eradication of exotic disease. The market value of pigs ordered to be destroyed will be determined by agreement between the owner and the departmental officer ordering their destruction. If such agreement cannot be reached the Minister is empowered to appoint an independent valuer to determine the value. In the event of the market value, as determined by the valuer, being in excess of the amount originally nominated by the departmental officer concerned, then costs of the valuation shall be awarded against the Minister. The producer would get the extra compensation and there would be no charge for that extra inspection.

**Mr. Duggan:** What if it is lower?

**Mr. MADSEN:** If a producer makes a frivolous claim he will pay the cost of the

inspection. I think it will be agreed that it is necessary to prevent many frivolous claims being made.

**Mr. Duggan:** Supposing that there is a fair decision by the parties concerned, what is the amount claimed? Is it the amount they would get for the pig at the bacon factory?

**Mr. MADSEN:** Yes, that is in the case of pigs destroyed as being affected with an exotic disease. It is not what they would get at the bacon factory, but the bacon factory price less freight.

**Mr. Bromley:** Does that include piglets?

**Mr. MADSEN:** Yes, any pig affected with disease or slaughtered as a result of being found affected.

In cases where the value is the same or less than that nominated by the departmental officer then costs shall be awarded against the owner of the pigs. This provision is necessary to prevent frivolous claims. The conditions under which compensation is not payable are clearly set out in the Bill.

Pigs fed on unboiled garbage or food scraps are excluded from compensation.

**Mr. Davies:** Would there be any pigs fed on unboiled garbage?

**Mr. MADSEN:** It is illegal, but if it is found that pigs have been fed on unboiled scraps compensation will not be payable. That is for the reason that swine fever can be spread easily by the ingestion of uncooked scraps or infected pigmeat. Because of this, garbage piggeries present a special risk. The feeding of uncooked garbage containing meat, blood or offal is in any case illegal under the Slaughtering Acts and the Pig Industry Act.

The Bill provides that any pig introduced into Queensland may be excluded from compensation if it is destroyed within one month of introduction. This is necessary to safeguard the fund against claims for compensation for pigs that were diseased at the time of their introduction.

In such a case, where the pig has been legally introduced, compensation will, however, be paid for any other pigs destroyed on the holding. There will not be any compensation paid on the pig that is introduced and destroyed within one month of introduction but, if there were other pigs destroyed and if that pig was legally introduced compensation would be legally paid on those other pigs.

**Mr. Bromley:** Could they not get out of that position by saying that their pigs had been here for several months?

**Mr. MADSEN:** Introduction from other States mainly involves stud pigs and there are many ways of checking up on them. One has a fair check on the type of pig that would be introduced.

At the present time there is a complete prohibition on the introduction of pigs from New South Wales and Victoria.

In the case of a pig that has been introduced in contravention of this provision, or otherwise illegally, no compensation will be payable for that pig or any other pig destroyed on the holding. That will be a penalty for illegal introduction. The non-payment of compensation in such a case should act as a strong deterrent to illegal interstate traffic in pigs.

The Bill provides for the charging of a stamp duty on sales of pigs. Initially, the rate of duty will be one half-penny in the £1 of sale price. It may be necessary to step that levy up so that the fund can accumulate and provision is made for the altering of the rate of stamp duty by the Governor in Council by Order in Council.

In the event of an outbreak of exotic disease occurring in Queensland before the fund reaches reasonable proportions the rate would almost certainly require to be raised.

This is very important to the pig industry at the present time. The action is taken because of the present position in New South Wales. The industry there has received rather a heavy blow, temporarily affecting most adjoining States and stopping freedom of trade between the States. Nevertheless, it is a very necessary precaution.

On the other hand, a disease of this kind, which can be brought in quite beyond the control of the producer, necessitates the introduction of some form of insurance to which a producer can contribute and by which he can receive some form of compensation.

**Mr. Duggan:** What action will be taken to provide for the resumption of interstate trade?

**Mr. MADSEN:** After a period of time has elapsed during which no cases of the disease have been reported in any particular area, steps will be taken to free interstate trade. But, we feel that the damage that could be caused at present is such that every precaution must be taken. That is well recognised in the industry. This is a matter that is under consideration all the time and it must continue while there is any likelihood of the disease spreading.

**Mr. Duggan:** What is the amount per week?

**Mr. MADSEN:** The market value of the pig will determine the amount of compensation. A maximum amount will be fixed in regard to stud pigs.

**Mr. Duggan:** I mean the amount of levy per week.

**Mr. MADSEN:** It will be a halfpenny in the £ of the sale price of the pig. It is estimated that the levy on the present pig numbers or sales will amount to approximately

£12,500 a year, so that it will be realised some years will have to elapse before very much money will be in the fund, that is, if there is a heavy outbreak of the disease. I think hon. members will agree, however, that the action proposed is necessary. I hope it will never be necessary to use the money in the fund.

**Mr. Bromley:** What would be the position in regard to compensation for pigs at the Stuart prison farm?

**Mr. MADSEN:** It will apply to every pig in Queensland irrespective of where it is or who owns it.

**Mr. Bromley:** Would compensation be paid for those pigs?

**Mr. MADSEN:** They will be treated in the same way. All pigs will be covered, whether they are owned by the wealthy, by the poor, by the Crown or anyone else. I think that is necessary.

I should mention that action has been taken already to try to protect the pig producers of the State prior to the coming into operation of the Bill. If an outbreak of the disease occurs Treasury funds would be made available, but of course those amounts would be repaid from the fund as the fund grows.

I commend the Bill to hon. members, believing as I do that it is a very necessary and desirable one. I am certain the industry looks forward to having the legislation in operation.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.37 p.m.): A measure of this kind should be treated on a non-party basis, and this one will be treated in that way by the Opposition.

As the Minister has pointed out, the pig industry is an important one to Queensland. With proper encouragement and education of the public, it could become of considerably greater importance. Per capita consumption of pork in Australia is very much below the figure in many other countries in the world. At the present time there is a great disparity—an alleged disparity and probably an actual one—between what the farmer receives for his pigmeat and the price charged for it in retail shops. I think the disparity is far too great, and, in view of the increasing price of beef, I think that if attractive types of pigmeat were presented to the public a very much greater demand for it could be stimulated. In view of the threat to the dairying industry through the proposed European Common Market and falling butter prices in Great Britain, many dairying properties that may be affected by low prices for butter could perhaps be converted in some degree to pig-raising properties. The potential for the production of pigmeat in Australia is tremendous.

**Mr. Aikens:** Will not the setting up of the European Common Market have the same effect on pigmeat as on the dairying industry?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I am referring to pigmeat for local consumption, not for export, because it is from the export trade that we get our main revenue, and that state of affairs will continue. I am referring to the substitution—perhaps that would be the better word—of pigmeat for beef, because of its lower price. Periodically we get a price war between some of the retailers, and pork is sold at 3s. 3d. a lb., compared with steak at 5s. or 4s. 9d. lb. It seems to me that pork would be a suitable substitute for beef.

I agree with the Minister that, if an industry of the importance and potential of the pig industry is threatened by the introduction of diseases, corrective action should be taken and, if the fund is going to be a self-financing one, I cannot see that serious criticism or any criticism can be offered, particularly if the producers themselves, by agreement and with Government acquiescence, are able to establish the fund so that proper compensation can be paid for pigs destroyed following on the introduction of the dreaded swine fever.

Apparently the disease strikes quickly. Some companies in New South Wales were very adversely affected last year following on the introduction of swine fever. The Minister has said that the sum of £150,000 was expended by way of compensation and that 12,000 animals were destroyed. At no time can we afford to have animals destroyed if preventive measures can be taken. It is apparent that some tidying up with the quarantine authorities and the Commonwealth authorities generally may be needed to see if they can close the door to the introduction of diseases of this kind. The Minister pointed out that this is becoming increasingly difficult because of air travel and so on. Last year the former Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation told us how foot-and-mouth disease was introduced by someone carrying manure on his shoes from another area. Even with the most careful scrutiny it is possible for diseases to be introduced, and heaven alone knows we have enough imported pests and diseases without making it easier for others to be introduced.

The Minister has intimated that the measures to be introduced will be policed fairly effectively and I believe that where the application of a measure affects so many people, we should see to it that the administration of the Act is carried out as simply as possible. I suppose that the duty stamps referred to by the Minister represent as simple a method as can be determined for that purpose. Offhand, I do not know of any other method that could be applied more simply. I do not know whether there are opportunities for evasion and I do not know if it may crop up. I do not know whether the losses are tremendous on the

stamping of documents, and receipt stamps, when the opportunities for supervision are not very great.

**Mr. Madsen:** Somewhere along the line they get caught. I think the collection of the tax by the stamp-duty method will be fairly successful.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Eventually, by tracing the movements of stock, we would get quite a fair estimate of whether evasion was being practised. The amount involved would not be very great compared with the degree of protection afforded, and it would be a pretty miserable attitude for the people affected to adopt. However, people become very "hungry". I learned of a case the other day of a man who was worth a substantial sum of money who objected to paying 1s. when he took his car to the races. Some of the people engaged in primary industry may try to take advantage of this scheme and evade the stamping of these papers.

At this stage, in view of the opportunity that will be afforded to us to read the Minister's introductory speech, and because the Bill will be introduced in due course, I do not think we should delay its passage. The Minister has set out very succinctly the principles involved in the measure.

Prompt and effective quarantine measures must be employed so as not to impose an unduly heavy burden on the primary producers affected. The swine herds could be affected, and the producers are entitled to compensation. Whether the full factory rate less freight is the appropriate rate, I do not know, but I suppose it is generous enough, and because their own funds are affected I will not quarrel with that very much. We find that very often the amount paid in compensation is very much lower than the amount claimed, such as in a motor car accident, or when furniture is repossessed. However, as it is their own money, I have no serious quarrel with the principle.

It appears to me that the fixing of this method of compensation will induce producers to be frank and open. If a person indicates to the authorities that he has suspect stock on his property, quick action may save the State a good deal of money later on, so there may be great advantages in the proposal.

I think that generally there will be a ready acceptance of this measure by hon. members, and that they will support this proposal in the hope that we may not suffer great losses in the pig industry from swine fever.

Apropos of my opening remarks I hope that increasing attention will be paid to the marketing of pigmeats because I believe that we are lagging behind other parts of the world. I have seen some Danish pork and the method of packing it.

I read recently that in Japan and in Hong Kong the eating habits of the people are changing very much. The Danes are our

biggest competitors in the export of pigmeat to foreign markets and already they have demonstrated that they can teach us a great deal.

I can only express the hope that there will be some improvement in the quality of pigmeats and in marketing methods, as well as a reduction in the price to the consumer.

At present pigmeats are far too dear. Many of these products are being priced out of the reach of the ordinary person. When I worked on the Downs some 25 or more years ago, the retail price of bacon rashers was 8½d. a lb. Today it is more than 10 times that and wages have not increased proportionately. Naturally people are looking for better and cheaper foods. In the past the bacon factory on the Darling Downs produced a type of frankfurt that I particularly liked. It has been alleged that the standard has deteriorated perhaps through putting in a greater percentage of bread. At any rate it appears that the high pigmeat content has been reduced. I hope that, contemporaneously with moves to prevent the introduction of swine fever, the department will continue rigorously to support the expansion of the industry, and incidentally give it a more profitable outlook.

**Mr. WINDSOR (Ithaca) (12.47 p.m.):** I support the Bill. It is a well-known axiom that prevention is better than cure. We have here an industry worth roughly £8,000,000. The New South Wales industry is worth about the same and the sum of £150,000, or roughly 1½ per cent. of the total value, is a very small price to pay for preserving an industry.

I remind all members of the drastic action that had to be taken a couple of years ago when the banana industry was threatened by that horrible "bunchy top" disease. Whole plantations had to be destroyed. We know what the banana industry is today. Through prevention and through scientific control of the disease, it is coming into its own. It will be one of the big industries of the future, the way the bananas are being waxed and washed and sent away.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is drawing an analogy.

**Mr. WINDSOR:** Prevention is better than cure and the Bill represents very wise action. Our sugar industry is worth £60,000,000 today.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member is again drawing an analogy.

**Mr. WINDSOR:** I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill because the end justifies the means.

Motion (Mr. Madsen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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



## MAIN ROADS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

## INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity) (12.52 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Main Roads Acts, 1920 to 1960, in certain particulars.”

The Department of Main Roads is an expanding organisation that is exerting every effort to keep abreast of modern trends and developments in both the engineering and administrative fields.

I think that hon. members are aware that we have decentralised the department to a great extent during the past five years.

**Mr. Davies:** The Minister must admit that it always was decentralised under the former Government.

**Mr. EVANS:** I will not admit that, because it is not true. Instead of everything having to come to Brisbane for decision an Assistant Commissioner has been appointed in Townsville and he has the authority, which I am now making legal, to make decisions in connection with that region. We are in the process of appointing an Assistant Commissioner in Rockhampton, also. Instead of representatives of local authorities coming to Brisbane to discuss with the Commissioner matters relating to those two regions, they can now go either to Townsville or to Rockhampton. That is only right. I do not wish to take credit for it. If we are to make progress, we must consider anomalies that existed in the past and correct them. It is not a question of giving one party or another credit for this. It is being done in the best interests of the people of Queensland. When it was mentioned in the House previously, all hon. members supported what was being done. It seemed ridiculous—and it was—that number-plates could not be issued in Rockhampton or Townsville, and it was inevitable that changes should occur if we were to progress.

**Mr. Thackeray:** Will there be any dummy number-plates available in Rockhampton?

**Mr. EVANS:** There have been no dummy number-plates since I have been the Minister in charge of the Department of Main Roads. It is a breach of the Act to have dummy number-plates. There are no politics with me in my department, and I had the position rectified immediately it was brought to my notice.

As I have said, a considerable degree of decentralisation has been effected in the past year or so, and this has meant changes in the organisation of the department. To give full legal effect to these alterations it is necessary to amend the Acts.

The first reason for the Bill is to provide for the positions that were created last year. The position of Chief Engineer has been replaced by a Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer, and a new designation, Assistant Commissioner, has been created. So far an Assistant Commissioner has been appointed to North Queensland, and from time to time as it becomes necessary further Assistant Commissioners will be appointed with jurisdiction in different parts of the State. These positions have now to be provided in the Act. I have said that there will be one in Rockhampton. I think that appointment will be made in the very near future.

**Mr. Davies:** Have you allotted the zones? How far down will Rockhampton go?

**Mr. EVANS:** The zones were there when we took over. We have not altered them.

**Mr. Houston:** You have a Chief Engineer in those zones already.

**Mr. EVANS:** We have a Chief Engineer in Brisbane.

**Mr. Houston:** You are only changing the title of District Engineer to Deputy Commissioner—

**Mr. EVANS:** Giving him more power and responsibility.

**Mr. Houston:** But it is the same person?

**Mr. EVANS:** The Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer would have the same job, as the previous Chief Engineer, only with more authority and more responsibility.

**Mr. Houston:** The person now holding the position of Assistant Chief Engineer—

**Mr. EVANS:** The District Engineer position? You mean the responsibility and authority throughout the various regions? Previously he had to submit everything to Brisbane. Now he will have the opportunity and responsibility of making decisions himself. I think that is right.

The second reason for the Bill is to provide a means of expediting the execution of necessary and urgent construction works on roads declared under the Act. Up to the present the Governor in Council alone has had power to approve of permanent works even if the cost was only a few pounds.

As a meeting of the Executive Council is held only once a week the present system not only delayed construction but it threw on to the Governor in Council work that could be performed by the Minister. The Bill therefore empowers the Minister to authorise the execution of permanent works estimated to cost not more than an amount to be determined by the Governor in Council from time to time. When the Minister exercises this power it is provided in the Bill that the approval will be published in the “Gazette” as if it were an Order in Council, so that there will be the same method of

promulgation of the authorisation for all permanent works. Let me explain what I mean. Very often the councils are given jobs to carry out. Take the Mulgrave Shire Council, for example. They may be given a permanent works job to construct on behalf of the Department of Main Roads. They may see fit to call tenders for the clearing and tenders for the earthworks. After tenders are called for the clearing and the clearing is completed they could call tenders for the earthworks. Under the present law the matter has come to Brisbane and an Order in Council has to go through. What we propose is that the Executive Council will give the Minister authority to authorise up to a certain amount.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Are you specifying any amount?

**Mr. EVANS:** It will be altered. A sum of £10,000 is proposed. I had a case in my own district. I had a case in Mulgrave. Tenders were called for a clearing job. All the equipment was on the site. Tenders were called for earthworks. To go through the ordinary procedure and get it through to Executive Council would have taken three weeks. The tenderer whose equipment was on the job would have had his equipment idle for three weeks. I anticipated matters in my own council by giving the authority to go on.

**Mr. Thackeray:** Would he have been the lowest tenderer?

**Mr. EVANS:** Always the lowest if he is qualified and his position at the bank is satisfactory.

The third main purpose of the Bill is to eliminate those provisions which are no longer appropriate or necessary and to clarify the wording in certain cases. For example, the provisions relating to the transition from the original Board to the sole Commissioner which took place over 36 years ago are no longer required and are being repealed.

The qualifications for the position of Commissioner are being brought into line with modern trends and those for the positions of Deputy Commissioner and of Assistant Commissioner fixed on the same general lines. They must have certain qualifications. We are definitely of the opinion that it is necessary to have a qualified engineer with outside experience of road work.

**Mr. Houston:** He must have outside experience?

**Mr. EVANS:** He must have outside experience to be a Commissioner. If he has only inside experience—

**Mr. Houston:** You mean inside, within the department?

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes, he must have other than office experience.

The detailed recital of the considerations to be taken into account by the Commissioner

when considering whether to recommend the declaration of a main road is being deleted.

In several parts of the Act the wording is being varied to clarify the meaning so as to overcome difficulties which have been encountered in the administration of an Act which was originally passed over 40 years ago.

The final purpose of the Bill is to incorporate some new provisions designed to facilitate works and to vary certain provisions the operation of which has proved difficult due to the manner in which the intention has been expressed.

Such a case relates to limitation of access which is an important matter—which gets more important as density of traffic increases—and one which provides for the safety and convenience of road users on through roads. There are five types of road or land to which limitation of access can be applied and to clarify the position the wording of the section is being altered to set out clearly the procedure to be followed in each case.

When a new road is built and limitation of access is applied, similar to what was done on the Ipswich by-pass at times a permit is issued giving a landowner on the limited access section permission to drive directly onto the through pavement. This permission is taken into account when damages for injurious affection are being assessed. If, later on, it becomes necessary to withdraw or vary any such permission the question of further compensation for the landowner arises. That can arise and, with traffic increasing and new towns springing up, I believe the people concerned must be protected. The Bill provides that in such circumstances the landowner has one year in which to lodge a claim for damages.

A provision is being inserted to give the Commissioner power to acquire land in the vicinity of a new road he proposes to construct or of an existing road he is about to widen or in the vicinity of a section of road to which limitation of access is to be applied so that he may control the points at which subdivisional roads join declared roads. That is very necessary. This is designed to protect road users from the hazards which could arise from locating road junctions at unsuitable places.

The Commissioner can hold or subdivide and lease or sell such part of such land which is not required for road purposes.

A new section will give the Commissioner the authority to control the approval or construction of new roads which would join or intersect a State highway or a main road. This will be achieved by preventing a local authority from approving the plan of such a road and prohibiting any person from constructing it without the prior approval in writing of the Commissioner. This is a further means of assisting towards safety on the road.

That can and does happen. Some councils approve plans that should not be approved, and roads on the subdivision are coming on to main roads where the density of traffic is increasing. We know it is increasing because we have taken a census of traffic. The Bill will give us some control over the subdivision of properties adjoining main roads. The power is very necessary because some councils are not conversant with the position. A plan is sent in by the subdivider. It is drawn in such a way that he will get as much as he can out of the sale of the allotments. Irrespective of the danger he is creating by building roads onto a main road the plan is designed to allow the subdivider to get as much as he can from the sale of the property. I think the department should have some say in approval of plans, but, of course, it will be co-operative and sensible.

**Mr. Davies:** You would not find many local authorities guilty of that.

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes. Local authorities do not give enough consideration to these matters. Bad subdivisions can be seen in some of the local authority areas. Not many local authorities have town plans. Many of them have not got engineers, and they depend on foremen and overseers. A plan is sent in and the overseer recommends it and the local authority approves of the plan.

**Mr. Davies:** Are you referring to the near North Coast?

**Mr. EVANS:** I am referring to many local authorities in Queensland where main roads are constructed. I am not referring to any particular local authority but I have had quite a few instances of subdivisions that were totally undesirable and dangerous. When we are putting roads through properties at the expense of the people of Queensland, to give main road access to those areas, we should see that the interests of the people are safeguarded.

**Mr. Lloyd:** In other words you might have a by-pass road constructed around a town and some speculator or subdivider may try to get access onto that road?

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes. To enable future development of the declared road system a section is being added enabling the Governor in Council to make a declared road reserve through property which is not within the area of a city or town and which is not built on at the time of the declaration of the reserve.

The effect of making such a reserve would be that the owner of the land could not build on the area but until the Commissioner acquires title to it or until a road is constructed on it the owner's rights of usage would not be affected. In many areas we have to straighten roads and that type of work is being carried on every week. We cannot do all of it immediately because we have not the money. Notice will be

served that such work is going to be done, so that the owner will not build on the land. We are thinking of the convenience of the owner of the land and are giving him protection by telling him that we are going to take it eventually or that we may take it eventually. In the meantime, however, he can continue to use it for the purpose for which it is being used when notice is served on him.

**Mr. Houston:** Is there any time limit?

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes. I am pleased to have that interjection. The Bill was prepared just after the adjournment last year, and after considering the Bill I was satisfied that we had to set a time limit. A time without limit would be most unfair. The provision is not in the Bill, because at the time of the decision it had been prepared, but I shall be moving an amendment to limit the period to seven years. I think that is a reasonable period.

Such a provision will enable the Commissioner to plan ahead and will save the landowner the inconvenience and probable loss which would result were he to place on the area in question improvements which would have to be removed when the land was later resumed.

Certain minor verbal amendments are also incorporated in the Bill.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (2.25 p.m.): As far as I can understand the Minister, the chief purpose of this Bill is to ratify the changes that have taken place regarding the organisation of the Department of Main Roads; there are some complementary pieces of legislation to deal with access to main roads and things of that nature. From time to time the Minister has made many statements about the tremendous amount of work going on in relation to main roads and has tried to create outside the general impression that due to the vigilance of this Government and the way in which they have been able to secure funds they are doing far and beyond what was done by previous Governments. When we look at the monetary figures it is true that the amounts are greater than they were previously, in the same way as the school attendances have increased. I do not suppose that the Government would take credit for that. In the same way, there has been a general increase in any normal community from time to time. We know that there has been an increase of about 6 per cent. annually in vehicle registrations and that must have the result of more revenue being available to the department particularly with the increases in fees and with the increases in motor vehicle insurance.

**Mr. Evans:** There has not been an increase of fees.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Yes, there has been. The Treasurer introduced it. The Minister does

not know what is happening in the Government. Of course there has been an increase. The Treasurer was responsible for the increase. The Minister should be ashamed of himself when he talks about stabilising costs because the present Government have imposed charge after charge. It is useless for the Minister to say that the Government are the guardian of these things.

What happens to Queensland is common to every other Government in the Commonwealth. The only thing that has happened in Queensland is that the Premier lost the formula under the Commonwealth Roads Aids Agreement which cost this State £1,500,000. All this flap-doodle that the Minister says from time to time about what the Government have done amounts to nothing because he is talking only about something that would ordinarily occur in any case.

I think the Government are getting too many "tall poppies" about the place. That applies to many departments. The moment the Government get a plan they set up commissioners and assistant commissioners, and all types of chief engineers. This has been done for a long while. I must say that this tremendous plea about decentralisation is not working out as the Government are leading us to believe. The engineers in the department are not so happy about the general arrangements that are taking place in the department. There seems to be the feeling that if someone has the ear of some person in authority or has the good fortune to know the Minister for Main Roads that there may be opportunities for accelerated advancement in the department.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I trust the hon. member is not imputing improper motives to the Minister.

**Mr. Evans:** Well, he certainly is.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** No-one can deny, for instance—and I say this quite openly—that if the present Minister had not been Minister for Main Roads Mr. Barton would not have been the Commissioner for Main Roads.

