

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 1965**

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## WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST, 1965

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

### QUESTIONS

RENTS AND ACCOMMODATION CHARGES PAID BY PENSIONERS.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

What action, if any, does he propose to take under the Landlord and Tenant Act or in any other way to ensure that the increase of 10s. per week in the rent and/or board and lodging allowance (known as Supplementary Assistance) as provided for in the recent Federal Budget for certain pensioners, is not grabbed by predatory landlords in the form of increased rentals and charges for accommodation?

*Answer:—*

“The Honourable Member’s question contains imputations as well as being hypothetical but I might here say that matters relating to “The Landlord and Tenant Acts” are constantly being kept under view by my Department.”

SUBSIDY TO YOUNG WOMEN’S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Does the Government subsidise in any way the work and activities of the Young Women’s Christian Association, and, if so, in what manner and to what cost annually to the State?

(2) If no form of subsidy is granted, can he inform the House if a subsidy is granted in all other States and, if so, why has his Government adopted a contrary policy?

*Answers:—*

(1) “There is no direct subsidy paid to the Young Women’s Christian Association by the Government; but I understand that the National Fitness Council make an annual contribution to the Association as assistance towards Leadership Training.”

(2) “I am not aware of the practice adopted in other States.”

UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES IN SALE OF ELECTRICAL GOODS.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

(1) Is he aware of the ever-increasing volume of false and misleading advertising relating to the sale of electrical goods?

(2) Are any steps being taken by his Department to investigate (a) the huge discounts being offered in connection with the purchase of refrigerators, washing machines &c., and (b) the gift of a suite

of bedroom furniture or similar articles to the purchasers of certain type refrigerators?

(3) What steps does he intend to take to curb the trade practices of these “Refrigerator Racketeers”?

*Answers:—*

(1) “It is recognized that there are unhealthy practices developing in the electrical goods retailing business, but I cannot take notice of generalised allegations such as that made by the Honourable Member. However, should the Honourable Member furnish details, I shall be pleased to have the matter examined.”

(2) (a) It is well known that large discounts and gifts of varied descriptions are offered by some distributors in order to promote sales of refrigerators and other electrical goods. While this is a matter which obviously should be taken into account by a prospective purchaser in considering any deal offered to him, it would be an unwarranted interference with the rights of the individual to attempt to lay down by Departmental edict the precise nature of any arrangement which might be entered into by a purchaser with the supplier of the article he desires to obtain. (b) “The Trade Coupons Acts, 1933 to 1947,” prohibit the issue of coupons and, briefly, the gift of goods contingent upon the sale of an article to a purchaser made at the time of issue or delivery of the article purchased. Again, no action can be sustained, unless there is proof of a particular sale made and of the making of a gift of goods in terms of the advertisement. Therefore, if the Honourable Member can furnish such proof, I shall be pleased to have the matter investigated.”

(3) “See answers to (1) and (2). It is also thought that any legislation which the Commonwealth Parliament might enact, relating to trade practices, could possibly also have a bearing on this matter.”

TRAINING OF AUSTRALIANS IN PEARL CULTURE.—Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Is every company indenting Japanese pearl-culture technicians required to agree to instruct local labour in the techniques of pearl-culture production?

(2) Does this mean that local labour must be trained in the fundamentals of the nucleus-insertion operations and also in other techniques basic to the industry?

(3) Are any steps taken to ensure that such training takes place?

(4) How many Australians have definitely been trained in all, or any, of the techniques involved?

(5) Has any consideration been given to (a) reopening, as a basis of training for Australians and especially Torres

Strait Islanders, the experimental pearl-culture station established many years ago at Thursday Island and (b) any other steps to train and encourage Australians to set up pearl-culture farms so that the industry will cease to be completely dependent on Japanese interests?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) "My Government has agreed to the entry of Japanese pearl culture technicians into Queensland on condition that no work should be allotted them which could be performed by local labour and that Australians (including Torres Strait Islanders) should be instructed by the Japanese specialists in the various techniques of pearl culture. Whilst the fundamental techniques of nucleus insertion operations are no secret to Australian technicians they remain a specialist's task and the Japanese operatives are, in the main, University graduates or of similar academic achievement. It is regrettable to date that candidates for instruction with the necessary educational background and qualifications have not been forthcoming to test the availability of this tuition. The pearl culture industry has been established with success in the Torres Strait with the use of Japanese technical skill. It now employs over 500 Australians compared with about 35 Japanese technicians. A considerable number of the Australians have received training in the general nursery procedures and associated functions. In my opinion, the industry has a more pressing need for research into pearl shell farming than for training of Australian technicians, and my Government has decided to promote and participate in such a programme of research. Steps towards promoting this programme are now being taken by the Department of Harbours and Marine with the Commonwealth, the Island Industries Board and C.S.I.R.O. I cannot say at this stage, whether this programme will call for the re-opening of the experimental pearl culture station at Thursday Island."

EMPLOYEES IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.—  
Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

What were the numbers of employees in each of the South-eastern, South-western, Central and Northern Divisions of the Railway Department at June 30, 1965?

Answer:—

"South-Eastern Division, 12,160; South-Western Division, 2,945; Central Division, 5,203; Northern Division, 5,514; Total, 25,822."

REDUCTION IN TAX ON ROAD TRANSPORT OF STOCK.—Mr. Hewitt, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

With drought conditions still prevailing in most parts of Queensland, will he consider a substantial reduction in road

tax payable where the Railway Department finds itself unable to cope with the heavy numbers of stock being forced on to the market as this applies particularly to Central Queensland and the Burnett River districts?

Answer:—

"The Government is aware of the difficulties facing primary producers in the drought-stricken areas in Queensland and has rendered substantial financial help in alleviating their position. Rebates allowed through the Railway Department in freight on fodder and starving stock during the months of April to July last totalled £278,212 whilst the road permit fees waived for the transport of fodder for starving stock from July 5 to August 8 last totalled £10,260. Whilst every effort is being made by the Railway Department to supply all the livestock wagons necessary to shift the livestock offering, the great demand for wagons is causing some delays. However, no railway system can be expected to have reserve stocks of wagons to meet abnormal requirements. Consideration has been given by State Cabinet to a reduction in road transport fees but it is not possible to draw a line between the normal road movements of livestock and those which are specifically caused by the lack of rail wagons without creating a problem which could involve the State in legal difficulty and possible loss of considerable revenue from other sources. The fees being charged for the road movement of livestock generally are half or less than half of the fees levied for the transport of general goods which, in itself, represents a concession of over £250,000 per annum to stock consignors. However, State Cabinet has requested the Railway Department to take every possible action to ensure that in the allocation of rail trucks due regard is paid to the most drought-stricken areas of the State and that severely drought-stricken stock are given priority over movements of primarily a marketing nature."

CONSTRUCTION OF ARMY BASE IN TOWNSVILLE AREA.—

(a) Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has he seen the statement by the Deputy Mayor of Townsville, Alderman G. V. Roberts, as reported in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* on Friday, August 20, 1965, pledging the full support of the Townsville City Council to the Commonwealth Constructing Authority and the Army in the construction of the new Army base in Townsville, but deprecating the methods of negotiation employed by the Army and stating, *inter alia*, "The fact that the Mayor's letter of six weeks ago has not been answered by the Minister,

indicates that the Army will not be satisfied until it gets every demand. I think under these circumstances that the matter must be referred to the Premier to have it settled on a Premier to Prime Minister basis?"

(2) Is he in a position to make a statement on this vital issue and, if not, is he prepared to ascertain the intention of the Department of the Army as regards the Townsville area in order that careful detailed planning might proceed at the earliest opportunity?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "The Townsville City Council has raised certain queries with me on this matter and these points are now receiving consideration."

(b) Mr. Graham, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

With regard to the proposal of the Federal Government to establish an Army Base North of Townsville, was any approach made to the Federal Government by his Government to have the Base established at the point chosen? If so, why was this area recommended?

Answer:—

"No."

INSTALLATION OF BOOM GATES AT RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS, TOWNSVILLE.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

In view of the three level-crossing accidents—one of them fatal—which recently occurred in Townsville, when is it intended to erect boom gates and flashing lights at these points for the protection of users of these crossings as well as for the peace of mind of the trainmen?

