

Queensland



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Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1970

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

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. SPEAKER: As this day is being commemorated as Remembrance Day, I ask honourable members to please rise and observe two minutes' silence.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations and Orders in Council under the Forestry Act 1959-1968.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

PURCHASES BY STATE STORES AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

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

(1) Since 1965, has the State Stores or any other Government department made any purchases of welding rods, chemicals, lubricants, nuts and bolts or any other materials or goods from (a) Magna Alloys & Research Pty. Ltd., (b) Cyngus Metallurgical Co. Pty. Ltd. or (c) either of the associated Corium Chemical or Delta Divisions? If so, for each year, what amount of expenditure was involved?

(2) Were such purchases made by way of tender, contract or straight-out sales by the company?

(3) In view of allegations in southern States of an advertising programme followed by salesmen of these companies, known as the M4 programme and relating to a points scheme for the awarding of free gifts to contacts, were any such incentives offered to personnel in Queensland? If so, with what result?

Answers:—

(1) "The State Stores Board has no record of its having made any purchases on behalf of Government Departments from any of the companies named since 1965. While it is unlikely that any direct purchases may have been made by Departments, I will have complete inquiries made in this regard and let the Honourable Member have the information as soon as possible. In so far as the Department of Railways, the main procuring authority other than the State Stores Board is concerned, the details are: Welding rod was purchased from Magna Alloys & Research Pty. Ltd. in 1967 to a value of \$690; in 1968, \$3,898; in 1969, \$4,160 and in 1970, \$1,469. From the same firm electrodes to a value of \$55 were purchased in 1970. From Cyngus Metallurgical Co. Pty. Ltd. screws were purchased in 1968 to a value of \$44; in 1969, \$420 and in 1970, \$50. From the Corium Chemical Division dry lubricants were purchased in 1970 costing \$33."

(2) "By quotation."

(3) "The Department of Railways has no knowledge of any such points scheme or incentives."

BUREAU OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

(1) What is the present set-up of the bureau he proposed to establish within his Department to promote regional development, as announced by him on December 21, 1968?

(2) What steps has the bureau recommended since 1968 for a more positive policy of decentralisation?

(3) Since 1968, (a) in which provincial areas have industrial estates been set up and (b) what incentives have been extended to attract investment in decentralised areas?

Answers:—

(1) "The Queensland Bureau of Regional Development is not a separate authority but represents one of the functions of the Department of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. Some of the Department's staff are engaged on regional studies and further staff will be available for this purpose early in 1971."

(2) "The Co-ordinator-General has recommended that a series of regional surveys be carried out and one of these has been completed while two are in progress."

(3) "Since January 1968, serviced industrial estates have been established in the following provincial areas:— Bundaberg, Cairns, Dalby, Gladstone,

Ipswich, Kingaroy, Maryborough, Narangba, Rockhampton, Southport, Toowoomba, Townsville and Warwick. In addition, land is held in Bowen, Caboolture, Cardwell and Gatton to meet the future needs of industry in those areas. Investigations are currently being undertaken into the availability of land in certain other centres such as Gympie and Mackay for the eventual establishment of industrial estates. I table a copy of the publication, 'Incentives to Industry', which gives details of the inducements offered to attract industry to decentralised areas."

Paper.—Whereupon the publication referred to was laid upon the Table of the House.

TRAFFIC BREACHES BY MOTORIST

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

(1) What were the traffic breaches for which a driver recorded 130 demerit points by December, 1969, as reported in *The Sunday Mail* of October 25?

(2) What were the circumstances of the breaches for which he received 11 more demerit points between April and August, 1970?

(3) For how long was his driving licence cancelled in August, 1970, and what other penalties have been imposed on him?

(4) Has or can any action be taken to ascertain what personal characteristics are causing this driver to have such a persistently dismal record?

(5) In view of this and other cases of alleged high figures in demerit points, what consideration has been given to any system other than licence cancellation for endeavouring to reduce bad driving practices?

(6) On what does he base his alleged statement that only a small number of the 750,000 drivers in Queensland are bad drivers?