**Mr. Evans:** He is the Commissioner because he is the best man in the place.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Because the Minister happened to have a very high estimation of him which I think is perfectly justified, and I make that quite clear, but he was the Minister's choice, and his choice long before the position was declared vacant. It was known to every engineer in the service that the job was being made for him long before the job became vacant. The Minister cannot convince me otherwise because engineers in the department have told me so from time to time. It is generally known that is the pattern. They are certain that some of these men are mere rubber stamps for carrying out decisions made by others.

On occasions there are retrenchments in the field but do they affect the engineers or clerks? In the Toowoomba division the Minister curtailed the staff drastically and had under construction only a miserable bit of road about a mile long, with four men working on it, while the clerical staff was still the same as when there was a much greater field staff operating. It is the same in so many other departments. Every time there is any need for a cut, the clerks are kept on. I do not say that the Government should sack the clerks, but the fact remains that every time there is a curtailment of staff it is the fellows who go out in the blazing sun who are sacked, while the man in the office is kept on. That is the case and the Minister knows it. On the other hand he did not like Garland, the Deputy Commissioner, and he drove him into the ground.

I do not know that the proposed new structure is something necessarily to be proud of. I have a very high regard for the engineering staff. I have mentioned in Parliament, both when in Opposition and when a member of the Government, the very fine material that we have in the Department of Main Roads. I have mentioned some particular engineers. I cited one or two not because they were necessarily the most outstanding but merely because, like Mr. Barton, they came under my notice. Mr. Shubert was one, quite a young man. I mentioned to the then Commissioner that if he had many men like him in the department he was fortunate indeed. Mr. McMahon, who was responsible for the bridge over the Bremer River, was another promising young man. There were others of comparable or perhaps even greater qualifications in the department.

It is undesirable to conclude merely from the fact that someone who comes into close contact with the Minister at some time does good work that he is necessarily the best man in the department. We have to be very careful that political patronage, even unwitting, does not enter into the matter. Very often one forms a favourable assessment of the work of an officer simply because one has the opportunity. This is not something peculiar to the Minister. I have experienced it myself in the Railway Department. You may be looking for a private secretary. Of the 27,000 employees in the department you can see only a mere fraction. A man who carries out an assignment well may give you the impression that he is outstanding. So he receives accelerated promotion simply because he has come under notice, while many others of comparable merit do not come under notice. That is quite a disadvantage and it is one of the reasons for the safeguards in the Public Service. It is desirable to prevent any undue exercise of political patronage, whether Labour or Liberal or Country Party or any other party. We want to see it removed.

I can assure the Minister that, in spite of his denials to the contrary, there is a good

deal of disquiet in his department about promotions that are taking place. Many people think they are being done, cunningly in some cases, for the purpose of protecting particular people and denying opportunities to others. I do not say that blindly. I have had the opportunity of discussing it with people in my travels throughout the State. One particular case came to my notice on a recent tour. Coming back with Mr. O'Donnell from Clermont I saw various jobs being done in the Central Division. Then I went on beyond Mackay to Cairns. I met some of the men in the various divisions right from Maryborough north. On the last occasion, on a trip of about a fortnight's duration, we had the case of a man, Mr. Herdon, who, I understand, was an Army officer stationed at Darwin until about June, 1961. Applications closed on 15 January, 1961. He was appointed about September, 1961. He received some instruction from Brisbane before being sent to Townsville to be further instructed. At present he does the work virtually of a junior draughtsman in the area filling out forms. He receives by way of remuneration £36 a fortnight Army pension and £54 a fortnight Main Roads salary. His wife, too, has a job worth £20 a week.

**Mr. Evans:** What is his name?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Herdon. I could give the names of many people about whom there is a good deal of disquiet. These people are frightened to open their mouths.

There was a case of some supervisory work being done by shire engineers and it was published in the "Truth" newspaper some months ago. They asked me whether I had heard about the matter at the time and I said I had. The repercussions from that statement were amazing. Officers with whom I had been on friendly terms in Toowoomba changed their attitude completely—not that I have ever sought any favours from Mr. Carroll or his officers. That is the last place I would seek them because the place is riddled with Q.L.P. members who would like to see me thrown out neck and crop. They are not likely to give me any information. But I would not embarrass Mr. Carroll, who is not a member of the Q.L.P. However, I did find among the staff in the South-western Division, who were ordinarily very pleased to discuss with me such work as the widening of the road out to Oakey, some who were too frightened to open their mouths because I was told on the very best authority that somebody—and I do not suggest it was the Minister—went to no end of trouble to find out where the leakage of information had occurred. There is fear in many of the departments. Legitimate criticism is offered from time to time, but the employees are frightened to open their mouths. Some of the personnel of the Main Roads Department—this does not apply to the south-western division, but it applies to other parts of the State—have come to

me and told me quite frankly that they are not very happy about things but are frightened to do anything about them because of the use of the big stick. Therefore, I should like to have a very careful look at the measure. Now that the Minister has revealed what is going on, the second reading will provide me with this opportunity.

This is a very important department. Its officers often have to travel to remote parts of the State and work under different conditions, very often with a shortage of material. They have a difficult, perhaps thankless, task, and the standard of their work is commendably high. Of course, as I have remarked previously, the higher the standard, the more favourable the response. The Department of Main Roads is unlike the Railway Department in this respect and I have sympathy with the present Minister for Transport. If one begins laying a track to a very high standard and the annual returns show a deficit, people are apt to criticise. People do not criticise the Department of Main Roads unless the roads are inadequate. If there is an elaborate specification, the public praises the Minister or the Commissioner because it is a wonderful stretch of road. The Minister has seen that in the case of the Gaven Way, the Wacol four-lane highway, and the Redbank by-pass. People do not quibble even if they cost an extra £100,000. But in a trading department, where the money spent has to be reflected in increased earnings, there is always criticism when there is a deficit.

The Minister may wish to know more about these things and I shall amplify some of them on the second reading, when I have an opportunity of examining the Bill a little more closely. I do not want to involve people unnecessarily, but I do not want the Minister to think that I am indulging in an airy-fairy story. I hope to give him some illustrations and examples to show that these changes are not as good as they might seem. We hear claims about the marvellous things that the Government are doing. I give them credit for the good things that they are doing; I do not wish to take that credit from them. The Minister did not try to score politically today. He said quite frankly, "It is a job that any government would investigate and undertake." However, when a new bridge was being opened in the North, I saw a four-page supplement in the Mackay paper inviting all and sundry to come along and saying that drinks were on the department. The motorists were asked to share the Government's joy. The Minister mentioned on that occasion all the wonderful things that the Government had done. I do not wish to deny the North an opportunity of getting things done, but the hon. member for Salisbury gave notice of a question this morning relating to congestion in his area and we must balance the expenditure in a fair and reasonable way. There is a great need for a fair and just apportionment of revenue throughout the State. I am not convinced

that that is being achieved at present. The Minister may say, "So much is being spent here and so much is being spent there." I do not want this to develop into a political dog-fight, with me saying that too much is being spent in Mackay and the Minister retorting that too much was spent in the Darling Downs division in former years. We should endeavour to achieve a balanced approach.

When I travel down from Toowoomba, if I do not leave on Sunday night, as I usually do, I leave at about a quarter to 6 on Monday morning. It is just a crawl into the city from Inala. We resumed land years ago, when Mr. Crawford was Commissioner, for a new alignment and sketch plans of an overhead bridge were done. A tremendous amount of inconvenience is caused to motorists when a downpour occurs. Cars have to go round through the area at Rocklea to get back onto Ipswich Road. You might say that that is right in the heart of Brisbane. At least more thought should be given to the main arteries. I do not expect the Minister to take over the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council, but the Government have some responsibility for the main arteries coming into Brisbane, not only for Brisbane motorists but also country motorists. Much of the congestion is with commercial vehicles. I do not quarrel with what has been done on the South Coast road. In my time we resumed an area of land through to Nerang, despite the fact that it is called Gaven Way today. At the time I received a good deal of opposition from within the department about improving the coast road. As a matter of fact, divided highways were started in my time. It is not that I want any particular praise for anything I did, just as I know the Minister does not. The attitude of the department was that it was a tourist road and that there were commercial centres that should be serviced first. I said that I agreed to the extent that we could not overlook the need to service the commercial centres of the State, but the sheer volume of the traffic on the road to the South Coast compelled the Government to take action. The same applies to the road leading out the other way. The hon. member for Yeronga knows of the congestion in Fairfield Road. It is not fair to the commercial vehicles and private motorists. We should ensure that there is fair and balanced spending on the various sections.

I think that the Minister's last suggestion is a sensible idea. I think he should arm himself with the necessary authority to deal with situations of that kind. It is very frustrating that work of a major character can be negated because of the lack of co-operation on the part of somebody. If people are not prepared to co-operate with the department it is proper that the Minister should arm himself with that authority.

I respectfully make another suggestion for the Minister's consideration, although this

may be being done. I urge the declaration of alignments in main road areas. It does not involve immediate expenditure of money. It does not apply only to Brisbane although the need is probably greater here because of population. I am very much concerned about the growth of some of the city areas where traffic congestion is constantly getting worse. Before I left the Department of Main Roads I asked the engineer to make a survey of the cost of the widening of the Marburg section. Since then a couple of service stations and a restaurant have been erected. Once alignments are declared no-one can build beyond them, but if alignments are not declared resumption costs later on can become prohibitive.

**Mr. Evans:** You must not have heard me. That is in the Bill.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** That is very appropriate. It is very much needed as the costs of resumption can become prohibitively high so that you are prevented from doing a worthwhile job.

I am in complete agreement with some of the things the Minister is doing by the Bill, but there are others I should like to have a good look at before I comment further.

I am concerned with the general trend. It is not something that is solely characteristic of this Government, but it is characteristic of all Governments. Somebody gets the ear of a Minister and sells him an idea. At one time we had an Under Secretary for Public Instruction, but then somebody decided to call him the Director of Education and then later the Director-General of Education. And so we get all these titles and terms coming into being. It is the same with the police force. It permeates the whole of the Public Service. No matter where or when it is, every time there is a reorganisation there is never a lesser number of fellows at the top, there is always the creation of additional positions. I do not know that their responsibilities are necessarily any greater. Because the volume of money is greater does not mean that the volume of work is greater. If the cost of materials goes up 30 per cent. and the cost of plant goes up 30 per cent., obviously there is a greater money content of a given job, but the actual length of roadway is no greater than when money values were lower. That is something to look at with regard to some of the emoluments of people attached to local authorities. As the hon. member for Redcliffe knows, they have become absurdly high. With commissions based on the value of the job, the more money depreciates and the more we get this inflationary factor, the higher becomes the income of the supervising engineer attached to the shire. It is becoming a tremendously lucrative sort of provision for them with the salaries they are getting from shires, and superimposed on those are these jobs from the Department of Main Roads based on the cost of the

job. It might be better to have a commission for reducing costs so that the more the costs are reduced the more remuneration they get.

The Minister knows very well that we are reaching an absurd position with these people getting commissions on inflated sums of money related to the costs of the jobs when the matter should be determined on the volume of the work rather than the value of the job.

With those observations I should like to have a good look at the Bill and to further read the Minister's submissions on it. I will then have an opportunity of adding to the remarks I have made on this very important measure.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (2.46 p.m.): First of all I want to congratulate the Minister on his move in regard to the decentralisation of control of the Main Roads Department in certain particulars. I regret very much that more Government departments are not decentralised. A wonderful example of decentralisation was set by the decentralisation of the Education Department, and I understand that some other Government departments are in the process of decentralisation but the final scheme or plan has not yet been announced.

I really think that, so far as decentralisation is concerned as it affects Townsville, the real trouble is that there are not sufficient Government offices in Townsville to permit of the decentralisation of the various Government offices there.

Once again—although I might be slightly off the beam it is somewhat analogous to this Bill—I suggest the Government might give serious consideration to the construction of a big Government block in Hermit Park which is the geographic centre of Townsville. At present Government offices are five, six or seven miles away from residential centres. The courthouse, the Supreme Court, and other Government departments are situated almost on the seafont on the edge of the town instead of being as near the centre of the town as possible.

I would be lacking in my duty if I did not express again the disappointment of the people of North Queensland in the allocation and spending of Main Roads money. They believe they are not getting a fair deal from the Government in the spending of that money and that the Act is not being administered as it should be.

The Act, of course, states that the amount of Department of Main Roads money shall be spent in equal proportions between the south, central and northern Queensland yet, every day one can see in "The Courier-Mail", and every week in the "Sunday Mail" or "Truth" lavish plans or proposals for four-lane highways to the South Coast, with overpasses and underpasses, and round-and-round about passes, shamrock crossings, and what have you—all here in the south—necessitating the expenditure of hundreds of

thousands and even millions of pounds of money, whereas in North Queensland we are being told year after year that our one main road, the Bruce Highway, is going to be finished some time in 1963. Then, of course, in 1963 we will probably be told that it will be finished in 1965 or 1966.

I know that the Government are adopting a principle, or excuse, or alibi,—call it what you like—that they roundly condemned when they were in Opposition. I can remember the Premier—and I am grateful to him for coming into the Chamber to hear me make this speech—time and time again when Leader of the Opposition, condemning the then Labour Government for saying that the money was being equitably distributed because it was being spent on a basis of so much per head of population. We all know that those figures are rigged. We all know that if money is going to be spent at so much per head of population, more and more money will be spent in and around Brisbane.

Hon. members who were in the Chamber at the time will remember the then Premier, Hon. V. C. Gair, refusing to continue to answer a question I had asked him with regard to the distribution of Department of Main Roads money. He started on this percentage per head of population alibi. I interjected and said, "Don't give us that old percentage-of-population alibi any longer, because, if Mary the gin had a baby in her gunnyah, the population of that gunnyah would increase by 100 per cent."

I think the money of the Department of Main Roads should be allocated on an area basis, not a population basis. It is ridiculous to assume, because we have a few extra people in the south-eastern corner of the State, that most of the main roads money should be spent in the favoured South-eastern corner. I know the Minister finds difficulty in carrying out as a Minister many of the pledges and promises he made as a private member. If I may again digress, and this is quite analogous to the question, I remember on one occasion writing a letter to the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Transport. I asked him as Minister for Transport to do something that he had staunchly proposed in this Chamber when he was a private member. He wrote back and very honestly said that it was difficult at times for a Minister to do all the things as a Minister that he had when a private member suggested should be done. At least the Minister for Transport as he was then was honest enough to admit that all sorts of things can be said by a private member but that they cannot be done by him as a Minister.

I remember, and I am sure other hon. members will remember, that I have banged this drum of neglect-of-the-North for many years, and I have banged it very successfully.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the hon. member that we are dealing with main roads and I ask him to confine his remarks to main roads.

**Mr. AIKENS:** You chopped me off, Mr. Taylor, before I could add the words, "dealing with the Main Roads Board money and the allocation of it." If you are going to carry on like that may I suggest that you might be wise in announcing that you are going to retire at the end of this Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to main roads.

**Mr. AIKENS:** We know that in 1955 the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity was then in Opposition, and there was no possible chance as far as Opposition members could see of their ever becoming the Government. On 15 September, 1955, I moved a resolution that is recorded in Volume 212 of "Hansard". I had the motion placed on the business sheet for private members' day. Naturally the Government of the day thought that when private members' motions were being called by the Speaker I would call "Not formal", to my motion, but I rather surprised the House on that occasion by calling "Formal", and before the Premier of the day could think to call, "Not formal" the Speaker accepted my motion as a formal motion and it was put to the House without debate. The motion dealt specifically with the allocation of Government money, particularly Main Roads money. The motion read—

"Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra): I move—

'This House resolves as partial compensation for the consistent grievous neglect of North Queensland by the Government over the years, that in future, not less than fifty per cent. of all Government expenditure . . .'

I interpolate at this stage and point out that Government expenditure includes Main Roads Department expenditure.

" . . . whether from loan funds, revenue or any other source, be spent in North Queensland."

The question was put and the House divided. Those in favour of the motion were the present Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, the late Lloyd Roberts, my old mate, the hon. member for Burdekin, and I.

So that in 1955 as a private member the Minister believed in and voted for the expenditure of not less than 50 per cent. of the money of the Department of Main Roads in northern Queensland, in order to compensate North Queensland for the years and years of grievous neglect by the Labour Government.

I do not doubt the personal sincerity of the Minister. I have no doubt that in his heart he is just as strong and just as true a North Queenslander today as he was then, but something has happened with regard to his determination to make up in North

Queensland for the grievous neglect we have suffered over the years in the miserable allocation of Main Roads money to northern Queensland.

All the promises made by the Government and all the shadow sparring and sham fighting by them with regard to the fact that the money is being allocated on a population basis does not cut any ice with the people of North Queensland, irrespective of their political complexion and irrespective of the party for which they might or might not vote on polling day.

I should like an assurance from the Minister for Mines that as far as North Queensland is concerned we have seen the end to the big Press articles almost weekly of the funds and money to be spent here in the South-Eastern portion of the State on highways, bridges, by-passes and shamrock crossings, and all the other things in the South-Eastern corner of the State, whereas in the North, at present, we have half the travelling population of North Queensland on one side of Proserpine and the other half of the travelling population of North Queensland on this side of Proserpine with hold-ups further up. We have the Haughton Bridge 4 ft. under water. That is a low-level bridge that should have been placed at least on the same level as the railway bridge years ago. We have the Barattas under water after only a moderate fall of rain with people tied up all the way from Mackay to Cairns simply because the same amount of money is not being spent on North Queensland roads as is being spent in the South-Eastern portion of the State. We never read of people being tied up between Southport and Brisbane due to some bridge being under water or of people being held up between Brisbane and Toowoomba because unpaved sections of the road are washed and scoured out after a couple of sun showers or a moderate fall of rain, yet, in North Queensland we hear of it, with sickening monotony and regularity.

I finish by saying that I am not launching a personal attack on the Minister. I have a high regard for his integrity as a North Queenslander. However, I should like him to tell us what stopped him from putting his views in regard to North Queensland into effect as a Cabinet Minister.

**Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (2.57 p.m.):** A few ideas came to my mind as the Minister was speaking. I think we can all appreciate the thoughts behind the recommendations concerning the setup in the Main Roads Department. I do not think anyone would oppose the idea of decentralisation providing it brings about the desired effect. However, I am wondering at present whether the desired effect will take place. The Minister said that the present district engineer would be virtually appointed as the deputy commissioner and chief engineer in the particular division—so we have changed his name, but have gained no personnel in



the area. He did say an assistant commissioner was to be appointed. If an assistant commissioner is appointed will he be an engineer with the same qualifications as the present district engineer? I take it that to be effective he would need to have the same qualifications because he would eventually succeed the present occupant of the position.

**Mr. Evans:** What I said was that instead of having a chief engineer we would have a deputy commissioner. We are only altering the name.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** No, that is not what the Minister said.

**Mr. Evans:** That is in Brisbane, and I continued and said that we were appointing assistant commissioners in the various regions.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** In the country the Minister is not giving a man any top-ranking appointment at all. All the Minister is doing is altering the designation of the person who already holds the position.

My Leader referred to all this talk about decentralisation which, when we get down to tints, will not be carried out. The main point seems to be that number-plates are to be issued. I do not see that it requires a whole staff to change the name, and everything else, for the simple task of issuing number-plates in a town in the North, say at Townsville or Rockhampton. That was not the main point. In my own mind, I do not think that the Minister is quite clear himself about the details of the proposed reorganisation. I suggest to the Minister that if any reorganisation takes place it should be in Brisbane.

I suggest that the Main Roads Department should interest itself in roads that at present it is not greatly interested in. I refer particularly to roads whose main purpose is to serve transport to and from schools. I have in mind a particular case which I think is an absolute disgrace to any government or any council, namely Thynne Road, which serves the Balmoral State High School.

**Mr. Evans:** That is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is the point I am coming to. For donkey's years an argument has been going on about where the responsibility lies. The Brisbane City Council is not prepared to spend a large sum of money on the road whose main purpose is to serve a school in the location of which the council had no say. If the Government reserve the right to build a school where there is no main road built to serve it, I believe the city council should not be held to be primarily responsible for building a road. So the council has a certain amount of justice on its side when it disclaims complete responsibility. After all, the council provides transport to schools

and pays registration fees to the Department of Main Roads for its vehicles. The least the Government could do would be to have the section of the road from the residential area to the school designated so that it would become the responsibility of the Department of Main Roads. I suggest that the Minister and his officers should visit the Balmoral State High School and see at first hand the condition of that road. Let them see, too, the dusty condition of the children's clothes in dry weather and how they are covered with mud and filth in wet weather. That is only one case. Throughout the State the Department in its reorganisation should accept school roads as its responsibility.

The portion of the Bill that does away with superseded parts of the legislation is sound. I have always held the view that legislation can become cumbersome. The more words it contains the more errors can be made in interpretation. As long as those parts being excised are no longer needed in these changing times, there can be no cause for complaint.

I am not so happy about the next part, where the Minister said that the Department of Main Roads could overrule a council or local authority on subdivisional roads joining a main highway. I agree that the local authority in endeavouring to get a subdivision through with expedition could do the wrong thing as far as the main roads and highways are concerned, particularly with by-pass roads. I am not keen about a fight developing between a local authority, whose members are elected by the people of the area, and the Deputy Commissioner or an understrapper who says, "No, you are wrong." At least there should be a right of appeal somewhere.

**Mr. Evans:** There is provision for a conference.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I can only reply to the Minister's introduction. If he has something in the legislation that will allow for a conference between a local authority and the Department of Main Roads I can have no quarrel with it. However, up till just now he has given no indication of the existence of such a provision.

**Mr. Evans:** That will be the procedure. A conference is always provided for.

The last point I wish to mention is the seven years' notice of resumption. The Minister told us that that was not in the Bill and he indicated that he would move an amendment to provide for a 7-year period.

**Mr. Evans:** I said that I would bring down an amendment.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That seems to me to be rather open. A person could be given seven years' notice and then, after six years, given another seven years' notice. In framing his amendment I hope that the Minister will not

only provide for a fixed time but also ensure that the provision cannot be used merely as a means of satisfying people. In fact, it may not mean seven years at all; it may mean an extended period.

**Mr. Evans:** It might have to be extended beyond seven years.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Yes, but we must make sure that it is not put in only to satisfy those who do not like the idea of having no fixed time. The Minister has told us that the legislation does not lay down a specific time and that a specific time is needed. I suggest that any time that is inserted should be adhered to, not merely used to make an indefinite period that could go on from seven to seventy years.

**Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (3.7 p.m.):** I did not intend to speak on this Bill, but I think the Leader of the Opposition raised a very important point in relation to the establishment proposed by the Minister in his introductory speech. As I understood it, originally it was to be only a change in name. However, whereas previously there were divisional engineers in North Queensland, Central Queensland, South-eastern Queensland and South-western Queensland, in two cases those men are to have their titles changed from Divisional Engineer to Assistant Commissioner. It is difficult to assess the real value of the Minister's proposal unless he details the exact way in which the powers of these men are to be extended in order to facilitate the carrying out of work in their areas. It is rather difficult to understand why the powers of the divisional engineers could not be extended. Why go to the extent of calling them Assistant Commissioners? At present we have a Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, and it is now proposed to appoint a number of Assistant Commissioners. I can see the need for an Assistant Commissioner in North Queensland. Under him he has a Divisional Engineer, who is actually the engineer in charge of a number of other engineers in other areas. I should like to know whether the Minister proposes to appoint in other areas a man below the Assistant Commissioner to be a Divisional Engineer having power over a number of other regions. If the Government are merely appointing a number of rubber stamps to expand the number of senior public servants without achieving any benefit, it seems to be a useless project.

What is the aim of the legislation? The Minister says that he is legalising procedures that have been followed for years, whereby certain sums of money can be expended and Executive Council approval of their expenditure obtained later. That is understandable if we are to facilitate the carrying out of work in many of the outlying parts of the State. We should have that procedure and it should be made legal. But will the suggested new procedure facilitate the work of

the department? What powers will the assistant commissioners have in these areas? Will they be given power to have certain works carried out immediately without having to seek the approval of the Commissioner or the Minister in Brisbane?

**Mr. Evans** interjected.

**Mr. LLOYD:** In that the Minister is going to achieve nothing, except what was stated by the Leader of the Opposition. He is creating a number of assistant commissioners purely and simply as rubber stamps, without being able to secure the necessary field work. Unless their activities are extended and they are given added duties to facilitate the construction of main roads throughout Queensland, he is not going to achieve anything.

