

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1969

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

QUESTIONS

**CERTIFICATE OF APPLICATION FOR
MINING LEASE**

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Has a notice of application for a mining lease, affixed to vacant private land, to be of any fixed size and set in any particular way on such land?

(2) Are such notices intended only for the owner of the land or for advice to the public as well?

(3) Is there responsibility for ensuring that the signs (a) can be seen from a public road and (b) are not obscured by bushes or grass?

Answers:—

(1) "Where a Certificate of Application for a mining lease is delivered or sent by the Warden to the applicant, the applicant must, within seven clear days after the receipt of such Certificate, cause a true copy thereof to be posted at or near to the datum point on the land applied for, and at the Warden's office, in both cases to there remain continuously posted for thirty days. Also the applicant must advertise the Certificate in some newspaper generally circulating in the neighbourhood at least thirty days prior to the hearing of the application by the Warden. In addition, where private land is concerned, the applicant for a mining lease must give notice of such application to the owner and occupier of the private land by pre-paid registered post letter within seven days of lodgment. The Regulations do not fix a size for such Certificate but provide that, for a mineral lease, the datum post shall be four inches in diameter, standing at least three feet above the ground and shall be durably marked with the initial letters of the applicant's name. The Certificate of Application and copies thereof issued by the Warden are on a form 10 inches by 8 inches."

(2) "The abovementioned procedure would be for the benefit of the public as well as the owner of any land concerned."

(3) "No."

**INSTALLATION OF FIRE HYDRANTS AT
STATE SCHOOLS**

Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) How many schools in Queensland have fire hydrants installed (a) within the grounds in close proximity to the school buildings and (b) in a position outside the grounds but in such a position that they can be used to protect school children and buildings with ordinary or normal fire-fighting equipment?

(2) How many schools, in what areas, have no fire hydrants within these categories?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The information sought by the Honourable Member is not available in my Department in statistical form, and also is otherwise not readily available. I consider that the time and expense which would be involved in making a State-wide survey to obtain such information is not warranted."

**COURSES FOR MANUAL TRAINING
TEACHERS AND TRADE TEACHERS**

Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is it intended to set up an extended course of training for manual training and trade teachers and, if so, when?

(2) Have any suggested schemes of training been submitted? If so, when and by whom?

(3) Have applications been called for the position of Senior Lecturer and Lecturer in Manual Arts at the Teachers' Training College? If so, will the filling of the position mean any departure from the old method of training in such arts?

(4) Was any report made by the Teacher Education Committee in relation to the training of teachers in manual arts? If so, when and with what results?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. It is intended that a course for the training of manual training teachers be set up from the beginning of 1970 or as soon as possible thereafter. The training of trade teachers is still receiving consideration."

(2) "Yes. On a number of occasions. By associations of manual training teachers and technical teachers, and officers of my Department. These schemes were considered by the Committee appointed to review teacher education."

(3) "Yes. Yes."

(4) "The Teacher Education Committee has considered various schemes for the training of teachers of manual arts, and has made a recommendation on this matter."

RESIGNATION OF DR. J. JOYCE FROM
TOWNSVILLE HOSPITALS BOARD

Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Did Dr. John Joyce recently resign from the Townsville Hospitals Board? If so, was his resignation accepted by the Board?

(2) Did Dr. Joyce at a previous meeting of the Board submit that there should be an administrator appointed to the hospital? If so, what was the Board's response to the suggestion?

(3) In view of the allegations of meat-stealing, seduction and drunkenness made in connection with the resignations earlier this year of a number of young doctors from the hospital, will he make public the reason for Dr. Joyce's resignation?

(4) Apart from the superintendent are there now any other medical representatives on the Board?

Answers:—

(1) "Dr. Joyce has submitted his resignation as a board member to the secretary of the Townsville Hospitals Board. The resignation will be tabled at the next Board meeting. In this respect I would draw the attention of the Honourable Member to Section 13 (8) (vi) of *The Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1967*", which reads—'Any member may resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the secretary, and such resignation shall be complete and shall take effect from the time when it is received by the secretary.'

(2) "The secretary of the Townsville Hospitals Board has advised that at a meeting of the Board on September 19, 1969, Dr. Joyce moved, 'That the offices of medical superintendent and surgeon at the Townsville Hospital be separate positions'. The motion, on being put to the meeting, was defeated by five votes to one."

(3) "Dr. Joyce has communicated personally with me and for the information of the Honourable Member I quote the correspondence:—

'The Hon. S. D. Tooth,
Minister of Health.

'Dear Sir,

For personal reasons, not connected with Hospital Board or departmental policy, I hereby resign my position as a member of the Townsville Hospital Board.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) John K. Joyce.'

and I replied on September 24, 1969, as follows:—

'Dear Dr. Joyce,

I have your letter of 22nd instant tendering your resignation from the Townsville Hospitals Board for personal reasons.

I am indeed sorry that you have found it necessary to resign and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for the part you have played in the administration and advancement of the Townsville Hospital over the last eleven years.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) S. D. Tooth,
Minister for Health.'

(4) "No."

DOCTORS AT THORACIC ANNEXE,
TOWNSVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) When did the doctor in charge of the thoracic annexe, Townsville General Hospital, resign or transfer from the annexe and what is his name?

(2) Has any appointment been made to the position and, if not, when is it likely to be made?

(3) Since the doctor's departure, how many "rounds" have been done by other doctors in the thoracic annexe, who were the doctors and what were the dates of the "rounds"?

Answers:—

(1) "Dr. J. E. Thompson, Chest Physician, Townsville General Hospital, has been appointed Assistant Director of Tuberculosis, Brisbane. He completed duties at Townsville on August 16."

(2) "A recommendation has been made in regard to a new appointee."

(3) "The Medical Superintendent, Townsville Hospital, has advised that the rounds carried out in the thoracic annexe at Townsville have been as follows:—Dr. P. O. Flecker, Medical Registrar, two rounds between August 18 and August 27; Dr. N. Scott-Young, Medical Superintendent, twice a week from September 2 to September 23; Dr. E. W. Abrahams, Director of Tuberculosis, on September 23; Dr. K. B. Harveyson, Visiting Physician, on October 7."

JANITOR-GROUNDSMEN FOR STATE
SCHOOLS

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

With reference to the proposed employment of janitor-groundsmen at primary schools of a certain class as from next year—

(1) Will the women who are now employed as part-time school cleaners be displaced and, if so, to what extent?

(2) What will be the wages of the janitor-groundsman?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "This matter is at present the subject of negotiation with the Union."

RESIDENCE FOR STAFF MEMBER, DOUGLAS
CAMPUS, TOWNSVILLE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) Was a house being built and nearing completion on the Douglas Campus, Townsville, for a member of the University staff, practically demolished and rebuilt to suit the whim of the staff member concerned? If so, what is his name?

(2) What will be the total completed cost of the house?

(3) What rent, if any, will be charged?

(4) What guarantee can be given that, in the event of the present proposed occupant vacating the house, it will not be demolished and rebuilt to suit the whim of the new occupant?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "This matter comes within the province of administration by the Honourable the Premier, and I suggest that the Honourable Member redirect his Question accordingly."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw attention to the next question. It appears that on this occasion, instead of something being deleted from the question, something has been added. A mistake has been made in the Printing Office, but I assure the hon. member that his question was sent up in its correct form and I am sure that the answer will be in accordance with his original question.

SUBSIDY FOR SUB-NORMAL CHILDREN'S
WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Has he been supplied with figures of the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association disclosing that the finances of this worthy organisation are in a parlous state and vitally necessary work for the children cannot be undertaken because, in the main, of the salaries of the teaching staff which, in the Townsville Branch alone, for instance, absorb \$18,000 of the Association's available funds?

(2) Will he immediately consider increasing the Government subsidy to this body?

Answers:—

(1) "In March, 1969, the Queensland Sub-normal Children's Welfare Association submitted to my Department a comprehensive statement and requested increased financial assistance."