Answers:—

(1) "The breaches included the following and in some cases there were multiple offences—Speeding, careless driving, defective vehicle, cross double lines, failure to produce licence, fail to keep left, disobey 'stop' sign, fail to signal intention, fail to notify change of address, fail to give way, drive whilst licence suspended, supply false information, follow too close."

(2) "The breaches were—Speeding, disobey 'stop' sign, fail to carry and produce 'P' licence and display 'P' plates."

(3) "On this occasion his provisional licence was cancelled on accumulation of four demerit points. He would be debarred from applying for another 'P'

licence for a period of three months from the date of cancellation, and if he then did, it would be a matter for consideration by the police authorities whether or not a further licence would be issued to him."

(4) "No."

(5) "I am continually seeking a system other than licence cancellation to combat incorrigible and irresponsible persons falling within this category. In particular I am concerned that there are many people still driving while their licences are cancelled or under suspension."

(6) "It is of interest to note that on the available information the yearly average number of suspensions and cancellations in the last three years was 3,382."

BEDS AT "EVENTIDE", CHARTERS TOWERS

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

(1) How many vacant male beds are there at present in "Eventide", Charters Towers, how many female applicants for beds are on the waiting list and is this typical of the position throughout the year?

(2) Could consideration be given to re-naming rooms with unoccupied male beds to the female section or transferring portions of the male section to the female section?

Answers:—

(1) "Excluding vacancies in cottages, there are four beds available in hospital wards and twelve in residential wards for males at 'Eventide', Charters Towers. There are fourteen females on the waiting list. However, six of these applicants are at present inpatients at public hospitals and one is accommodated in a home for the aged. Arrangements are progressing for the admission of four of the females on the waiting list, to vacancies recently available."

(2) "The matter of reallocation of wards to provide additional accommodation for females has been investigated but it has been found impracticable to vary existing arrangements."

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES SOLD BY T.R.E.B.

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

(1) Is the Townsville Regional Electricity Board an agent for the sale of Kelvinator refrigerators and, if so, will he examine the possibility of this agency being suspended until a full inquiry by a competent body is held into the repeated failure of component parts, such as fan units, which have to be replaced every 15 months or so at considerable expense to the buyer?

(2) Before accepting an agency from any firm manufacturing electric stoves, refrigerators, washing machines or any other electrical appliance, what test is made or what action is taken by the T.R.E.B. to ensure that the component parts, usually bought by the manufacturer by tender on the cheapest market, are not of shoddy material or badly assembled, in order to protect itself against charges of collusion in the misrepresentation made by the manufacturers who protect themselves by the small print on the warranty?

Answers:—

(1) "Townsville Regional Electricity Board is a retail outlet for several brands of electrical appliances but is not an agent for the sale of Kelvinator refrigerators. However I am advised that while the Board finds that failures of component parts such as fan units do occur, they are not common either with respect to Kelvinator or other makes. If the Honourable Member has any evidence which will assist in this matter, he should bring it to the notice of the Board."

(2) "New models of appliances are field-tested by the Board in its area before general release to the public. In addition, officers of the Board make periodic visits to the factory where particular note is taken of quality control and testing practices. I am informed that refrigerator manufacturers normally purchase their fan units, and that the same brand of fan unit is used by a number of manufacturers."

RACEHORSE AS ART UNION PRIZE

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

Has his attention been drawn to an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of October 23, wherein it was reported that Morgan John Ryan was awarded substantial damages against Brooklyn Lodge Pty. Ltd. by Judge Monahan in the New South Wales District Court, as the result of the fraudulent description of an alleged racehorse acquired by Ryan and later found to be unable to be raced and, if so, will he grant assistance to William Hunt, of Townsville, to enable Hunt to take action at law against Norman Bauer, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen and John Houston, President, Patron and Vice-Patron respectively of an organisation from which Hunt acquired, on a fraudulent description, an alleged racehorse named "Aladdin's Record," which later was found to be unable to be raced?

Answer:—

"In reply to the Honourable Member's Question, it is noted that a horse with a similar name to 'Aladdin's Record', called 'Baghdad Note', was recently successful in recent horse sports in another State."

NITROGENOUS FERTILISER BOUNTY

(a) **Mr. Cory**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

Because of its importance to Queensland and as it may affect the operations of Austral-Pacific Fertilizers Ltd. in Brisbane, which has been encouraged by this Government, will he investigate all aspects of the Federal Government's decision to discontinue the \$16 per ton nitrogenous fertiliser bounty and make available his findings?