Many of us perhaps have not a full appreciation of the tremendous amount of money needed to be spent on main roads at the present time. If we make a comparison with what was done on main roads work 25 years ago we would have a better appreciation of the high employment it previously provided to many people throughout the State. In those days it provided employment for both tradesmen and unskilled workers. Today main roads construction depends greatly on mechanisation. Twenty-five years ago hundreds of men were employed on main roads construction work. With present-day mechanisation main roads construction does not provide the employment one would expect from the high expenditure on that type of work.

As it does not provide the employment it used to we must plan so that main roads do not merely go through one part of the country as a connecting link but must open up land to give the greatest possible service to industry. They must be considered with a view to providing an incentive to the establishment of a secondary or primary industry within the area so that employment follows after the road is actually built. In other words, when you have a limited amount of money to spend on main roads throughout the State, as far as possible you must build roads not merely to link one place with another but consideration must be given to what industry they will assist. Unless that consideration is given we will never overcome the unemployment problem. Industry demands not only electricity and water but it also requires the highest possible efficiency in transport facilities. Therefore we have to consider what roads are necessary in each area of the State to enable existing industry to expand and to attract new industries to the area.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that not sufficient consideration was given the flow of traffic in many areas. Without detracting any merit from the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville South I would point out that Brisbane has become somewhat neglected in that direction. The flow of traffic in Brisbane depends to some

extent on the facilities available for the by-passing of the city. It is affected by the traffic moving in and out of Brisbane, but not necessarily into the city area. Two or three years ago the Minister said that immediate provision would be made for the western by-pass road.

**Mr. Aikens:** Another £5,000,000 for Brisbane.

**Mr. LLOYD:** That was two or three years ago, but I do not think one penny has been spent other than what has been made available by the Commonwealth Government under the Federal Aid Roads Grant. Indeed, far too little is being received by the Brisbane City Council from that grant. The money has to be apportioned to the different local authorities throughout Queensland. There are a number of dedicated main roads in the Brisbane area at the moment. Most of them are for traffic going in and out of the city, yet the State Government in the past few years particularly, have been somewhat parsimonious with the amount of money advanced to the Brisbane City Council for necessary expenditure on the maintenance of these roads.

**Mr. Evans:** We have given a lot more than your Government ever gave.

**Mr. LLOYD:** That is nonsense. Very little money has been made available from the grants under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Acts to the Brisbane City Council compared with the amount of money allocated to other local authorities in the State. The remarks of the hon. member for Townsville South do not mean very much in that regard.

One of the important items of expenditure on main roads in the next few years will be to by-pass the city of Brisbane in order to maintain an easy flow of traffic and so avoid the problems that now confront the cities in the South. That money must be expended because we cannot have this traffic coming into the city at the same time as traffic is proceeding to the city to industry and back again.

The western by-pass road is holding up a considerable amount of development, particularly in my area, the north-western suburbs, at the moment. It was stated three years ago that that by-pass road would be constructed as soon as possible. Some work was apparently carried out near Settlement Road, Ashgrove but no further work has been done on it. In the meantime, the Brisbane City Council and the Pine Shire Council are refusing to undertake necessary and essential work in those areas because they know there are plans for the construction of the by-pass by the Department of Main Roads.

Until the Department of Main Roads goes ahead with the construction work the local authorities in the area will refuse to spend money to provide necessary facilities for people living and working in the area.

I consider that not enough money has been spent by the Department of Main Roads in many of the areas of the State, particularly the south-eastern corner. I say that deliberately because that area includes Brisbane which contains one-third of the population of the State. This is very important, not only to Brisbane people, but to people in the whole of Queensland. Primary and secondary industries depend on facilities offered by the Brisbane City Council and consideration must be given to an even expenditure of moneys for all purposes, not only in the northern, western and central areas, but also in the south-eastern corner.

**Mr. Houghton:** Don't you think that if more money came from the Federal pool there would be more opportunity for doing that?

**Mr. LLOYD:** I agree with the hon. member for Redcliffe that if the total allocation coming from the Federal Government was nearer to the amount of customs and excise duties received, there would be a lot more work done. The hon. member's area has been fortunate in that their share of the money allocated to the south-eastern area has been out of proportion to that allocated to the Brisbane City Council.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member has developed sufficiently his thought on local authorities. I should be glad now if he would get back to the Department of Main Roads.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Yes. I am grateful for the courtesy extended to me in allowing me to develop that line of thought but it was necessary to mention it on this legislation. There are a number of other controversial matters that we shall have an opportunity to discuss on another occasion.

**Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (3.19 p.m.):** No doubt, what appeared to be a very simple clause in this Bill has now become very involved. The Minister is endeavouring to avoid certain questions in relation to the Bill. It is quite evident, that with his frequent trips abroad, he is becoming used to the negotiating methods of other countries and that he has lost the straightforward method for which he was noted in previous debates in this Chamber. It now appears that the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner merely means a change in name from the position of Chief Engineer. Chief engineers in some districts are very busy men. They are so busy that they will find it impossible to do further work in their hours of duty, but now they are going to be expected to be handers-out of registration numbers and so on.

**Mr. Ramsden:** No.

**Mr. DAVIES:** The Minister said added responsibility is going to be placed on respective departments and divisions. Who is going to accept that responsibility. At the

moment the time of engineers is taken up. In addition we know that at times good engineers are not good administrators. An engineer may be good in the field but it does not follow that he will be good in the handling of office work and general administration. If they are not going to do it immediately, it is clear that the intention of the Minister and the Government is the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner, and then, because of the onerous duties to be imposed on the Commissioner, the appointment of an engineer. In that way we will have an extension of the decentralisation methods of the Minister and we will find a great increase in the number of staff at various centres. Decentralisation is all to the good if it serves a valuable purpose. I believe in decentralisation when it will have beneficial results, but as the Leader of the Opposition clearly pointed out, in times such as the present when there is a shortage of money—and there should not be a shortage of money—and works are being curtailed and men being sacked, it is the underdog who gets the sack. The same thing can be seen in companies and firms. The directors, the general manager and the office staff are not sacked. The men who are being thrown into unemployment are those down below. That is what is happening now. At a time when we cannot find work for these men or cannot keep them on the payroll we are proposing to create additional staff in various centres.

If the Minister is adamant and insists on the passage of the Bill, and weight of numbers will allow him to do it, I suggest to him that the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner should not have been to the centre of Rockhampton but to the centre of Maryborough.

We know that in its report the Commission appointed by the Commonwealth Government to inquire into television development in Queensland recommended that Maryborough should be the next centre after Brisbane.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. DAVIES:** That was the recommendation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! When I call "Order", I trust the hon. member will remain silent. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to Main Roads and not to deal with television.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I have a great respect, Mr. Taylor, for your mental alertness.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am the Chairman, and the hon. member will please deal with the matter of Main Roads.

**Mr. DAVIES:** The hinterland of Maryborough has a greater density of population than any other part of the State. My opinion on that was supported by Country Party members. I am speaking of the

density of settlement in the Maryborough area compared with a centre like Rockhampton. As hon. members know the Federal Government disagreed with the Commission's recommendation on a television station going there. In further support of my suggestion to the Minister I draw attention to the sale of petrol and oils in the Maryborough hinterland area of which Maryborough is the statistical centre. Ten per cent. of the sales in the State of petrol and oils take place in the Maryborough statistical area.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I think the hon. member has made his point about Maryborough. If he has nothing further to say about Main Roads, I will ask him to resume his seat.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I claim I am perfectly right in requesting the Minister in the interests of Main Roads development in this State to have the Assistant Commissioner appointed to Maryborough rather than Rockhampton. I can give many instances of neglect of the Maryborough district. If, as the Minister suggests, the Assistant Commissioner is going to be given more power and responsibilities, the Commissioner will have more time to look into all aspects of Main Roads development in the area. We will find possibly a recommendation by him to the Government, whether adopted by the Government or not, for an improvement that should have been carried out long ago. I will mention one. I refer to the Boonooroo Road, which is some 16 miles long. When the Labour Government were in office they saw fit to make inverts on that road costing £14,000 which were of great value. If they had remained in power there would have been a sealed surface as far as the forestry gates, which is just a little over half-way. This is one of the most important fishing centres in the State. I have a letter here from Mr. Hiley in which he states that the new Fish Board in Maryborough tried a run of processed mullet at Maryborough that was not satisfactory because the recovery was bad from the washed-out mullet. One of the main reasons for some of it being washed out would be the bad state of the road.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I have given the hon. member his last opportunity to confine his remarks to main roads, and not to fishing. Will he please continue to speak in relation to main roads.

**Mr. DAVIES:** To follow my reasoning, I must point out that the Government are not aware of this and I am bringing it to their notice. These fisherman have suffered because this is the roughest corduroy road in Queensland. For 16 miles the fish are bumped together in the cases. That is one of the reasons for the Treasurer's complaining about the washed-out mullet received from this area. The fishermen have petitioned the Government for years. All the little

main roads on the South Coast are bitumen. Between here and Gympie there has been a widening of the main road, and there has been a by-pass made at Landsborough. What necessity was there for the by-pass at Landsborough except that it was in a Country Party electorate. The pounds that were spent there would have served to seal a portion of the road to Boonooroo. Then, there is the straightening of the curves just south of Nambour. What is the necessity for that? To make a speedway for motorists to travel at 70 miles an hour on the roadway? The fishermen have to travel along roads that have the worst surfaces in the State. Money is being spent freely in the southern part of the State south of Gympie when it could easily have been spent on widening dangerous roads between Tiaro and Maryborough and sealing the surface out to the wonderful hinterland that at the present time is represented by Country Party members, such as on the road from Maryborough to the Kingaroy hinterland through Woolooga and the road due west from Maryborough through Aramara to the rich country centres of Gayndah and Mundubbera.

If there is to be an Assistant Commissioner let him be appointed to the area I have spoken about—the area I represent. I believe that is the place where we would see the greatest development, rather than in the City of Rockhampton. I do not wish to disparage Rockhampton in any way. If the Minister compares the hinterland of Maryborough with the hinterland at Rockhampton he will realise the necessity for giving further thought to my suggestion.

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity) (3.29 p.m.), in reply: The Leader of the Opposition chided me with claiming credit for certain work that has been done. I thought I had been most moderate. I said I just tried to keep up with the rate of progress. The money that has been spent, or that has been authorised for spending in the department has been as economically and fairly and justly spread over Queensland as we thought it was possible to do.

**Mr. Davies:** You should have done something on the Boonooroo Road.

**Mr. EVANS:** If I listened to the hon. member who just sat down I would spend it all on Maryborough and nowhere else.

I am trying to equalise the spending of this money all over Queensland, taking into consideration all the people of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition said there was an increase in registration fees. Of course he is wrong. The last increase in registration fees was a 50 per cent. increase imposed by the Government of which he was a member. There has been no increase in registration fees but there has been an increase in third party insurance premiums and drivers'

licences. They do not come under my jurisdiction. There has been no increase in actual registration fees during the period this Government have been in office.

**Mr. Houston:** Driving licences are compulsory.

**Mr. EVANS:** That does not come under my department. But previously there was a 50 per cent. increase in registration fees.

The hon. gentleman went on to talk about tall poppies and discrimination and favouritism, and he even mentioned the present Commissioner. I have known the present Commissioner for 25 years. He came out of the Department of Main Roads to be an engineer for a shire of which I was chairman. I know his qualifications. He was with me during the whole of the period other than when he was away fighting for his country. He rose from the ranks to be a colonel. He is a highly-qualified engineer. My personal knowledge of him carried no weight with me when I had to decide on the appointee. I was guided by the qualifications of the man.

Unfortunately the hon. gentleman mentioned Mr. Garland—a personal friend of mine, a man who was one of our best bridge engineers, a man whom I regard very highly, a man whose health broke down, and a man who has not been in the office while the Commissioner has been there. So why talk poppycock? Why talk rot?

He spoke about the assistant commissioners we are going to appoint. We are going to give them more authority, more responsibility.

**Mr. Houston:** What are they going to do?

**Mr. EVANS:** I told hon. members previously.

**Mr. Lloyd:** No, you did not.

**Mr. EVANS:** They are going to prepare plans in their office. They are going to be able to bring plans to fruition—plans to be submitted for Executive Council approval through the Commissioner. That could never be done previously.

**Mr. Lloyd:** Aren't they doing it now?

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes. That is during the period we have been in office. It was never done before. Let me tell the Committee what happened in the past. Previously in Mackay, Cairns and elsewhere in Queensland when a plan was submitted it did not go to Townsville or Rockhampton but it came to Brisbane. We are very short of engineers and we have had to use the services of many consultants. When I took over there were piles and piles of plans held up. We are overcoming those delays. All we are doing is allowing the people who know the area, who inspect the area, who live in the area, and who are engineers in the area, to make decisions about the corrections that should be made for roads, bridges, &c. That is fair enough.

**Mr. Houston:** They have been doing it for years.

**Mr. EVANS:** They have not.

**Mr. Houston:** Surely you are not going to admit that the engineers down here who did not know the jobs were altering the plans?

**Mr. EVANS:** They were altering them. They had to approve them. Some bright boy, possibly fresh from the University, would inspect plans and say that the bolts in the bridges were not right.

**Mr. Lloyd:** Who was the engineer?

**Mr. EVANS:** It was all done here. Now it is done in the area concerned, where the engineers live and travel and inspect. They know the watersheds. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman knows what that means. They know what sort of bridges should be built. They know the strength required.

The hon. gentleman went on to talk about clearing up the mystery of number-plates. The Assistant Commissioner has nothing to do with that. That is done by the petty sessions office, as it should have been done long ago. It is a help to the people.

**Mr. Houston:** It took you five years to get around to it.

**Mr. EVANS:** It is being done.

**Mr. Houston:** Then why are you complaining?

**Mr. EVANS:** It was never done previously. It is being done in Townsville and Rockhampton now. When you register a motor-car you get your number-plate. Have not I the right to tell the Committee that it is being done? Do hon. members opposite want to debar me from telling them?

The hon. member said that there was discrimination in the selection of appointees. I am going to say something that I did not wish to say and tell the House what happened when I took over. These are facts and I am going to hurt people when I give them. The people who will be hurt are the people who have been talking to the Leader of the Opposition. When I took over, I stopped air fares from Townsville to Brisbane that were being incurred continually because men were not living in Townsville. The position in Rockhampton was similar. The tall poppies that the Leader of the Opposition talks about were engaged by him and supported by him and allowed to do the things that I am telling hon. members I have now stopped. Those men have to live in Townsville or Rockhampton now. If a man's wife is ill, for example, I am most generous and reasonable and try to get him shifted if medical treatment is required. Until I had it stopped, people were incurring air fares to come down to Brisbane every three weeks. I brushed the tall poppies aside and put men there who would live in Townsville and Rockhampton.

**Mr. Houston:** What did they come down for?

**Mr. EVANS:** Because they lived here.

**Mr. Davies:** Who were they?

**Mr. EVANS:** The Leader of the Opposition will tell you who they were. Unfortunately there are men in the department—they are few in number—who are prepared to just jog along. One man, a district engineer, put in for overtime. If we allowed a district engineer to charge overtime, how could we police it? I had to deal with that, and so did the Commissioner. There are many days when a district engineer has to work overtime; but he is his own boss and can easily take the next day off or a half day off. If we let him claim overtime he would flog us to death. They are the men that the Leader of the Opposition was protecting, the men who would not live in their divisions and who were getting passes. They used the Leader of the Opposition to get at me. They said, "We always used to get them from Jack Duggan."

**Mr. Duggan:** The people I was talking about were appointed after the Minister took office.

**Mr. EVANS:** They were the Leader of the Opposition's appointees.

**Mr. Duggan:** They were not.

**Mr. EVANS:** They were appointed by a former Government.

**Mr. Thackeray:** Get the black book out.

**Mr. EVANS:** It is not a matter of a black book. These men are still in the department because the Public Service Commissioner controls them; but he does not deal with them when they want air fares to which they are not entitled. Is there any hon. member who will not support me in the action that I took?

**Mr. Davies:** We want to know the names.

**Mr. EVANS:** If it is good enough for the hon. member for Rockhampton North to live in Rockhampton and the hon. member for Townsville North to live in Townsville, is it not good enough for these men to live in Townsville and Rockhampton?

**Mr. Duggan:** You used to bring them down every month.

**Mr. EVANS:** They used the Leader of the Opposition. They said, "Jack Duggan did it." I said, "If Jack Duggan did it, I won't do it."

**Mr. Davies:** Does the Minister really think it was necessary for him to incur the expense of going to Japan when Thiess Bros. could have signed the contract?

**Mr. EVANS:** The hon. member is getting right off the track. I would say, with your permission, Mr. Taylor, that there have never been better deals put through than were put

through in Japan when I was there—the alumina, the coal, and the maize. I know that the hon. member judges me by his own standards. He would not be capable of doing it, but I was. I did not want to go to Japan; I was sent to Japan by Cabinet.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the name of Mr. Herdon. I have never heard of him, but I am assured by the Commissioner, whose word I believe absolutely, that he was employed in the usual way. Applications were called and Mr. Herdon was employed by the Public Service Commissioner. He decides it. Mr. Barton does not employ him, but the Public Service Commissioner. It never came to me. I do not think I have spoken to the Public Service Commissioner five times since I have been Minister for Main Roads.

**Mr. Duggan** interjected.

**Mr. EVANS:** The hon. gentleman judges people by his own standards. He shuffles around and gets other people to do things for him. I always have had enough courage to do what I wanted to do.

**Mr. Duggan:** You said that I was the best Minister for Transport they ever had.

**Mr. EVANS:** I do not remember ever saying that about him. I think he was the weakest. I do not think he was a Minister at all. I do not think he ran the department; I think the department ran him. When I took over and I interfered with many things that were going on they told me how easy-wheezy he was.

It is very hard to adjust expenditure after you give out allocations. I have found my Commissioner to be scrupulously fair with allocations. From time to time different conditions prevail. Drought conditions or heavy wet seasons may intervene. Even last year there was nearly £400,000 of Federal aid money not spent. It is hard for those people to finish jobs in one year, particularly in North Queensland. We have tried to give out work as fairly and equitably as possible all over Queensland. Listening to the Opposition one would think that it should be all spent in the precincts of Brisbane. Of course, the hon. member for Maryborough thought that it should all go to Maryborough. The cities of Queensland have very few main roads. The hon. member for Kedron said that Brisbane got no money at all. Let me point out to him that Brisbane received £147,100 from the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Fund. That money could have been spent all over Queensland but we gave Brisbane actually what was collected in respect of operations in the city area because we thought it was fair. In addition Brisbane received Commonwealth aid allocation of £65,000. When the Leader of the Opposition was Minister they never got anything like that at all.

The declaration of alignments was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. We

are doing that. It is in the Bill. In reply to what the hon. member for Bulimba said let me point out that I want to be fair to everybody. I do not want to tie up people's property, nor does the Department of Main Roads. We want to protect the people of Queensland. If we do not declare alignments we must become involved later in very heavy costs. It does not apply to Ipswich or Townsville, but once you get to the boundaries of an area the costs could be phenomenal. Planning and foresight are necessary to protect the interests of the people of Queensland.

At the present time we are seriously under-staffed.

**Mr. Houston:** Why don't you put some young people on? If you had started to train them four years ago you would have had them now.

**Mr. EVANS:** It is easy to say that, but they have to be qualified to do the job. Mr. Barton will tell you that we are only too happy to take them if they are qualified. We are putting on cadets and allowing them to go to the University to qualify. We are doing everything possible. We are employing consulting engineers all over Queensland in order to catch up on the lag of work. We have to do that to get the plans ready, because with the grant of £5,000,000 from the Federal Government the whole position has altered. We have no possible chance of doing it with the present staff.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned council engineers who were supervising jobs, but many of the councils have consulting engineers and the percentages they receive are laid down in the rules. The engineers employed by the councils are allowed a percentage for supervising the jobs. If we had sufficient engineers we would do that work ourselves. The clerk in the office gets a small percentage—I think about one-half of 1 per cent. The engineer does get quite an amount out of it but he only does so because we have not the staff to supervise the work. By getting the clerical work done in the shire council office in small shires we save much money by not having to set up a staff of our own. The use of the staff supervised by the shire clerk is authorised by the Local Authorities Association. If they are prepared to come to me with suggestions I will consider them.

The hon. member for Townsville South said that we are not spending enough money in North Queensland. This year 26 per cent. of the available money will be spent in North Queensland. All the money allocated in each year has not been spent. If the Commissioner allocates money to these shires and they do not spend it, we cannot be blamed for that. Most of the money in the South-Eastern division of Queensland has been spent. I think Central Queensland had roughly 34 per cent. of the total. I should say that in the next financial year,

with the grant we have received for the Croydon-Normanton highway, North Queensland will get more than 33 per cent. of the total.

**Mr. Walsh:** Would you know how many local authorities have underspent their grants?

**Mr. EVANS:** I could not give the hon. member the exact number, but there are quite a few.

**Mr. Walsh:** According to an article in the Bundaberg paper your officer said that 17 shires in that area were underspending their grants.

**Mr. EVANS:** That would be right and a letter has been written to them in regard to it.

**Mr. Walsh:** Many people are looking for work.

**Mr. EVANS:** A letter has been written informing them that they must spend their allocation or lose it. The Commissioner has written that letter quite recently. In order to try to catch up in North Queensland we widened the Cook Highway; we widened the Gillies Highway; we built the Mulligan Highway and, I can tell hon. members that we are going on to Laura. We intend to blaze the track and to try to induce the Commonwealth Government to assist us to build the road through to Weipa which will be a big show.

**Mr. Adair interjected.**

**Mr. EVANS:** I know it is, and we have spent £600,000. The hon. member for Cook knows that. Prior to our starting on the Cook Highway there was not a beast brought out but they are being brought out now.

We have tried to do something in North Queensland. The Herberton-Atherton road has been built by us to try to catch up. We are doing everything possible in an endeavour to equalise the expenditure in the three divisions. The hon. member for Maryborough's electorate is in the Southern division. In addition there is a Central division and a Northern division. We are anxious to be fair to the three regions, but with so many people in the south-eastern division the position becomes difficult. We have to consider human rights. In regard to the money allocated to North Queensland, it must be taken into account that Tully, for instance, has had 70 inches of rain this year. It receives 160 inches in a year. The people up there find difficulty in spending the money allocated to them. The hon. member for Townsville South must take that factor into account.

The hon. member for Bulimba spoke of the main roads gazetted in Brisbane. About 20,000 miles of roads have been gazetted in Queensland, and of that less than 7,000 miles have been sealed with bitumen. So hon. members can realise the enormous problems we have to solve.

**Mr. Houston:** Do you not agree that the roads that go to a school should be main roads?

**Mr. EVANS:** What about Mackay and Bundaberg? Cases for those centres have been put up to me. At the moment many miles of road have been gazetted and many miles have not been built. Brisbane, Bundaberg, Mackay, Maryborough and other cities depend on country areas. Why was the Department of Main Roads created? It was created so that primary producers could get their goods to railheads and so to market. That was the objective. We are trying to implement that plan, but it could not be done if everything was given to Brisbane. Too much is spent on roads leading to Brisbane. I think we have to look after the people who produce the wealth. I stand hard and fast in support of the people in the country who are producing the wealth. There would not be a city like Brisbane but for that wealth.

**Mr. Houston:** No-one is denying that fact, but who put the school where it is, and what about the young people?

**Mr. EVANS:** I am not responsible for that.

**Mr. Davies:** Do you not support the Wacol industrial estate?

**Mr. EVANS:** I am not responsible for that.

The hon. member for Kedron wanted to know about the responsibility and authority that is being given. I have spoken about the responsibility and authority of the Assistant Commissioner. I should say that the hon. member for Townsville South, although politically opposed to me, is happy that he has an office in Townsville where decisions can be made. He can go to that office and get a great deal of information that he could not get unless he came to Brisbane. The responsibility and authority of such officers are great. We have allowed them to spend increased money without reference to Executive Council. When we have top men we have to trust them and allow them to make such decisions.

**Mr. Adair:** Up to what amount?

**Mr. EVANS:** It is £1,000, but as I explained the amount previously was only about £200. Very often the Commissioner or one of the assistant commissioners can make a decision that will obviate shifting a gang from one point and then bringing it back again later.