(2) "The Honourable the Treasurer has indicated in his Financial Statement presented to Parliament on September 25, 1969, that the maximum endowment payable to the Queensland Sub-normal Children's Welfare Association would be increased from \$100,000 to \$200,000 in 1969-70."

DAIRY PASTURE SUBSIDY SCHEME

Mr. O'Donnell, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

With reference to the Dairy Pasture Subsidy Scheme, have forms relative to deferred payments been forwarded to all the dairy farmers concerned? If so, have all payments been made and, if not, will he expedite those outstanding?

Answer:—

"A total of 447 deferred payment forms has been forwarded to the dairy farmers concerned. Of those returned to head office, 294 have been paid. The payment of outstanding deferred claims is being expedited. This is proceeding concurrently with payment of ordinary claims and fertilizer grants. Priority is being given to farmers in drought-stricken areas."

CONFERENCE OF STATE MINES MINISTERS
ON OFF-SHORE DRILLING

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Did the State Ministers for Mines meet in Canberra on October 3 to discuss the possible effects of the recent High Court judgment in the *Bonser v. La Macchia* case on the validity of the issue of permits or licences in regard to off-shore drilling operations? If so, what are the details of the result of the conference?

Answer:—

"No. The Mines Ministers met to discuss legislation to govern off-shore operations for minerals as distinct from petroleum."

SCIENCE EQUIPMENT IN STATE SCHOOLS

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that (a) part of the equipment supplied to primary schools prior to the recent State election included science benches, (b) these benches were incomplete inasmuch as the gas burners were missing and (c) repeated applications for the supply of burners by head teachers have been fruitless?

(2) What is the reason for this inordinate delay and when will the burners be available?

Answers:—

(1) "(a) Yes. One thousand five hundred (1,500) science benches have been supplied; (b) Yes. Separate contracts were made for benches and burners; six thousand (6,000) burners were ordered; (c) Yes."

(2) "Seven hundred and fifty (750) burners are now in transport from Sydney, and issues should be made in the very near future. Further progressive delivery is anticipated."

PASSENGER RAILWAY SERVICE FOR
INALA-ACACIA RIDGE AREA

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Sherrington**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) In view of the provision of railway facilities for the industrial area at Wacol, has consideration been given to extending the line to provide for a passenger service to the Inala area?

(2) If not, is there a plan to provide passenger train facilities for the Inala-Acacia Ridge area?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The terms of the Brisbane Public Transport Study contract require the consultants to investigate and report on public transport requirements projected to the year 2000 for an area of approximately 60 miles radius from Brisbane. The commuter problems of Inala-Acacia Ridge are included in that study."

DROUGHT-RELIEF SUBSIDY ON MOLASSES,
MACKAY DISTRICT

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

Will the newly announced subsidy on the road freighting of drought-relief fodder apply to the cartage of molasses from Mackay district sugar mills to drought-stricken properties in the Mackay hinterland, such subsidy having recently been refused by the Minister for Primary Industries? If not, why not?

Answer:—

"Yes, provided the journey exceeds forty miles."

LAW REFORM COMMISSION SALARIES
AND REPORTS

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Bennett**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) When did the salaries of the members of the Law Reform Commission commence?

(2) Have any reports or submissions been made by the Commission and, if so, will he table them?

Answers:—

(1) "The salary of each member of the Law Reform Commission other than the Chairman has been paid on and from March 1 last."

(2) "No."

RESTAURANT LIQUOR LICENCES

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Bennett**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

(1) How many new restaurant licences were granted during the year ended June 30, 1969?

(2) In what localities were the restaurants situated?

(3) Were any licences granted to the central-west or western areas?

(4) Are there any licensed restaurants within a radius of 300 miles of Longreach?

Answers:—

(1) "Three."

(2) "At Brisbane, Surfers Paradise and Townsville."

(3) "No."

(4) "Yes—at Charleville."

CONDUCT OF STAFF AND STUDENTS,
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Bennett**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that some University lecturers and students at a public meeting named the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor L. H. Teakle, a 'liar'?

(2) Is the Government prepared to tolerate such larrikin conduct from lecturers and students who are being supported with taxpayers' money?

(3) Why has the Government issued instructions to prevent the police carrying out their duties in relation to University staff and students as they do in relation to any other section of the community?

(4) Will he cause a drug squad to visit the University to prevent any possible breach of the Health Regulations by certain members of the staff and a section of the students?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. I am informed that a student well known for his irrational statements did name the Acting Vice-Chancellor a 'liar'."

(2) "No. It is to be noted however, that the University as an autonomous body, is responsible for the conduct of its staff and students."

(3) "No such instructions have been issued by the Government."

(4) "This question might be directed to the Minister in charge of Police."

Mr. DAVIES: I do.

AIR POLLUTION READINGS, PINKENBA AND MYRTLETOWN

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

What were the readings on the fall-out gauges at Pinkenba and Myrtletown for each month from January to September, inclusive, 1969?

Answer:—

"The Division of Air Pollution Control has advised that the readings of fall-out gauges at Pinkenba and Myrtletown are as follows:—

1969	Pinkenba	Myrtletown
January	10.5	6.1
February	6.9	20.6
March	20.4	10.4
April	19.5	12.6
May	No record	15.6
June	22.5	14.1
July	24.6	16.5
August	43.5	No record

Figures for September have not yet been completed. The figures in each case refer to tons per square mile per month."

WAITING TIME AND WARD ACCOMMODATION, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, BRISBANE

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) What is the waiting period for (a) minor and (b) major operations at the Royal Brisbane Children's Hospital?

(2) (a) How many wards are there at the hospital, (b) what was the number of beds in each ward at October 2, 1969, and (c) how many of these were occupied on the same date?

(3) Are any patients accommodated other than in wards or rooms? If so, where?

(4) Is there a waiting list for admission to the hospital? If so, what is the longest period of waiting?

Answers:—

(1) "The Medical Superintendent of the Royal Children's Hospital has advised that as at October 7, 1969, the waiting period

for operations was—(a) Minor operations, six days; (b) Major operations for plastic surgery, 1 month; general surgery may vary from immediate attention in the case of one surgeon to one month in the case of another, depending upon the operations listed for each; orthopaedic, two weeks; eyes, may vary from immediate attention to two weeks; ear, nose and throat, five months. The Medical Superintendent has further advised that there is no waiting period for any urgent surgical procedure."

(2) "As at October 2, 1969, there were two hundred and eighteen beds in nine wards. The total occupancy at that date was one hundred and fifty-five as follows:—

Ward	Beds Provided	Beds Occupied
McConnel ..	35	23
Gray ..	12	3
Chelmsford ..	30	14
O'Connell ..	29	27
Babies ..	16	14
Paterson ..	30	22
Turner ..	30	28
Fraser ..	17	15
Raff ..	19	9

(3) "I am advised that no patients are accommodated other than in wards or rooms."

(4) "There is no waiting list for medical or urgent surgical admissions. The waiting time for surgical procedures is as indicated in (1) above."

TUCK SHOP, CRESCENT LAGOON STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

Has approval been given to a request by the Crescent Lagoon State School Parents and Citizens' Association for the provision of a tuck shop at the school?

Answer:—

"No. However, consideration will be given to the matter when plans in course of preparation and the estimate of cost are completed."

IMPROVEMENTS, CRESCENT LAGOON STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

In view of his Answer to my Question regarding the two classrooms at the Crescent Lagoon State School, which were brought from Mt. Morgan in 1933, what are his Department's intentions for remodelling them?

Answer:—

"The Department has no immediate intention of remodelling the classrooms referred to as funds are not available for such work."

REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY
TEACHERS TO ACHIEVE
PERMANENT APPOINTMENT

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

What are the minimum requirements with regard to (a) efficiency and (b) experience necessary for teachers who are classified as temporary to be granted permanent status?

Answer:—

"It would not be fair to teachers concerned to reveal confidential information. Efficiency has been related to experience on a sliding scale, which is subject to review. In general, greater efficiency is expected from a teacher of longer experience."