Answer:—

"The implications of the Commonwealth Government's decision to discontinue the nitrogenous fertiliser bounty, in so far as it affects not only Austral-Pacific Fertilizers Limited but also other Queensland manufacturers, has been the subject of study by officers of my Department. Whilst the matter is still under examination, the Honourable Member can rest assured that close liaison is being maintained with the companies concerned."

(b) **Mr. Cory**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

Because the high price of nitrogenous fertilisers is at the present time limiting their widespread use, can he give any indication whether the Federal Government's decision to discontinue the manufacturing bounty will increase the price to the farmer?

Answer:—

"The position is not clear. However the matter is being taken up with the Commonwealth Government."

INCREASES IN UNION FEES

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

As the Australian Labor Party invaded the Gold Coast area at the week-end for the visit of their Federal leader, Mr. Whitlam, conducted a number of meetings and made reference to the continuing increase in the cost of living and as a number of my constituents have approached me and complained about what they referred to as an exorbitant and excessive increase in the union ticket fees, will he ascertain the relative increase in these fees as against the accepted increase in the cost of living and inform the House of the position?

Answer:—

"The Consumer Price Index, Brisbane (all Groups) moved from 96 for the September quarter 1965 to 111.1 for the September quarter 1970. This is an increase of 15.1 per cent. However, from seven Unions selected at random as being a fair cross section, only one Union, the Australian Builders' Labourers' Federation, Queensland Branch, has increased its fees to a lesser extent than the rise in the Consumer Price Index over the same

period. At the same time the Transport Workers' Union of Australia Union of Employees, Queensland Branch, has quintupled its fees from \$4 in 1965 to \$20 in 1970. I lay upon the Table of the House a schedule showing the increase in union fees of the seven Unions selected at random, six of which far outstrip the rise in the Consumer Price Index since 1965."

Paper.—Whereupon Mr. Herbert laid upon the Table of the House the schedule referred to.

POLICE RESIGNATIONS

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

(1) What number in each rank, including new recruits, resigned from the Police Force each month from January to October, 1970?

(2) What were the reasons given for the resignations in each category?

Answer:—

(1 and 2)—

—	"Rank	No.	Reason
January, 1970 ..	Sergeant 2/C	1	No reason
	Constable ..	6	Own business 1 Other employment 2 Return to Scotland 1
	Probationer	2	No reason 2 Could not accept transfer condition 1 Felt was not suited to Police work 1
February, 1970	Sergeant 2/C	1	No reason 1
	Constable ..	8	Own business 1 Other employment 3 Financial reasons 1 Domestic reason 1 No reason 2
March, 1970 ..	Probationer	Nil	No reason 2
	Constable ..	6	Own business 1 Other employment 3 No reason 2
	Probationer	3	Did not like conditions 1 Felt he could not pass medical 1 Could not accept discipline 1
April, 1970 ..	Sergeant 2/C	1	No reason
	Constable ..	9	Own business 1 Other employment 4 Travel overseas 1 No reason 3
May, 1970 ..	Probationer	Nil	No reason 1
	Sergeant 2/C	2	Other employment 1 No reason 1
	Constable ..	8	Own business 2 Other employment 3 No reason 3
	Probationer	4	He was not suited 1 Deprived of personal life 1 Did not like idea of transfer 1 Returned to former employment 1

(1 and 2)—continued—

—	"Rank	No.	Reason
June, 1970 ..	Constable ..	3	Health reasons 1 No reason 2
	Probationer	1	Ill health
July, 1970 ..	Constable ..	9	Other employment 4 Won land ballot 1 No reason 4
	Probationer	2	Unable to cope with conditions 1 Difficulty with studies 1
August, 1970 ..	Sergeant 2/C	3	Health reasons 1 No reason 2
	Constable ..	12	Other employment 4 Non acceptance of transfer 2 No reason 6
September, 1970	Probationer	Nil	No reason
	Sergeant 2/C	1	Own business 2
	Constable ..	10	Other employment 3 Domestic reasons 1 Non acceptance of transfer 1 No reason 3
	Probationer	3	Unable to cope 1 Could not settle down to training 1 Did not like discipline 1
October, 1970 ..	Sergeant 1/C	1	Other employment 1
	Sergeant 2/C	1	Dissatisfied 1
	Constable ..	9	Own business 1 Dissatisfied 4 Other employment 2 No reason 2
	Probationer	1	Did not like conditions 1"