**Mr. Houston:** When was it £200?

**Mr. EVANS:** I cannot say exactly when but the amount was very low when I took over my portfolio. I increased the amount to £1,000. I think it was £200 previously. I am not quibbling or criticising anybody. I just thought that the scheme was wrong. It does not matter whether I do something or someone else does it. It was something that I thought should be done and I did it. We



have to be careful and cannot go too far, but when we have top men they have to be given some authority. When they are given authority and responsibility, they have the incentive to work. Unfortunately there were a few officers in the Department of Main Roads, and there still are, who want to go up the ladder according to seniority. They do not want to justify or earn their positions. However, they are very few in number.

**Mr. Davies:** What percentage, would you say?

**Mr. EVANS:** Very few.

**Mr. Walsh:** Can you tell us the mileage of main roads gazetted in the Brisbane area? I think it is approximately 90 miles, yet there is not a mile gazetted in Bundaberg.

**Mr. EVANS:** I mentioned that fact. Brisbane has been looked after very well. Every road that leads to Brisbane has a bitumen surface to bring trade into Brisbane.

**Mr. Houston:** That is right.

**Mr. EVANS:** I know it is, but what about the fellow outside? What about when you go out on the horror stretches? People are cut off for three or four weeks and we are dependent on these people. Brisbane has 91½ miles to 15 in Bundaberg, and Bundaberg is comparable with the other cities.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Commonwealth Roads Aid Grant had been increased considerably and the contribution to maintenance tax. We give a very appreciable part of the latter back to the local authorities in Queensland when we can dissect it and prove where it was collected. Throughout Queensland the people in the towns will tell you how satisfied they are with the allocation of the Commonwealth Roads Aid Grant money and with the contribution to maintenance tax.

The hon. member for Maryborough said that the Assistant Commissioners were going to deal with number-plates. How ridiculous! Is it not a great thing to be able to get number-plates issued in Rockhampton?

**Mr. Houston:** How often do they want them?

**Mr. EVANS:** They want them when they buy a car. That is the only time they get one. When I told the people in my department it had to be done I was told it would be very difficult but I insisted it should be done. However, as I said, we have to look after the other areas in Queensland. When it can be done in Townsville and Rockhampton it is only right that it should be done because the people in Townsville and Rockhampton are at least equal to the Brisbane people.

I come now to the matter of the engineer. Before I took over, and before we decided on the title of Assistant Commissioner, there was the Divisional Engineer. We would

still have divisional engineers because the regions are cut into divisions and there must be divisional engineers. Then, there will be the District Engineer. Bill Hansen in Townsville, is a very fine and capable engineer and capable Assistant Commissioner. There will be one in Rockhampton in the very near future. I think that covers all the points that have been raised.

**Mr. Houston:** Is there any increase in salary for these men?

**Mr. EVANS:** Yes.

**Mr. Houston:** How much?

**Mr. EVANS:** I could not remember the exact amount—about £440.

Motion (Mr. Evans) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

### HOSPITALS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (4.1 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1955, in certain particulars and for other purposes.”

The Bill refers in the main to the financial arrangements and accounting of hospitals boards, designed to give a better presentation of hospital accounting and providing for certain amendments and alterations to established procedures to give effect to the new measures.

A new section has been included in the Bill, which makes provision for the incorporation of the Executive Committee of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade as a corporate body with statutory powers, thus conferring definite legal status on this body. I will deal more specifically with this section of the Bill later.

The provisions of the existing Acts relating to unauthorised collections have been reviewed, and those sections which refer to the soliciting or accepting from the public of any moneys by public contribution of any kind have been extended to embrace public collections for the purpose of ambulance transport, first aid or teaching of first aid.

Under the new provisions, it will be unlawful for any person or association of persons, or any other body, other than a hospitals board or an ambulance brigade established under the Acts, to solicit or

accept from the public any moneys by public contribution of any kind for the purposes of treatment of the sick, or of ambulance transport, first aid or teaching of first aid.

The new provisions will have the effect of prohibiting the St. John's Ambulance Brigade from soliciting or accepting from the public any money by public contribution of any kind, but as I shall explain in my second reading speech, other provisions have been inserted to ensure that this organisation will not be affected in relation to the exercise of its present function.

**Mr. Aikens:** What about voluntary contributions?

**Dr. NOBLE:** There is nothing to stop a person from giving a private donation to anyone.

The proviso under the present Acts that this section shall not apply to any hospital established under the Friendly Societies Acts or by any religious organisation will not be disturbed.

There is provision in the Bill, however, for the Minister to grant approval for any body or association of persons to raise moneys by public contribution for the purposes I have just mentioned and the Minister may subject any such permit to such conditions as he deems fit.

In the past there have been requests from hospital auxiliaries and such bodies as Jaycees, Rotary clubs, Lions clubs and the like to raise moneys for specific purposes associated with local hospitals, but, as the present Acts stand, no such approval could legally be given. The Bill will enable the Minister to issue permits in such worthy cases.

The Bill will contain a provision for legislative authority for the operation by hospitals boards of a patients' trust fund. At the present time, hospitals boards are operating, *inter alia*, a patients' trust fund for all moneys received in trust for any patient, but the authority to operate such a fund is not contained in the present Acts.

Authority will be given to hospitals boards to utilise the interest accruing to the Board's patients' trust fund for the purpose of providing amenities for patients generally. The utilisation of this interest in purchasing amenities for patients generally will mean that the interest payable on the balances of the patients' individual accounts is being rightly channelled for the patients' own use and benefit, collectively.

Provision is made in the Bill for the establishment of the Hospital Administration Trust Fund to be established and kept in the Treasury, with a view to a better presentation of hospital accounting. It is proposed to operate this new procedure as from 1 July 1962.

Instead of Hospitals Boards paying into their own general funds their collections

for patients' fees and other local receipts, these receipts will be deposited to a separate Collections Account and paid monthly into the Treasury for payment to the Hospital Administration Trust Fund. In addition, moneys received from the Commonwealth by way of recoupment for tuberculosis expenditure, hospital benefit payments, pharmaceutical benefits, etc., will be paid into this one fund, together with all other moneys received from any source in respect of hospitals.

**Mr. Duggan:** You mentioned a patients' trust fund. How are those funds established now?

**Dr. NOBLE:** We sometimes have patients in the hospitals who are long-stay patients—age pensioners, and so on. Sometimes they get their full pension, in other cases only a proportion of it. They are not able to use it, and over the years it accrues into quite a large sum. The hospitals boards would probably prefer the patients to put their money into savings banks and have done with it, but it is very difficult to do that and administer the hospitals properly.

**Mr. Duggan:** They are all voluntary deposits?

**Dr. NOBLE:** Yes. One man may have £50 standing to his credit. Instead of trying to dissect all the interest from the trust funds they invest, the total interest will be used for the benefit of the patients collectively.

Out of this fund payments will be made to hospitals boards for the running and maintenance costs of their hospitals, and the amount by which the Hospital Administration Trust Fund falls short of the total running and maintenance costs of hospitals will be met by moneys appropriated by Parliament.

There is authority in the Bill for hospitals boards to invest moneys that are surplus for the time being in any of their funds in any securities of the State or Commonwealth, and also in the short-term money market. As the Acts now stand there is no legal authority for hospitals boards to invest any surplus moneys held in any of their funds. Boards should be given the opportunity of investing in markets that offer the maximum amount of interest. If they have any excess money, they can invest it and get a few shillings in interest. There may be some capital works in two or three months, for instance.

**Mr. Lloyd:** They would not be able to invest in I.V.M.?

**Dr. NOBLE:** They would have to be invested in Commonwealth or State securities.

**Mr. Aikens:** Is not that done at the present time with certain estate funds?

**Dr. NOBLE:** Yes. Power is taken in the Bill to provide for the use of coupons in connection with the issue of debentures to be optional. The Bill also provides for the

use of a standard form of debenture, subject to the lender being agreeable to use such standard form. They sometimes save a few pounds in legal fees that way, provided the lender is quite happy about it.

In connection with the boards' budgets of the General Fund, the Bill will contain a provision that the Minister may approve of re-allocation of votes between the various budget headings within the General Fund budget, provided the total approved budget expenditure is not exceeded. This is most important if boards are to obtain the maximum benefit from the total budget allocation made to them for any financial year. Under existing legislation, prior approval of the Governor in Council must be obtained in every instance where expenditure under any one of the approved budget headings will be exceeded. The provision in the Bill will limit cases to be approved by the Governor in Council to those only where the approved total expenditure of a board is to be exceeded. When the boards submit their budgets to the department and to the Executive Council, they do so under certain headings. They allocate certain sums of money for salaries, and so on. Once executive approval is given to the expenditure of that money they can spend only within that Vote. The only way they can alter that is to put in a submission to go to the Executive Council. This gives power to the Minister to short-circuit that.

There is an amendment also that only the budget of the General Fund of the Board shall be submitted for approval of the Governor in Council. As the Act now reads, budgets in respect of all funds of the Board—General Fund, Loan Fund and Trust Fund—should be submitted for approval of the Governor in Council. In actual practice over the years, the budget of the General Fund has been the only budget submitted for the Governor in Council's approval. It is to remove any suggestion of non-compliance with the Act that the above has been included in the Bill.

Provision is made in the Bill for hospitals boards to utilise moneys remaining in their loan funds, after the completion of the project for which the loan was approved, for the purpose of some other loan, or in some other manner as may be approved of by the Treasurer.

Under the present Act it is mandatory that such balances be repaid to the Treasury if a Treasury loan, or paid into the General Fund if a debenture loan. This provision will allow full utilisation of loan moneys for capital works, subject at all times to the consent of the Treasurer.

The Bill includes certain provisions having reference to the appointment of a representative of the component local authorities on a hospitals board. The Bill will provide for the nominee for appointment on the hospitals board to indicate his acceptance of such nomination, and will give such

nominee the right to retire from his candidature within 72 hours after nomination day. The form of ballot paper to be used in such elections has been redrafted, ensuring that a secret ballot will be conducted. The time for the holding of the election for the appointment of the representative of the component local authority has been extended from 31 May to 30 June, each three years, to allow sufficient time for this election to be satisfactorily arranged and conducted. Sometimes local authority elections may not be held until late in May or early in June and difficulty arises about the local authorities' having their ballots in time.

The Bill also raises from £100 to £250 the amount that a board member may earn from the sale of goods to a board or for the performance of any work for a board in the ordinary course of business and not pursuant to any written contract, before such a member becomes disqualified from being a member of the board. The figure of £100 has been standing in the present Act for many years past and a figure of £250 is more consistent with present-day valuations.

With the division of the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board into two separate boards, the North Brisbane Hospitals Board and the South Brisbane Hospitals Board, and the position that normally would apply of officers not being interchangeable, anomalies and possible injustices would occur in the matter of promotion of certain officers.

Representations have been made by the responsible unions to have the position amended, so that rights accruing to officers would not be lost as a result of the constitution of two separate boards. Provision is made in the Bill to preserve these rights.

The Bill also provides that full-time officers employed in a clerical capacity by any board where such employment is permanent at the date of passing of this amending Bill, or is subsequently made permanent, will be protected for seniority purposes, in that the whole of the officer's service will be regarded as permanent service.

**Mr. Melloy:** Is there any reciprocity between the north and south hospitals boards and the country hospitals boards?

**Dr. NOBLE:** No.

**Mr. Melloy:** What would happen with a man working on a hospitals board here who accepted a position on a country hospitals board?

**Dr. NOBLE:** In the country the secretaries of all hospitals boards are members of the Public Service, and they have their rights within the Public Service. This amendment is made at the request of the clerical employees' union. I think it is a very fair provision for which they are asking.

There are some other minor clauses in the Bill which authorise the use of the board's trust fund for the purpose of depositing

contract deposits in respect of building contracts, and amending the existing Acts to allow proceedings to be taken for recovery of charges or fees imposed by regulation. The Acts now restrict, legally, proceedings to be taken for recovery of charges or fees, where such fees are imposed by by-laws only.

As I mentioned earlier, the Bill includes provisions for the incorporation of the Executive Committee of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade as a corporate body with statutory powers thus conferring definite legal status on this body. Such legal recognition has been sought by the Ambulance authorities over a long period of years. Under the new provisions it will have power to hold land, to sell or mortgage land on behalf of ambulance brigades generally. It will be the trustee with all brigades in connection with the holding of land and will also have power to act on behalf of any ambulance brigade in the raising of money by mortgage or sale. Under the present law, ambulance brigades have no power to borrow and in fact are specifically excluded from the application of the section of the Act which provides for borrowing by way of overdraft.

**Mr. Duggan:** The central body would not be able to dispose of any assets?

**Dr. NOBLE:** No, they cannot. The exercise of the powers to be conferred on the Executive Committee by the Bill will be subject to any limitation which may be imposed by the ambulance brigade concerned, that is to say, ambulance brigades on whose behalf the Executive Committee is acting will have the full right to determine how its lands and property may be dealt with or disposed of. In other words, the lands and property of a local brigade cannot be dealt with without the consent of the local brigade.

**Mr. Hanlon:** The local centre would still have to approve?

**Dr. NOBLE:** Yes, right through this Bill, the main desire is to protect the autonomy of the local centre. That has been preserved.

The Bill contains provisions laying down how the powers of the executive shall be exercised and what procedure must be followed if it is to be granted additional powers.

The Bill also contains provisions covering the conduct of meetings and for generally giving effect to the Executive Committee's functions.

The Bill will afford the existing ambulance organisation in Queensland, which is the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, protection against the unauthorised setting up of another ambulance service within the State. The Bill will make it unlawful for any other body to carry on any other operation relating to ambulance transport, first aid or the teaching of first aid.

Exceptions will be made in the case of the St. John's Ambulance Association and Brigade

overseas which will be allowed to continue its activities as now being carried out but not including actual ambulance transport, the setting up of first aid stations or the provision of first aid services except under certain specified conditions. This will be explained in greater detail during the second reading.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Dr. NOBLE:** It is a very good Bill.

Exceptions are also made in the case of employers, for example, Mount Isa Mines, who provide without charge or award, a first aid service for their employees.

The Bill contains a number of minor amendments to the provisions of the Acts relating to the election of members of ambulance committees, the principal ones being the insertion of a requirement that the consent must be obtained of a person nominated for election, and providing that any nominee shall have the right to withdraw as a candidate within 72 hours of the date of nomination.

Other minor amendments will clarify the principal Act in relation to the publication of election notifications and the witnessing of signatures of voters.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (4.19 p.m.): It seems to be apparent that, on the eve of the Minister's departure on his trip overseas, he is most anxious to have the Assembly in a very amiable mood because he claims the Bill is a very good one. He explained very pleasantly some of the provisions on which we sought clarification by way of interjection. I suppose it is reasonable to assume that over the years the accountancy practice would require amendments in the way in which hospital boards furnish their returns to the Department of Health and Home Affairs, and it seems to me from the Minister's explanation of the Bill that there is warrant or justification for many of the proposals advanced. We are anxious to facilitate the work of hospital board secretaries in preparing their budgets and other information required by the department. If the position is as outlined by the Minister, I cannot see that very much objection can be taken to the steps he suggests should be followed. If the objective is to provide better accounting methods, I think we should facilitate the passage of a Bill that will bring that about.

I am very pleased to know that the Minister has finally been persuaded that there should not be interference with the method of collecting for the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. Perhaps from some quarters there may have been some exaggeration, nevertheless steps have been taken to undermine the authority of the Brigade. That led very properly to action on the part of those associated with the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade for many years, if they felt there was going to be an under-pinning of the structure of the brigade.

**Dr. Noble:** That was never the intention of the Government.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I have no reason to doubt the Minister's word, but grave fears were expressed by those associated with the brigade.

I think the Ambulance Brigade in Queensland does an extremely good job of work. Criticism is sometimes voiced about the type of equipment used. Some of it may be a little extravagant, but I do not subscribe to that view. At times the brigade may have vehicles that are more expensive than sheer necessity dictates, but after all the brigade provides a very good service and works very hard in collecting money, and I do not think we should quibble at the cost of any extravagant equipment that may be used. I think all persons would agree that the work of the Brigade, the rapidity with which it responds to calls, the treatment accorded to patients, the unflinching courtesy of the officers, stand out as a beacon light and an example of the way in which an efficient organisation should be administered. I am very glad that the Minister has recognised the work done by the brigades throughout the State and is giving them statutory authority and recognition, and a financial basis for their operations.

I am not quite certain what has motivated the Minister in regard to the refusal to solicit funds for hospitals and other purposes, whether some people have canvassed for funds and a disproportionate amount has been absorbed in promotion expenses.

**Dr. Noble** interjected.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I am thinking of the Lions Club and other service organisations that are raising funds for the provision of facilities at some of the hospitals. I was wondering whether some undesirable practice had developed.

**Dr. Noble:** No.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I acknowledge the work done by such organisations. They have worked very hard to raise funds. Take the case of the Blue Nursing Service in Toowoomba. That is the only place in the State where a car has been handed over completely free of cost. They have provided amenities at hospitals, for sub-normal children, spastics. They have done a very good job of work. Some people seem to think it is merely a society where the members go for the purpose of debate and to have a good meal. The members work very hard on various projects. They raise funds and do a very good job indeed.

The Minister mentioned the matter of a patients' trust fund. According to the explanation given to us the provision seems to be a satisfactory one. I suppose someone could raise the quibble that a patient may have a large sum of money on which he would normally draw interest but which would be credited to the trust fund as a whole. I suppose the answer to that is that if he has that much money it should not be in a trust

fund at the hospital, it should be in a savings bank or somewhere else. I do not think we should quibble about that unduly.

**Dr. Noble:** There will be a tremendous amount of work involved for the hospital secretary.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I should like to look more closely into this question of the hospitals board investing in the short-term money market. They may have funds, and the Treasurer would be in a better position than I to know the extent of those funds. No doubt someone has told the Treasurer that there are such funds and that they could earn interest. If they are there, and they can be used, I suppose there is no reason why they should not be invested as suggested. However, I hope that there will not be a tendency for some avaricious hospitals board to neglect the proper development of the hospital and to earn interest on the money and thus neglect spending it on a project that should be started as early as possible.

**Dr. Noble:** The Bundaberg hospital have £80,000 towards their administrative block. We could not see our way clear to give them the balance straight away.

**Mr. Walsh:** They have that as an advance on approval of work.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** It is only sensible that that money should be earning something. I wish to point out that they should not have it earning money when they should be getting on with the job.

The raising of the amount from £100 to £250 for people who are permitted to supply goods to the hospital or perform any work for the Board does not appear to raise any problems in view of the change in value of money. I offer no objection to the raising of that amount to £250.

I come now to the provision relating to the promotion rights for employees in the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals. It seems fair enough because, after all, for all practical purposes, the Brisbane Hospital is separated into the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the General Hospital. They are serving the people in the Brisbane area and it is only reasonable that their prospects should be determined by seniority as being members of the one institution. The administrative responsibility and general nature of the work would be common to both institutions, coming under the surveillance of the department. The accountancy practices and other operative procedures used in those institutions would be as a result of instructions from the Department of Health and Home Affairs.

The other point dealt with the authority of the Ambulance Brigade to borrow. That authority does not repose in them at present. I do not know why it was not given to them previously and I do not know how they were able to build up their substantial assets.

**Dr. Noble:** Their budgets have to be approved every year.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** It is a question of the authority to borrow?

**Dr. Noble:** It has to come through the department.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** You are giving them authority now to borrow independently?

**Dr. Noble:** They get an overdraft from the bank to carry on.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** They did not have that authority up to now?

**Dr. Noble:** No.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** It is extraordinary to me that it has operated for so long on the present basis.

From what the Minister has said there does not seem to be any objection to the principles announced by him. I thought some of the principles might have needed closer consideration. The Minister has indicated that during the second reading stage he will amplify his remarks about some of the proposals and so I will leave my further remarks until then.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) (4.29 p.m.): I am particularly pleased that this Bill has been introduced because it clears the atmosphere with regard to a public controversy waged for some time between the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and the Q.A.T.B. I do not know very much about it except what I have read in the Press, but it would appear that the St. John's Ambulance Brigade was set up in Queensland. They began to solicit subscriptions and they created the impression in the minds of the people that they were a separate ambulance transport department from the Q.A.T.B. and were entitled to the same measure of public support. I know that the officials of the Q.A.T.B. in Queensland were quite concerned. They realised that the resultant confusion would mean a loss of revenue to the Q.A.T.B. and consequently a diminution of the services that the Q.A.T.B. could render.

I think we are all aware of the fact that the ambulance brigades throughout the State are more or less broke. They work almost from month to month. Sometimes the bearers do not know where their next monthly pay cheque is coming from. The bearers have to get out and solicit subscriptions. They have to sell raffle tickets and various other things to raise money for their brigade—and they are to be complimented on that—but for many years now the financial position of the ambulance brigades in Queensland can only be described as tragic and parlous. So much so that some ambulance brigades, such as Townsville, instituted a system of membership in the ambulance for which people pay £2 a year. That £2 a year entitles a man and his family, or a man or woman if

single, to attendance from the ambulance and transportation by ambulance free for 12 months. Many citizens of Townsville have taken advantage of the provision. However, many people said when the system was introduced, "If the ambulance brigade is going to become a business proposition, if you have to make an annual subscription to it in order to secure from the ambulance the services that were previously provided free, that is sufficient excuse for us to no longer regard the ambulance as a charitable organisation and that is sufficient excuse for us to withhold from the ambulance the contribution that we voluntarily gave to it over the years." So I doubt whether the ambulance—and I am taking Townsville as an example—is in a much better financial position since establishing the £2 per annum membership than it was before.

At times complaints have been made to me that people more or less seriously injured have rung up the ambulance centre and the first question asked by the man at the ambulance end has been, "Are you a member of the ambulance?" If you are not a member of the ambulance, if you do not pay this £2 a year or if a member of your family does not pay it, it has been reported to me on more than one occasion, the ambulance would not go out and render service to that injured person.

**Mr. Davies:** Name the centre!

**Mr. AIKENS:** I will name the centre. I will name the complainant. The complaints were made to me about the Townsville centre, and if the hon. member for Maryborough did not get that into his head right from the start he is much dumber than I think he is and I think he is one of the dumbest hon. members in the Chamber. If the Minister for Health and Home Affairs would like the name of the last complainant who spoke to me, I shall be very happy to give it to him. I could not be fairer than that.

I raised the matter here because it is something I should like to have cleared up. Some people have come to me and complained about the ambulance. For the benefit of the hon. member for Maryborough let me say that I am still talking about Townsville because I think that is quite a good ambulance centre. Anything I say about the ambulance I merely state in an exploratory manner. I want to find out all about it. I am certainly not criticising the ambulance because it has done an excellent job over the years and I have always subscribed to it. I doubt whether the hon. member for Maryborough has always and consistently subscribed to the Maryborough ambulance. But quite a number of people have come to me and complained that they have rung up the Townsville ambulance for transportation to the hospital and they have received a bill that they have considered to be outrageous—a guinea, 26s., 29s. and so on. I have said to them, "In that case you were foolish

because if you were not a stretcher case, if you did not have to be carried into the ambulance and carried from the ambulance into the casualty ward at the hospital, then there was no need for you to ring up the ambulance at all. You could have rung up a taxi, and you could have gone from your home to the hospital in a taxi and gone there much more cheaply and perhaps just as quickly." The ambulance certainly should never be used purely and simply as a taxi transportation service. I have told the people of Townsville that if it is cheaper to ring a taxi and they can travel by taxi instead of ringing the ambulance, they should do so.

**Mr. Walsh:** Would not the position be in the case you have mentioned that the particular person was not a member of the ambulance and was charged a mileage rate?

**Mr. AIKENS:** That is so. I am not criticising the charge that the ambulance in Townsville makes for transport. The people know what the charge is. If they are not prepared to pay the charge, if they are not stretcher patients they should ring up a taxi and go in a taxi. I know that a good deal of the time of the ambulance is taken up purely and simply in transporting cases that could have been taken in a taxi. I have made representations to the ambulance committee and the ambulance superintendent myself in cases involving pensioners or people who are in indigent circumstances who have to attend the hospital two or three times a week for an injection or some other specific type of treatment. The ambulance takes them there at a very cheap rate by arranging a roster transportation system to pick up all the patients of this type on a certain day, one after the other, take them to the hospital for treatment, then return them to their homes. Those patients get much cheaper and better transportation from the ambulance than they would get from a taxi.

People know that I am interested in age pensioners, and age pensioners are complaining that when they go to the ambulance they are being charged the full transport rate. They really believe that the Commonwealth Government, which pays the age and invalid pensions, should make some contribution to the ambulance brigade, either on an annual basis or at so much for each transport job, in order to compensate the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade for the transportation of pensioners. I see nothing wrong with that. I think that in this regard the Commonwealth Government are shelving their responsibility by not subsidising ambulance committees for the transportation of pensioners, both invalid and age.