INCIDENCE AND TREATMENT OF
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) What facilities, designed specifically for the treatment of the disease, are available to sufferers of multiple sclerosis in Queensland?

(2) Is any research being carried out into the cause and treatment of this disease?

(3) How many multiple sclerosis sufferers, either out-patients or in-patients, are under treatment at the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra hospitals?

(4) What treatment are they receiving?

Answers:—

(1) "I have been advised that there are a number of morbid neurological conditions and it would be professionally impractical and wasteful to provide specific facilities for the treatment of each separate one. Neurologists are trained to treat all forms of these conditions. There are no specific facilities for the treatment of multiple sclerosis but treatment is available at an inpatient and outpatient level at public hospitals throughout Queensland."

(2) "Research has been carried out in Queensland into the epidemiology of the disease by the Medical Professorial Unit of the University of Queensland, and neurophysicians have conducted controlled trials in the use of the drugs Parnate and ACTH. An eminent neurophysician has investigated the association of acute optic neuritis and multiple sclerosis. A prospective study is in progress in regard to the efficacy of the drug ACTH in optic neuritis in multiple sclerosis patients. A further long-term investigation is being made into the value of the drug ACTH in the treatment and prevention of relapses."

(3) "For the financial year 1968-69 there were 52 admissions for 36 separate patients with multiple sclerosis at Royal Brisbane Hospital. Outpatient attendances are not available. At Princess Alexandra Hospital, however, where a neurophysician is making a special study of the disease more detailed figures are available. 29 patients have been treated at the Outpatients Department in the last twelve months. For the years 1957-1969, 154 sufferers have been admitted as inpatients. At the present time there are three confirmed inpatients receiving treatment in various wards. Two patients are being investigated for the disease and a further two patients are attending the day centre of the Geriatric Unit."

(4) "At the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra Hospitals, provision is made for the treatment of the acute phase of the disease by using the drugs ACTH or Prednisone. For the chronic phase of the disease, physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and social service facilities are available."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber during question time.

ROYALTIES FROM MINERAL SANDS
MINING, CAPE FLATTERY

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

What royalties are being paid by the company mining mineral sands at Cape Flattery to (a) the State Government and (b) the authorities conducting Hopevale Mission?

Answer:—

"(a) 5 cents per ton; (b) Royalty on such minerals is payable only to the Crown."

MARRIED WOMEN TEACHERS

Mr. B. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Does a refusal by his Department to grant permanent status to married women (temporary) teachers indicate that their service has not been satisfactory?

(2) How many permanent teachers are on a level with or below the standard of those women who have been refused?

(3) Is he aware that dissatisfaction follows a refusal, after the teacher has first been invited to apply for permanent status?

Answers:—

(1) "No."

(2) "These figures are not readily available."

(3) "I am aware that dissatisfaction follows a refusal. I might add that a number of women who might have been approved for permanent status have withdrawn their applications on realising that, in terms of Regulation 177 of the Public Service Regulations, they were liable for transfer."

PROSECUTIONS FOR POLLUTION OF
CREEKS AND WATERWAYS, BRISBANE
AREA

Mr. Davis, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Conservation,—

(1) How many persons or firms have been prosecuted for the illegal dumping of materials or liquids in creeks and waterways in Brisbane and adjoining areas?

(2) If there have not been any prosecutions, what is the reason?

(3) What action is taken by the Department of Harbours and Marine regarding illegal dumping by persons or firms?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "During the past four years, four prosecutions."

(3) "Action taken by the Department of Harbours and Marine with regard to the dumping of materials or liquids in the tidal waters adjacent to Brisbane is as follows:— Officers of the Department's Boating Patrol, Dredges, Launches and other surface craft have been instructed to report all sightings of flotsam. In all possible cases and certainly in cases where the flotsam is likely to prove a menace to navigation immediate action is taken to remove it from the waterway. In cases where oil slicks are noticed by or reported to officers of the Department, full investigations follow in an endeavour to ascertain the extent and cause of the slick and where evidence to support a prosecution is obtained the matter is usually taken before the Court. In cases where the dumping of liquids by manufacturers is noticed by or reported to officers of the Department, these are referred to the Department of Local Government where they are fully investigated to determine the extent and cause of and probable remedy for the problem. In cases where the dumping of rubbish is noticed by or reported to officers of the Department these are fully investigated, usually in company with officers of the Brisbane City Council in an endeavour to ascertain the cause and probable remedy for the problem. In cases where the offending party is apparent, action is taken by the Department in terms of Section 146 of the Harbours Acts. Quite recently three organisations adjacent to Breakfast Creek have been directed by letter to remove rubbish dumped below high water mark in that Creek."

PROSECUTION OF EMPLOYERS BREACHING
INDUSTRIAL AWARDS

Mr. Davis, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Tourism,—

(1) How many complaints have been investigated by his Department on behalf of trade unions regarding employers carrying out the awards of the Industrial Commission in the past twelve months?

(2) How many breaches for not carrying out the awards have been detected by the Department?

(3) What amount of wages was reimbursed to employees following the Department's investigations?

(4) Have any prosecutions been taken out by the Department as a result of the investigations?

(5) What was the amount of fines against employers regarding these matters?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "Complaints regarding the non-observance of Awards are received from various sources and not only from Unions of employees, and consequently no good purpose would be served by keeping records of the sources from which the complaints originate. All such complaints are investigated without fear or favour irrespective of from where such complaints come. Whenever the Chief Industrial Inspector recommends it, prosecutory action is always authorised by me."

(3) "This information is contained in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops which has already been tabled."

(4) "See answers to (1) and (2)."

(5) "This information is not readily available and the time and work involved in extracting it from Departmental records is not warranted."

HONG KONG INFLUENZA

Mr. Davis, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) How many cases of the virus known as Hong Kong 'flu have been reported in the past twelve months?

(2) Have any deaths occurred from it?

(3) Is he aware of any deaths within three months of persons receiving Hong Kong 'flu injections?

Answers:—

(1) "As influenza is not a notifiable disease the number of people who have suffered from Hong Kong influenza is not known. The Virology Section of the Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology has isolated the virus from 39 patients."

(2) "The Government Statistician advises that the classification of deaths would not separate Hong Kong influenza from any other so that there is no record of deaths from Hong Kong influenza. Figures for deaths from influenza generally are currently being compiled."

(3) "There have been no reports of deaths connected with Hong Kong influenza vaccine injections. It is quite possible there have been deaths due to other causes within three months of receiving the injection. For example, a man died from a coronary occlusion 24 hours after receiving an injection of vaccine which was quite unrelated to the cause of death."

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR TOOWOOMBA
AREA NATIONAL FITNESS COMMITTEE

Mr. Bousen, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

What finance was allocated to the Toowoomba branch of the National Fitness Council for the year 1968-69 and what amount will be allocated for the year 1969-70?

Answer:—

"(a) Financial assistance provided to the Toowoomba Area National Fitness Committee by the State National Fitness Council in the 1968-69 financial year is shown below— 1. Salary of the National Fitness Officer less \$1,600 from local authorities, \$2,100; 2. Travelling allowance for officer, \$900; 3. Services of a departmental typist (half), \$665; 4. Employment of part-time secretary to Area National Fitness Committee, \$200; 5. Office supplies, \$100; 6. For the training of sports coaches and youth leaders, \$400; 7. Employment of part-time physical instructors, \$126; 8. Purchase of 16-mm projector and screen, \$541; 9. Purchase of tape recorder, \$81; Total, \$5,112. (b) Excluding items 8 and 9 above, financial assistance for 1969-70 will be approximately the same as that allocated for 1968-69."

HOSTEL AND SCHOOL MILEAGE ALLOWANCES FOR WESTERN QUEENSLAND CHILDREN

Mr. Aiken, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that there are a number of children in the Charleville, Tambo, Augathella, Cunnamulla and Thargomindah areas who do not qualify for a school mileage allowance when they have to travel two days a week from thirty to eighty miles to attend central schools and have to stay at hostels?