Answer:—

"At two of the level crossings where accidents recently occurred electrically operated warning signs are provided. At the third level crossing where the fatal accident occurred there are Police stop signs as well as an Australian Standard Level Crossing sign. The Department has a progressive policy of installing boom gates and flashing lights at a number of level crossings each year and Hugh Street, Townsville, is included in the programme for this financial year. However, it must be said on behalf of the Railway Department that there is also some responsibility on the part of motorists to exercise care at all times, and that there are set traffic practices to be followed when approaching Railway crossings."

NEW SUPREME COURT BUILDING, TOWNSVILLE.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

What stage has been reached in the planning of a new Supreme Court building for Townsville and where is it intended to site the building?

Answer:—

"Progress is continuing on this matter but the stage is still not reached where a public announcement thereon may be made."

TOBACCO INDUSTRY STABILISATION SCHEME.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Further to his Answer to my Question on March 23, 1965, relative to the Tobacco Stabilisation Scheme, that this scheme should definitely safeguard tobacco growers during the 1965 selling season and in view of what has transpired since that date, particularly yesterday's disastrous sale as reported in *The Courier-Mail* of August 24, is it the Government's intention to take action to eliminate any hardship suffered by tobacco farmers?

Answer:—

"I am very much aware of the difficulties which have been encountered during this year's tobacco leaf sales and I consider that many of these difficulties would have been avoided if all manufacturers had purchased their requirements in the auction line instead of allowing so much leaf to go to negotiation and arbitration. As I indicated in my reply to the Honourable Member's question of March 23, 1965, the Commonwealth Government has undertaken to ensure the sale of all tobacco leaf falling within the accepted grade schedule up to a total of 26 million pounds weight at an average minimum price of 125d. per lb. based on a normal quality crop. I have every reason to believe that the Commonwealth Government will meet this undertaking and that before this year is out all tobacco leaf which falls within the accepted grade schedule will be sold at at least the minimum price for its appropriate grade. In view of this every grower who has delivered tobacco leaf of acceptable grade to this year's sales should receive payment at least equivalent to the minimum prices for the grades of leaf delivered by him."

APPEALS BY GROWERS AGAINST TOBACCO QUOTAS.—Mr. Lloyd, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) How many appeals have been received by the Tobacco Stabilisation Interim Quota Committee against its quota allocations?

(2) How many of these appeals have been upheld?

(3) Has the committee inquired into the number of growers who may be forced out of the industry or into the position of part-time growers by reduced production created, if the interim quotas become operative?

(4) Has consideration been given to the question of special financial assistance to growers most severely affected by the interim quota on a Commonwealth-State basis and having regard to the answer to Question (3) and the withdrawal of trading bank financial accommodation due to the operation of the interim quota?

*Answers:—*

(1) "Until such time as the necessary legislation is passed there can be no statutory issue of tobacco leaf marketing quotas or determination of appeals. In the meantime all that can be done is to give growers an indication as to how their quotas are likely to work out under the formula put forward by the industry. I have previously outlined this formula in answer to questions in this House. An Interim Quota Committee has been carrying out this work and the Committee has invited growers to submit requests for review so that all circumstances can be taken into consideration. The Chairman of the Interim Quota Committee has advised me that a total of 817 quota indications have been given to tobacco growers and that 506 of these growers have so far submitted in writing requests for review. In addition a substantial number of growers have made personal approaches to members of the Committee."

(2) "The Interim Quota Committee is reviewing all cases in which a request in writing has been lodged and some cases have been reviewed several times. So far the initial quota indications given to 162 growers have been increased following review. It is understood that some thirty requests for review most of which have only recently been received are awaiting consideration by the Committee. These are expected to be completed within the next week."

(3) "The Interim Committee is endeavouring as far as possible to ensure that growers are retained in the industry. It will not be possible, however, to properly assess the position until the Interim Committee has completed its task. In the meantime, however, I am informed that a number of cases have arisen where the grower concerned would have little chance of surviving in the industry regardless of quota. It cannot be assumed therefore that because a grower leaves the industry he has been forced out by the quota system. Rather is it the case that in the absence of the stabilisation scheme and quotas many more growers would be forced out of the industry."

(4) "It would not be possible to give proper consideration to any question of financial assistance until the final position is known."

**BRIGALOW LAND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.—**  
Mr. Lloyd, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) What was the total expenditure, as at June 30, 1965, on the Brigalow Land Development Scheme?

(2) What was the cost, including State subsidy, as at the same date, of road construction by local authorities within the area of the scheme?

(3) How many blocks have been settled and what were the aggregate prices received for (a) freehold and (b) leasehold land?

(4) In how many cases have blocks of the land either reverted to the Crown or been resold as (a) freehold and (b) leasehold, since the inception of the scheme?

(5) What was the existing indebtedness of those blocks at the time of reversion or resale?

*Answers:—*

(1) "£2,174,607."

(2) "£247,913."

(3) "Eighteen sold at auction which aggregated £491,000 in purchase prices payable over 10 years. Sixty-four Purchase Leases opened to ballot, the aggregate purchase prices being £757,750 payable over twenty-five years. Thirteen Grazing Homesteads opened to ballot for which rent only is received. Ninety-five total blocks."

(4) "Nine blocks have reverted to the Crown. Seven of these were subsequently sold at auction under freeholding title. One was balloted for as a Grazing Homestead and the remaining one balloted for as a Purchase Lease."

(5) "£9,973 on two of the blocks which has since been recovered when the blocks were sold at auction. The other seven blocks reverted to the Crown before any advances were made."

**PRODUCTION OF LOW-GRADE SUGAR.—**  
Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

On the subject of the poor quality of raw sugar manufactured last year, will he supply full particulars of the quantity and quality of raw sugar produced to the latest available date in this season by individual sugar mills?

*Answer:—*

"The subject of raw sugar quality is most complicated and it is not possible to stipulate a single measure of quality. In effect, quality of sugar means its acceptability to refiners. For many years the

quality of Australian raw sugar (i.e., its acceptability to refiners) has steadily improved. Last year, due to certain circumstances, there were some difficulties. The Government and the Sugar Board are determined that only high quality sugar will be supplied to customers and a system of checking has been set up to ensure that this is achieved. Mills are co-operating with the Sugar Board and the system is working well. There is no doubt that the continued improvement each year in quality will be resumed and no difficulties, such as occurred last year, will reappear. As I have indicated, it is not possible to stipulate a quality measure, but the Honourable Member may be assured that this season's manufacture is good and our customers are satisfied. The quantity of sugar made at individual mills to the latest common date is as per the list which I now lay on the Table of the House."

*Paper.*—Whereupon Mr. Dewar laid upon the Table of the House the list referred to.

**OFF-LOADING OF CHILDREN FROM CHARTERED BUS.**—Mr. Knox, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

In view of an incident some weeks ago when school children returning from a sports meeting were off-loaded from a chartered bus some seven miles from their destination, what was the nature and extent of the investigations made by the Transport Department into this incident and the consequential action which the Department was able to take?

*Answer:*—

"Investigations into the incident mentioned by the Honourable Member were carried out by a Transport Department Officer. The bus was operating under charter to the Banyo High School and in the course of his enquiries the officer interviewed the Principal of the Banyo High School, the School's Sports Master, the Officer in Charge of the School Cadets and two Prefects. He interviewed the owner of the omnibus service and the driver of the bus concerned. A report was also obtained by the Commissioner of Police from a Police Officer who was on traffic duty at the intersection of Countess Street and College Road at the time of the incident and who was approached by the bus driver prior to the driver's instructing the children to leave the bus. It was established that the off-loading was decided upon by the driver after an incident involving the improper use of the stop bell on the bus. In this regard Section 30 of the Traffic Acts provides, *inter alia*, that any person using an omnibus operating under a permit issued under the State Transport Act who misconducts himself or causes inconvenience, annoyance or discomfort to any person whilst using such vehicle, may, in addition to being guilty of an offence, be removed from the vehicle by the driver. The papers were submitted to

the Solicitor-General who advised that the driver's liability would be a civil liability. The Solicitor-General stated that he could not suggest any action on the part of the Commissioner and that the action clearly would have to be taken civilly by the person who entered into the contract with the bus service. In the circumstances no further action was taken by the Commissioner for Transport."