ROAD COLLISION, REDCLIFFE

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

(1) Did a car owned by a Redcliffe businessman collide with the back of a green bus at stop 15 on the front road on October 29 at approximately 6.50 p.m.? If so, who was the businessman, where does he live and did he remain at the scene of the collision?

(2) As several eye-witnesses claim that the man was under the influence of liquor at the time, what tests were taken in regard to any possible offence under section 16 of the Traffic Act?

Answers:—

(1) "A traffic accident occurred on Kate Street, Woody Point, approximately fifty feet south of Georgina Street, and the details are similar to those stated in the Question. One of the drivers involved in this accident was a Redcliffe businessman named Joseph Benedict Stanislaus Underhill who resides at 28 Prince Edward Parade, Redcliffe, who remained at the scene until he had fulfilled his obligations under the Traffic Act."

(2) "None. No tests were considered necessary."

PERSONAL DOSSIERS HELD AT SPECIAL
BRANCH, POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

(1) As dossiers are kept on many citizens by the Special Branch of the Police Department, will he consider introducing a system of *habeas notae* for the production of such records to the individual concerned so that he may check the accuracy of and/or correct the information contained therein and if so will he apply the same principles as apply in the case of *habeas corpus* regarding the physical individual?

(2) As the information contained in the dossiers sometimes is supplied by irresponsible people, is he prepared to protect citizens by giving them the opportunity of making regular inspections at the M.O. section of the C. I. Branch to view their own histories?

(3) If it is necessary to keep dossiers on citizens' conduct and histories, will their shareholdings also be recorded?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "The work carried out by the Special Branch of the Police Department is of a confidential nature. It is not my intention to disclose details of the workings of this Branch or the records kept. I do not intend to give consideration to the introduction of a system which has as its aim the making available of records of a confidential nature for checking purposes. It is now quite competent for a person in any court action in which he is involved, to serve a subpoena *Duces Tecum* for the production of documents and/or records kept by the Police Department and which are relevant to the action. The Crown can claim privilege in respect of these documents and/or records but the final decision as to whether they are to be produced is a matter for determination by the court."

RECOMMENDATIONS OF DR. L. WEBB
ON PRESERVATION OF RAIN FORESTS

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

(1) Has Dr. L. Webb, head of the rain forest ecology section of the C.S.I.R.O., made any recommendation in regard to the preservation of particular rain forests in this State? If so, what are the areas and what has been done about the recommendation?

(2) Did Dr. Webb recommend that these areas be set aside as national parks?

(3) Have any areas south of Cooktown been recommended? If so, what are the areas and what has been done in regard to them?

(4) Have any mining leases been given over the areas recommended by Dr. Webb for national parks?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) "I suggest that the Honourable Member direct his Question to my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Lands, whose Department is responsible for the administration of national parks."

DELAYS IN PAYMENT OF HOSPITAL
STAFF SALARIES

Mr. V. E. Jones for **Dr. Crawford**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

As he indicated in his Answer to my Question without notice that he was unaware of any delays in the paying of wages to staff at our major hospitals—

(1) Are part-time general practitioners being employed to staff the medical casualty department at the Princess Alexandra Hospital because of the drastic shortage of junior doctors in Queensland?

(2) Have several of these doctors, having been employed since August, 1970, received no payment at all for their services rendered since commencing work? If so, from what source has this gross inefficiency developed, who is responsible for such a situation and how can it be immediately corrected?

Answers:—

(1) "General practitioners are being employed on a part-time basis in the medical casualty department of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. With the aim of continuing to provide a full and efficient medical service, the policy of appointing general practitioners on a sessional basis to the casualty department is a new concept, where general practitioners of experience are being engaged to supplement our full-time medical services."