(2) Will he consider an annual grant to the hostels in these towns so that their fees may be kept to a minimum, thus

enabling children of large less-privileged families to have the same advantages as other children?

Answers:—

(1) "Under these circumstances a pro rata conveyance allowance is payable."

(2) "It is not proposed to provide an annual grant to assist hostels in their running costs. Subsidy is provided in capital costs to hostels which are established by a local authority or by the Queensland Country Women's Association. Financial assistance in respect of students accommodated at such hostels is available from my Department in the form of remote area allowances for children in Grades 8 to 12 (extending to Grades 6 and 7 in 1970). The remote area allowance is not based on a means test. Further assistance is available for secondary students by way of student's allowance for students whose parents qualify under a means test."

UNIFORMITY IN REGIONAL ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Mr. Aiken, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

(1) As electricity is so important to Western Queensland if progress is to be maintained and assured, will he standardise the uniformity of rural power lines to link up all terminal points?

(2) As the cost of electric power is excessive and air-conditioning and refrigerating charges on rural properties would be almost prohibitive, will he consider subsidising rural charges?

Answers:—

(1) "The basis on which electricity is extended into rural areas is to provide distribution and reticulation systems at the lowest possible cost, allowing for reasonable growth of load and consistent with the obligation to ensure a proper and continuous service. There is already a large measure of standardisation in the design and construction of rural lines but the linking up of all terminal points is technically and economically impracticable."

(2) "The smaller Electric Authorities now receive Government subsidy in the form of a percentage of the capital cost of generating and other specified assets and this is reflected in the charges of these Authorities which are lower than they would otherwise be. The rural charges in the areas of supply of the major Electric Authorities are for the most part at the same level as the charges in urban areas. Subsidising rural charges to make them lower than urban charges in the areas of supply of these Authorities could not be justified."

MARRIED FEMALE PUBLIC SERVANTS
AND TEACHERS

Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Education,—

(1) Have the Public Service Regulations applying to married female employees recently been altered and, if so, in what regard?

(2) Do these regulations apply to female teachers employed by his Department?

(3) Were letters recently forwarded to all temporary female teachers implying that they should make application for permanency or face dismissal?

(4) What is the position of teachers who (a) applied for permanency and were accepted or refused, (b) did not apply and (c) are single female teachers anticipating marriage?

(5) Was a formula applied to these teachers based on efficiency, years of service and/or other conditions? If so, do the conditions apply to all teachers irrespective of sex or marital status?

Answers:—

(1) "I refer the Honourable Member to the regulations which appeared in the Government Gazette dated February 15, 1969,—pages 576-7 and the Education Office Gazette for May, 1969, pages 123 to 127."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "No."

(4) "(a) Those who were accepted are now permanently employed and those whose applications were refused are continued in employment as temporary teachers; (b) The position is unchanged; (c) Their applications are being considered according to the regulations to which reference is made in (1) above."

(5) "Yes. The conditions apply to the employment of married women and continuation of employment of female officers on marriage."

APPLICATIONS FOR QUEENSLAND
HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL
HOUSES, WYNNUM ELECTORATE

Mr. Harris, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

How many applications for rental houses in the Wynnum Electorate are at present lodged with the Housing Commission and how many are outstanding for more than three years?

Answer:—

"Within metropolitan and adjacent areas applications are not made for a specific suburb. Applicants may indicate their preference, and where they do so, they could

possibly indicate three areas. When the offer of a house is under consideration an endeavour is made, if the location of available houses permits, to meet the applicant's wishes. With 1,538 applications of some degree of priority, I regret that it is impracticable to determine how many of these have indicated a first, second, or third preference for the Honourable Member's electorate."

REDIRECTING OF QUESTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! A question in the name of Mr. Bennett, was asked, in the absence of that hon. member, by the hon. member for Maryborough. At the conclusion of the answer, the hon. member for Maryborough requested that a section of the question be redirected to the Minister in charge of the Police Department. It is not in order for an hon. member to make such a request. The hon. member concerned must be in the Chamber and redirect it himself.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough): I give notice of it for tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member for Maryborough had been listening he would have heard me say that an hon. member cannot redirect a question standing in the name of another hon. member, nor can he ask a question for another member as a redirection is tantamount to asking a question. If the hon. member for South Brisbane attends tomorrow morning, he can redirect the question himself.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PRESENCE OF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AT
YOUNG COUNTRY PARTY FUNCTION,
KINGAROY

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier) (11.31 a.m.), by leave: Statements made yesterday in this House by the hon. member for South Brisbane concerning activity at a Young Country Party function in the Kingaroy area last weekend have caused me some concern. These statements were obviously designed to mislead the House and embarrass the Commissioner of Police. I feel I am obligated to place the true facts on record so that all concerned might be aware of the nature of the function and the reason for the attendance by Mr. Bauer.

For the information of hon. members, I might explain that the function referred to included members of the Kingaroy Branch of the Young Country Party, who had invited the general public and members from neighbouring areas. I was invited to open the function.

As there have been a number of road accidents involving deaths over a period in the Kingaroy area, it was suggested that I invite the Commissioner of Police to address those present on the role of the Police Force in the community. He was asked to place

particular emphasis on all aspects of road safety and driving practices in order to alert young people to the often tragic results of road accidents.

It is true that Mr. Paul Neville, the State President of the Y.C.P., attended in the initial stages, but I should mention that Mr. Neville left the function before Mr. Bauer spoke. Contrary to what the hon. member stated, Mr. Adermann was not on the platform and did not speak.

Let me also emphasise at this stage that the gathering was not a fund-raising function, nor was any liquor sold or consumed at this function, and it is completely untrue to say that gambling games were conducted.

When Mr. Bauer spoke, there was only the Chairman and myself on the platform. When Mr. Bauer was introduced, I outlined the purpose of his being there, and this was to speak on road safety matters. Mr. Bauer, in the very first instance, made it quite clear that he was not associated with any political party, nor was he present for any political purpose. He made it quite clear that he came up to talk on road safety and police matters only.

Mr. Melloy: He made a bad choice of meeting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have repeatedly called for order. I remind the House that when a Minister or a member has been given leave to make a statement or a personal explanation, at least he should be allowed to make it without interruption. I caution hon. members on both sides of the House that if there is any further interruption I shall deal in no uncertain manner with those causing it.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At the end of his address he answered questions which those present later indicated were of considerable benefit to them, and then members of the Y.C.P. and the general public joined in afternoon tea served by the ladies.

During recent months the Commissioner of Police has spoken at many functions on the need for road safety. I commend Mr. Bauer on his efforts to get the message over to young people in the community, and particularly those in country areas, of the great need for road care and safe driving. It was because of my concern for the growing road toll that the Police Commissioner was invited to attend this function.

DISALLOWANCE OF QUESTION

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not asking a question; he is making a statement. Unless it is reframed it will not be acceptable.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) continuing to give notice of the same question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is out of order.

SWINE COMPENSATION FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

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

As I pointed out in my introductory speech the Bill is designed simply to allow of the suspension of stamp duty payable under the principal Act on the sale of pigs. This suspension will not be automatic on the passing of the Bill but will require an Order in Council to give it effect. This means that the decision to suspend payment will remain with the Governor in Council on my recommendation.

The Bill further provides that statements required to be made out under the principal Act in relation to sale of pigs shall not be necessary during any period when payment of stamp duty is suspended. There would be no point in continuing to require them at such times. Any stamps held by individuals when duty is suspended may be cashed on their being surrendered to my department.

Finally, the Bill provides for stamp duty to be reimposed at any time by a further Order in Council. I think the Bill is generally acceptable to both sides of the House. The only point in issue at all seems to be whether it is wise to suspend the collection of stamp duty at this stage.

I can assure the House that the decision to provide for suspension of duty has not been taken lightly. The pig industry itself wants it suspended at this stage, and my departmental advisers assure me that the amount available in the fund is adequate to allow of the suspension without any fear of adverse consequences.