**Mr. Walsh:** Everybody else concerned in the treatment of pensioners gets a hand-out, but the ambulance does not.

**Mr. AIKENS:** That is true. I believe that it is a shocking state of affairs.

**Mr. Walsh:** The ambulance gets nothing.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It is a shocking state of affairs. The ambulance renders a service to the pensioners that cannot be provided by any other means, and the Commonwealth Government should reimburse the ambulance brigade for the service it provides to the pensioners. The sooner the Minister for Health and Home Affairs confers with his Federal colleagues on that, the better.

**Dr. Noble:** I have already done so.

**Mr. AIKENS:** If the Minister has done so, I shall be glad to hear the result.

**Dr. Noble:** I will tell the hon. member later.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The Commonwealth Government have money for an artificial lake at Canberra, they have money for extensive trips overseas for Ministers, but they have no money to subsidise the Q.A.T.B. for the transport of pensioners.

**Mr. Walsh:** The truth is that up to date the Commonwealth have knocked back the application by the Q.A.T.B.

**Mr. AIKENS:** If that is so, that is an even more shocking state of affairs.

Getting back to the complaints of reputable people that they have been refused attention by the ambulance, I really believe that the attitude of the ambulance should be, "We will render assistance when and where it is asked for. If the person who asks for assistance is not a member, we can use the ordinary processes of law to later collect the money if necessary." I am not suggesting that the ambulance should not charge that particular person for the service rendered to him if he is not a member, but I am suggesting that it should render the service and charge for it afterwards. Perhaps it might be advisable for the Minister for Health and Home Affairs to tell us plainly and without equivocation what the attitude of his department and the Government is to the ultimate solution, which must be faced up to sooner or later, of the problem of the parlous state of the finances of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. Sooner or later we have to institute in Queensland what has been instituted in every other civilised country in the world; we have to institute a co-ordinated service between the ambulance and the hospital.

**Mr. Walsh:** There are a couple of places in Queensland where that has been done already.

**Mr. AIKENS:** When I was first elected as the hon. member for Mundingburra in 1944 there was a co-ordinated service between the Ayr ambulance and the Ayr Hospital. Sooner or later we have to face up to the fact that the ambulance brigade is part and parcel of the State's hospitalisation system. It should be attached to the hospital; it should be financed by the hospital; it should be a department of the hospitalisation

system. The sooner the Minister lets us know what the Government think of that—because it has to be faced up to sooner or later—the sooner we will know where we stand on it.

The Minister told us what is to be done about certain financial arrangements and bookkeeping methods in the various hospital boards. What I am about to say applied under the previous Government with the same force that it applies to the present Government. We all know that hospital boards are purely and simply a veneer, a sham or a farce. The hospital board is purely and simply a Government sub-department; the secretary is a State public servant; every member of the board is appointed by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, with the exception of the local government representative. The hospital board cannot spend one brass farthing unless they get the approval of the Minister's department. Quite recently the budgets came in for next year. With a stroke of the pen the Minister wrote to every hospital board in the State saying, "You must prune your budget." The Townsville Hospital had to prune their budget to the extent of several scores of thousands of pounds.

**Mr. Walsh:** With the Government broke, what would you expect them to do?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Apparently the previous Government were broke. They did exactly the same thing. When the hon. member for Bundaberg was Treasurer he did exactly the same thing as the hon. member for Chatsworth is doing now that he is Treasurer. He ran the blue pencil through the budgets.

**Mr. Hiley:** He did not give them half as much.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I shall not argue that point. The hon. member for Bundaberg ran the blue pencil through the budgets of all the hospital boards. He told them, just like the hon. member for Chatsworth has told them, "You have to prune your budget by so many scores of thousands of pounds for the year whether the work is necessary or not."

If we are going to have hospital boards why bother to call them hospital boards? Why not call them "sub-departments of the Treasury" or "Health and Home Affairs sub-department of the Townsville Hospital" or whatever hospital it might be? Every member of the board with the exception of the local government representative is a Government nominee. More often than not he is of the same political complexion as the government in power, a man who can be relied upon to raise his hand and vote every time the Minister in charge of the department tells him to raise his hand and vote.

If the hon. member for Bundaberg is trying to parade his Government as being better than the present Government in this regard I say quite honestly that they are both tarred with the same brush.

One thing we must have in Townsville as quickly as possible is a new psychiatric block. Probably I will be the first patient, but that will not matter. It is unfortunately true that at the present time all female mental patients from North Queensland must go either to Goodna or Toowoomba. There is no accommodation at any mental hospital in North Queensland for female patients. It is a matter of distress and considerable inconvenience that while male patients can be taken from Goodna or Toowoomba and sent to Mosman Hall at Charters Towers, it is unfortunately true that there is no accommodation at Mosman Hall at Charters Towers for very many types of female mental patients. I know that the Minister is very sympathetic in these matters. I represented a case to him the other day in regard to an old chap in Townsville who has a daughter in Toowoomba. He wants that daughter brought back to Charters Towers in the hope that the shift North and his frequent visits to her might mean an improvement in her condition. The Minister did write to me and tell me that there was no accommodation in Charters Towers mental hospital for female patients. However, he did very kindly offer to transfer the girl from Toowoomba to Brisbane where she would be at least a little closer to her father in Townsville than she is at present.

I have knowledge of the wonderful effect it has on a mental patient to transfer him or her from Goodna to Townsville or as near as possible to the home of the particular patient. I have had patients for whom I have made representations. I suppose other hon. members have done the same thing; I am not unique in this regard. I have made urgent representations to have patients transferred from Goodna to the mental home at Charters Towers. I had one patient in the refractory ward at Goodna. Finally, Dr. Stafford decided to take a risk and send the young man to Charters Towers so that his parents could come and see him every week or perhaps twice a week. Because of the different atmosphere and the regular visits of his parents, it was not long before that boy was sufficiently cured to take a job and take his place in society and industry.

That is only one of at least seven cases I have personally dealt with in regard to people in my electorate. The Minister would know, as a medical man, how necessary it is to get mental patients as close to their homes as possible so that their relatives can visit them as often as they can. That will do much more towards their complete rehabilitation and discharge from the mental home than perhaps the treatment they are receiving in the mental institution.

I know that the Government's policy in regard to the mental home at Charters Towers is that it has not exactly outlived its usefulness, but there are no plans to extend it and they are going to establish psychiatric blocks at the big base hospitals. Already the ground has been acquired for a



psychiatric block attached to the Townsville hospital, in the grounds of the old Central School, but there again, I understand the Treasurer has put his blue pencil through the financial or budgetary plans for the provision of that psychiatric block at the Townsville hospital.

**Mr. Hiley:** I have never seen them.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am surprised that the Treasurer has never seen them because we have been hearing about them from the Minister for Health and Home Affairs for years. We have been hearing that provision was going to be made for this big new psychiatric block at the Townsville General Hospital. Now we have the admission from the Treasurer, who is responsible for the funds for that project, that this is the first time he has heard of it. If he cares to look it up he will find reference to it in the Townsville "Bulletin" by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs for years past.

**Mr. Hiley:** The Treasurer does not exercise control over the details of functions of these departments. They get a bulk vote. How they use it is a matter for each department itself.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The blue pencil has been drawn through it. If the blue pencil was not wielded by the Treasurer it must have been wielded by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, but it has been wielded by somebody.

**Dr. Noble:** Plans are being drawn up.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Now we are beginning to see a glimmer of light. The Minister for Health and Home Affairs now interjects that plans are being drawn up. Can we get from him some rough estimate of when the building itself will be commenced, when the building itself will be completed, and when patients will be housed in it?

**Dr. Noble:** I would say within three years.

**Mr. AIKENS:** At least that is something definite. Up till now we have had only a vague and general promise that we will have a psychiatric ward at the Townsville General Hospital. Now we have an admission from the Minister that the ward will be erected and patients will be accommodated in it within three years. I suppose we have to be satisfied with the time limit that has been put on by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs.

**Mr. Walsh:** Is there anything else up there you want to bring up?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Yes, a very important matter in fact. It is that the Townsville General Hospital is bursting at the seams and must be enlarged or a new hospital built in the centre of the population, which is the Hermit Park area. I can only speak in the highest possible terms of the services rendered at the Townsville General Hospital and by everybody connected with it. But

there is a limit to what a human being can do, a limit to the number of patients a building can accommodate, a limit to the number of patients that can be handled in the particular building, and I suggest to the Minister, as a first step towards the establishment of a second base hospital in the Hermit Park area, the population centre of Townsville, that he establish an out-patients' clinic there so that people will not have to travel six, seven and eight miles from Stuart, Wulguru and Aitkenvale right to the edge of the city, almost to the beach, in order to secure out-patient attention. I do not particularly care in which part of the Hermit Park area it is established, but I ask him to give consideration to the setting up of an out-patients' department there as a first step in the establishment of a second hospital in Townsville in the Hermit Park area. If he does that I will be happy.

**Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (4.51 p.m.):** The Minister, in his introduction, spoke about better accounting methods. I think they are perhaps long overdue. I suggest to him, however, that he should endeavour to improve the methods of treatment at hospitals. I had brought to my attention yesterday the case of a person who went to the casualty department for eye treatment. This person was immediately sent to the eye department where he waited for three hours but he received no treatment or medical attention. An appointment was made for 24 March, but the person received no treatment. That type of case should be looked into.

The Minister spoke of collections by unauthorised persons and organisations and he mentioned specifically St. John's Ambulance. I should like some clarification by the Minister of his statement about the collection or soliciting of funds from the public for the St. John's Ambulance. The Minister seems to me to be having two shillings each way. He said that under the Bill funds could not be solicited or collected from the public without the permission of the Minister. It appeared to me that in the one breath he was saying funds could not be collected, and in the next saying that they could be collected.

**Dr. Noble:** No. I said the Jaycees, the Lions Club, and hospital authorities can get authority to collect funds. Organisations such as the Jaycees, the Lions Club and hospital auxiliaries are raising funds for hospitals now, but there is no legal power for them to do so under the Act.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I understand there is no power. I wanted to get an assurance from the Minister that the interests of the Q.A.T.B. will be protected, and that the St. John's Ambulance Brigade will not be able to collect funds and so harm the financial position of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade.

The Minister mentioned one or two matters affecting friendly societies. I think

I would be in order in saying that under the Act they are not allowed to invest any moneys other than in Government loans, bonds, or similar securities.

**Dr. Noble:** That matter would not come under the Act. That would be under the Friendly Societies Act.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** The Minister mentioned friendly societies.

**Dr. Noble:** Some friendly societies build hospitals and I was referring to that matter. Under the Act power is given to church organisations and friendly societies to build hospitals and raise funds for that purpose. We are not altering those powers.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I ask the Minister to give consideration at a later date to an amendment of the Friendly Societies Act so that investments can be made in other than Government loans, bonds, and securities of that description.

**Mr. Hiley:** Trustee investments? What did you have in mind?

**Mr. BROMLEY:** The City Council or S.E.A.

**Mr. Hiley:** They are authorised.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** Only with the permission of the Registrar. They cannot do it off their own bat. They must get specific permission from the Registrar.

**Dr. Noble:** I will look into that.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** I think that perhaps some consideration should be given to the fact that when they hire a deed box from an organisation such as the Queensland Trustees they have to pay for the hire of the deed box and that is charged to the beneficiaries of the friendly societies. It has been suggested to me on various occasions by trustees of friendly societies that some amendment should be brought forward to allow this charge to be made against the interest on the investments.

**Dr. Noble:** I suggest that you write in about that because it does not come under this Bill.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** When the Minister mentioned friendly societies I did not know what he had in mind. He was specific in certain circumstances, but did not tell us exactly what was in the Bill. He said he would enlighten us more during the second reading. I think it is about time that we in the Opposition should be given more notice of what is contained in a Bill when it is introduced by a Minister so that we may know everything in relation to it.

**Dr. Noble:** I said that at present the friendly societies are entitled to build a hospital and that power has not been taken away from them.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** That is quite true. I heard that. I may have misunderstood the

Minister. I wrote down exactly what he said and I understood him to say, when he mentioned friendly societies, that they would not be stopped from building hospitals and then the Minister said that he would further enlighten the House during the second reading.

**Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (4.57 p.m.):** Certain of the provisions outlined by the Minister deal largely with the budgetary position of the hospitals boards. The Treasurer has already put the hon. member for Mundingburra wise about this. He said that so far as the Treasurer is concerned, either today, or in my time, it was never the function of the Treasurer to tell the hospitals boards how to spend their money.

**Mr. Aikens:** Are you speaking as a member of the Q.L.P., or as an Independent?

**Mr. WALSH:** As a member of this Parliament, and I hope I will adopt a common-sense approach to the question.

Each department is given the sum allocated to it out of the total sum allocated and, in each case, the hospitals boards, being boards with local autonomy, have to submit their budget to the department in exactly the same way as any Government department has to submit a budget to the Treasurer. After all, whether it be the Government of today, or the Government of 10 years ago, it is the Government that guarantee all loan raisings and funds for the hospitals boards. It is essential that the Government, irrespective of its politics, in the interests of the community, should have some control over the expenditure of public funds. I am not standing here to say that all the hospital boards over the years, under this Government, or under previous Governments, have functioned in the best public interest. The hon. member for Mundingburra knows as well as I do that there was an incident many years ago under the Labour Government, when the Government of the day, under the jurisdiction of the then Minister for Health and Home Affairs, the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon, saw fit to appoint special committees to inquire into the administration of certain hospitals in the North that certainly was not in the public interest.

**Mr. Aikens:** He cleaned one right out.

**Mr. WALSH:** That may have been the result. The inquiry into the administration of the hospital, or any other hospital, was in the interests of the public as a whole. There appears to me to be a general complaint throughout Queensland from hospital boards about the very strict control over their budgets by the Minister and his department, over the years.

**Dr. Noble:** They would spend you into the ground otherwise.

**Mr. WALSH:** As I said, I realise there has to be some control but in recent years, in some centres, including my own, they are

screaming to high heaven about the instructions they are getting from the Department of Health and Home Affairs about their budgets. Without going into the subject of the politics of the members of the board, all of whom I know are estimable persons, let me say that in the main they would be in sympathy with the present Government. Nevertheless they are complaining. As the Minister says, after examination of the costs in Bundaberg compared with the costs of some other hospital centre, the department may feel they have some justification. I do not know whether they have. If the hospitals board in Bundaberg feed their patients better than the hospitals boards in some other centres, that is to their credit. If the department reduces the menus in those places—the Minister shakes his head but I can only say what I know of the background and what I have read in the Bundaberg papers about the complaints that have been made.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. WALSH:** I am not tempted to come into these personal allusions. We can all do that if we want to at the proper time, but we are dealing with serious problems involving the expenditure of public finance.

I cannot see anything wrong with the principles as outlined by the Minister. I emphasise that because, being of a suspicious turn of mind as the Treasurer has often accused me of being, I still have to wait to see the Bill notwithstanding what the Minister says.

The provision giving hospitals boards the right to invest funds that may be at their disposal for short periods owing to some difficulty in proceeding with building projects under their jurisdiction is, I think, quite sound. After all, it is only giving them similar powers to those conferred on local authorities by this Assembly in recent years. There would probably be more justification for conveying those powers to hospitals boards, who, if the department keeps up with the programme of approvals and so on, spend their money without much delay. They do not hold very much on hand. But, as I said by way of interjection, 7 local authorities who have funds at their disposal in the area out from Bundaberg are not spending their money. With so much unemployment about that is a shocking state of affairs. I hesitate to think that any hospitals board would hold money unnecessarily and not get on with the job.

**Dr. Noble:** They cannot raise the money until the working drawings are completed.

**Mr. WALSH:** I realise that, but the Minister knows I mentioned in this Chamber a little over 12 months ago that the Bundaberg Hospitals Board had £87,000 already in hand and they were not getting departmental approval to proceed with the work. Then the department allowed them to disburse that under some other heading. Fair

enough. But for the particular purpose for which it was raised they complained they could not go ahead.

**Dr. Noble:** They are building now.

**Mr. WALSH:** Yes, and constructing a good building, too. Hospitals boards perform a very important function in the community life of the State.

I am under no illusion about the Minister's reference to St. John's Ambulance. I think he made it perfectly clear that the Bill contains provisions to protect St. John's Ambulance up to a point. I thoroughly agree. Having established that I am under no illusion about it because the Minister said there would be a certain protection for the overseas organisation known as St. John's. Is that correct?

**Dr. Noble:** Yes.

**Mr. WALSH:** The Minister has agreed.

The proposal of the Government to give what the Minister refers to as legal status to the Q.A.T.B. is actually an extension of the legal status that it has at present. It has certain legal standing. Whatever may have been the reasons of the Government of the day and the Minister of the day, when the Bill was brought down the Q.A.T.B. was made a body corporate, in that it could sue or be sued. I was not a member of Cabinet in those days, so I was not closely associated with it, but for some reason that I cannot understand the power was never conveyed to any one of the centres, or even to the main centre in Brisbane, to hold land in fee simple. The result was that two individual trustees had to be nominated for all the properties held throughout the State. I commend the Minister for removing that anomaly, if I might call it that, and giving the local centre power to hold in trust on behalf of all the centres land that might be held in fee simple. That is no different from the position that might prevail in political organisations. I suppose the Minister will have this provision in the Bill, but as he has conveyed to the Committee that the Central Executive Committee will be a corporate body, I should like to hear from him at some later stage who the trustees will be. I take it that they will be the executive officers from time to time and from period to period.

**Dr. Noble:** That will be a matter for the executive. No doubt they will nominate certain officers.

**Mr. WALSH:** I would rather see included in the measure—the Minister might examine this suggestion—a provision that the president and secretary or the treasurer and secretary should be the trustees *ex officio*. In that way the trusteeship would continue with people who occupied official positions on the executive committee.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why not allow the land to be owned by the branch? You might reach the position where they did not have a president and secretary.

**Mr. WALSH:** That would cause a lot of trouble. I am satisfied from the Minister's explanation that the necessary action has been taken to protect the local centres. No matter what the hon. member for Townsville South has to say about centres being nearly broke, the Bundaberg centre is not nearly broke. It wants to guard its assets and does not want any Queen-Street control of them. It does not want a central body to deal with them.

**Mr. Aikens:** When I said "the branch", I meant the local branch.

**Mr. WALSH:** The local branch would be Bundaberg. Maryborough is attached to the hospital, and I think Longreach is, also. The position does not arise there.

Dealing with the legal status as outlined by the Minister, I know that the Minister has had this matter under discussion for some time. The pity is that the late Hugh Millar, who was buried only yesterday,—I attended the service at the Presbyterian Church on behalf of the Bundaberg Centre—did not live to see or hear these amendments being brought down. I attended two executive committee meetings, and I felt that undue bitterness and undue personalities crept into the discussions, particularly after Mr. Millar had gone to the trouble of outlining in a confidential way, and within the limits of what the Minister would be in a position to tell him, the amendments proposed to be brought down last September. Unfortunately, they were not brought down and this snarl continued at the last meeting about these very same matters. Anybody who attended any of these meetings would be satisfied that there could be no quibble about the legal status of the Q.A.T.B.

**Dr. Noble:** Mr. Miller was in the picture right through.

**Mr. WALSH:** There was the strange observation the other day that no representations were made. I could not imagine it. No, I was not asleep, as I heard someone suggest. Hon. members here heard very clearly my observation on that. I was surprised that the statement was made that no representations had been made by the centre.

**Mr. Hanlon:** That was denied by the executive.

**Mr. WALSH:** I do not know whether it was denied. I think the hon. member for Barooka heard me say that the acting chairman had stated it in reply to a statement made by the Speaker (Mr. Nicholson). Having got to my feet to reply to a motion I moved, I said that I was astounded to hear that neither he, the acting chairman, nor the centre, had made any representations. I

thought the first duty of the executive would have been to knock at the Minister's door every day for these amendments.

I hope that during the course of the debate there is not going to be built up a feeling of enmity between those sections that are prone to urge everything in favour of the St. John's organisation, or vice versa for the Q.A.T.B. The St. John's organisation has been here for many years, so do not let us do or say anything that is going to convey the suggestion that we want to trample them into the ground.

**Dr. Noble:** They go back to the middle ages.

**Mr. WALSH:** I am talking only about the Australian position at the moment. They have a very fine organisation in Bundaberg. Despite what might be said to the contrary, the ladies associated with the nursing division are working in complete harmony. If the Q.A.T.B. has not got what might be called a nursing division within their structure, do not let us say or do anything that might suggest that this organisation that is providing a nursing division should be curtailed in any way in its activities to raise finance to meet their requirements. I think that would be the sensible view of sensible people in the Chamber.

The other argument comes into it as to whether or not there should be a male division formed within the structure of the Q.A.T.B. I say quite frankly what I said at the meeting the other day. As far as I am personally concerned, not representing the Bundaberg point of view—I am not permitted to give their point of view in this instance—as a public man I would be against a second body being statutorily organised to duplicate the function of the Q.A.T.B. Let them go ahead at all times in establishing their organisation in the same way as they have done with the nursing division. As the Minister has said here, apparently under the Bill they are going to keep control of this phase of it in so far as it will not be allowed to develop into an organisation to transport patients. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. Why should anyone in this community stop any body of persons, male or female, who want to band themselves into an organisation that is going to render service in some way like that, as long as they are not undercutting what is a substantial organisation that has been established by statutory authority in this State over the years? It is plain silly even to urge that it is necessary to have dual organisations to carry out the same transport function. As time goes on I hope that this ill-feeling, if it does exist between the personnel and the staff of the Q.A.T.B., will disappear. I can see that it has disappeared in Bundaberg as far as the St. John's organisation is concerned. They have their own building—the only place outside of Brisbane. They are accepted there. Having made myself perfectly clear about their rights as

a voluntary organisation, I think I can leave it at that. On the question of the raising of finance, I should be particularly interested to hear the Minister elaborate on this part of the Bill in relation to the St. John's organisation and its rights, because I hold the opinion at the moment that the Minister is not going to curtail their activities.

There is nothing of which I know in the law that would prevent these people from accepting money. I do not by any means set myself up as a legal expert. I know many other people like to do so, to read a section out to one, and to put their own interpretation on it but, as I say, I do not know anything in the law that would prevent the St. John's organisation from accepting money. They are, in fact, accepting it and have been accepting it over the years.

**Mr. Aikens:** The Bill prohibits them from soliciting.

**Dr. Noble:** That is from going out and publicly soliciting in the street.

**Mr. WALSH:** That is different again. There is nothing to stop Mount Isa Mines or any other organisation from making a contribution.

**Dr. Noble:** There is nothing to stop me, if I have the money, from giving them £100.

**Mr. WALSH:** Nothing whatever, and, when one gets to the term "soliciting", one finds it is very wide too. I remember an argument that occurred over the Rugby Union here and the St. John's intrusion into that field. I do not know the internal side of that matter but what has been conveyed to me is that the St. John's people offered to give their services to Rugby Union and the Committee said, "We will give you a contribution." I do not know whether that is soliciting or not. I hope the matter is approached in a sensible fashion, and that the Ambulance Transport Brigade and the St. John's organisation will be allowed to give their services to the community as a whole. I have made myself clear so far as the statutory body is concerned. We have one organisation and we should recognise that as such.

On the question of pensioners, I do not know whether the Minister raised this with Senator Wade when he was here, but I understand other hon. members here attended the executive meeting, and that there is to be held in Canberra some time in April a conference of the Q.A.T.B., every ambulance centre throughout Australia. I do not see if the Commonwealth issue a medical entitlement card to a pensioner to enable him to get treatment at a hospital and to enable the doctor's fees to be paid under certain conditions and matters of that kind, why the Commonwealth should not make some contribution to the Ambulance Brigade for the transport of pensioners to the hospital.

The question does not arise to the same extent in Queensland so far as the State

is concerned because the State, over the years, has subsidised ambulance contributions. I heard quoted some figures the other day indicating that the State of Victoria paid so much for the conveyance of pensioners to and from State institutions and hospitals and so on, but the State of Victoria does not give them any other money, I suppose, and consequently the same position does not arise here.

The Minister said that there would be something in the Bill regarding the conduct of meetings. I take it that this will be in the usual form—that is, to conduct a meeting as any hospital board meeting, for instance, would be conducted.