(2) "The Central Accounting Bureau, established at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, is responsible for the payment regularly of salaries and wages to all employees of the North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Chermiside and Redcliffe Hospitals Boards. These total 7,200 in all. During the month of August, five general practitioners were engaged by the South Brisbane Hospitals Board for duty in the medical casualty department. It was decided by the Board that payment to the doctors for services in August would be made in September, at the same period of the month when payment was made to the visiting specialist staffs. This arrangement was not an unreasonable one. Of the five doctors employed in August, four were duly paid in September for services rendered in August. The salary of the fifth doctor for two sessions worked in August was not paid, as this doctor had not complied with certain necessary documentary requirements by the time the salary vouchers for August services were being prepared. It is a fact that salaries due to be paid in late October, not only to these

general practitioners, but also to the 250 visiting specialists employed by the Metropolitan Boards, have not yet been paid. This has been occasioned by the fact that the Central Accounting Bureau was anxious to effect at the earliest possible date the relevant adjustments in salaries to medical staff, following salary increases recently approved and made retrospective to May 4, 1970. The additional work involved in the calculation of these adjustments prevented salary cheques being despatched by the usual time of the month. I am informed that salary cheques which normally would have been paid on or about October 25 will be now paid, including adjustments back to May 4, 1970, during the current week."

HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS

Mr. V. E. Jones for **Dr. Crawford**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) How many official positions of pharmacist are there (a) in each of the Brisbane hospitals, (b) in each of the major provincial cities of Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns and (c) elsewhere in the State?

(2) How many vacancies exist in each of the above at the present time?

(3) Which hospitals in the State have (a) no official pharmacist position and (b) an official position for a pharmacist which is rarely or never filled?

(4) Why is there only one Queensland qualified degree pharmacist employed permanently in the Queensland hospital system, out of 400 who have graduated since 1962?

(5) Why do most graduates in pharmacy complete their compulsory registration year and immediately leave the service?

Answers:—

(1) "Approved establishment for qualified pharmacists are—(a) Royal Brisbane Hospital Complex, 21; Princess Alexandra Hospital, 7; Chermside Hospital, 2. (b) Toowoomba, 1; Rockhampton, 3; Townsville, 3; Cairns, 1. (c) At other hospitals, 20 full-time, 10 part-time."

(2) "It is the prerogative of hospitals boards to engage pharmacists and records are not maintained in my Department of vacancies. The chairman of the Metropolitan Hospitals Boards, has, however, advised that at the present time—(a) the Royal Brisbane Hospital Complex employs 17 full-time pharmacists and 4 part-time pharmacists; (b) the Princess Alexandra Hospital employs 6 pharmacists; and (c) the Chermside Hospital employs 2 pharmacists. Overall, in the metropolitan area, in an approved establishment of 30 full-time pharmacists, there is a shortage of five. This position is relieved by the appointment of four part-time pharmacists."

(3) "(a) There are 97 hospitals without approved positions for pharmacists. I shall be pleased to supply a detailed list to the Honourable Member if he so desires. I would point out that these hospitals are the smaller country hospitals where the employment of a pharmacist could not be justified. (b) As indicated in (2) records are not maintained of vacancies and I am therefore unable to provide the information requested."

(4 and 5) "Pharmacy graduates are free agents and where they will undertake their compulsory year and subsequent employment is their decision. I would advise that my Department will be offering Fellowships to pharmacy students as from the commencement of the 1971 academic year and on graduation these students will assist in maintaining the establishment throughout the State."

REVALUATION OF REDCLIFFE AREA

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

(1) Was the Redcliffe Town Plan gazetted in 1964?

(2) Is he aware that the Valuer-General's Department has recently completed a revaluation of the area with increases from 23 per cent. to 1,740 per cent. including increases to 900 per cent. in some rural areas?

(3) Is he aware that the Town Plan has not been considered in the determination of recent valuations?

(4) Will he take urgent action to have this valuation cancelled and a new one undertaken in accordance with normal valuing practice?

(5) What action does he propose to take to avoid this unjust, unfair and inflationary burden which has been placed upon the electors of Redcliffe?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes, on April 18, 1964."

(2) "Yes, but it should be noted that these are the extreme cases brought about by changes in potential due to development and expansion factors and in some cases on account of the effect of provisions of the Town Plan. The overall increase for the area is 68.4 per cent."