In the event of an outbreak of swine fever the collection of stamp duty could, and no doubt would, be restarted without delay. It has been suggested that this would not be appropriate at such a time, but I must disagree. In my view, farmers would be much more amenable to paying the duty at a time when their herds and livelihoods are under direct threat.

In regard to the difference between the price paid to the producer for his pigs and the price paid by the consumer for ham and bacon—a matter raised by the hon. member for Barcoo—I would say this: the final yield of boned-out ham and bacon represents only about one-third of the live weight of a bacon

pig weighing in the vicinity of 180 lb. This, in itself, goes a long way towards explaining why there is such a wide margin between the two prices. However, the curer's out-goings have increased in sympathy with general increases in costs of labour and materials.

There are fairly clear indications that the yearly average "livestock to retail marketing" margin increased by about 50 per cent. between 1960 and 1968, and that the curer-wholesaler has been the chief beneficiary. This is to be expected as he has to shoulder the great bulk of the off-farm costs involved.

There is a somewhat happier story in relation to fresh pork. Per capita consumption of pork in Australia has been rising since 1947 and reached the record of 16.1 lb. per head in 1968-69—more than double the figure for 1947-48 of 7 lb. per head. A factor in this situation has almost certainly been a more favourable price to the consumer for pork as compared with beef than used to be so. Producers and the butchering trade might do well to heed the lesson.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (11.58 a.m.): Had the second reading of this Bill been introduced before the recess, I would have been critical because the Opposition would not have had sufficient time to delve into the background of this matter and ascertain the attitude of the pig producers to the Bill. However, the recess gave me an opportunity to investigate the matter adequately. The Minister has replied to my query on the disparity between the price received by the primary producers and that paid by the consumers.

The airing of this matter in the House will give some information to the general public who feel acutely about the price of what could be regarded as one of the luxury meats. To the housewife who wants to vary the menu for the benefit of her husband and family, that seems to be rather a contradiction in this wonderful country which can produce pigs of quality in quantity.

There is apparently some optimism for the future of this industry because we read in the Press the other day the plans of a big operator in the pig industry. I feel, however, that our interests would best be served by supporting decentralised primary producers with their smaller herds of pigs. I should like to see them, in particular, receive an adequate return for their product.

Basically the purpose of the Bill is to suspend contributions to the fund because the pig producers feel that their subscription to it is now adequate and that, in the event of an outbreak of swine fever, there would be at least the nucleus of a very substantial fund to cope with such a disaster.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition questioned whether this was an appropriate time to discontinue contributions by primary producers to the fund. However, bearing in

mind the time that has elapsed since the last outbreak, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition agrees with me, from an investigation of the background of this matter, that there is some validity in the legislation before the House, because there is general agreement among pig producers on what is proposed. Had the measure been brought down solely by the Government, perhaps our attitude to it would have been entirely different.

The fund now approximates \$300,000. It has come to my knowledge that some pig producers were prepared to say, when the fund had reached approximately \$100,000, that that amount was sufficient. Later when it reached approximately \$200,000, that was also possibly considered by some as enough. It can thus be seen that, at \$300,000, this is quite a substantial fund.

Looking at the matter in retrospect, in 1962 the then Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Otto Madsen, forecast that the annual income of the fund would be \$25,000. At this stage it can be seen that the amount expected in 1962 has almost doubled. It must be remembered that primary producers have established this fund as a means of insurance against a disaster that may strike them.

It has occurred to me that consideration might well be given to whether the money held in trust funds of this type is wisely used. After all, this fund has been established entirely by primary producers and, with the temporary suspension of further contributions, is this sum of money to lie idle without earning interest?

Although I am not suggesting that the idea of investment has not been considered before, I cannot find any argument against putting it into operation. The pig producers concerned need feel no reticence about such a scheme because, if their money was invested in gilt-edge securities, it would be for the benefit not only of pig producers but the organisations borrowing the money. Nor could the Government be criticised, so far as I can see, if, as trustees for the operation, it imposed a service charge. I submit that idea today in the interests of pig producers, because on an amount of \$300,000, even allowing for the payment of a service charge to the Government, surely an annual income of \$15,000 could be expected. It must be remembered that the late Otto Madsen said that he expected the annual income of the fund to be \$25,000. We all know that values change, and \$25,000 is not a large sum in comparison with contributions over the last two or three years. But if one thinks of it, \$15,000 is 60 per cent. of \$25,000, and \$15,000 would be a wonderful addition to the fund in the event of a disaster such as swine fever.

I put that suggestion forward because I think it is a paradox that some of the moneys held in trust are not used to earn interest. I should be pleased if the Minister would answer my question, and I am sure that pig producers would be interested in his answer,

also, because I cannot see that the adoption of my suggestion would in any way be detrimental to their interests. No matter what avenue of investment was taken, as long as it was gilt-edge no inconvenience would be caused to the Government and there would be a gain all round.

The subject covered by the Bill was canvassed fairly widely at the introductory stage—in fact, I do not think that any aspect of swine fever was omitted from the submissions made by hon. members who took part in the debate—so there is no need for what you, Mr. Speaker, call tedious repetition, and I do not intend to indulge in it. In conclusion, therefore, I say on behalf of the Opposition—and I say it with conviction—that there is no objection to the suspension of the fund in accordance with the principles outlined by the Minister.

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.7 p.m.), in reply: The hon. member for Barcoo raised the question of the \$300,000 now held in the fund in trust being invested. I stress that it is a trust fund, and over the years it has been my understanding that the Treasury takes the view that it should not be expected to act in the role of banker. As a general practice, interest is not paid by the Treasury on departmental trust funds, which are, of course, considered to be Crown funds.

Another point is that, under section 6 (2) (d) of the principal Act, the State undertakes to contribute the amount of any deficiency in the Swine Compensation Fund at any time in respect of compensation. In addition, no charge is made against the fund for general departmental administration costs. That means, in effect, that if an outbreak of swine fever occurred and the \$300,000 held in the trust fund was insufficient, the Treasury would have to make good the deficiency.

Mr. O'Donnell: Couldn't there be an investment outside the range of the Government?

Mr. ROW: I do not know. The hon. member should take that question up with the Treasurer.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE EXPENSES AND COMPENSATION FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.10 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is designed to remove a weakness in the regulation-making power of the principal Act. Section 23 of the principal Act authorises the Governor in Council to make regulations relating to the seizure and the destruction of animals and property that are infected with, or contaminated with, or have been in contact with, foot-and-mouth disease or the contagion of that disease. The operative words in the Bill are “in contact with”.

In the course of an explosive outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease there are all too frequent occasions when it is desirable, and in fact essential, to destroy animals and property that have not been “in contact with” the disease or its contagion. As the principal Act stands, the regulations made thereunder in 1966 provide, and can only provide, for the destruction of animals and property that have been “in contact” and that, I am informed, means direct contact. Perhaps the difficulty arose from the assumption that contact would include indirect contact. However, legal advice is that such is not the case and it becomes necessary, as a matter of urgency, to rectify the position.

Of importance also is the matter of payment of compensation in respect of animals and property ordered to be destroyed outside or beyond the authority provided by the Act and the regulations thereunder. From this standpoint also it is important that the present weakness in the principal Act be rectified. Let me give hon. members an example of how the deficiency in the Act would be revealed in practice.

A farmer who keeps both dairy cows and pigs has foot-and-mouth disease diagnosed in his dairy herd, but the piggery is not at the time involved. There has not been any direct contact between the cows and the pigs, but the farmer has been tending to the needs of both. It is, therefore, inevitable that the disease will appear in the piggery and therefore highly desirable that the pigs be destroyed without waiting for that to happen. This would be from the standpoint of preventing further spread of the disease.

Mr. Bennett: It reminds me of the relationship between the Liberal Party and the Country Party.

Mr. ROW: Oh, the hon. member for South Brisbane is here!