Strangely enough, I gathered recently that the Executive Committee of the Q.A.T.B. here takes unto itself complete power over matters of policy in relation to the ambulance brigades. In spite of the fact that they hold a conference of delegates from centres in various parts of the State, apparently the attitude is that it does not matter what decision is arrived at by conference, it cannot over-ride a decision of the Executive Committee. That appears to me to be a fantastic view. I did not think it could possibly prevail and I am amazed that there should be any provision made for the holding of a conference of delegates from the various centres if the Executive Committee take up the attitude that they are the supreme body. Some years ago there used to be a conference of superintendents and that system has grown. It is futile for a body of men to meet in Bundaberg as delegates to discuss numerous matters affecting the ambulance if the conference has no power or authority. However, that is a matter for the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. I am merely expressing my opinion.

In regard to the conduct of meetings, I do not think the Minister would lay down any constitution for the Q.A.T.B.

If I followed the Minister intelligently, I am satisfied that he has incorporated in the Bill provisions that will be acceptable to the local centres. I hope that my opinion will be confirmed on reading the Bill, and that it contains provisions as outlined by the Minister. I shall await the presentation of it.

**Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (5.21 p.m.):** I desire to speak briefly about hospital boards. Unfortunately I did not hear the Minister's introduction, but I have listened to other hon. members dealing with the situations in their areas. For instance, the hon. member for Bundaberg has outlined the position in his area. I have heard statements about hospital boards and the moneys they may be able to invest. I was rather amazed to hear those statements. Having regard to the new buildings required, the cost of maintenance and renovations, I cannot see how the hospital boards in Brisbane would have any moneys to invest in any manner. Since I

have been a member of Parliament I have raised the matter of extension of hospital clinics in the metropolitan area. To my knowledge Wynnum has had a hospital clinic for 15 years, the length of time I have resided in Wynnum. Sandgate is in a similar position with a hospital clinic. Those places may have had hospital clinics for more than 15 years. The Wynnum hospital clinic provides good service for the public on the days when doctors, nurses and dentists are in attendance. The metropolitan hospitals boards make recommendations to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs on what should be done on the north and south side of Brisbane. The Belmont electorate takes in part of Wynnum. The establishment of a general hospital at Wynnum is long overdue. The Labour Government when in office promised that this hospital would be built, and the matter has been raised on numerous occasions since the present Government assumed office. The metropolis is spreading further and further afield and if it is important to have hospital clinics at Wynnum and Sandgate it must be equally important to have hospital clinics in the Upper Mt. Gravatt area, the Inala area and other places situated 10 to 12 miles from the nearest hospital in the metropolitan area.

The present Government introduced the system of sub-intermediate wards. Previously the hospitals had intermediate wards. Today we find that public ward patients are being discharged from hospital much sooner than they would have been discharged when the previous Government were in office and when hospitals did not have sub-intermediate wards. As a consequence, patients after their discharge have to return to the hospitals for regular treatment.

The work of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade has been mentioned. At the present time ambulance centres such as Wynnum are overburdened because patients have to be transported to the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Brisbane General Hospital for radium and other treatment recommended by doctors on their discharge. The necessary arrangements have been made for them to be transported to the hospitals each day. This imposes a burden on the Q.A.T.B. which is trying to do a very good job under difficult circumstances. They have tried to overcome part of the problem by shifting sub-centres to the various suburbs. This has been done to avoid some of the costs involved in carrying out this humane work of carrying patients to and fro in the metropolitan area. Either the southside hospitals board or the northside hospitals board is not making the necessary recommendations for the extension of hospital clinics throughout the metropolitan area and for a public hospital at Wynnum.

**Mr. HANLON:** (Baroona) (5.26 p.m.): I was out of the Chamber attending a Parliamentary Committee meeting when the Minister introduced the Bill. I did not intend to

come into the debate. However, as there has been some discussion concerning a number of matters I thought I should make a few remarks on the principles contained in the Bill. It is unfortunate that with a Bill of this nature coming before Parliament although to deal with only limited sections of the Act that a move for a public inquiry into hospitals was not accepted by the Government. Many remarks have been passed by various hon. members during the course of the debate, which I think can be justified, that in recent years there has been a tendency for a rising tide of complaint about the hospital services of Queensland since this Government came into office. I know that the Minister will strongly deny that and say that these things are not of his making, or he will raise some other argument. As other hon. members have pointed out, in the last four years, there has been a much greater wave of criticism from all sections of the community, all political parties, the medical profession, and from the Press through special feature writers. Firstly there was the "Truth" newspaper and later Mr. Richards in "The Courier-Mail", and then, there were the suggestions from the Country Party Conference. The complaints have been widespread. Naturally the Labour Party has been particularly critical of the conduct of the hospitals under this Government. It is most regrettable if the Minister believes he has nothing to be ashamed of that when the Country Party overwhelmingly carried a resolution at their conference for a public inquiry into the hospital system, the Premier stifled the resolution and went back and had it reversed for what he himself said were purely political reasons. He said quite openly at the Country Party Conference that at present he did not want to conduct any inquiry into the hospital system of the State. He said that if an inquiry was conducted into our hospitals it would mean that the Government would be called on to spend a large sum of money which they did not have to spend. That cannot be denied. That is what the Premier told the Country Party Conference.

The Prime Minister recently refused on the same grounds an inquiry into education which was requested by the Premiers at the recent Premiers Conference. He said that if he had an inquiry his Government would be required to spend a huge sum of money that they would not be able to raise. When we study the Hospitals Act we realise that it relates to hospital finance and makes provision for hospitals generally. The hon. member for Bundaberg pointed out that in one instance the Bundaberg Hospitals Board had some money they had raised and were forced to hold because the Government would not give them approval to spend it at the time.

I think there should be an inquiry into the hospital system so that the public, and members of Parliament in particular, might have a clear idea of what is going on. Naturally we can have vested interests in

different directions coming forward and making claims about the hospitals. No doubt the medical profession has a vested interest in trying to depress or remove the free element of hospital treatment in Queensland. It is obvious that the fewer the people who receive free treatment the more who will pay for it and generally speaking the more who will be paying the general practitioners instead of availing themselves of free treatment. On the other hand, there are others anxious to get away from free treatment because of the pressure on the Government for spending money in other directions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have listened very carefully to the hon. member for Baroona and I do not want him to broaden the debate on hospitals beyond the details given by the Minister which are referred to in the Bill. The Bill deals with trust funds of hospitals and an amendment of the provision for the election of members of hospitals boards. The general administration of hospitals is not dealt with in the Bill so I should like the hon. member to confine his remarks to the details given to the Committee by the Minister.

**Mr. HANLON:** I appreciate your pulling me up in that regard, Mr. Taylor, but I point out that the Bill makes provision for amendment of the Hospitals Act "in certain particulars and for other purposes", which generally gives a fairly wide definition. If the Minister can assure me that he has told us exactly what is in the Bill that makes its introduction desirable, I will be happy to confine myself to the point. As the hon. member for Norman points out, the Minister indicated on several occasions that he was only touching very briefly on most of these matters and that he intended to give us more information at the second-reading stage. I have no desire to turn this into an Estimates debate on hospitals. I realise that you would not allow me to do that. At the same time, if we are not allowed some scope for debate in the introductory stage we might as well adopt the Federal procedure of having a Bill introduced formally and then having all the debate on it on the second reading. By the procedure of this Parliament the Minister has to justify the desirableness of introducing a Bill. In view of the present state of the hospital system in Queensland and the widespread controversy about hospitals, it would be better if the Minister were able to come along and give us the benefit of much wider information of an impartial nature secured by an inquiry into the position of hospitals relative to the amendments he proposes to the Act.

**Mr. WALSH:** I rise to a point of order. Before the hon. member for Baroona concludes, let me say that I am interested in your ruling, Mr. Taylor, mainly for the reason that I might want to take advantage of a particular position myself. I should like you to make it clear in your ruling

that the motion as it stands on the notice paper, which includes the words "and for other purposes" does not allow the fullest possible discussion of hospital administration. My understanding of the Standing Orders has always been that the moving of the motion with the addition of those words widened the scope of discussion where otherwise the debate would be limited to "a certain particular". From the point of view of the future interests of other members of this Assembly, and in particular my own, I should like to be quite certain that you are not in any way limiting or restricting the debate on this motion.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I point out to the hon. member for Bundaberg that my interpretation of my responsibility as Chairman in the introductory stage is to confine the debate to the outline given by any Minister on a Bill he is introducing. I am no more aware of the details of the Bill than any other hon. member is, and I have to be guided by what the Minister says and the title of the Bill as to the limitations of the debate. As the hon. member for Baroona pointed out, this is not an opportunity to have an Estimates debate on hospital administration. The Minister has introduced the Bill for certain specific purposes and has spoken to those specific purposes. On the second reading hon. members will have a full 40 minutes, after an examination of the Bill, to add to what they may have said at the introductory stage and to get a better interpretation, as I will get a better interpretation, when we have seen the Bill.

**Mr. WALSH:** I rise to a further point of order. With due respect to your interpretation, Mr. Taylor, I should say that where a Bill is introduced to amend an Act in a certain particular, you are bound by Standing Orders to confine every hon. member to the outline given by the Minister. But I submit with respect that we could reach a situation where the Minister might fail to outline some of the provisions of the Bill and, consequently, having accepted the principles outlined by the Minister, we could not discuss the principles on the second reading.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member for Baroona.

**Mr. HANLON:** I do not wish to conflict with you on this matter, Mr. Taylor, but, like the hon. member for Bundaberg, I think that this is the sort of thing that could better be discussed by the Standing Orders Committee than by trying to go into it at this stage. When a Hospitals Bill is introduced, it is quite possible that in the opinion of certain members of the House it is desirable to bring such a Bill in for certain reasons other than those given by the Minister for introducing it. Members of the Australian Labour Party will welcome an inquiry into hospitals. We believe that there are two ways of destroying the free hospitals system that has been built up in Queensland. One way is to

allow money to be spent wastefully or extravagantly. The former Labour Government did not allow that to be done, or avoided it as much as they could, and I do not expect this Government to allow it. The second way is by depressing the standard of service by continually squeezing the amount of money made available to the hospitals till the stage is reached where the average person says, "It is only a second-rate service. It is not good enough. As a free service, it is only good enough for those who have to use it as a last resort. We will use a private practitioner."

**Mr. Aikens:** If it is a second-rate service, why are our hospitals filled to overflowing?

**Mr. HANLON:** Because of the economic conditions under this Government and the Federal Government in the last four years. People who can afford it, particularly if children are involved, will make additional sacrifices for private treatment if they think that the free hospitals service is second rate. That was not the principle upon which the free hospitals system was established. It was established at a standard acceptable to everybody. As the Minister and the hon. member for Bowen have claimed at different times, many people who could afford to go to private hospitals have used the Queensland free hospitals service because they recognised that it was up to the standard that they would expect if they were paying right to the hilt to get the service. If an attempt is made to depress the service to drive people away, the position arises that we believe has developed under this Government—that the standard is regarded as second-rate. The Australian Labour Party does not regard that as a proper free hospitals service.

I wish to refer briefly to the section dealing with the ambulance and the St. John's Ambulance service. The Minister said that he would enlarge on it at the second reading stage, and I do not intend to say any more about the particular provisions he has outlined until I see the Bill and have an opportunity of hearing what the Q.A.T.B. thinks about it.

The hon. member for Bundaberg mentioned the discussions by the Q.A.T.B. over a period of time about the formation of a male division of St. John's. Briefly, the position was that the Q.A.T.B. Executive continually passed resolutions, and then rescinded them, in which they said they were in favour of the St. John's Division and then that they were not in favour of it. Some months ago, at a meeting of the Q.A.T.B., it was suggested that they should make a definite decision on the matter in view of the fact that the Minister had given an assurance that the Bill would be introduced in the pre-Christmas session.

**Dr. Noble:** I hoped to bring it down then.

**Mr. HANLON:** I am not trying to score politically. I do not think any member of Parliament who is a delegate to the Q.A.T.B. would want to see that body used as a political football. It was considered by some hon. members attending that meeting that it would be a good idea for the Q.A.T.B. to be quite clear about the matter in their own minds so that in turn the Government would have a clear indication of their attitude towards the St. John's Division. Therefore a move was made to take a ballot of the various centres of the Q.A.T.B. who, after all, are the people who make the ambulance brigade. The Executive down here does a very good job of organisation, but it consists mainly of proxy delegates, including members of Parliament who represent outlying centres that cannot send delegates to every meeting. The ballot was carried out and the results recorded that something like 77 of the centres were against the formation of the St. John's male division, while something like 10 expressed themselves in favour, with about half a dozen giving their answers more or less conditional on certain things being done, the introduction of this legislation and other points that they put forward. That is the story so far as the Q.A.T.B. is concerned.

What I think created concern in the minds of some people associated with the Q.A.T.B., was the amount of pressure brought to bear on members of the Executive and officials of the Q.A.T.B. It was as if something was to be brought in that was going to affect the Q.A.T.B. adversely. As the hon. member for Bundaberg said some thought it would be a second male ambulance service competing with the Q.A.T.B. It would be competing for finance and offering a more or less duplicate service to what is already provided by the Q.A.T.B., an organisation that has done a tremendous amount of good work over the years. It has built up a good name for supplying that service. It was unfortunate that pressure was brought to bear in that way. I am not saying that it was not done with the best of intentions. Probably it was all done in good faith by the people concerned. They probably thought what they were doing was of benefit to the community. However, the position is very obvious, particularly to us here, because as members of Parliament, or as politicians, if we can call ourselves that, we always look at things a little more suspiciously than other members of the community. When somebody comes along and pressure begins to build up from a number of directions, with a little bit of soft-soaping, and you know that something is coming forward relating to another organisation that possibly might impinge on the rights of your organisation, you do become suspicious. However, the Minister says he feels that he has corrected the position by the legislation and that it will be revealed that the Q.A.T.B. have nothing to worry about in what the Government are doing. If that is the position I think the



ambulance people will accept it. Whether there was any intention before—I am not saying there was—to bring something in that could affect them adversely, and because of their suspicions it has been changed, or whether the Government or the people concerned never had any intention of doing other than what is being done in this legislation we will find out only when we have had an opportunity to study the Bill. I did want to make those few remarks in relation to what was said by the hon. member for Bundaberg.

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) (5.45 p.m.): I listened with interest to the Minister's admission that there would be a new psychiatric block at the Townsville General Hospital within the next three years. I hope very much that that proves to be so. Last year I asked quite a number of questions about it and I submitted a report to the Minister in this regard. I, with the hon. member for Townsville South, sincerely hope that that ward will be commenced in the near future.

I should like to ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Taylor, did he say something about a permit being necessary for hospital auxiliaries to raise funds and does it mean that they do not, at the present time, need a permit to raise funds?

**Dr. Noble:** There is nothing in the Act legalising it. Before they can raise funds on behalf of hospitals an Executive Council minute has to be put through each time. They have raised considerable sums of money in that way.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That is the point I was going to make. We have in Townsville a very efficient hospital auxiliary and during the last two years they have raised a considerable sum of money. They have been concentrating on the geriatric ward in Townsville. That ward at present—and I have drawn the Minister's attention to this on a number of occasions—is in a very bad state of repair. I call very often to see old people in that ward. There is quite a number of them. Admittedly they frequently change because every week some pass on. However, the ward has not been renovated in any way or painted for many years. I previously asked the Minister whether it was possible either to renovate it or replace it. Almost two years have gone by and it is still in the same condition.

I do not wish to score politically on this matter but this ward offers a very cheerless outlook to these old people in the eventide of their lives, and something should be done with regard to it.

I realise that these buildings are in such a state of repair that they should be demolished. The old wooden building constitutes a tremendous fire risk to the rest of the hospital. If the wards cannot be torn down I suggest that something should be done about renovating them to give these old people a more cheerful outlook than they have at the present time.

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (5.48 p.m.), in reply: I think that, on the whole, the Bill has been very well received by the Committee. The hon. member for Townsville North referred to the geriatric ward at the Townsville General Hospital. Before this Government came to office there was no geriatric ward nor was there any geriatric service in our hospitals in the whole of Queensland. Surely we should be given credit for what we have done and for the new services provided in Queensland over the last four or five years. As I said, there were no geriatric services in Queensland when we took office but we had the imagination to send overseas a medical man who came back to Queensland with modern ideas. We will develop the science of geriatrics in this State and every old person will get a fair deal.

I agree with the hon. member for Townsville North that the geriatric ward is old. It is the old Townsville General Hospital. It is not suitable for nor is it intended that it should be a permanent home for old people in Townsville. There have been various thoughts on the matter. I do not recall the details or how far they have gone but the general thought was that that ward should come down and a new ward go up in its place between the two hospitals, providing a better geriatric service for the very important centre of North Queensland. That will be done.

The amount of loan money made available to my department has been increased considerably beyond that made available to the department under Labour rule. More has been done in building work, and in a sensible way, since I have held this portfolio than was done under the previous Government in any one year, but I am allowed an appropriation in a year of only approximately £1,500,000 to £1,750,000, depending on the need. I have to do the best I can to distribute this money equitably throughout the State, and, when there is a big building programme of £250,000 such as the one going on at Bundaberg at present, money has to be provided to meet the bills as they become due. We try to give an equitable coverage of loan works throughout Queensland, with the loan money that is available. I hope a move will be made on the geriatric hospital at Townsville in the not far distant future, but a psychiatric service should have first priority. When loan moneys are made available to the Townsville hospital first priority will be given to a psychiatric service. I think the need for it is urgent in Townsville.

Much has been said by the hon. member for Baroona and other hon. members about the squealing of hospitals boards at the cutting down of hospital budgets. As long as there have been hospitals boards the budgets have been cut down. The procedure is that at the beginning of a financial year they send in estimates of what they hope to spend in that year. We have to

look at the position. We know more or less whether they can or cannot spend those amounts of money. Of course, they could throw it away but we want the money to be spent efficiently with due respect to the economy. I then go to Cabinet and a sum of money is made available to my department for hospital purposes. The spending of that money has to be spread throughout the State. During my term of office as Minister the amount of money available for hospital services has been increased year by year, and we are spending more on hospitals today than has ever been spent before. From £34,000 to £44,000 has been provided for the Flying Surgeon Service to the West. We never had an alcoholic ward when the previous Government were in office, and at that time there were no social workers employed in hospital wards. They are now employed for the first time in Queensland. Additional money is made available each year to hospitals boards.

There has never been any paring in the money for salaries, food, drugs, instruments or anything connected with the care of the sick. Over the years the greatest failure has been in the field of maintenance. Hospitals boards include in their estimates £X for painting and carpentry repairs, and the first thing they do when they get their estimates back is to cut out painting and minor repairs within the hospital. Over the years there has been a falling off of maintenance in some hospitals but I am very pleased to say that with the new Federal grant allocation which we got from the Premiers' Conference sufficient money will be available for much of this repair and maintenance work.

Hospitals boards do a tremendously good job. It is useless to dissent on this point. Under Labour Governments and under the present Government the persons appointed to boards are persons more or less of the Government's own political persuasion. That was the position under Labour Governments and it is the position now, but the difference is that the boards we have now are prepared to voice their criticism whereas board members in the days of the Labour Government were more or less indoctrinated and, with complete control over them by the Executive of the A.L.P., they were not prepared to complain about a Labour Minister.

The hon. member for Baroona spoke of the need for an inquiry into the hospital system in Queensland. There is a committee in the metropolitan area at the present time and we are getting ideas from them as to how our hospitals should be run. We are looking ahead for 20 or 30 years when Brisbane will have a population of 1,000,000 people. The committee are giving us ideas as to how our hospital expansion should take place.

Quite a number of people come from Inala to the Women's Hospital for prenatal treatment, but because it costs something like 7s. in fares many of the mothers do not go

sufficiently often to get a complete check. We are looking into this problem and I hope to have an out-patients' obstetrical service in the Inala district where the mothers can go for prenatal treatment. The committee has recommended where public hospitals should be established. I am not going to disclose their recommendations. It is proposed very soon to establish a hospital district at Caboolture and in the very near future we may extend our hospital services to those areas. Perhaps the hon. member for Belmont may be right. If the committee tell me that a hospital is needed at Caboolture and Redcliffe I will be prepared to examine their suggestions.

We are examining these matters all the time. We intend to build up a very good hospital service in the State, and to keep on improving it. Was any effort made by Labour to have a cardiac clinic or a neurological clinic? No, there was not! Today, we have a cardiac clinic, in its early stages. We have ordered a heart-lung machine that will be functioning shortly. Far from depressing the hospital services of the State this Government are providing more finance from loan funds and revenue, we are providing new services for the people of the State. The Bill has been well received and at the second reading stage I shall give a complete outline of it.

Motion (Dr. Noble) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Dr. Noble, read a first time.

### GRAMMAR SCHOOLS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (7.17 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Grammar Schools Acts, 1860 to 1900, in certain particulars.”

The Bill authorises grammar schools to borrow money from the Treasurer or by sale of debentures, bonds and inscribed stock. At the present time they cannot do that. That is to say, they cannot borrow by the sale of debentures, bonds or inscribed stock. The relative loan provisions included therein are similar to those applicable to other local bodies. And the grammar schools are defined as local bodies with the powers of borrowing of local bodies.

All borrowings are subject to the prior sanction of the Treasurer and, finally, approval by the Governor in Council.

The Bill also prescribes provisions for the obtaining of temporary overdraft accommodation in respect of the general fund.

There are really two main principles. The "certain particulars" are the borrowing by way of sale of debentures, bonds and inscribed stock and the other matter is the obtaining of temporary overdraft accommodation in respect of the general fund.

In addition the Bill defines the funds which shall be established and kept by the trustees and the manner in which such funds shall be operated. These funds are—

(1) A general fund, in which all the transactions other than those relating to loan and trust funds are incorporated;

(2) A trust fund for the holding of contractors' deposits and other trust moneys; and

(3) A loan fund, into which loan moneys and subsidy are paid and from which disbursements for the purposes of the loan are made.

Finally, provision is made for the compilation by the trustees of a balance sheet showing assets and liabilities, and a revenue account or profit and loss account is required to be prepared for each year together with such other statements as may be necessary. These have to be submitted to the Auditor-General for examination and certification. The conditions laid down by the Bill are in keeping with present-day financial provisions applying to other public bodies.

It might be appropriate to traverse the history of the grammar schools very briefly. The Grammar Schools Act was first enacted in 1860 and it made provision for the establishment of a grammar school in any locality where the sum of £1,000 was raised for the purpose. A Government subsidy of twice the amount raised was made available for approved building.

Each school was to be administered by a board of trustees, three to be elected by subscribers and the remaining four nominated by the Governor in Council. Provision was also made for the payment by the Government of an annual maintenance grant.

Ten grammar schools were established under the Act. The first was at Ipswich, in 1863. It is nearly 100 years old. The last was the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School in 1892. As early as 1891 it was clear that further development of secondary education would be along different lines.

**Mr. Walsh:** That was the year of the shearers' strike.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** And the year of the great flood.

**Mr. Walsh:** That was 1893.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I think it was about 1891 or 1892. Only you, Mr. Taylor, would know what happened in 1892. As early as 1891 it was clear that further development of secondary education would be along different lines. In that year a Royal Commission on education reported—

"We have not advised the discontinuance of the present Grammar Schools, but we think that in future a system of secondary schools more directly controlled as to foundation and management by the State would be less expensive and quite as effective in the education of the youth of the Colony."

I do not know whether they were right when they said it would be less expensive. Their forecast there was incorrect.

No grammar school has been established since 1892. In 1912 the system envisaged by the Royal Commission came into being, with the opening of six high schools and three secondary departments. I can remember that. In 1936 the Boys' and Girls' Grammar Schools at Maryborough were taken over by the State at the request of the trustees and became State High Schools. At present there are eight grammar schools.

The Grammar Schools Amendment Act of 1864 increased from £500 to £1,000 per annum the Government endowment to assist the trustees to meet current expenses. Although no legislative action has been taken to increase this grant nor to enable trustees to borrow from the Treasury, successive governments have in fact provided much more assistance than the Act required both in terms of endowment and loans. I suppose there was no objection to our providing more as long as we did not provide less.

Despite the fact that no new grammar schools have been established, there has been a considerable increase in the accommodation provided in the last 10 years. Secondary enrolments in grammar schools have increased from 1561 in 1951 to 2977 in 1962. That is virtually in a decade.