(3) "My officers assure me the provisions of the Town Plan have been fully considered and taken into account."

(4 and 5) "The Redcliffe area valuation has been made pursuant to the provisions of the Valuation of Land Act and consequently action as requested will not be taken. Owners dissatisfied with a valuation should avail themselves of the ordinary rights of objection and appeal in accordance with the provisions of the Act."

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Mr. W. D. Hewitt, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) What section of the Public Service is charged with the keeping of public archives?

(2) Has the Government laid down broad rules as to the period of time that must elapse before Government documents may be made available for public research and study? If so, what are the rules and, if not, will he consider determining such rules?

Answers:—

(1) "In terms of Part IV of the Libraries Acts, public records are deposited with the State librarian, who is the executive officer of the Library Board of Queensland. The board operates under the Department of Education."

(2) "No. Documents deposited in the Archives belong to the Departments concerned which determine access in accordance with policy. I would refer the Honourable Member to the Public Library of Queensland Form 'Accession Record' which clearly sets out the relevant details and which also indicates that, unless otherwise stated, any restriction of access should not apply to records of an age greater than fifty years."

SENATE ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

Mr. W. D. Hewitt, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has he had the opportunity to study the new committee procedures of the Senate for detailed consideration of estimates?

(2) Do the procedures provide for a greater analysis of public expenditure by elected representatives than has ever before been possible and, if so, will he favourably consider the creation of similar committees in Queensland?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "Since replying to the Honourable Member's Question without Notice on this matter on September 22, I have had the opportunity of looking at the implications of the Senate arrangement to which he refers. Apart from the fact that in our Queensland unicameral legislature sixteen sitting days are allotted for the discussion of Departmental Estimates, it must be remembered that these Estimates are first scrutinised by a number of experienced and responsible authorities—the Minister, the Treasury and, in certain areas, the Public Service Board. The Minister has the responsibility of submitting these Estimates for approval by the Treasurer who subsequently includes them in his Budgetary proposals which, after consideration, receive the endorsement of Cabinet before being presented to the House. I

do not see what additional practical results might emanate from a further examination of Estimates by a Parliamentary Committee, particularly at this point in time. However, when the Senate procedure has been operative for a reasonably sufficient period, I will arrange for it to be evaluated in the light of our State practices and requirements."

ALLOCATIONS FOR COLLEGES OF
ADVANCED EDUCATION

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

(1) What allocation of funds was provided for each college of advanced education for recurrent expenditure for the year 1969-70?

(2) Were any allocations reduced and, if so, for what reason and to what extent in each case?

(3) What allocation of funds is provided for each college for recurrent expenditure for the year 1970-71?

(4) Have any allocations been reduced and, if so, which colleges are affected and what is the amount involved in each case?

(5) Have any colleges had allocations for recurrent expenditure increased, either from a reduced amount or from an original allocation and, if so, which colleges and by what amount in each case?

Answers:—

(1) "Funds were provided for colleges of advanced education for the financial year 1969-70 as follows:—Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane, \$2,038,927; Queensland Institute of Technology, Capricornia, \$587,379; Queensland Institute of Technology, Darling Downs, \$686,985; Queensland Agricultural College, \$947,780; Queensland Conservatorium of Music, \$101,894."

(2) "No."

(3) "I refer the Honourable Member to page 29 of the Estimates of Expenditure 1970-71."

(4) "No."

(5) "Yes. A special provision from State funds of \$100,000 has been granted to the Queensland Agricultural College for the financial year 1970-71."

DEGREE COURSES, COLLEGES OF
ADVANCED EDUCATION

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

(1) Which colleges of advanced education outside Queensland are now awarding degrees and which colleges will award degrees as from next year?

(2) When will Queensland colleges be accredited to award degrees or, alternatively, which courses in any of the colleges are considered to be of degree status?

Answers:—

(1) "No official advice has been received on this matter. It is understood that the College of Pharmacy in Victoria, Swinburne College of Technology in Victoria and the Canberra College of Advanced Education will be awarding degrees, but it is not known when the first degree awards will be made."

(2) "Queensland will consider the matter of awarding degrees when it has received the final report of the working party set up by the Commonwealth and State Governments to consider advanced education awards."