Mr. Bennett: I have been here all day. You need to change your glasses.

Mr. ROW: It is a pity the hon. member was not here to ask his own questions.

In the present circumstances, there would be no real authority to order destruction of the pigs, and if it were ordered, the payment of compensation would be dependent on an ex gratia decision.

Experience in the 1967-68 outbreaks in the United Kingdom highlighted the necessity to keep at least one jump ahead of the disease. There was some evidence of infection being taken down wind by natural agencies, and from farm to farm by bulk milk tankers. Persons may quite easily transport the infection in a purely mechanical way.

All of these considerations make it essential to have authority to order destruction in the absence of direct contact, should factors in the situation point to the probability, or even the possibility, of infection being present.

Much was said in the course of the introductory debate on the matter of incineration of garbage from overseas ships. There has been a long delay in getting agreement on the conditions under which Queensland would accept responsibility for maintaining and operating incinerators at our 13 overseas ports. It is a long story and there would not be a great deal of point in detailing it beyond what was done at the introductory stage. In fairness to the Commonwealth, however, I think it can be stated that it is meeting the initial cost of purchase and installation of the incinerators.

Queensland supports incineration of ship's garbage and is anxious to get on with the job as soon as possible. However, it needs restating that a major risk remains in the shape of meat and meat products (particularly home-made ones), brought into Australia either openly or covertly by travellers from countries affected by foot-and-mouth disease.

On the score of vaccination, a matter that was referred to at the introductory stage by the hon. member for Barcoo, I would say that there are seven different types of the foot-and-mouth disease virus, some at least of which have numerous subtypes. There is no cross immunity among the seven main types, and cross immunity exists only to a degree among the subtypes. Consequently, the vaccine that is used has to correspond with the type of virus responsible for each and every outbreak of the disease.

The Pirbright Animal Virus Research Centre in the United Kingdom is the acknowledged world reference centre for the typing of foot-and-mouth disease virus. Specimens would have to be sent to Pirbright from Australia for typing, as it could not be performed in this country. That would result in a delay of something of the order of one week in awaiting the outcome, with the attendant possibility of further specimens being required in the event of a doubtful result. Supplies of vaccine would have to be mobilised and air-freighted to Australia.

The vaccine is relatively expensive, and vaccination needs to be repeated at relatively short intervals, particularly where pigs are concerned. In some circumstances, vaccination leads to a carrier state in vaccinated animals, and the disease is perpetuated.

Obviously, vaccination is a proposition only for countries that are forced to the hard decision to live with the disease, or as a preliminary to eradication at a later date. My advice is that in Australia vaccination would be considered for use only if early eradication were deemed impossible of attainment. This could be the case in some of the more remote areas of Australia where full musters would be out of the question and pest animals are present in considerable numbers. In these circumstances, and these circumstances only, a dead vaccine might be used to provide a protective ring around the disclosed area affected by the disease.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (12.17 p.m.): Probably I will be briefer in my remarks on this Bill than I was in my remarks on the Swine Compensation Fund Act Amendment Bill.

I do not think that any message came from this side of the Chamber when this Bill was introduced other than that the Opposition completely supported the proposed measure. Nevertheless, the matter of foot-and-mouth disease was very widely canvassed in the debate, and perhaps the Minister did not expect the debate to take the time it did. Practically nothing was left unsaid.

I thank the Minister for answering my question relative to vaccination, as I was concerned about two matters: whether there was any possibility of vaccination being effective, and, if so, could this State fall back on to a reliable source of supply? Those were the important questions I asked at the introductory stage, and the Minister has answered them.

I would like to refer to the matter of incinerators. The hon. member for Mackay received wide publicity when he made his statement on the matter of the Commonwealth Government supplying incinerators. Obviously a lag exists. The Minister has apologised, in a somewhat half-hearted manner, for the Commonwealth Government by saying that that Government has undertaken the responsibility of supplying incinerators. Criticism has been levelled at the size of the proposed incinerators and also at the delay in providing them at the State's ports. When compared with other States, Queensland has a very long coastline and a considerable number of ports.

Incinerators certainly cost money, but if foot-and-mouth disease comes to this country, the losses that we have experienced in the recent years of devastating drought will be only chicken feed compared with what we will lose. It is important for the Commonwealth Government to realise that the implementation of its policy to establish incinerators is vital because incinerators provide an essential safeguard against this deadly scourge that could set back our primary industries for years, demoralise our countryside and, what is more, make our exports

very suspect indeed. It is important to realise thoroughly what could happen, and that is why I am accentuating these matters.

I mentioned in my speech at the introductory stage that there had been about 6,000 outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in France in one year. Just think of that number of outbreaks in Australia!

At the introductory stage I said that the Act is not really being brought satisfactorily up to date by this amending legislation. The Minister did not refer to that, and I will not make an issue of it, but when an amending Bill is to be introduced the Act should be revised to ensure that the amendments are complete. I believe that the "determination by agreement" section of the Act could well have been amended at this stage.

The last point I wish to make is the most important point of all. I urge the Minister and his departmental officers, and through them, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry and his departmental officers to recognise the need for a continuous propaganda campaign to keep before our primary producers the necessity to be on the qui vive at all times, to thoroughly inspect their flocks and herds, and to know what to look for relative to foot-and-mouth disease. The propaganda should be directed not only at primary producers but also at city dwellers, the travelling public and incoming tourists so that every precaution will be taken to protect Australia from a disease which has been rampant in so many countries of the world and has detrimentally affected their economic future.

The Opposition lends its full support to the proposition of clarifying legally the matter of "direct contact", because it is a most important aspect. We are indeed pleased that a better approach has been devised to clarify it.

Motion (Mr. Row) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have noticed a tendency among hon. members to move around the Chamber while I am on my feet addressing the Assembly. This is not in order and I ask hon. members on both sides of the Chamber to please observe the rules.

MONEY LENDERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (12.27 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Money Lenders Act 1916–1968 in certain particulars."

Money-lending legislation of the several States of the Commonwealth is similar and has been based largely on the English Money Lenders Act of 1900.

This Imperial Act resulted from the findings of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, "which unhesitatingly came to the conclusion that the system of money lending by professional money lenders at high rates of interest is productive of crime, bankruptcy, unfair advantage over other creditors of the borrower, extortion from the borrower's family and friends, and other serious injuries to the community". It was not intended to apply to ordinary commercial transactions.

As the names of the various legislative enactments imply, they are directed at money-lenders and not at money lending as such. The mere fact that one person lends money to another does not automatically attract the money-lenders legislation to the transaction.

The Queensland Money Lenders Act was enacted in 1916, mainly because some persons were transacting the business of money-lending with the poorer classes and charging excessively for the loan. It was not aimed at legitimate commercial money-lending.

The term "money-lender" is defined by the Queensland Act to include "every person whose business is that of money-lending, or who advertises or announces himself or holds himself out in any way as carrying on that business, or who lends money at a rate of interest exceeding 8 per cent. per annum".

Generally speaking, the courts have defined the phrase "carrying on business" as meaning the conduct of some form of enterprise, systematically and regularly, with a view to profit, and implicit in this idea are the features of continuity and system. However, under the Queensland Act a person becomes a money-lender within the meaning of that Act if he lends money at a rate of interest exceeding 8 per centum per annum.

The Money Lenders Act, as originally enacted in 1916, had an interest rate of 12 per centum per annum. This rate determined whether a person or corporation was a money-lender or not and also determined certain exemptions from that Act. At that

time the relevant Commonwealth Bank overdraft rate of interest was 6 per cent., with trading banks having a slightly higher rate. The relevant Commonwealth bond rate on new loans in 1916 was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per centum per annum.

The Money Lenders Act Amendment Act of 1933 reduced the interest rate from 12 per cent. per annum to 8 per cent. per annum. It also inserted a new section 17F, which enabled a maximum rate of interest to be prescribed, and it was prescribed by regulation 10 of the Money Lenders Regulations of 1933 as 20 per cent. per annum.