This expansion would not have been possible without the increased government assistance in the form of loans and subsidies. Approved building for educational and recreational purposes has been subsidised by the Government to the extent of £40 for every £60 raised by the trustees. The extent of Government assistance from loan funds in the past 10 years has been something of the order of £381,000. There is a limit to the extent to which Treasury loan funds may be made available to local bodies. It is reasonable to assume, too, that trustees of grammar schools may have prospects of obtaining debenture loan funds from interested local parties. We think that they should be given the opportunity to tap that source of money for capital development.

Perhaps hon. members might be interested to know the enrolments at the grammar schools in 1962. They are—

School	Enrolments	Boarders
Brisbane Boys .. .. .	849	105
Brisbane Girls .. .. .	630	82
Ipswich Boys .. .. .	366	182
Ipswich Girls .. .. .	250	111
Rockhampton Boys .. .. .	236	149
Rockhampton Girls .. .. .	269	151
Townsville .. .. .	274	98
Toowoomba .. .. .	305	182

Five of those schools, Ipswich Boys', Rockhampton Boys', Rockhampton Girls', Townsville and Toowoomba, have some primary classes and some primary children boarders. It is quite obvious that with the projected development of secondary education in Queensland more money will need to be spent by the grammar schools in the next few years so that they can share in this new system of providing a three-year Junior and a five-year secondary course. The object of the Bill is to provide them with an opportunity to get more money for capital improvement by way of sale of debentures, bonds and inscribed stock. I commend the measure to the Committee.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (7.26 p.m.): In his usual fashion when introducing Bills dealing with education the Minister has presented the Bill in lengthy detail. Quite often at the introductory stage a lot is left unsaid but on this occasion I think the measure has been fully covered by the Minister.

At the moment I cannot see any great objection to the idea of fostering grammar schools. After all, over the years, they have done a wonderful job of education in Queensland. But for the grammar schools of years gone by many of our most highly educated men today would not have had an opportunity to receive such an education. It is pleasing to note that the Minister is introducing the principle of allowing semi-Governmental schools to take out debenture loans and is opening up the way for overdrafts with banking institutions. Many people associated with State high schools will welcome this principle, as one of the great problems of the education system controlled by the State is to meet the desire of the parents of pupils, particularly at new schools, to have the school progress at the rate they wish. Unfortunately, owing to the shortage of finance, it is a rather long process for a secondary high school, particularly a State high school, to progress in line with the grammar schools. Over the years examination results have shown that State high schools can more than hold their own with private and semi-Governmental schools. The idea of borrowing should be extended to the State high schools. I suggest that at this stage the Minister take a look at the possibility of allowing parents' and citizens' committees

that have shown their ability to raise finance an opportunity to go to financial institutions. I have in mind quite a few that raise over £2,000 a year. They should be given a similar opportunity to borrow from financial institutions. It could not be done by way of debentures because it is State property, but I think the way should be left open by way of Government guarantees so that parents' and citizens' committees could borrow from the banks the necessary money to complete some of the larger projects that the State cannot see its way clear to embark upon at the moment. I have in mind particularly assembly halls and swimming pools. In my opinion the assembly hall is of particular importance in State secondary schools. By extending the principle contained in the Bill to State secondary schools it would allow State high schools to erect assembly halls and provide other educational equipment much more quickly. I do not want to prolong the introduction of the Bill but I take the opportunity at this stage to bring that matter to the notice of the Minister in the hope that the necessary legislation can be brought in.

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (7.30 p.m.), in reply: I thought at the outset that the Bill would receive the unanimous support of the Committee because I think we all appreciate the great contribution that the grammar schools have made to the development of Queensland. For the first half of our century or maybe for the first three-quarters of it most of our engineers and professional men must of necessity have gone to a grammar school. It is only since about the 1920's, since the first World War, that we have had the opportunity to gain secondary education at State schools.

This Government believe in the dual system. We are proud of our State High Schools. We know that, on the average, they are equal to the non-State schools, but I believe that both the non-State schools, which include semi-governmental and private ones, and ours are better because of the competition that exists and the incentive that the dual system gives to each of those types of secondary education.

The question of giving school committees or parents' and citizens' associations power to borrow is worthy of some consideration, remembering all the time that if we lend them £5,000 we have to find another £5,000 to match it on some of the projects. I think that they should go a long way towards their objective before being assisted in this way. It is sometimes disheartening when they are raising money for projects like swimming pools and have to raise £6,000 or £7,000. The first £3,000 or £4,000 is relatively easy; the last £3,000 or £4,000 is much more difficult. It could be that if they were able to achieve the actual project it could produce some revenue itself and could be an added

incentive, but, on the other hand, having got it by this means the parents might say, "Why should we work any longer?"

It is a matter to which a great deal of thought must be given, but consideration will be given to the suggestion.

Motion (Mr. Pizzey) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

### ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS BILL

#### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (7.34 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to the execution of electrical works and the competency of electrical workers, to provide for the licensing of electrical contractors, and for other purposes."

The present law in this matter is contained in the Electrical Workers Acts, 1927 to 1931—"An Act to make better provision for the execution of electrical works by competent persons and for the examination of electrical workers and the granting of certificates to them and for other consequential purposes."

Under the present Act there is no provision for the licensing of electrical contractors, who at present are required to first obtain a permit from the relevant electric supply authority before commencing installation work for connection to that supply. It is at present necessary for a contractor to obtain a separate permit for each and every supply area where he intends to perform installation work.

In the Bill there is provision for the repeal of the Electrical Workers Acts, 1927 to 1931, and for the State-wide licensing of electrical contractors. Such single licence will cover the whole State. It is not a new principle for the licensing of contractors. They have to be licensed now or obtain permits. It is replacing individual sets of licenses which a contractor must have to do work in various parts of the State with one single licence issued by this new board.

Many years ago—right back nearly to 1951—the Electrical Workers Board was asked by the government of the day to revise the Electrical Workers Act and at the same time advise on the matter of the licensing of electrical contractors. In doing so the Electrical Workers Board had the assistance and enjoyed the collaboration of the State Electricity Commission. They have met. They have had a lot of general business

to do but bit by bit they have been piecing together what they believed would be the ideal Act for the licensing of contractors and for the certification of tradesmen, and consequently this Bill is a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the execution of electrical works and the competency of electrical workers, to provide for the licensing of electrical contractors, and for other purposes.

It represents the unanimous recommendations and the single view of all the board members and the representative of the State Electricity Commission. It is not often that a measure coming before the Committee has such wide general approval.

The Electrical Workers Board has on it a representative of the Government at the present time, a representative of the supply authorities, a representative of the Fire Underwriters' Association, a representative of the employers and a representative of the employees, so that every section of the industry is represented. I should like to pay tribute to them for the work they have done, particularly recently, but generally speaking over the years, in getting together and suggesting to the Government that they should implement an Act that has such widespread support from every section of the community. The Government of course must represent and watch the interests of the public. The public are not represented on that board unless perhaps by means of the chairman who is the representative of the Government, so that hon. members will no doubt peruse the Bill very carefully to see that it is not only a Bill to protect contractors and the employees and all those connected with the electrical industry but that it also safeguards the interests of the public. It deals with the certification of the trade competency of workers and the issue of certificates of competency in the present four categories, namely, electrical fitter, electrical mechanic, electrical linesman and electrical joiner. Those are the four categories at the present time, and it adds a category of electrician. In Queensland an apprentice who does his course, or completes his course of training as an electrician, actually covers the two fields of electrical fitter and electrical mechanic.

The Bill also provides for the issue of restricted licences, and this is something new. There has been a difficulty with the refrigeration mechanic, the radio mechanic, the television mechanic and the mechanic who deals with electric adding and computing machines. All these people perform some measure of electrical work and they require some limited or restricted certificate to ensure that they are capable of assembling or repairing, or doing work in their own particular sphere, having in mind the safety of the public.

Now, I suppose that every week in some part of Australia, we read of some unfortunate citizen who loses his life through some faulty installation or some faulty

connection or in some way or another using electrical equipment in a bad state of repair or perhaps wrongly connected. I believe that anything we can do within reason to ensure that such things should be done, and if we take every precaution to ensure that competent and qualified men are handling such a dangerous substance as electricity, that is to be commended by all.

We believe that the Act is a little too loose. As a matter of fact, I think a legal interpreter of it would give us the advice that anybody could do electrical work so long as he did not hold himself out to be an electrical worker. You could go over to your neighbour's place and put in a plug, and even put in the fitting itself, except that it would come under the Electric Light and Power Act, whereby an inspector has to come out and adjudicate on the correctness of the work and so on. There are all sorts of jobs that can be done provided you do not hold yourself out to be an electrician or a tradesman, and our legal advisers inform us that no action can be taken against you. We want to make sure that anybody getting a job done is assured that the job will be done by a competent tradesman or a person qualified to do that particular work. It is obvious that a radio mechanic, and a TV technician, does not need to do the long 5 years' apprenticeship in the electrical trade, but there is a certain minimum of knowledge they ought to have and there ought to be some tests. It may be practical or it may be oral, or it may be both, but the Electrical Workers Board should satisfy itself that they can carry out the restricted amount of work required of them for the safety of the public. This measure ensures the performance of electrical work by qualified certificated persons, whereas under the Act there is no such restriction. The Bill gives the board power not only to cancel and suspend services as at present, but also to impose a fine for the performance of defective work. Hon. members will see the full details of that in the definitions when they get the Bill. The Bill deals with the contractor's licence. The contractors' association advanced the proposal to remove the need for the contractor to hold a multiplicity of permits or present-day licences. I think there is even a slight difference between the licence issued by the S.E.A. and the one issued by the Brisbane City Council. The one from the S.E.A. is issued free whereas a fee of £1 a year has to be paid for the licence issued by the Brisbane City Council. That is the first difference. Each supply authority issues its own so that a Brisbane contractor will hold permits on the S.E.A.Q. and the Brisbane City Council and must also apply to any of the regional boards where he has country work to do. A State-wide licence is preferable. The Contractors' Association also contends that at the present time there is no effective control of a contractor doing faulty work. He can slip from

one area into another leaving behind him a trail of faulty work. There is not any sort of reciprocity of information. He can take out a permit somewhere else and keep on doing faulty work and so long as he holds an Electrical Workers Board certificate he cannot really be refused a permit by a supply authority. At present the cancellation or suspension of his certificate of competency by the board is the only disciplinary action possible. In some cases this may be considered too drastic. A reprimand or fine might fill the Bill.

Licensing of contractors under this system has been adopted in most of the other States. I think South Australia and Queensland are the only two that have not as yet done so.

Both individuals and firms can hold a contractor's licence. Obviously an individual can. A firm can, as long as at least one member of the firm or partnership is personally qualified to be issued with a contractor's licence in his own name.

In all cases the contractor must have a place of business in Queensland. At present a person can come here from another State or country, obtain an Electrical Workers Board certificate as an electrical mechanic and with it obtain a supply authority permit. With no fixed place of business in Queensland he can roam the State, do one or two unsatisfactory jobs here and there, for which in many cases there is advance payment, and then move on. There is no way of bringing him back and making him do the job properly and of fining him so much for every day that he allows a faulty job to stand.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Do you mean a registered place of business? Must he be registered under the Factories and Shops Act?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** No, a place of business. He must convince the Board that he has a place of business. It is no good saying, "Box So-and-So, G.P.O., Brisbane."

**Mr. Sherrington:** It would not be necessary to register as a company?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** No. Most of them will already be registered as firms.

**Mr. Dewar:** Some automatically under the Factories and Shops Act.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** He has to satisfy them that he has a place of business. In other cases he can be a week-end contractor. All sections of the industry think that is undesirable. Take the case of the small town, with two electrical contractors and with several electricians at a mill. They do not think the man who is working at the mill for five or six days a week should be able to take on a job on Sunday to the detriment of the other two who are established with a place of business and working continuously as electrical contractors. You could carry that to the extreme where the man could

know what volume of business his boss is getting and perhaps offer to do it himself at the week-ends.

The Bill will not stop a man wiring his own home as long as he is competent and he has the certificate. He will be able to act as a contractor in his own home or in that of a near relative. We think it is only right that a father who is an electrician should be allowed to wire the home of, say, his recently married daughter or of his son-in-law or other near relative, as the case may be. A father may retire and acquire a new home. His son is an electrician. It is not stretching it too far to allow him that freedom of action.

**Mr. Sherrington:** He can do that now.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Yes, in Brisbane under both the S.E.A.Q. and the Brisbane City Council. It was suggested that it should be limited to his own home but I think the present system of allowing him to do the work in the home of a near relative is fair and reasonable. A register of contractors is to be kept and once a year notified in the Government Gazette or the Industrial Gazette. There are about 1,500 contractors already holding permits in Queensland, so we can assume that the number will be somewhere round that figure.

There will be heavy penalties for anyone who is not licensed holding himself out as a contractor. It is a fairly dangerous business, a business in which people who are not absolutely qualified should not be engaged. To protect the public, there will be very severe penalties on people who have not the qualifications or the ability and who hold themselves out as contractors.

A builder will not be required to hold a contractor's licence for electrical installation work provided it is effected by a licensed electrical contractor. He does not need to have it twice.

There is provision for firms manufacturing electrical goods, machines or appliances in a factory. They will not be required to hold a contractor's licence. The licensing provisions are only to apply to the work of electrical installation and to such work as is subject to the inspection of the electrical authorities.

**Mr. Newton:** Does that apply to power-driven tools?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** The manufacture of them?

**Mr. Newton:** No, the repair work. I am referring to power-driven saws, and so on, used on builders' jobs.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** It depends what they are. It applies to anything over 32 volts. It applies to anything that is ultimately connected with some power authority.

**Mr. Newton:** They would all be over 32 volts.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Does that include private plants that are not electrical authorities?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** Private plants that are over 32 volts capacity, no.

**Mr. Sherrington:** A place such as Mt. Isa would not be covered?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I see what the hon. member for Salisbury means. Nearly all plants such as that are connected with some power authority. Nearly all of those would supply power. They are contractors.

**Mr. Newton:** What about sugar mills, and so on?

**Mr. PIZZEY:** They have to become contractors. There will probably be a nominal fee. Although they are not really contractors, they must have a licence so that they can be supervised and examined under the other Act, the Electric Light and Power Act, which is closely interwoven with this Act.

In my opinion this Bill should not be under the control of the Minister for Education. For years the Electrical Workers' Act was in some way related to apprenticeship and there was a connection with the Electrical Workers' Board. I think that the Act should be under the control of the Minister controlling the State Electricity Commission, and Cabinet and the Government believe that, too. My officers are not as competent as the officers of the State Electricity Commission would be to deal with it. It is outside the field of apprenticeship. It will still be the responsibility of the Department of Education to deal with apprentices until they have completed their training and have received their certification. I do not believe that electrical contractors should come under the control of the Department of Education. I think all hon. members will agree that this Act would be better administered by the Minister controlling the State Electricity Commission.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (7.55 p.m.): I have only a few general observations to make as we have two or three hon. members on this side with a more extensive knowledge of the subject of the Bill and consequently they will deal with it in greater detail. I am not generally enamoured of the idea of insisting that all trades or industries should be licensed. Today almost every section of industry makes demands on Governments to have the protective umbrella of licensing placed over it. Probably there is a good deal of merit in many of the applications. Sometimes there is something in excess of 50 per cent. of an argument in favour of such a course; sometimes it is something less than 50 per cent. There are arguments that can be used in favour of licensing master plumbers or sawmillers. There are arguments in favour of licensing fuel merchants and all sorts of people. But I am rather loth to say that merely because an industry considers that it can advance some argument therefore Governments should necessarily agree to such proposals.

**Mr. Pizzey:** This one is already licensed, you understand. It is not a new principle.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I have followed that. Even though that is my personal attitude, and not necessarily the party attitude, I would not advance it against this measure. Firstly, as the Minister has pointed out the principle is already established. Secondly, because of the dangers inherent in the practice of the profession of an electrical mechanic, it is essential that there should be greater safeguards than those that apply to other sections of industry. Last year quite a number of accidents took place. Altogether there were 148 incidents termed as slight accidents of an electrical character. There were 51 serious accidents and 17 fatal ones. Of this total in excess of 200 accidents 35 occurred to employees engaged in the industry, showing that even with their training there is a fairly high percentage of accidents amongst trained personnel. Therefore it is essential that we have adequate safeguards and ensure that when work of this nature is carried out it is of such a standard that people living in houses served by electricity are not liable to suffer accidents. Consequently I am very pleased to learn that there was unanimity on the part of the members of the Electrical Workers Board in regard to the submission of recommendations. Whether the unanimous recommendations embrace the whole contents of the Bill the Minister did not make clear. There are one or two aspects that I think are slightly controversial, or at least they are open to debate from various points of view.

The enforcement of general standards is very desirable indeed. I should like to see greater uniformity throughout Australia. I know that there is a Standards Association. I know that there is a Standards Association Electrical Approvals Board that meets from time to time. That organisation determines whether a particular appliance can be sold. In some instances appliances that circulate quite freely in various parts of Australia are not permitted for use in Queensland. There are various theories about load factors with electrical equipment that I learned recently. What is acceptable in the southern States is not necessarily accepted in Queensland. I understand that the matter is being examined by the authorities with a view to obtaining uniformity. I do not think it is asking too much that the various authorities concerned should get complete uniformity of electrical standards in Australia. It should be possible for a person to buy a coffee percolator in Melbourne and use it in Townsville or to buy a toaster in Townsville and use it in Melbourne. There should be a greater effort on the part of all concerned to see whether there could be some accepted uniformity throughout Australia. We talk about a uniform traffic code, but I think there is a greater need for uniformity in this direction. I am certain that the authorities in the other States must be equally concerned about the

safety of human life and therefore would not pass an appliance that is not up to safety requirements. The safety factor is the dominant factor in all those cases. However, I do not think it is asking too much to say that there should be an approach on the basis of reasonable give and take with certain minimum standards laid down.

A few months ago I purchased an electrical appliance which I understand came from Italy. It was really the base for a lamp-stand in glass, that I bought for my wife for her birthday. I was shocked at the electrical standard of the work and I went to the trouble to get an electrician to bore a hole through the glass stand to make the appliance safe. I was told that because the article was not manufactured here it was permissible for it to be sold. It was sold by a reputable firm in the city and it passes my comprehension that in the country of origin, Italy in this particular case, work of that kind was permitted. I was told that once a lamp-shade was put on top with a little clip that was the only apparatus required but when I did that the thing collapsed completely. I do not think standards of that kind should be tolerated. Appliances of a higher standard manufactured in the South are not permitted to be sold here but this particular appliance could be sold because it came under a general condition standard. I am not sure of the term.

**Mr. Dewar:** Safe to the required standard.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** That may be. On the subject of defective work I think this is a provision requiring clarification. I was wondering whether the Minister for Health proposed to impose a similar condition under the Medical Act for defective work and whether any penalties would be applied.

**Mr. Dewar:** The penalties vary in such a case.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Yes. It is quite a departure legislatively to impose a penalty for defective work, not that I am against the principle in this instance. As I pointed out, where life is involved I think there is no excuse for defective work. When a householder gets what he believes to be a reputable firm to do electrical work and believes the work is done satisfactorily he is entitled to a period of freedom from worry, that there should not be any defective work performed. I have not discussed this with my colleagues, but I personally will not oppose it in this instance.

**Mr. Herbert:** They always penalise them by cancelling their licences. This gives a graduation of penalty.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I do not know if that is too high a penalty for defective work.

**Mr. Pizzey:** For defective work they would probably cancel.



**Mr. DUGGAN:** The hon. member for Salisbury may be able to correct me but whereas the safety factor may apply in all instances, neatness and other factors may apply in the trade generally. I recently saw some work that was apparently not shoddy work but when I saw similar work done much more neatly it was apparent that the first work was much less neatly done although the safety factor could have been observed in both cases.

The Minister has indicated that the Act at present provides that help can be given in the case of near relatives.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Own home or near relatives.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** What is the general position? I am sure there are people who are employed during the week who work privately over the weekend with the full knowledge and approval of the authorities. I am quite certain of that. Many people perform work that must be inspected by the S.E.A. in the south-eastern area and the authorities must know that this work is carried out by employees during the week-end. I do not know how it operates generally but it certainly does to my personal knowledge in some areas.

Toowoomba has a number of electrical firms. I do not think they would give me favoured treatment because of my parliamentary position. I have known representatives from such firms for many years and through their personal friendship I am certain they would go out of their way to help me as much as possible. I have been trying for two or three weeks to get some electrical installation work done. The position is not as bad in a big city such as Toowoomba or Brisbane, or the provincial cities, but the Minister mentioned that in his area there were two contractors, and it would be unfair for anyone employed in the sugar mill during the week to do such work during week-ends. I agree in principle that it is wrong for a person in full employment during the week to take work on the week-end, but what I do not like about licensing provisions is that they can bring about a close preserve and one or two electrical contractors can increase prices. Sometimes the fact that there is an alternative opportunity to the public acts as a brake on such a practice.

**Mr. Pizzey:** We have deliberately written in a provision giving the right of appeal to the Minister so that they cannot establish a close preserve.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** The matter has obviously been considered by the Government. One of the great dangers of a licensing provision is the fact that people do rig prices. They set out with lofty ideals, principles and motives when seeking registration. I am not prejudging the case, but the master builders at the present time have embarked on a definite campaign for the licensing of builders. Photographs have been taken of defective

work and the association is building up a very strong case for the registration of builders. However, there is no guarantee that many of these things would not happen if registration was granted. The I.C.I. building in Melbourne was designed by a firm of Australia-wide repute and built by a contractor of Australia-wide repute, but all sorts of design difficulties have been experienced. Plate glass has been falling out of windows in the upper storeys and similar defects have been noted. Apparently that is something they have not been able to rectify. I am merely pointing out that even with firms of the highest repute it is not always possible to obtain the very highest standards, and even if the standards are reasonable the preserve factor is something that has to be taken into account.

Apart from the price factor, people in small towns can be kept waiting indefinitely. That is the reason in many cases why these itinerant electricians referred to by the Minister have been able to reap a rich harvest in these towns. The local people have not been able to get the service to which they are entitled.

Unscrupulous people without the requisite knowledge have done work, and I am not justifying the practice, but I think the only reason why fly-by-night people have been able to go into a town and get work is because the work is available for them. If the local electrical contractors were able to do the work, the opportunity would not exist for the itinerant electrician to go to these towns and exploit the people.

I should like some clarification from the Minister on the provision as to the place of business. I do not know whether a person's home would be accepted as a place of business. I cannot envisage the particular situation. Perhaps a person might set up a small workshop at his home.

**Mr. Dewar** interjected.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** If the Minister indicates that that is so it would be all right. A person may not be in very good health. He may resign from a firm where he has been working for many years and take part-time work. I know of one particular case of that type. He suffered from some heart trouble and decided he did not want to engage in work for the full week but would do part-time work. If he had to establish a workshop in the town, a hardship would be imposed on him. If his place of residence was taken as his place of business, my objection would be met. I do not suppose there would be many cases of that kind, but when legislation is before us we have to consider all such possibilities. The other point mentioned by way of interjection by the hon. member for Belmont referred to power drills and so on. I do not know whether this properly comes within the ambit of the Bill, but I think it is a matter to which a good deal of attention could be given. About six months ago I borrowed an electric drill to

do a little fitting round a fish pond I have at home, to hang some wire baskets, and the first joint of my finger was numb for three weeks after. The person opposite me did not want to look at me and said that I would kill myself. He would not use one even at his place of employment. He is afraid of electric drills. We know how many have been killed by them. On the question of servicing drills, special attention should be paid to power tools that are capable of causing death by shock.

**Mr. Dewar:** Have you tried a Safety Pak? It is pretty widely used now and has practically wiped out all this.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I do not think it is general. I have read about what the hon. member refers to but a tremendous number of power tools are still used without them.