**TAXABLE INCOME UNDER HOUSING COMMISSION LIFE INSURANCE SCHEME.**—Mr. Coburn, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

As the insurance cover, free of charge, by life insurance for an amount sufficient to liquidate a borrower's indebtedness to the Queensland Housing Commission in the event of his death is restricted to borrowers under the age of forty years whose taxable income does not exceed £1,040 per annum, will he consider increasing the allowable taxable income because of the change in circumstances since it was initiated?

*Answer:*—

"It is not at present proposed to review the conditions for this free life insurance which is intended as a measure of protection to the low income group for whom the cost of insurance premiums could be an obstacle to their taking out normal life insurance cover."

**MERZ McLELLAN REPORT ON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.**—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) Was the firm of Merz McLellan retained as adviser to the State Electricity Commission?

(2) What was the amount of the annual retainer fee?

(3) When was the last report received from this firm?

*Answers:*—

(1) "Yes, such action received approval in November, 1962."

(2) "£750 per annum, reduced to £250 per annum in 1965."

(3) "June 25, 1965."

**APPOINTMENT OF SAFETY OFFICER TO STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.**—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) In view of recent developments towards safety in the Electrical Industry, has there been any move to appoint a safety officer to the State Electricity Commission?

(2) Are there any trained staff, presently employed by the Commission, who could suitably fill such a position?

(3) If such an appointment has not been made, is it proposed to appoint such a person and when?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "Yes. A recommendation is in fact being submitted for the approval of the Governor in Council tomorrow."

ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS IN MACKAY AREA.—Mr. Graham, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Has a survey been taken with regard to the necessity of providing further educational facilities in the South and East Mackay areas? If so, what was the result of the survey?

Answer:—

"Yes. A site of about 15 acres has been acquired for a future Primary School at Mackay South. Negotiations have been undertaken with the Land Administration Commission for portion of an estate to be reclaimed by the Crown in the eastern part of Mackay to be made available for school purposes to enable a separate Infants' School to be established in the Victoria Park Area."

SMALL-BOAT HARBOUR, MACKAY.—Mr. Graham, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

When is it anticipated that finance will be available for the establishment of a small-boat harbour in Mackay?

Answer:—

"The provision of small craft facilities in the Mackay area presents problems of which the Honourable Member is aware. The Department of Harbours and Marine has taken up with Mackay Harbour Board the question whether that Board could make sufficient space available within the confines of the Harbour to accommodate facilities for small craft. A reply is awaited from the Board."

USE OF CLOSED SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—Mr. Newton, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What is the number of secondary and primary schools that have been closed by the Department of Education in (a) the metropolitan area and (b) the rest of the State since 1957?

(2) Of this number, how many have been (a) taken over by his Department for other purposes, (b) taken over by other Government Departments and (c) sold for removal in (i) the metropolitan area and (ii) the rest of the State?

(3) In regard to Question 2 (b) what are the names of the schools in both categories in the metropolitan area that have been taken over by Government Departments and what are the names of such Government Departments?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) Metropolitan:—Secondary, 3; Primary, 8. (b) Rest of State:—Secondary, Nil; Primary, 339."

(2) "(i) Metropolitan:—(a), 8; (b), 2; (c) Nil. (ii) Rest of State:—(a) 32; (b), 1; (c), 169."

(3) "When the Fortitude Valley Opportunity School was closed the building was taken over by the Civil Defence Organisation and when the Industrial High School was closed the accommodation was taken over by the Department of Mines."

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL HOUSES, ZILLMERE, CHERMSIDE AND STAFFORD.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) What was the total increase in rates payable to the Brisbane City Council by the Queensland Housing Commission in respect to Commission houses in Zillmere, Chermshire and Stafford?

(2) How many employees are engaged on maintenance work on Housing Commission houses at Zillmere, Chermshire and Stafford?

Answers:—

(1) "The extraction of the particulars sought by the Honourable Member will entail considerable time in dissection of the Commission's accounts, and as soon as the information is available I will advise the Honourable Member."

(2) "Thirty-one employees carry out maintenance work as required in North Brisbane suburbs, including Zillmere, Chermshire and Stafford. Further maintenance is carried out by contract."

PROTECTION AGAINST MATERIALS FALLING FROM MOTOR TRUCKS.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the danger to pedestrians and other motorists, from falling articles, will he take appropriate departmental action to have all loads of rubbish, &c., adequately covered when being transported in open vehicles?

Answer:—

"This matter has already received the attention of the Police Department and was raised with the Australian Road Traffic Code Committee, on which the Commonwealth and all States are represented, for consideration on an Australia-wide basis, having in mind the present trend towards a uniformity in traffic laws. The Queensland law at present creates it an offence for a

person to drive a vehicle upon a road with insecurely fastened loading and an offence for a person to cause anything to be deposited or dropped on a roadway in a manner likely to cause damage or danger."

**EXCESS CLAUSE, MOTOR VEHICLE COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE POLICIES.**—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Is he aware that some Insurance companies require car owners under the age of twenty-five years to pay as much as the first £75 of damage cost?

(2) Is there any restriction as to the amount that Insurance companies can demand as first payment?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "Because of the bad claims experience in the under 25 age group, the Insurance Commissioner last year raised no objection to the imposition of a special £25 excess in this age group without premium adjustment. This excess can be increased in one of two ways:—(1) A motorist in the age group may choose to accept a further loading in the ordinary course of effecting a policy so that he may gain the benefit of a lower premium rate. Thus, if he accepted a £50 loading, the total loading would become £75, the first £50 of which would be of his own choosing; and (2) There are some insurers who require a person in this age group who has taken out his first driver's license to take a policy with a total loading of £75. This policy is issued at a reduced premium rate. The practice is not common to all insurers. I have no doubt that a youthful driver with a good record would have little trouble in obtaining a cover with a much lower excess than £75. I might add that I have not been altogether happy with the manner in which the standard £25 excess has been applied in all cases in this age group. Not every incident in which the vehicle of a youthful driver is involved is caused through the negligence of that driver. For all the difficulty of establishing negligence in every case, I cannot accept the application of a £25 excess to such extreme cases as where the damaged vehicle is lawfully parked at the time of impact. There are a number of instances of varying merit which similarly offend my concept of fairness. I have asked the Insurance Commissioner to convey certain of my views in this behalf to the underwriters and I am awaiting further advice."

**SHIPMENT OF HIDES FROM CAIRNS.**—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) Is he aware that approximately 60,000 hides per annum are diverted a distance of 245 miles by road from Queerah Meatworks, Cairns, for shipment from the port of Townsville?

(2) Are port facilities available to stow and handle this cargo from the port of Cairns, six miles from the works, and, if not, has any action been taken to remedy the position?

*Answer:—*

(1 and 2) "The matter is one for Cairns Harbour Board and I suggest the Honourable Member pursue his enquiry with the Board. For the Honourable Member's information, the quantum of hides exported through the port of Cairns was 334 tons 13 cwt. in 1962-1963 and 373 tons 9 cwt. in 1963-1964. I understand these were treated hides. I also understand that Queerah Meatworks desired to export hides through the Port of Cairns and sought a site for treatment in the harbour area adjacent to the shipping basin. Because of the noxious nature of the work and its effect on the Port and the City generally, the Board refused the application. I am assured that if the meatworks establishes its proposed treatment works in an area suitable for a noxious industry and introduces treated hides into the Port area, the trade will be welcomed by the Harbour Board."

**USE OF RAILWAY BUILDINGS, MILLAA MILLAA BRANCH LINE.**—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

In view of Departmental accommodation lying vacant following the closure and progressive removal of the Millaa Millaa branch line railway—

(1) Have the buildings been disposed of? If so, what were the individual prices received by the Railway Department?

(2) If not, what are the present rentals being received and what is the purpose in allowing buildings and housing to be left lying idle to deteriorate, where no railway exists to transport them for re-erection on new locations?