Between the years 1916 and 1933, the Commonwealth bond rate was reduced from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and the overdraft rate of the Commonwealth Bank and other trading banks was reduced also.

These reductions were the basis for the 1933 amending provisions which reduced the statutory interest rate to 8 per cent. per annum. The present interest rate specified in the Act is 8 per cent. per annum; that is, it has remained unchanged since 1933.

Provision is made in the Money Lenders Act for a body corporate to be exempted from registration under that Act by order of the Governor in Council published in the Government Gazette. A number of bodies or associations have been exempted under this provision, but each exemption is subject to the condition that money is not lent at a rate of interest exceeding 8 per cent. In other words, the exemption is made for what may be regarded as normal commercial transactions.

I understand that it is customary for these bodies and associations to charge loans to clients at a margin slightly above the bank overdraft rate applicable for the time being. This is understandable because unless an interest rate is competitive it will not be availed of.

These bodies and associations charge interest on a daily balance. The interest is applied to the borrower's account half-yearly, with the result that the effective interest rate is slightly higher than $7\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., which is the present maximum bank overdraft rate. Consequently there exists little margin between the effective rate and the maximum rate of 8 per cent. specified in the Act.

In addition to these bodies and associations receiving assistance from this amending provision, credit unions also may derive benefit. I am informed that credit unions presently charge interest at the rate of 1 per cent. per month, which is equivalent to 12.7 per cent. compounded annually. From this amount the credit unions pay stamp duty. Under the Stamp Duties Act, stamp duty of 1 per cent. on credit business transactions is payable where the interest on the loan exceeds 9 per cent. per annum.

Hon. members who were present in 1968 will recall that in that year this Parliament passed an amendment to the Money Lenders Act to enable a money-lender to pass this stamp duty on to the borrower. However, I believe that credit unions are not availing themselves of the provision. If the duty were passed on to the borrower as a separate charge, the interest rate charged by the credit union could be reduced accordingly.

The credit unions, with the fairly low borrowing rates available to them, appear to have been successful in absorbing the payment of stamp duty on credit business transactions. If the credit unions can be encouraged to reduce their operating expenses, then they may well reduce their interest rate to 10 per cent. per annum. Consideration will then be given to whether they may be exempted from the provisions of the Money Lenders Act, and such exemption will be an undoubted benefit to them.

In view of the Commonwealth bond rates of interest and the overdraft rates of interest applicable in 1933, there was a good case to be made out for fixing the determining rate of interest for the purposes of the Money Lenders Act at 8 per cent. per annum. Now, of course, there has been a change from low interest rates to relatively high interest rates, and the current long-term Commonwealth bond rate is 6 per cent.

The Reserve Bank is charged with the duty of managing the flow of money in the community so as to control inflationary tendencies, and it does that by interest rates and statutory reserve deposits; so that in a time like this of a booming economy, interest rates have been raised to such an extent as to bring erstwhile free commercial transactions under the Money Lenders Act, which was never intended to apply to them.

Hon. members will appreciate that the Commonwealth bond rate is regarded by the business community as virtually a gauge. One finds that within a relatively short period of an announcement of an increase in the bond rate, pressures seem to force a comparative increase in interest rates applied by banking institutions and other organisations engaged in commercial and financial transactions. A comparison of the relevant interest rates under the various State money-lending Acts reveals that the Queensland rate is 8 per cent., that the New South Wales and Victorian rate is 10 per cent., that the South Australian and the Australian Capital Territory rate is 12 per cent., and that the Western Australian rate is $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

In view of our standard of living and the present state of the economy, including the current Commonwealth bond rate and rates chargeable upon Commonwealth Trading Bank and other trading bank overdrafts, I consider it desirable that the Money Lenders Act be amended to increase the prescribed interest rate from 8 to 10 per cent. per annum.

I commend the motion to the Committee.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (12.37 p.m.): For the past 10 minutes or so the Minister has endeavoured to explain the various facets of the provisions of the Money Lenders Act, and I think that all hon. members on this side of the Chamber wondered when he was going to come to the point.

Mr. Bennett: He was trying to hide it.

Mr. TUCKER: I agree with the hon. member for South Brisbane that the Minister was attempting to camouflage the point, because only in the last sentence of his introductory remarks did he tell the Committee the reason why the Government proposed to introduce the Bill, that is, to raise the interest rate to 10 per cent. In the preceding 10 minutes he found it necessary to attempt to justify this sudden raising of the interest rate. Quite frankly, I believe that it will be to the detriment of the State if the interest rate is raised, and the question will be studied much more carefully by the Opposition.

As I listened to the Minister speaking of money-lenders, it occurred to me that one of the greatest money-lenders, if one can call him that, in this great continent is John Grey Gorton, the Prime Minister of Australia. As late as last week he said that he would lend Queensland about \$80,000,000. Having worked out the interest on that huge sum of money, I find that Queensland would have to repay to the Commonwealth Government about \$100,000,000 in interest for the privilege of being loaned \$80,000,000. If one is talking of usury, I suggest that here is one of the greatest usurers of all time, and I think it is pertinent that I should make that comment on behalf of the people of Queensland.

I noticed, too, in one of the Sunday papers recently that a correspondent mentioned a man who was brought before a court for allegedly stealing a television set. When charged, he stated that he agreed to pay the finance company 48 instalments, each of \$22.17. In fact, he had paid a total of \$1,064.16. As the correspondent in the "Sunday Truth" newspaper has mentioned, the wholesale value of the set was \$350. If we allow a 50 per cent. profit on that set, that would bring it to \$525, which means that over four years the finance company would have made a 100 per cent. profit on the loan first advanced.

When we speak of money-lenders and commercial enterprises within this facet of our society, it is very obvious that there is still great need for some form of control over some persons and companies who lend money, especially some of those who charge outrageous and extortionate rates of interest to people who normally cannot afford to pay cash for various articles. I bring this matter up because it is the ordinary person in the community who has not the cash or capital who is today being exploited by firms and

people who lend money. The ordinary wage earner in the community who seeks some of the ordinary amenities of life is the target and he pays through the nose for virtually everything he has to buy on hire-purchase.

The Minister mentioned credit unions. I think it can be said that their movement into the field of hire-purchase or money-lending is at least a ray of hope to many of those who are forced to raise loans to obtain the ordinary amenities of life.

Mr. P. Wood: They are not letting them off the stamp duty.

Mr. TUCKER: The Minister mentioned that they come under the Money Lenders Act because, as he claimed anyway, they were not prepared to pass on the stamp duty to the borrower. Up to date they have absorbed it, and if they were prepared to pass that on to the borrower they would be able to reduce their interest to 10 per cent. That, I think, is the yearly amount; I think the Minister said 1 per cent. a month.

Dr. Delamothe: It is 12.7 per cent.

Mr. TUCKER: That would be approximately 1 per cent. a month. If they were prepared to pass on the stamp duty to the borrower, they would be able to reduce the interest rate to 10 per cent. a year. This argument has been going on for quite a while. Many of us have made written submissions to the Minister on the matter, and I believe others have seen the Minister about it, but the position is still one of deadlock. The Minister feels that if this were done the credit unions would not then come under the Money Lenders Act. I do not intend to go into the matter deeply today, but I understand that it has been a source of argument for a considerable time. However, I pay a tribute to the credit unions for what they are doing at the moment for the ordinary people in the community. If the interest could be reduced, so much the better. However, the credit unions would much rather absorb the stamp duty themselves than pass it on.

This brings me to the next point I want to make. It is that Mr. Hawke, who has now become President of the A.C.T.U., has suggested that the unions set up their own hire-purchase companies, and this is a very good and solid suggestion. I have referred to "Sunday Truth" of 5 October, 1969, to illustrate what can happen on occasions. If unions were permitted to set up their own hire-purchase companies, those companies could assist a great many people who otherwise would be forced to pay high interest charges on articles purchased for their homes or other amenities that make life a little more pleasurable.