On the question of electricians engaged in smaller areas, there may be station properties with electric light equipment of 110 volts. Would it be necessary to have an electrician there? It may not justify an electrician being there to do the work around the place. I do not know whether any discretionary power is given to the Minister. I would suggest that in such small places the full-time employment of an electrician would not be justified. There may be quite a number of those stations. No doubt there must be quite a number of them in various parts of the State. I have made general observations that will be amplified by the hon. member for Bulimba and the hon. member for Salisbury. I think the Bill is a good one. I am in agreement with its general principles. It should be welcomed by everyone in the community. My main concern is that some people may get a greater measure of competitive protection. I think that must be watched. At the same time, I am not encouraging week-end work. At one time, when quoting for a job, a person would work out how much material would be used, and how much of his time, and then he would add the normal profit charge to that. That was the general basis of costing the work to be done. However, today many people in Australia have the idea that they should retire at 45. They think that if they can get enough money together by the time they are 40 or 45 they will retire, and so they load a job to what they think it will carry. Not everyone knows that it costs £2 10s. to install a power point. Some people are silly enough to accept a quote without checking. They do not think of the figure it should cost. They just say, "Well, go on with the work." They say to themselves, "I can afford £20, £30 or £40." There is too much of that. It seems to be creeping into too many small jobs. It does not occur in the big jobs where there is a fair amount of competition. There seems to be this tendency to load the price of a job as much as possible. The hon. member for Wavell probably adds a pre-determined gross profit charge. That happens in many industries. They say that the gross

profit should be so much and they load the job accordingly. I have no objection to that. However, some people are not content with that. They say, "Well, we can get an extra £10," and they load it. I only hope that this practice does not occur too often in various parts of the State.

On the general information the Minister has given us, I believe this is a very timely Bill. If it is administered correctly it will make a useful contribution to the work of the department.

**Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.15 p.m.):** On the last occasion that legislation was before us I said the Minister gave us a comprehensive introduction. I felt he had covered the measure in its entirety. However, on this occasion I am worried not so much about what the Minister has told us as about some of the aspects of the legislation that he has not mentioned.

**Mr. Pizzey:** You will see it when you get the Bill.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I dare say I will. However, if the Minister had seen fit to tell us more at this stage he could have saved us time now and on the second reading.

**Mr. Dewar:** He covered all the new features.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not think he covered many of the new ones and certainly very few of the old. It is true that the legislation is based on (1) the safety of the public and (2) the safety of the workers in the industry. As my leader has said, quite a few people trained in electrical work suffer shocks. Unfortunately some die through accidents in the industry, but in almost no case can it be shown that the worker in the industry has received the shock through his own incompetence. The cause is always something outside his control, so in the training of those working in the industry we have the foundation laid for safe work. Safety to the public is another kettle of fish. In most cases of accident, particularly of death, we find on investigation that the cause lies in the carelessness or incompetency of somebody. Some people use a hammer or a screwdriver on electrical equipment with all the faith in the world and next thing someone loses his life. With electrical shock you do not get much warning and in most cases you do not get a second chance.

I can understand the idea of carrying on the present classifications of electrical fitter and electrical mechanic. They deal directly with the public. The linesman and joiner do so only to a small degree and in most cases the effectiveness of their work is not realised by the public but when one considers the value of the equipment they bring into service one realises the need for their being highly qualified.

On those scores I think the Opposition will have no objection to the introduction of the Bill.

The question of restricted operation in industry must be viewed on its merits in each case. In this industry, taking into account the serious effects of shocks, we must approve the principle in the Bill.

It is true that the present Act has many short-comings. I could give many examples where test has shown it to be weak. I remember when a man was brought before the court in Toowoomba on a charge of doing unauthorised electrical work. A great deal of money was spent by the prosecution in the preparation of the case, and the magistrate fined the man concerned 1s. That left the Act wide open to ridicule. Many people said, "If that is the attitude, why should we worry about having a licence?" It is true that in country areas at times quite a few people have run the risk of prosecution. The union knows full well that in most cases it is useless to launch prosecutions because of the openness of the Act. That has long been the case.

Contractors have been licensed for many years. As the Minister pointed out, there has been a weakness because local authorities and regional boards have both been concerned with licences. I was astounded to hear the Minister's admission that up to this stage there was no overall authority that knew who had licences and who did not have them. I believe that was the responsibility of the regional board.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Each regional board would know.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I meant the State Electricity Commission. I believe that there should be a tie-up even at this stage. After all, there are not very many supply authorities. When a person performs work and an inspection is arranged by a local authority or a regional board, it would know when a man did faulty work. I believe that it should inform the Commission that a particular contractor was doing faulty work. In turn, the State Electricity Commission could then inform other authorities not to issue a license to that person. I suggest that the Minister's statement on that matter is rather startling.

I should like to correct one statement made by the Minister, although I know that he made it in good faith. In referring to the members of the present Electrical Workers Board, he mentioned an employees' representative. The Board at present has no employees' representative on it. The union has asked for direct representation. It is true that the secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, Mr. Archie Dawson, is on the Board, but he is not there as an employees' representative. He is there purely and simply as a certificate holders' representative. He represents contractors just as much as he represents employees, and he does not represent the tradesmen's assistants, radio mechanics, linesmen, and all the others who are associated with the electrical industry. I hope that when the legislation finally

comes before the Assembly it will provide for a reconstitution of the Electrical Workers Board to include a direct representative of the employees.

The Minister mentioned restricted licences. I think hon. members must study this provision very closely and see that we are very careful in issuing restricted licences. The legislation is designed to protect the safety of the people working in the industry and, more important still, the safety of the people who use electrical appliances. If we hand out these certificates to anyone who applies for them, there will be a great reduction in the safety of the public. I believe that it is just as important to have a qualified man put a 3-pin plug on the end of a lead as it is to have a certificated and qualified man install the power point to which that appliance is plugged into. I cannot see any difference in the safety factor. As this stage I should indicate that there may be opposition to the granting of a restricted licence to any person who asks for it. The Minister did not make a number of things clear, and he did not make clear who would be issued with restricted licences. In my opinion, that is one of the most important features of the Bill. It is designed to bring about the registration of contractors and make sure that only qualified men do the work. If we leave a loophole, the Act will be no better than it was previously.

**Mr. Dewar:** It would be only for minor stuff. A man might be selling television sets. He would have to prove that he is qualified to fiddle round with television sets.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is all very well. He might fiddle round with a television set, a wireless set or an electric jug, but people get killed fiddling with electrical appliances. Fiddling on the part of the uneducated is what I object to.

**Mr. Dewar** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Let the hon. member stick to leather-making. I do not tell him how to run his business.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Don't you think that the board would be a responsible board?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I am hoping it will. I have every confidence in the members of the board that I know personally, but I do not know everyone who will be on the board. The Minister has not told us what authority he will have to override the board. We had an earlier Bill giving power to the Minister for Main Roads. I have not much faith in his ability as an electrician.

I have no great objection to the granting of licences to those who require electrical knowledge during the carrying out of their ordinary trade—radio mechanics, refrigeration mechanics and the like, but they should be given a certain amount of electrical knowledge in the learning of their trade. If they are to hold restricted licenses,

electrical work should be part and parcel of their trade. They should be so taught in the early years of their trade, and taught sufficiently well that they understand not only how to undo and tighten a screw but also the tests to be carried out to make sure that the electrical work is done correctly. After all, it is with the small appliances that most accidents and deaths with electricity occur. We do not hear of many people getting strung up on transformers, power stations or sub-stations. Many more people are injured in the use of small electrical appliances than are reported in the Press. They get into trouble with appliances that are incorrectly connected. Today most appliances are permanently connected with the lead. I am strongly opposed to any suggestion that may be made by the Minister at a later stage to give shop assistants and the like the right to work on electrical appliances. It does not happen so much now but a little while ago, and it could happen again, we had an influx of cheap electrical appliances when men were going from house to house selling them on 2s. deposit and 10s. a week or something of that order. They used all kinds of salesman ship. If men of that type were given restricted licenses it would add to the trouble that the Minister is hoping to overcome. Without labouring the point, I suggest that restricted licences be held in very close preserve, that they may be given only to those who need them in their work and are qualified by training. It should be made a subject of their apprenticeship course. The refrigeration mechanic does electricity in his course. An examination paper could be set by the Electrical Workers Board either during the time of his apprenticeship or on completion of it. To my knowledge quite a few apprentices do not actually complete their college apprenticeship. A lad could come out of his time before he reached the year when electrical work was taught. Thus he could go into industry without the necessary knowledge. Merely because he happens to pass a particular workers' board examination it does not mean that he is actually competent. He could be lucky. He could study old examination papers, as, unfortunately, some of them have done in the past, and have enough knowledge to pass but still not enough knowledge to do the work as we should like it to be done.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned fines. I feel that there is no objection to that. There will always be variation in the ability to do work correctly. It is true that some electrical contractors are not as competent as others, and the public, when they engage a contractor, do not know whether he is a competent man or not. In most instances they have not had occasion to try him out. Most people usually look up the newspaper or the phone book, find the name of a contractor—in small towns they hire the local man—and have the work carried

out. I believe it should be made very clear in the Act that it is the responsibility of the supply authority inspectors to report to the workers' board any inefficient work by contractors. That is the only way it can be checked. Perhaps the only alternative would be to use industrial inspectors who, in many instances, are not qualified electricians.

The Minister has not mentioned anything in regard to industrial inspection of this work, to make sure that it is carried out in the proper manner, so it is obvious that we must rely on either the supply authorities or the industrial inspectors who are not qualified. I personally always favour the qualified man. If it becomes necessary, due to other factors, to bring this into line with other legislation, I certainly recommend to the Minister that an industrial inspector with the necessary electrical knowledge be appointed to handle these cases. One cannot tell by just looking at a job whether it is carried out in a safe manner. In the great majority of cases instruments have to be used to test the safety factor and those instruments require skill to operate and knowledge to interpret. Therefore, it should be a job for an electrician.

If Cabinet recognises that only electrical men should be employed as electrical inspectors, then if industrial inspectors are used to inspect any of this work they should have the same qualifications as the electrical inspectors. If such men with electrical knowledge are appointed as industrial inspectors, they could also do an extra job with some of these firms. In addition to inspecting the quality of the work they could deal with matters concerning working conditions, such as illumination and lighting.

On the matter of cancelled licences, when a firm dispenses with the services of a holder as a result of his defective work, it should be clearly understood that he is not employed elsewhere on similar work.

**Mr Pizzey:** They would have to insist on that or they would lose their licence.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** A man might be employed in such a case and it may not be discovered. If the Minister thinks back he will realise that there are many cases where electricians have been employed for a period. In some cases a small amount of work has to be done and a licensed electrician is employed. After a period his services are dispensed with and a man without a licence is employed. In such cases they may not be doing outside contracts but work within their own establishments, work that should be done by a licensed man. In many cases after dispensing with the services of the licensed man, instead of bringing another licensed man from outside they employ someone who has obtained a small amount of knowledge by working with the licensed employee.

**Mr. Pizzey:** It would be a very foolish firm that had an incompetent man to do these jobs.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** He might be an incompetent electrician but he could do the little odd jobs they would require him to do and it is wrong, from my point of view, to allow him to do it.

The Minister mentioned that a manufacturer of power tools was not required to hold a contractor's licence. I suggest that some arrangement be made so that these articles are checked before they leave the factory. I have seen faulty new equipment. Some time ago I repaired a power drill that was perfectly safe when it was bought. It burnt out very quickly and on investigation we found that it had been connected in a very untradesmanlike way. Consequently it broke down in a short space of time. I have seen instances of badly connected wires in brand-new products, particularly when the connections are made inside the unit, for instance, a modern iron. In other cases wires are bared too far back and although there are no loose wires there are bare wires in close proximity to each other. Those are the things that can happen when there is no check inspection. I think a check should be made of all electrical goods being manufactured for sale to the public.

The Minister suggested that administration of the Act should be given to the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity. It is true that the Minister for Development controls electrical supply throughout Queensland, but I do not know whether it would be the right thing to give him the administration of the Act. We have to take into account that apprentices at the end of their term have to pass the examination of the Electrical Workers' Board. If they fail to pass the examination they again come under the control of the Apprenticeship Committee. In other words, there is a complete tie-up between the Apprenticeship Committee and the Electrical Workers' Board. If the Minister wants to transfer administration of the Act to the Minister for Development, he would have to transfer administration of the Apprenticeship Act. Interim certificates and improver's licences are handled by the Apprenticeship Committee. If the Minister's suggestion was adopted provision would have to be made for the granting of interim certificates and improver's licences under this Act. It would not be proper to have two authorities dealing with the same persons, the same examination and the same apprenticeship system. It would be undesirable to have those matters coming under two Ministers. In a number of cases it is necessary to issue the lad with an interim certificate. In other cases he may fail in one year and it is necessary for the Apprenticeship Committee to issue him with an improver's licence. Although he is outside his five-year apprenticeship period, while he holds an improver's licence he is virtually still an apprentice and under the control of the Apprenticeship Committee.

I suggest to the Minister that he consider the points I have raised and perhaps in his reply or at the second reading stage give further details.

Not having seen the Bill I cannot deal in detail with the clauses, but I assure the Minister that I will go carefully through them. I shall tell him if I do not like some of the provisions and I will endorse those with which I agree.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) (8.40 p.m.): The main point in this Bill was reached halfway through the Minister's introduction when he made the statement that it is essential that persons in the electrical industry should be thoroughly competent. I could not agree with him more. Because of the dangerous nature of the industry it is set apart from most of the everyday trades. The electrical industry is perhaps the only industry wherein all the workers should have a thorough knowledge of resuscitation. Although all electrical tradesmen are thoroughly competent, nevertheless it must be admitted that accidents occur from time to time. However, the greatest number of electrical accidents are caused from sources outside the industry when thoroughly incompetent persons have tampered with electrical appliances or circuits.

I was interested to hear one hon. member in the Chamber interject when the hon. member for Bulimba was speaking about restricted tickets. The hon. member interjected and said that the technician would be doing only trifling things. In my opinion there is no such thing as a trifling part of electricity. One of the greatest causes of accidents is the complete lack of appreciation of the earthing system of any electrical appliance. I have heard it said on many occasions, by persons without any knowledge, that after all it was only the earth wire and it did not matter. The earthing system in the electrical industry is the most important part of the system from the safety angle. Electrical accidents are caused mainly by the incompetent persons who meddle with electrical appliances, and not by tradesmen.

I have with me a sample of the type of electrical accidents and most of them, strangely enough, have occurred in recent weeks. On one occasion in Toowoomba a man was electrocuted when he was using a lead and standing on a wet concrete floor. Then, there was another case in Toowoomba where a shop assistant received a severe shock from a cash register she was handling. Just recently a contractor was electrocuted when using a jack hammer. I notice that in this case the City Council inspector found that a wire had been incorrectly connected. I am not familiar with the case but I should say, at a guess, that the wire would have been the earth wire on the jack hammer.

I might now quote a case where a department administered by the Minister who introduced this Bill—the Education Department

—was exposing students to the danger of being electrocuted at one of the colleges. It was only because my daughter—

**Mr. Pizzey:** I hope you reported it as soon as you found out.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** Not only did I report it, but I took it up with the teacher at the school and pointed out to her the danger she was exposing the children to.

My daughter mentioned to me casually one evening that they were doing laundry work and that they were ironing while standing on a concrete floor. One of the worst hazards that can be set up with electrical appliances is by using an electric iron while standing on a concrete floor with no protection such as a rubber mat between the person and earth. It only needs a fault to develop in the iron with perhaps bad earthing and a person using the iron immediately bridges the supply to earth and so you have another case of electrocution. I contacted the teacher at the school and pointed out the danger. I suggested that before asking any pupils to carry out more of the work she should provide them with a rubber mat to stand on.

The electrical trade is fraught with dangers, particularly when people meddle with something of which they know very little.

The Minister has indicated that by the Bill the Board as set up is given power to grant restricted certificates. Like the hon. member for Bulimba I view the provision with grave suspicion. Although the Electrical Trades Union recognises that in certain circumstances there is a need for restricted tickets they have always felt that refrigeration and radio mechanics, for instance, should as part of their curriculum be required to have a very much greater degree of knowledge of the electrical systems. I view with suspicion any issue of restricted tickets if they could mean a general breaking down of the standard of the trade. I have in mind the safety factor. In Brisbane we have chain stores selling the component parts of iron and jug cords. I have seen female shop assistants—and the Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union has also brought it to our attention—telling purchasers, "You put this wire here and that wire there." The component parts are sold and taken home and doubtless assembled without the person's having any real knowledge of the consequences of a wrong connection. That has been going on in the chain stores in Brisbane for many years. I wonder if the provision covering restricted tickets will make it easy for the chain stores to employ labour to assemble jug cords and the like and so eliminate the need to have a tradesman carry out the work. If so it will open up the field for more electrical accidents in the State in the years to come. The use of restricted tickets will not end there if it applies to the chain stores and to certain electrical appliances. If we are going to

break down the standard of tradesmen to enable that sort of work to be carried out, the person who receives the restricted ticket will not be content with merely assembling jug and iron cords. Sooner or later somebody will come along with an electric iron and ask him to have a look at the cord and see what is wrong with it. Having found that there is nothing wrong with the cord, he will then proceed to delve into the works of the electric iron or other electrical appliance. In years gone by an electric iron consisted merely of an element between two plates; but modern irons, with different types of heat control and different types of automatic switches inside them, can be handled only by a person who is thoroughly competent in his work. If we reduce the standard of the electrical ticket by issuing tickets to enable the type of work that I have mentioned to be carried out, I think that members of the public will be exposed to much greater danger of electrocution than they are now. That is why I, for one, will not be fully convinced by the Minister's explanation of the use of restricted tickets until I have read the Bill and understand completely what is meant by a restricted ticket. If the Bill does not contain a clear indication, then it is the Minister's duty to make a firm declaration on what restricted tickets actually are.

The Minister said that if we license electrical contractors there will be a check on persons applying for a licence and there will be a certain amount of control. I do not dispute that for a moment, and on broad principles I think that members of the Opposition support the proposal. But the Minister also said that at present there was very little control over a contractor who moved from district to district, who did his work and was paid in advance. Under the present system, a contractor must apply to the electric authority for a licence to carry out work within that authority's boundaries. If he proceeds to an area controlled by another authority in another part of the State, he must obtain a licence before he can perform any work. I fail to see how the granting of a State licence will overcome the problem of the contractor who flits from area to area. If a person wishes to carry on a snide business, he will find ways and means of circumventing any legislation that is brought down. I do not see how the mere fact of licensing a contractor to work in any part of Queensland will give any greater control over him than we have now. The control that is exercised over him at present is the inspection of his work by local authority inspectors. Even though this provision is desirable, I do not think that it will materially affect the position to which the Minister referred, that is, where a contractor decides to shift from one area to another.

The Minister also mentioned in his introductory speech that there was provision in the Bill for a firm of contractors to obtain registration, but he said that it provided that

one of the partners in the firm must hold an electrical licence. Mention was made of the case of a father doing work for a close relative. There is power to do that now. It is merely a matter of proving to the authority that he is a certified electrician. Then he can obtain a permit to carry out a particular job.

The Minister has failed to assure the Committee of the position that will apply to a company dealing in electrical appliances. He has not told us whether there is any provision for the company to obtain a contractor's licence if they employ a certified electrician. The position of a company of contractors is bound up with the fact that one of the members of the firm must hold a licence. The Minister has not explained to my satisfaction whether companies presently operating in the selling of electrical appliances will be able to obtain a contractor's licence if they employ a certified electrician.

Another point to which the Minister made no reference was the enforcement of the legislation when it becomes law.

**Mr. Pizzey:** You have not got the Bill yet. These things may be all in there.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** These are the things I want to know.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Surely you can see them when you get the Bill.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** At the second reading stage it is no good our saying, "I wanted to say so-and-so, but you said it might be in the Bill." All of this Government's legislation has been famous for the lack of information given about it to the Committee during its introduction. That is what disturbs me. Why should I not be disturbed when the Minister talks about issuing restricted tickets? Am I not entitled to ask him what he means by it?

**Mr. Pizzey:** You will find out in a moment.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** The Minister made no reference to the enforcing of the Bill. In most legislation of an industrial nature reference has been made to the policing of the law by inspectors. No reference has been made to the fact that when the Bill becomes law qualified electrical inspectors will police it.

Dealing with the provision concerning the place of business, the Leader of the Opposition said it could react unfairly to the person who is engaged in part-time work, or the person who is semi-retired. I agree with that. If the Bill makes provision that a contractor must have a place of business, it is very little use if the contractor goes to the Board and says, "My postal address is Box 45, Post Office, Woolloomooloo." If the Minister is to insist that he have a place of business, it should be a place of business registered either under the Companies Act

or with the Registrar of Firms. It is only when firms are so registered that there is some form of redress for persons who have been taken for a ride by them or where the companies have flitted from area to area, receiving money in advance, and not completing their jobs.

In conclusion, I feel that the Bill will go a long way towards bringing a sort of stability to the industry because there will be classifications of contractors and workmen. But, as I said earlier, I am not entirely satisfied with the Minister's explanation on the introduction of the Bill and I will reserve any further remarks until I have read it.

**Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (9.1 p.m.):** I do not intend to speak to this Bill as an expert on electricity or electricians, but I am concerned with any measure of this nature that deals with the safety of the public. There are certain observations I feel should be made in that regard.

Firstly, I should like to mention supervision of people selling and servicing TV's, radios and other small electrical appliances. Many of these people have perhaps commenced business in stores selling a variety of goods, and from limited types of electrical appliances have moved into the sale of TV's and radio without having any particular knowledge of the mechanics of those instruments. In many cases they have taken upon themselves the task of installing these sets and the public is entitled to some measure of protection from them.

In many cases they are not only incompetent, more or less "having a go" at the installation of the appliances, but they make similar charges to those made by fully-qualified electricians capable of handling the appliances. I think there should be some greater supervision over such stores. I refer mainly to one-man stores. Perhaps big businesses can afford to employ an electrician or electricians who are qualified to service any electrical appliance that may be sold. But there are many one-man shops the proprietors of which take it upon themselves to attend to the maintenance of the instruments they sell. I think it is something the Minister should look at in the interests of public safety.

Moving on to the matter of restricted licences, I hope that the Minister in his Bill is not going to allow restricted licences to those people who are handling only TV sets and radios and who are not qualified electricians fully aware of the dangers involved in the installation of such appliances. I hope that anyone who is concerned with the sale, installation or maintenance of any electrical instrument is not qualified only in that particular field or in relation to that particular instrument but is a fully qualified electrician. It is not only a matter of maintaining a set. It involves the installation and the handling of the electricity supply within the dwelling where the instrument is installed.

I fear that restricted licenses would not give the public the protection that is necessary in the installation of these instruments.

That is one aspect of public safety in the Bill which has to be considered. I do not think the Minister has dealt with the matter. I refer to the availability of electrical equipment in retail stores such as Woolworths, Coles, Myers and other retail establishments. A layman can go to any of those stores and buy wire, switches, sockets and tools for use in the installation of electrical equipment. No-one at those stores questions the qualifications of the purchaser as an electrician. A person can walk in and buy wire, switches and so on and go home and install electrical equipment. No check is made on the source of supply of those goods. It is virtually useless to licence contractors or service men in the electrical field if the public generally are given every opportunity to purchase these goods in retail stores and install equipment in their own homes.

Naturally I would not buy electrical equipment from a store and do installation work in the home of someone else, but I may do the work in my own home.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Could you fix a fuse at home if it blew?

**Mr. MELLOY:** That is the only thing I could do, but it is a minor matter.

The Minister must consider the danger to the public from the availability of electrical equipment in retail stores. I do not know whether we can restrict the sale of such electrical equipment. The mere fact that a restricted licensee is employed in the retail section of a store where electrical equipment is sold does not prevent an unlicensed person from purchasing the equipment. In the interests of safety of the public the Minister should look into that matter.

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (9.8 p.m.), in reply: At the introductory stage a reasonable amount of information is given as to the contents of a Bill, but every phase of it cannot be covered. Most of the Aunt Sallys put up by hon. members opposite were of their own making. At the introductory stage they could have dealt with the certification of electrical workers and whether it was wise to licence contractors. Nearly every one of the problems they raised will be solved very quickly for them when they read the Bill and see how these matters are covered.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we should hesitate before we start licensing people, but on balance, when it is a matter of life and death, I think in electrical work it is important that some control be continued over contractors who perform such work.

The Bill contains a provision giving the right of appeal to the Minister, not that he would determine the issue himself. The Bill gives him the power to call on some

highly-qualified electrical authority to arbitrate. If there was no right of appeal there would be the danger that the Board could restrict the work to a certain favoured few in the community. That is not our intention. The intention is to have such control as will ensure the greatest possible safety and security for the public.

After hon. members read the Bill and digest it very carefully they will find there are very few points with which they will disagree. I will not delay the Committee any longer. I think it is desirable to have the Bill printed as soon as possible and in the hands of hon. members.

Motion (Mr. Pizzey) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 9.12 p.m.