DROUGHT-RELIEF SUBSIDY ON ROAD
TRANSPORT OF GRAIN

Mr. P. Wood, pursuant to notice, asked
The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) In what districts are subsidies paid to primary producers for the road transport of grain to their properties for drought-affected stock?

(2) Are any districts previously eligible for subsidy now ineligible and, if so, for what reason?

(3) Which primary producers qualify for the subsidy?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) "Primary producers in a drought declared area or whose properties are declared individual droughted properties are entitled to road transport subsidy on fodder carried from the nearest railhead to the property for the purpose of feeding drought-affected stock. Where it is shown that road transport of fodder can be justified on the grounds of unavailability of rail transport; urgency; lower cost or excess handling; approval for road transport for the full distance may be granted. Prior approval for such a movement must be obtained from the local Inspector of Stock if subsidy is to be claimed. In this case, a subsidy on the distance less the first 40 miles is payable. Following some relief rain in much of Southern and Central Queensland recently it is now considered that the urgency to obtain fodder from New South Wales no longer exists and my inspectors in such areas are advising owners and agents accordingly. It is understood that railway trucks are likely to be available to transport supplies, and applicants in less favoured areas will be asked to provide evidence that rail trucks are unavailable in New South Wales before permission will be granted for the use of road transport on a subsidised basis."

(3) "Dairy Co-operatives obtaining fodder on behalf of dairy farmers and graziers bringing in fodder for the purpose of feeding a nucleus of the beef cattle herds and sheep flocks of the State are eligible for this subsidy."

PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL, MOSSMAN

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

(1) What is the present enrolment of the secondary department at the Mossman School?

(2) How many high schools in Queensland have a small enrolment?

(3) When will land for the proposed new high school be acquired?

(4) Has a decision been made on the date when the proposed high school will take the first students and, if so, what is the date?

Answers:—

(1) "203."

(2) "Two full high schools. One high school which opened in 1970 with only Grade 8 enrolments."

(3) "A site is being acquired. It is expected that the matter will be finalised before the end of this year."

(4) "No."

POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION, ABORIGINAL
AND ISLANDER STUDENTS

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

(1) How many Aboriginal and Islander children at present attend high schools in Queensland?

(2) How many (a) boys and (b) girls are in each of the high-school forms?

(3) How many (a) boys and (b) girls sat for (i) Junior and (ii) Senior examinations in each of the last three years?

(4) Has any assessment been made of the examination results and, if so, what was the assessment?

(5) How many Aboriginal and Islander students are at present at (a) teachers' colleges, (b) University of Queensland and (c) institutes of technology?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) "As no separate statistics are kept of Aboriginal and Islander children in schools, or indeed of any children in terms of race and creed, it is not possible to answer these Questions. Twelve Aboriginal and Islander teachers are doing a special course at a teachers' college."

MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE PREMIUMS

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

In view of the allegations made in a news item in the Bundaberg *News Mail* of November 7 that a car involved in a smash and insured for \$1,700 two and a-half years ago had a write-off value of only \$850, will he check the report and state what action can be taken against insurance companies which accept premiums on values well in excess of the write-off value of a car?

Answer:—

"If the Honourable Member would supply further details, e.g. the name of the insurer involved, details of the vehicle, the name of the owner and the date of the incident, the matter will be investigated by the Insurance Commissioner."

26. ALLOWANCE FOR TRAINEE TEACHERS, TOWNSVILLE TEACHERS' COLLEGE

Mr. F. P. Moore, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Is he aware that the allowance for a teacher-trainee at the Townsville Teachers' College is \$18.60 net per week and that trainees pay board at the rate of \$16.00 per week at the residential provided?

(2) In view of the small residue left after board is paid and as parents of the trainees are hard pressed in supplying extra moneys for clothing and entertainment, will he review these allowances and give the trainees equitable amounts?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "No provision has been made in the estimates for 1970-71 for any change in the allowances payable. It was never intended that the allowance should cover the full cost of a student's maintenance and it is not regarded as a salary. The matter is, of course, constantly under review."

MOONIE OIL PRODUCTION AND ROYALTIES; USE OF NATURAL GAS

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

(1) How many barrels of oil were produced at Moonie oil field, what was the value and what royalties were paid, during the years 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1969-70?