*Answers:—*

(1) "The following buildings, trucking yards and locomotive water tanks have been sold for removal at the prices shown:—

Item	Location	Price
		£
Trolley Shed .. ..	Yungaburra .. ..	10
Station Building .. ..	Yungaburra .. ..	200
Goods Shed .. ..	Peeramon .. ..	8
Shelter Shed .. ..	Peeramon .. ..	3
Shelter Shed .. ..	Kureen .. ..	3
Goods Shed .. ..	Malanda .. ..	50
Trolley Shed .. ..	Malanda .. ..	3
Station Building .. ..	Jaggan .. ..	30
Waiting Shed .. ..	Tarzali .. ..	5
Station Building .. ..	Millaa Millaa .. ..	200
Rail Motor Shed .. ..	Millaa Millaa .. ..	35
Goods Shed .. ..	Millaa Millaa .. ..	125
Trucking Yards .. ..	Yungaburra .. ..	250
Trucking Yards .. ..	Tarzali .. ..	25
Locomotive Water Tank	Yungaburra .. ..	150
Locomotive Water Tank	Malanda .. ..	125
Locomotive Water Tank	Millaa Millaa .. ..	100



Ten buildings and two trucking yards remain to be disposed of as unsatisfactory offers or no tenders were received in response to public tenders invited through the Press.

Item	Location
Shelter Shed .. .. .	Chumbrumba
Shelter Shed .. .. .	Weerimba
Station Building .. .. .	Malanda
Roadside Shed .. .. .	Malanda
Inspector's Hut .. .. .	Malanda
Station Building .. .. .	Minbun
Trolley Shed .. .. .	Minbun
Station Building .. .. .	Moregatta
Engine Shed .. .. .	Millaa Millaa
Lamp Room and Lavatory .. .. .	Millaa Millaa
Trucking Yards .. .. .	Millaa Millaa
Trucking Yards .. .. .	Peeramon"

(2) "One cottage at Millaa Millaa is rented at £2 per week plus rates and taxes leviable. Public tenders were invited for the purchase *in situ* of the Station Master's house at Yungaburra but no tenders were received. An offer was subsequently received to purchase the Station Master's house at Yungaburra and this offer is at present under consideration. A Government Department is interested in acquiring one of the cottages at Malanda and a second cottage at the same place will be offered for sale in the near future when the Commissioner will have conveyable title. Two of the buildings have no road access and these will be offered for sale for removal with those listed in (1). The remainder of the houses totalling five are located on former Crown land and could only be disposed of *in situ* either by carrying out survey of the five allotments and obtaining title deed therefor or by the obtaining of a special lease of each allotment through the Lands Department. As the latter method would facilitate disposal this is being followed. It is not the intention of the Department to remove any of these buildings for re-erection at other places."

USE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to several press articles and statements reporting that the People the North Committee will actively support the left-wing Australian Labor Party candidate for Dawson, Dr. Patterson, in the next Federal election?

(2) Under what provision of the Local Government Act or any other Act is a Local Authority authorized or empowered to use ratepayers' money for party political propaganda purposes?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "I am not aware of any such provision."

REGULATIONS AND ORDERS IN COUNCIL ISSUED DURING PARLIAMENTARY RECESS.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

How many (a) Regulations and (b) Orders in Council have been approved by Cabinet during the recess of Parliament from December, 1964, to the March session 1965 and how many have been approved in the recent recess?

Answer:—

"May I inform the Honourable Member that Cabinet does not 'approve' of Regulations and Orders in Council. This prerogative is vested entirely in the Governor in Council. All Regulations and Orders in Council tabled in the House are recorded in the Votes and Proceedings. I would suggest that the Honourable Member could obtain the information asked for by perusing these papers."

TEACHERS WITH UNIVERSITY DEGREES.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What is the present number of teachers employed in high schools, apart from those involved in teaching home science, commercial, industrial, music and art subjects, and how many are engaged in the latter-mentioned pursuits?

(2) What percentages of these numbers have acquired a University degree?

(3) How many University graduate teachers have entered the employment of the Department of Education since January 1, 1965, until the present date and how many graduate teachers have resigned from the teaching service in the same period?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) Teachers taking Academic Subjects, 1968; (b) Home Science Teachers, 352; (c) Commercial Teachers, 248; (d) Manual Training Teachers, 348; (e) Music Teachers, 16; (f) Art Teachers, 68."

(2) "Percentage of academic teachers with University degrees, 35.1. Teachers in (b) to (f) above do not work normally towards University degrees."

(3) "(a) Graduates entered Department since 1-1-1965, 66; (b) Graduates resigned since 1-1-1965, 51."

SUPERVISION OF PRISONERS AT WACOL AND BRISBANE PRISONS.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the article in *The Sunday Mail* of August 22, headed, "Anyone can leave Wacol—Jail Warder"?

(2) (a) Are groups of prisoners still working outside the jail compound fence escorted only by a lone inexperienced probationary officer; (b) do prison officers have to keep a check on up to twenty-five prisoners coming and going, heading down paddocks to get cows, with not a fence between them and the outside; and (c) did the ex-probationary prison officer claim he knew of several sex-offenders who were allowed to move unescorted outside the jail?

(3) Is there a real danger that prisoners in Boggo Road could take over or stage a mass escape, particularly from No. 2 Division, which is undermanned and isolated from where senior officers were on duty?

(4) Is Boggo Road "rotten with homosexuality" and the lives of staff in danger because of shortage of staff and lack of supervision?

(5) What action is intended to remedy the situation which obviously exists so that the public and the staff of the prison services will be protected from any major outbreak or possible repetition of recent incidents?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "I have read the statement made to the *Sunday Mail* by Mr. V. Love, former Prison Officer at the Wacol Prison. Only prisoners who are considered satisfactory risks are permitted to work outside the enclosed compound area. All reasonable precautions are taken and strict instructions have been issued that no prisoner is to be allowed out of sight of the officer in whose charge he is. There are about 200 prisoners in the Wacol Prison, and attempts to escape are relatively rare. This being so, the claim by Mr. Love that 'anyone can leave Wacol' would indicate a most remarkable measure of success for our policy of rehabilitation and social redemption. Though a gratifying measure of success has been achieved, it is not nearly so great as Mr. Love's story would suggest. The statement that 'anyone can leave Wacol' is just not true. It is necessary to keep more than half the prisoners in fairly high custodial security inside the Prison, whilst the remainder who are permitted to work outside do so under surveillance and in varying degrees

of custody. It should be understood that Wacol is a half-way house between the maximum security Brisbane Prison and the Prison Farms at Palen Creek and Numinbah where the open honour system operates. The prisoners at Wacol include all gradations from near top security to those who are qualifying for the open honour system."

(3) "I am assured by the Comptroller-General of Prisons that there is no more real danger of prisoners in Brisbane Prison taking over or staging a mass escape than in any other maximum security prison. No. 2 Division referred to is not undermanned or isolated and senior prison officers are always on rounds. The Comptroller-General points out that the officer-strength at Brisbane Prison has been increased from 75 in 1957-1958 to 133 in 1964-1965. In 1957-1958 the ratio was one officer to 6.8 prisoners, and at present the ratio is one officer to 3.4 prisoners. This indicates that the prison officer strength in relation to prisoners has been doubled over the last eight years. This ratio is higher than the major prisons at least in the eastern States of Australia, and believed to be higher than any other major prison in Australia."

(4) "On the subject of homosexuality in the Brisbane Prison, I am assured by the Prison authorities that all possible precautions are taken to prevent it. Whenever large groups of men are closely confined, be it in prison or anywhere else, it may occur, and there is an obligation on all in charge to be vigilant. Isolated incidents undoubtedly take place, and when detected are treated in accordance with the provisions of the law."

(5) "See answer to (3)."

HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, MT. ISA.—Mr. Inch, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) To whom will the hundred Housing Commission homes now under construction at Mt. Isa be allocated and in what numbers?

(2) What is the number of applicants who await the allocation of this type of accommodation at Mt. Isa?

Answers:—

(1) "Mt. Isa Mines 50 houses; Mt. Isa Shire Council 6 houses; Thiess Bros. 6 houses; the balance will be available for purchase and if not sold will be rented."