I do not believe that a precedent is set for this State to follow simply because in New South Wales and Victoria the rate is

10 per cent., South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory 12 per cent., and Western Australia 12½ per cent.

The Minister referred also to the current Commonwealth bond rate and to increased interest rates throughout the country. At the present time, commercial interests are covered by the Money Lenders Act, but a practical approach must be adopted in this matter. Of course, I understand that outside forces beyond this State's control could have made it necessary for it to take some action; however, it is regrettable that the State is forced to take action.

On behalf of the Opposition, I say that we will look very carefully at the proposed measure and will take into account all the statements the Minister had made, particularly the last one, which was the most pertinent one. I am not being disrespectful when I say that I believe that his other statements are merely camouflage. By the second-reading stage the Opposition will know what course it will follow in the debate on the proposed Bill.

Mr. CHINCHEN (Mt. Gravatt) (12.48 p.m.): Once again the hon. member for Townsville North commenced his remarks with a complaint. On this occasion it was that the Minister presented a lot of detail and that it was only towards the end of his remarks that hon. members were able to get to the "meat" of the proposed Bill. Only two weeks ago the Minister for Health introduced a Bill and the hon. member for Townsville North complained that the Minister had not provided sufficient information at the introductory stage.

The interesting point is that the hon. member for Townsville North spoke about everything except the Bill. He spoke about hire-purchase and credit unions, which are not covered by the Bill. In addition, he spoke about interest charges in other States. The proposed Bill does not relate to charges but simply to the stage at which money-lenders have to be registered. Obviously the hon. member for Townsville North has not read the Act. If he had done so he would have realised that the Bill related only to registration.

Everybody realises the different levels of charges made by financiers. Money must have a value, and naturally, when little security is offered, a high value obtains and higher interest rates are charged. But what occurs in the hire-purchase field has nothing to do with the proposed Bill. Of course, it is pertinent to remember that, owing to the increase in the bond rate and overdraft rate, a higher level must be set at which people lending money should be registered. That is all that is happening here. The interest level is to be increased so that there will be people willing to lend money in certain circumstances to borrowers who cannot get money from banks when their overdraft limit is

reached, perhaps for bridging finance for a home or for purchase of a business. This legislation is designed to make sure that there will be someone with money to lend at a rate slightly higher than the overdraft rate. This is a most important field, and these funds cannot be permitted to dry up in this area. At the moment the overdraft rate is 7½ per cent., and the provision that people must register as money-lenders when money is lent at 8 per cent. is creating a problem. As the Minister pointed out, the only difference is the raising of the rate for registration from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent.

I agree with the hon. member for Townsville North that hire-purchase rates are high, but there are reasons for that. If they are too high, there is nothing to prevent anyone from entering the lucrative field. Everyone knows that they are high because of the risk involved.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. CHINCHEN: Hire-purchase companies would lend money at a lower rate if they could. We should not rigidly control the interest rate because everyone is entitled to try to make a profit. Money-lenders will enter the field and charge a lower rate if they think it will be reasonably profitable. We all know the reason for the high rate is the risk involved and the necessity to make a profit.

Some of the suggestions made by the Adelaide Law School as a result of its research and investigation into consumer credit should be implemented in this State. The disclosure of the interest charged on all hire-purchase agreements is important. That provision should apply in Queensland, but it does not as yet. A number of important suggestions could be made but they do not come within the ambit of this measure. I strongly support the increase in the interest rate at which money-lenders must register, with the exemptions which exist at the moment, because it will ensure that money will be available at a rate between the normal overdraft rate and 10 per cent.

I am not a money-lender or borrower but it is ridiculous that, when the overdraft rate was 4½ per cent. money-lenders did not have to register until they charged 8 per cent., and that now, when the overdraft rate is 7½ per cent., those lending money over 8 per cent. have to register as money-lenders. That is the reason for the increase to 10 per cent. The only change is in the rate at which registration is compulsory. This is a logical and sensible move and I support the amendment completely.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (12.53 p.m.): I was very pleased to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition voice the anxiety of our party about the introduction of this measure, and indicate that we will proceed with caution in our approach to it.

The Attorney-General, in introducing the measure, reminded me of my Air Force days when the doctors used to sneak up on us and jab a needle into us before we knew what happened. He engaged in many preliminary, irrelevant observations and, in the last sentence of his speech, really told us the truth about the proposed amendment. It is rather significant that no indication of this change has been given, so far as I know.

The Government knows that this is not a desirable measure to safeguard the interests of ordinary investors. It is purely another sop to the big business interests which have the Government by the throat and are strangling it. Government members are very much interested in big business, money-lending and investing. It is rather unfortunate to hear members who have had their consciences tarnished by their own commercial dealings having to submit to the dictates of big business interests in Queensland and, for that matter, overseas. Since 1916, when it was first instituted, 8 per cent. has been the provision in the Money Lenders Act. No Government has seen fit to change that rate. It has stood the test of time and there is no reason to suggest that it has adversely affected the interests of investors or borrowers.

Mr. Chinchen: It was 12 per cent. at one stage. Didn't you hear the Minister?

Mr. BENNETT: I do not care what the Minister said; I read the Statutes. As Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, the Minister is a very good doctor.

Section 1 of the Act reads—

"This Act may be cited as 'The Money Lenders Act of 1916,' and shall come into operation on the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen."

Section 2 of the Act repeals the Usury Act of 1834.

Section 3 defines "Money-lender" as—

"'Money-lender' includes every person whose business is that of money-lending . . . the term does not include—

(d) Any person or body corporate bona fide carrying on the business of banking or insurance, or bona fide carrying on any business not having for any of its objects the lending of money, in the course of which and for the purposes whereof he or it lends money at a rate of interest not exceeding (eight pounds) per centum per annum;"

That Act is contained in Vol. 6 of the Public Acts of Queensland, 1828-1936, which is available in the Parliamentary Library and in the Chamber. Section 3 (d) refers to 8 per cent., so I do not know where the Minister obtained his information.

Mr. Chinchen: What about 1916?

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member has made a fool of himself already. He should not make a bigger idiot of himself.

The Minister, when introducing the Bill, should have given more serious consideration to recent cases decided by the High Court, which had difficulty in determining who was or what was a money-lender in terms of section 3 of our Act. Had the Minister considered those High Court decisions, he might have given some thought to amending the definition of "money-lender", because some big business interests are getting off the hook by claiming that they do not come within the meaning of "money-lender" under the Act, even though they are charging usurious rates of interest. The authorities in Queensland, that is, the departments concerned, claim that they come within the purview of the Act, but because of the weaknesses in the definition of "money-lender", they are able to escape their obligations, pursuant to the decisions of the High Court, which had difficulty in interpreting the meaning of "money-lender" under our Act.

Quite frankly, I was disgusted to hear the Attorney-General compare credit unions (which are bona-fide money-lending organisations and are usually bands of workers clubbed together, pooling their funds to help one another build homes and buy essential commodities) with cheap, usurious money-lenders such as Brisbane Monte de Pieta Pty. Ltd. which often acts dishonestly and even receives stolen property and will not let the owner take it back. I could give an instance of that at the moment. But decent, healthy credit unions are being compared with vultures who fleece the public. I do not see why any such comparison should be made or why credit unions should have to prove their bona fides and the worth-while part they play in the community before they can be exempted from the provisions of the Act. I think it is outrageous that a body of workers who are conscientious enough to put their shoulders to the wheel and to share each other's difficulties should be put into the same category and pay the same stamp duty as these men who are making large fortunes from lending money to unfortunate individuals who cannot obtain it through other avenues.

Mr. Hanlon: You would think the Treasurer would exempt credit unions from stamp duty.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes. I mentioned yesterday that the Treasurer will extract from the Queensland people a record amount in stamp duties. Surely he could find a soft spot in his hard heart and exempt credit unions from the payment of stamp duty. That would not make any appreciable difference to his Budget.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 1.1 p.m.