(2) "Ninety-seven purchase enquiries and 41 rental applications are on hand. Now that Mt. Isa has returned to more normal conditions a check is being made to ascertain whether these persons have remained in Mt. Isa and still desire accommodation."

RESERVE FOR ABORIGINES AT DAJARRA.—Mr. Inch, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What action has the Department of Native Affairs taken to have land set aside for aboriginal reserve purposes at Dajarra?

(2) What type of accommodation does the Department contemplate providing for aborigines on this reserve?

Answers:—

(1) "As the Honourable Member will appreciate, an assured supply of water, which was until recently not available at Dajarra, is a pre-requisite to the selection of any suitable residential area. I have now been successful in securing for the Department of Native Affairs, the Railway Department water facility which ensures adequate and permanent water, and the Land Administration Commission has approved that, conditional upon survey, an area of five (5) acres adjacent to and south of the Railway as selected by the Department, be recommended for Executive approval. Action is in hand for the Surveyor-General to undertake the necessary survey."

(2) "The Department, after consultation with the Protector and a visit to the Centre by a Departmental Officer, is planning for the erection of seven (7) homes which will comprise six (6) three-bedroomed homes, and one pensioner's cottage with complete septic installations. Necessary specifications are being prepared by the Works Department to enable tenders to be called. The Honourable Member is assured that the type of homes erected will be to the same high standard of those which the Government has already constructed in many other centres throughout Queensland."

QUEENSLAND TRADE BALANCE.—Mr. Bennett, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the statement in the latest bulletin from the Bureau of Census and Statistics setting out that the external trade of Queensland during the quarter ended December 31, 1964, showed an excess of imports over exports of £8.2 million compared with an excess of exports of £11.9 million for the corresponding quarter of 1963?

(2) If so, will he indicate the reason for this substantial drift in the export market, which upsets our trade balance at a time when it is claimed to be unusual for imports to exceed exports in the December quarter of any year?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "I feel that the Honourable Member should need no reminder on my part that policy matters appertaining to trade in

relation to Queensland or any other State come within the constitutional responsibility of the Commonwealth Government."

SEX PERVERSION AT BRISBANE PRISON.—Mr. Bennett, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the claim made in *Sunday Truth* of August 22, 1965, to the effect that perversion is rife at the Boggo Road Prison?

(2) Has he any statistical details to deal with this claim?

(3) If there is some evidence that the allegation is only partly correct, will he give urgent and immediate attention to adopting measures to prevent these nefarious practices?

(4) In any case, will he consider the segregation of prisoners according to age groups and type of offences?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "I have read the statement made to the *Sunday Mail* by a former prison officer that homosexuality was prevalent at the Brisbane Prison. I am assured by the Prison Authorities that all possible precautions are taken to prevent it. Known cases are rare and, where evidence is available, offenders are always prosecuted publicly, through the Courts. There is one case now before the Court. The previous last known offence was before 1957. There are always rumours of perversion where groups of men are segregated and confined. The closest scrutiny is exercised to prevent this type of conduct. Segregation of prisoners in age groups can only be practised to a very limited extent due to accommodation problems. The Prisons Department is continuing a programme for more accommodation and consequently more segregation."

POLICE SENIORITY LIST.—Mr. Bennett, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Is he aware that the latest seniority list published for the Police Force pursuant to the Police Acts and Rules, was gazetted as far back as March 7, 1964, and relates to the seniority position as at January 31, 1964? If so, will he give serious consideration to the bringing of this list up to date so as to avoid confusion in Courts and elsewhere?

Answer:—

"No. A seniority list for Police Force personnel was published in the *Police Gazette* of March 20, 1965, and shows seniority as at January 31, 1965. It is usual for the Police seniority list to be published at the beginning of each year and this annual publication meets practical requirements."

**HOLIDAYS FOR TEACHERS.**—Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What holidays are granted annually to teaching staff in—(a) State primary schools, (b) State secondary schools, (c) State technical colleges on (i) trade (ii) technician and (iii) technology subjects and (d) the University?

(2) If there be any difference, will he explain why?

*Answers:—*

(1) “(a) State primary schools are on vacation over a total period of nine weeks per year. (b) For State primary schools west of the 150th meridian and for all State secondary schools the total is ten weeks. (c) (i) and (ii) Technical colleges observe the same vacation periods as State secondary schools; (iii) The staff of the Queensland Institute of Technology is employed on the normal Public Service basis of three weeks’ annual recreation leave. (d) The teaching staff at the University is granted four weeks per year during the long vacation period.”

(2) “By long established custom and practice teachers employed in primary and secondary schools and technical colleges are not required to report for duty during vacation periods. In the case of higher institutions of learning such as the University and the Institute of Technology, the teaching staff is expected to devote that part of the vacation outside the stipulated period of annual recreation leave to research, reading, preparation of courses and such other duties as are determined by the employing authorities.”

**NEW STATE HIGH SCHOOL, NASHVILLE.**—Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

Has any date been set down for the commencement of the construction of a new State high school at Nashville in the Sandgate Electorate? If not, when will the construction of a high school in this area commence?

*Answer:—*

“No. An examination of the anticipated enrolment at Sandgate High School indicates that there will be no significant increase there during the next three years. Rather does it show an anticipated falling off in enrolment after 1966. Accordingly I am unable to indicate when a new State high school will be built at Nashville.”

#### ORDER IN CHAMBER DURING QUESTION TIME

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I have warned hon. members repeatedly that they must not interject during question time. I will deal with the next member who transgresses.

#### PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1964.

#### DEATH OF HON. P. J. R. HILTON

##### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Premier) (12.5 p.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 Honourable Paul Jerome Remigius Hilton, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown.

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

The late honourable gentleman was well known to the majority of us who now sit in this Chamber. He served with us for a number of years, and I think I can say truthfully that during the period he was here he earned the admiration of us all for his many good qualities and the sincerity of purpose with which he carried out his duties as a member of this Assembly.

The late Mr. Hilton gave long and valued service to Queensland as a member of Parliament and a Minister of the Crown. He entered the Parliament as member for the Carnarvon electorate at the general election of 11 May, 1935, and held the seat continuously for 28 years—a magnificent record that testified to the esteem in which he was held by the electors.

Before his election to Parliament he was actively associated with many public bodies in Stanthorpe, his home town. His record of service in the public life of the State was outstanding, and Queensland can ill spare men of his calibre. He was a loyal supporter of many local activities in the district in which he lived, and he was keenly interested in the progress of show societies, not only in Stanthorpe but elsewhere in the Carnarvon electorate, and delighted in their expansion. In fact, it could be said that he took an active part in every worth-while activity that he believed to be for the good of his people or the good of the district.

He was a quiet, unassuming man of high principles and integrity, and during his long political career he won the respect and esteem of the members of all parties in Parliament.

For seven years the late Mr. Hilton was a Minister of the Crown, holding successively the portfolios of Public Works, Housing and

Local Government (from 10 May, 1950, to 1 May, 1952), Public Works and Housing (from 1 May, 1952, to 28 May, 1956), and Lands and Irrigation (from 28 May, 1956, to 12 August, 1957).

From 1947 to 1950 Mr. Hilton was Deputy Chairman of Committees.

During his administration of the Housing portfolio, Mr. Hilton imparted considerable vigour and drive to the attempt to overcome Queensland's housing shortage. In 1951, with this object in view, he made a six weeks' tour of England, France, Italy, Holland, and Germany, covering in all 34,000 miles, and he placed several contracts for prefabricated houses, in accordance with the terms of a request by the Commonwealth Government. These houses were of material assistance in reducing the serious housing shortage at that time. He was responsible, also, for negotiating a contract in England for prefabricated classrooms, and these buildings were of great value in overcoming the war-time lag in school construction.

Mr. Hilton, who was a very capable and hard working administrator, served in the Housing portfolio for six years. Thereafter he held the portfolio of Lands and Irrigation, and he was well versed in these aspects of State development and took a very keen interest in them.

During the Second World War, the late Mr. Hilton, who had been an N.C.O. in the Militia for some time, volunteered for overseas service but was rejected on physical grounds. He was, however, successful in enlisting in the R.A.A.F. in 1942, and he served until 1943, when he was discharged with the rank of Flying Officer, Administrative and Special Duty Branch.

During the time he was in Parliament Mr. Hilton was a very keen bowler. There was nothing he liked better and he played the game at every opportunity that came his way. He was, indeed, as I said previously, a gentleman who earned the admiration of all who knew him. Queensland will be forever indebted to him for his outstanding efforts for the welfare of its people, but those who sat with him on both sides of this House will remember him as a man whose quiet, unassuming manner masked an endearing personality of high principles and impartiality.

I think an example of the high regard in which he was held by all sections of the community was the large and representative gathering that assembled at St. Stephen's Cathedral last week on the occasion of his funeral service. It was a great tribute to a worthy son of Queensland.

I feel that all hon. members will join with me in extending to his sorrowing wife and family and his relatives the sentiments expressed in the motion.

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.11 p.m.): The A.L.P. wishes to link itself with the expressions of sympathy that, on behalf of the

Government, have been voiced by the Premier in regard to the untimely death of the late Mr. Hilton. He came into this Parliament a few months before I did. In those days the transport facilities and the use of a motor-car were not as extensive as they are today and he was obliged to come to Brisbane each Monday by the interstate mail train. He and the then hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Healy, and I were travelling companions for a number of years, and as we were members of the same party and were thrown together so closely in getting to and from our electorates, it was natural that we became fairly close friends. It was a matter of very great personal regret to me that, because of the involvement in party-political disputation and the resultant political explosion, there was a severance of that tie of close association and friendship which had characterised our dealings for a number of years.

It is a matter of history, of course, that there were differences of opinion regarding the exercise of judgment on the causes that led to that particular severance of association, but I want to say that whilst the late Mr. Hilton perhaps questioned my judgment and I questioned his, at no time did I question his integrity or his sincerity of purpose.

He was, as the Premier pointed out, a man with a very deep and intense conviction. He was extremely religious. He was a very keen reader and his range of subjects was most extensive. He concentrated on philosophical and theological questions and enjoyed very greatly the opportunity of engaging in personal debate or discussion on many problems of a rather heavier character than is usually discussed in normal conversation. He applied himself with great industry and ultimately his worth was recognised by his colleagues. In due course he was elected to the Cabinet, where he displayed unbounded energy in his desire to familiarise himself with the responsibilities of the various departments under his control. He made himself readily accessible to people and was anxious always to come to a correct decision.

He had the misfortune to experience a serious illness in his early life. At that time, because he was not particularly affluent, the residents of the area subscribed to fly him to Brisbane for specialist treatment for a heart condition, which at that time was feared might bring about his early demise. Fortunately, the attention he received and his obedience to his doctor's advice enabled him to overcome that disability. His untimely death was not caused by that condition but by another complaint which is very distressing and painful, and invariably—almost inevitably—leads to death.

Mr. Hilton accepted the prospect of death with great resignation. I have seen many people who felt that their days were perhaps numbered, but of all those with whom I have discussed the question of imminent death none displayed such a readiness to go to his Maker as did the late Paul Hilton.

For old times sake I was pleased I had an opportunity of calling to see him at his home before his death. When one has associated with a person for so long, a person whose principles you have admired and with whom you have had similar social and cultural interests, naturally it is a blow when the relationship is severed because of political disputation. Under these circumstances perhaps many things are said which, in the light of calmer reflection might not have been said, and consequently it is not quite so easy to re-establish the association that existed previously when these factors were absent. But I was very pleased that I did see Mr. Hilton prior to his death. I had quite an interesting conversation with him on that occasion. The main impression I took away from that conversation was his resignation. He had been able to make reasonable provision for his family. His daughter, a trained sister, had contemplated leaving home for duty in the north of Australia but she remained to nurse him in a very devoted way during the closing stages of his illness.

I think it can be said of Paul Hilton that whilst we on this side of the House disagreed with some of his political judgments we are unanimous that he was a man of very great personal integrity, a wonderful family man, a very devoted churchman, and one who, in his personal life and conduct, set an example which others could well emulate. If one can pay a person a tribute of that kind I think one has paid to the memory of Paul Hilton a tribute that was deserved, an honoured tribute which he justly earned in his lifetime. Because of his sincerity in his public life, his private life and his family life, and his disposition to do what he thought was best in the circumstances, the Opposition through me seek to join with the Premier in this motion. We do so with a proper appreciation of its significance. We join with the Premier in expressing our deepest sense of sadness at the great loss that has occurred to Mrs. Hilton because of the deep family attachment which was characteristic of the union between this couple.

**Mr. DIPLOCK** (Aubigny) (12.19 p.m.): I associate myself with and support this motion of condolence to Mrs. Hilton and members of the Hilton family with a sense of humility, pride, and profound grief. I feel very humble, because as a close friend of Paul Hilton I had ample opportunity of knowing what a truly Christian life he led. Few of us live up to the standard he set and maintained. I am very proud that I was privileged to be a friend of his and to have his complete confidence. The rigid moral disciplines of his own personal life were carried, in full measure, into his life as a public man. This accounted for his impeccable integrity, to which there is universal witness.

As a member of this Parliament he had to face many crises, the most important of which found his adherence to old loyalties

in conflict with what he regarded as high principles. He resolved this conflict as he resolved all other conflicts—in complete and total accord with the dictates of his own conscience. None who differed from him, no matter how intensely, ever had occasion to believe otherwise, for that was the way Paul Hilton lived his life.

I feel a sense of profound grief because during the past three years we became closely associated. He stayed at my home regularly every month and we looked forward to his coming just as much as I know he did. It was during this period that I came to appreciate the real Paul, to understand his sterling qualities, and to value his sincere friendship. By nature a gentle and warmly charitable man, nonetheless, in the political sense, or in the parliamentary sense, he was a stout and determined fighter. He expressed his ideas with force and courage, but equally accepted opposition to his ideas in the same spirit. I think all will agree that at all times he was an honourable opponent. He has gone, but his memory will survive, and the great and good influence he exercised in this House will persist for its welfare, for the welfare of its deliberations and of its members.

Because I mourn his loss deeply as a mate, I appreciate to the full the even more profound grief of those who mourn his loss as a husband, as a father, and as a relative. To them I express my own personal sympathy, and the sympathy of all those connected with the organisation to which he and I belonged.

**Mr. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon) (12.25 p.m.): I express sincere sympathy with the Hilton family in the bereavement they have suffered. In supporting this motion of condolence I am in a rather unique position. Paul Hilton and I became firm friends early in his political career, and we remained so at all times—completely so—even during the last election campaign which, as all hon. members know, was fought between us.

For some time Paul Hilton knew the end was near, and with great dignity and religious faith he approached the future confident that he knew where he was going. Such a faith has sustained him all his life. In the political crisis of 1957 he remained confident that he was following a correct course, and despite the consequences that he knew could follow he did what he believed to be right.

Last Friday, in St. Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane, the people of Queensland paid their tribute to him to that cathedral's capacity, and the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Cleary preached a panegyric that was really worthy of Paul Hilton.

For 28 years Mr. Hilton served Queensland faithfully and well, and having lived in his electorate most of my life I know the service and fairness he rendered and displayed to

his constituents, and the deep love and respect in which he was held by people of all political opinions. In fact, many Country Party members freely admitted that they voted for Paul Hilton both when he was a member of the A.L.P. and of the Q.L.P. They paid him that honour because they felt that in him they had a man who was beyond party politics.

After the last election he was big enough to assist and advise his successor, and in all humility I do not think I could pay him a greater tribute than trust that help will be given me to serve the electorate as he did.

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

## PETROLEUM PRODUCTS SUBSIDY BILL

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the Chair)

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth—Treasurer) (12.30 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to subsidise the distribution of certain petroleum products in certain country areas.”

The Commonwealth Government has decided as a matter of policy that prices of petroleum products in country centres should be subsidised so that they will nowhere exceed the capital city price by more than 4d. a gallon. As the Commonwealth Constitution gives no power to the Commonwealth Government to pay subsidies of this nature, the assistance of the States was sought and obtained. The Commonwealth Government has passed the necessary legislation to pay to the States, by way of grants, sums equal to the amounts expended by the States in paying subsidies in accordance with the Commonwealth scheme. The purpose of the Bill is to establish machinery for carrying out the State's part of the scheme. In its basic provisions the legislation in each State will be uniform.

Hon. members may well ask why the Bill is presented late in 1965 to fulfil a promise made by the Commonwealth Government in December 1963. The position was not simple. The clear line of wholesale and retail demarcation, fairly precise in towns and cities, was truly blurred where the back-blocks mailman made bulk drum deliveries to station properties, some of which acted in turn as local resellers. There was, too, the border problem where, say, a Queensland wholesaler supplies New South Wales customers. Always present was the need to protect the Commonwealth from rapacious increases in the level of freight charges.

We believe that all these problems have been reasonably met in the Commonwealth law. Subsidies will be paid at the wholesale level, but all registered distributors must undertake to pass on to purchasers the

benefit of the subsidy. In other words, they cannot get it and keep it for themselves. There is no automatic correction for the effect of escalating freight costs upon differentials in wholesale prices. Until a general review of the scheme is made, these have been frozen at the rates applying at 31 December, 1964, except that the Federal Minister may make amendments to the schedule of recognised distribution points or, if he is satisfied that changed circumstances warrant it, he may alter a rate of subsidy at a place in the schedule. The Commonwealth Government has agreed to make a general review of the scheme at intervals of three years and to introduce any necessary amendments in the light of the facts at the time.

The proposal is for receipts of claims, and their investigation and certification, to be performed by authorised officers who will in fact be officers of the Commonwealth Customs and Excise Department. They will do the work for us, although they will not be our officers. The Commonwealth will make non-repayable grants to the States for the purpose of making payments under the scheme, as provided by the Commonwealth Act.

**Mr. Duggan:** Will there be no State officers used at all?

**Mr. HILEY:** Only in minor matters of administration. All the policing and administration of claims will be carried out by officers of the Commonwealth Customs and Excise Department. The role of the State will be purely to pay to claimants the amounts certified by the authorised officers, and to account for sums received and paid.

State legislation is needed to authorise these payments to registered distributors. As the power to make the subsidy payments rests with the State, the penalties for fraud and other breaches must also be provided by the State Act. The State will bear its costs of local administration—the accounting and payment for services—but these should be comparatively minor.

The Commonwealth is empowered to advance the funds to enable us to meet claims without using our own precious funds. There could be political problems if rises in freight make it impossible to keep the margin down to 4d. over the capital city price, but the provision for review after three years fairly meets the worst of the hazard. Before the differential can move too far from 4d., the period of three years will have expired and there will be a review and a fresh target set.

Because of the great distances in Queensland, the benefit of this measure is relatively greater than it is in the rest of Australia. The Government regards it as a practical contribution to the man who lives some distance from the main ports of entry. For example, the price of standard grade petrol in Burketown, is 6s. 1½d. which is 2s. 6½d. above the price in Brisbane. In varying degrees this is the story in other remote

areas of Queensland. The reduction to 4d. margin will be a practical aid to people who live and conduct their work in far-removed places.

I have not attempted to illustrate, other than by giving the one example of Burketown, the great number of rulings that have had to be given. It is sufficient to say that a publication has been brought out headed "Petroleum Products—Schedule of Subsidies" in which is listed every known distribution point in respect of every grade ever handled.

If hon. members go through the schedule they will discover that there are some gaps in it, and I think I should explain the reason for these. Take Alexandra Headlands as an example. The subsidy on motor spirit is ½d.; then there is a gap against power kerosene and another gap against motor distillate. The reason for the gaps is one of two things: either that no distributor at Alexandra Headlands has ever sold or handled power kerosene or motor distillate, or that, in respect of those two items, the gap is 4d. or less and no subsidy is needed.

Indeed, as I went through the schedule it struck me as being quite remarkable—I have not attempted to illustrate this—how in an area it might cost 2½d. a gallon more to get distillate to one centre than it does to get motor spirit to that centre, yet at another centre in the same area the differential is reversed and one can buy distillate 2½d. a gallon cheaper than motor spirit. Heaven only knows the full story of the freight charges and practices that led to this conflicting pattern of freight differentials. Let me say, however, that I understand there has been the closest possible co-operation between officers of the Department of Customs and Excise and the Commissioner of Prices and his officers in Queensland who have been dealing with these matters. Queensland was rather fortunate in having a substantial body of records available. Some of the other States had no similar means of checking, and the task, therefore, was more difficult and to some extent delayed.

I want to make it clear that the Bill makes provision for the Federal Minister to make intermediate changes in the schedule. If a demand for a product occurs in a district for which the schedule simply shows a gap, it seems to me that the proper course will be for the oil company concerned to make application to the Federal Minister and say, "There is a gap in the schedule because we have never sold distillate in such-and-such a place. There is a demand there, and we now want to sell it there. Will you please fix a differential for the area?" The application will then be considered by the Federal department in the light of the information available to it.

The second point that has been raised with me is this: if a man lives 100 miles from the railhead or the nearest point of

distribution, does the Government recognise the freight differential at the point at which the wholesaler makes his sale to the retailer? That is the position. Indeed, pondering over the matter, it seemed to me that if the Federal Government had attempted in its measure to provide that the subsidy should be carried through right to the final point of usage, it would have had an almost impossible task administratively. On some of the big cattle runs, it is one thing to get the product to the homestead; but it is another thing to get it to the point of use, miles away from the homestead. The administrators have taken the view that the freight differential is calculated at the point at which you go to buy it, whether you buy it in bulk in drums or at the bowser, and that is the standard basis for the point of distribution.

We have not attempted to strike a separate rate for every individual consumer and to vary it in terms as might be argued for variant rates according to the actual point the individual consumer chooses to use as the wholesale point of delivery. It is the point at which the property passes from the wholesaler to the person who retails it.

Finally, it is hoped to have the scheme operative at an early date. No date has been specified but I think the Commonwealth have given a public clue because they have provided funds in the recent Budget to allow the scheme to operate from 1 October. It cannot operate until every State in Australia has passed enabling legislation. That is one reason why my Government was keen that this should be the first of the legislative measures attended to this session. We think it is good for Queensland and, on the whole, it will be of greater benefit to the residents of Queensland than to the average resident in Australia. We are anxious to have this Bill passed so that we can say to the Commonwealth, "We are ready for it. The scheme cannot come into operation too soon to please us."

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.41 p.m.): This is one of the few Bills that come before the Committee on which there is unanimity of opinion in the desirability of giving effect to its provisions, because people in many parts of the State will receive considerable financial benefit from its application.

This legislation has its origin in the Commonwealth sphere and is an example, on a major scale, of an attempt by the authorities to equalise prices throughout Australia. There has long been advocacy on the part of people living in the remote parts of the Commonwealth that the cost of living in those areas should be reduced, that there should be a declaration of a greater range of common goods and services in most parts of the State, and that the cost should be borne by people living in the more concentrated areas of population. Superficially this has some merit, but there is a limit to



which people living in the more populous parts of the Commonwealth should have to pay for this policy of permitting people in remote parts to get things on the same basis as those in the cities.

Apart from considerations of climate and other difficulties that confront people living in the remote parts of the State, if this principle were applied universally there would have to be a levelling-up in some other directions. For instance, a person living in a remote part of the State—he might be a book-keeper on a station—is not involved in any transport costs in travelling to and from work each day. If a person elects to build a house in one of these areas, admittedly he has to pay a tremendously greater sum for the timber used in the construction of the home, but he pays very little for his land compared with one living in a more centrally situated and more populous part of the State. He may get meat much cheaper—and other commodities—so it would need a very complex examination of costs throughout Australia.

In regard to some major commodities an attempt is being made, which is reflected in this measure. It had its origin, I think, in a proposal by the Leader of the Federal A.L.P. in his policy speech in 1963 when he said that, if returned to power, the A.L.P. would introduce legislation to provide for a universal petrol price throughout Australia. Some days later the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, because of the appeal which no doubt that offer had to the people of Australia, felt obliged to match it in some way. I do not think it is unfair for me to say in a political sense that I do not think he had any idea of how the scheme would operate but he felt that he would have to do something about it and he plucked out of the air this figure of 4d. a gallon. Why 4d. was chosen, I do not know. I suppose he felt it was substantial enough to be of some benefit. I do not think he had a clue how much it would cost. I speak with some measure of authority on this matter. Neither he nor those who are closely associated with him had a great deal of knowledge about how it was to be administered. No doubt the Treasurer can furnish authoritative answers to these statements. However, I think he would agree that but for the various officers of State departments who visited Canberra, this scheme would not be functioning as efficiently as theoretically it is likely to be when it is implemented some time after 1 October next. I think the State officers generally made the contributions as to how this proposal could be administered.

There will still be a substantial measure of injustice to those living in the more remote parts of the State in the circumstances outlined by the Treasurer. I must concede that in the absence of some costly administrative process it would be difficult to deal with this in a completely satisfactory way unless the oil companies themselves agreed to deal directly with the people

in the remote parts of the State, treating them virtually as wholesalers. That would obviate this trouble, but to do that apparently they would have to set up some sort of administrative machinery that they feel is rather too costly.

As the Treasurer pointed out, this measure will give quite a considerable benefit in known towns. He mentioned Burketown. I have taken three or four towns at random to show the effect of the proposal. In Aramac, on the new declared price of super-grade petrol, taking the additional 3d. a gallon into account, there is a differential of 1s. 5d., which will be reduced to 1s. 1d. At Birdsville the 2s. 11d. differential will be reduced to 2s. 7d. In Hughenden, where there is a 9½d. differential, the people will have a net benefit of 5½d. At Iron Range, where my records show that super-grade petrol is 6s. 11d. a gallon—the highest of the areas shown—there will be a differential of 3s. 1½d. and a net benefit of 2s. 9½d. Even in my own city of Toowoomba there is a differential of 5½d. a gallon at the present time. The residents of the fairly large city of Toowoomba will benefit to the extent of 1½d. a gallon. It means that if a person in that area uses 160 gallons a year he will save about £1. The reasons for some of these differentials are hard to understand. I find it hard to understand why, when there is a 5½d. differential between Toowoomba and Brisbane, there should only be ½d. differential between Toowoomba and Wallangarra which is more than twice as far from Toowoomba than Toowoomba is from Brisbane—even if the petrol comes in the other direction, as it probably does. I am not labouring this point because I know from experience the difficulties associated with getting oil companies to match up to their responsibilities in determining a fair allocation of costs in these areas.

The subsidy itself is expected to cost £6,000,000 a year—subject to review, as the Treasurer pointed out. It applies only to motor spirits, power kerosene, automotive distillate, aviation kerosene and aviation turbine fuel.

It remains to be seen just how far this benefit of reduction in costs will extend. In the Iron Range area, for example, the benefit will be in the nature of 2s. 9½d. a gallon. The transport operators in that area would be heavy consumers of petrol, as they would be in other places where a high differential operates. It remains to be seen whether these benefits will be passed on to the consumers living on the stations in those areas, who use a substantial amount of petrol in their trucks. Instead of being adversely affected by the recent increase of 3d. a gallon announced in the Budget, as are private motorists in most areas, the people who are operating motor transport in those areas will get a very great net advantage, as will the aviation companies who draw fuel from some of those areas. Because of

the small volume of fuel used in these areas the savings will not be tremendously great, except in the case of chartered flights.

It is appropriate also to point out that, from what I can ascertain about this matter, the oil companies do not benefit by this proposal, neither do they lose anything. They are in an as-you-were position. Some people have advocated that oil companies should be prepared to surrender some of their profits to make it possible for petrol to be reduced somewhat in price. I note that a financial writer pointed out in a publication released only a few weeks ago, that more losses than profits were made in distributing last year by the 11 major companies. The Amoco Company was mentioned. It had a net loss of £1,085,000. Ampol showed a slightly increased profit over the previous year. British Petroleum showed an increased profit of about £3,300,000. Caltex showed a net loss of £542,000. Esso showed a loss of over £1,000,000. The figures for H. C. Sleigh were down slightly on the previous year. Mobil showed a lower profit for the year. Neptune and Phillips each had a loss. The Shell Company showed a rather obscure position; it showed a loss of £933,000 but, with the tax provision, there could have been a profit of £3,900,000. It is pretty difficult to work these matters out. With the exception of Ampol, the wholly Australian-owned company, and H. C. Sleigh, which is about 75 per cent. Australian-owned, all the other companies are owned by organisations domiciled overseas.

**Mr. Aikens:** There is no means of knowing whether the Australian figures are correct.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** I filed some appropriate references but unfortunately when I wanted them quickly I could not find them. I had the Shell Company's balance sheet, which was sent to me for the first time. I think it shows Australian assets of £100,000,000, and provision is made for depreciation amounting to about £40,000,000. Australia is not like Indonesia, where they are likely to lose their assets, yet they amortised about 40 per cent. of their value. To give some figures for parent companies, I point out that Standard Oil (New Jersey) made a net profit of 1,019,469,000 dollars, which is equivalent to £500,000,000. The Socony Mobil Oil Company made a profit of 271,852,000 dollars, and Royal Dutch Shell made a profit of 601,292,000 dollars, a little less than £300,000,000. The argument is used that many overseas companies deliberately charge their Australian subsidiaries a higher price for crude, which means that the net profits of the refining companies in Australia, at the distributing points, are much less. They pay less tax, and a higher profit is transferred to the appropriate company in some country where the taxation is lower, and where the double tax provision applies. It has been said that the loss by the Australian-owned companies is due

to this method of charging the subsidiaries in this country a price higher than the appropriate competitive world price for crude, and that this is responsible for the loss of an amount equal to the cost of a new refinery over a short period. I am not certain whether it is over three years or five years, but it is of the order of £20,000,000. It is said that if the companies in Australia were charged the price which competitors pay, they would pay in increased taxation an additional sum of £20,000,000. However, I am not quite clear whether it is every three years or five years that it equals the cost of a refinery.

This measure is of benefit, and one would be churlish not to acknowledge it. We sometimes think we should thank Mr. Menzies or Mr. Calwell, or whoever may, for the time being, be the Premier of the State or the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth when some benefit is introduced. I suppose, however, that some people, because of their skill, are able to re-arrange finance in such a way that they can give more benefit than an incompetent administrator. But in the final analysis it is the people themselves who have to pay for these benefits. In this case, the burden will be borne by the taxpayers of the Commonwealth of Australia, not by Mr. Menzies, Mr. Calwell, Mr. Hiley, or myself. It is appropriate that this should be done, because action must be taken somewhere along the line to try to equalise the prices of commodities which represent a substantial volume of spending by people in isolated areas.

I commenced my remarks by saying that it would not be possible to equate the cost of living to everybody wherever domiciled in Australia, but I think it could be made reasonably attractive for people living in the remote parts if these serious injustices were removed. As modern transport is the only method of social intercourse in these areas and the only means of effective trade, it is obvious that we should do all we can to see that the burdens imposed on people in remote areas are lessened as much as possible, and this is the first step in that direction. For that reason it should be commended. As the Treasurer pointed out, at the end of three years the matter will be subject to review, and anomalies might be ironed out in the intervening period.

I am glad that there will not be any substantial cost to the State in setting up the necessary administration. As with so many of these things, the cost of administration, even at the Commonwealth level, has to come out of the taxpayers' pockets, and so we have to find £6,000,000, plus the costs of administration. That means it is either costing more than £6,000,000, or if costs are going to be drawn out of the £6,000,000 allocated for the purpose, that the people of this State will be getting less subsidy.

I have yet to see the position where the Federal authorities can provide something as economically or as efficiently as the State generally does. It might have been a better arrangement if the Federal authorities had offered the Treasurer a certain sum to provide this service and he could have arranged efficient administration. There may be technical problems with customs and excise. Experience has shown that the State can provide a service at least as efficient, effective, and economical as the Commonwealth usually provides. I do not deny that the Commonwealth has many able and outstanding officers, but it has a tendency to inflate the number of people required.

On behalf of the Opposition, I appreciate the Treasurer's action in introducing this measure in this early stage of the session. It will be of great benefit to a number of people. We commend the measure.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 1 p.m.