(2) How many cubic feet of natural gas were used for (a) industrial and (b) household purposes during the same years?

(3) What towns in Queensland are using natural gas?

Answers:—

(1)—

	"Production	Value	Royalty
	bbls.	\$	\$
1967-68 ..	3,177,210	9,974,391	782,998.92
1968-69 ..	2,398,964	7,530,345	591,250.34
1969-70 ..	1,543,612	4,834,097	249,684.99

(2)—

1967-68 ..	Industrial ..	100	million cubic feet
	Household ..	Nil	million cubic feet
1968-69 ..	Industrial ..	935	million cubic feet
	Household ..	60.5	million cubic feet
1969-70 ..	Industrial ..	5,773.65	million cubic feet
	Household ..	312.35	million cubic feet

(3) "South Brisbane, Toowoomba, Ipswich and Roma (Power House and Hospital)."

PROPOSED TOWN PLAN, IPSWICH

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

(1) Has the Ipswich City Council submitted its proposed new town plan for the City of Ipswich to his Department? If so, on what date was it lodged?

(2) What period of time will his Department require to examine and approve of this town plan?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes. On October 30, 1970."

(2) "It is not feasible to state precisely the period of time required to be spent on the examination of the scheme. It will, however, be processed as expeditiously as possible, taking into account other departmental commitments, including several town plan schemes lodged prior to the Ipswich scheme."

FISH DEATHS AT PARSONS POINT, GLADSTONE

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Hanson**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Primary Industries,—

(1) Has an investigation been carried out recently into the cause of the death of hundreds of fish in the vicinity of Queensland Alumina Ltd., Parsons Point, Gladstone? If so, who reported the matter to his Department and were specimens of the dead fish despatched to Brisbane for investigation?

(2) To satisfy the public as to the cause of this unfortunate incident, have any reports been made to his Department of leaks emanating from the alumina plant?

(3) So that a fair and objective analysis may be made of the cause of the death of these fish, will he have an on-site investigation conducted?

Answers:—

(1) "Following normal procedure, the boating patrol officer took samples of both the fish recently killed and the water in the vicinity of Queensland Alumina Ltd., Parsons Point, Gladstone. Such samples were forwarded to the Department of Harbours and Marine for transmission to the pollution section attached to the Department of Local Government."

(2 and 3) "It is too early to speculate on the likely cause of the death of the fish. The need for any further investigation will be determined when analyses of the samples have been completed."

OPENING OF NEW OXFENFORD BRIDGE, PACIFIC HIGHWAY

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

Is it anticipated that the new Oxenford Bridge on the Pacific Highway will be open to traffic prior to the Christmas holidays? If so, when will traffic be using the bridge?

Answer:—

"It is presumed your Question refers to the pair of bridges on the overflow channel of the Coomera River near Oxenford. One of these is open to southbound traffic now. The other will not be used by northbound traffic until the new Coomera River bridge is completed and opened to traffic. The due completion date of this bridge is April 1971."

ORDER IN GALLERY

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much chattering in the gallery.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

NEW CITY WATCH-HOUSE

Mr. NEWTON: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Have plans and specifications been drawn up for a new city watch-house, and do such plans include a special women's section to be manned by a woman police officer?

Mr. HODGES: Plans and specifications are now being drawn up for the completion of the new Supreme Court complex, which will include a city watch-house. The second stage will be the construction of the Supreme Court, but at this stage I could not give the hon. member details relative to the latter part of his question.

Mr. NEWTON: I ask the following supplementary question: Is it proposed to build the new city watch-house on the site of the present watch-house?

Mr. HODGES: The new city watch-house will be built on the present site; but provision has been made for Adelaide Street to be extended through to North Quay, and the design has to take that into account.

RAIL STRIKE

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I ask the Minister for Transport: While I do not oppose the right of any employee to withhold his labour when he has sufficient reason to do so, will the Minister inform the House what notice, if any, was given to him of the rail strike that occurred this morning? Can he ascertain whether consideration was given by the union to the inconvenience it would cause to the public and to the tragic and long-term effect that this strike could have on the future of many of the students who have not been able to sit for their examinations as a result of the lack of transport?

Mr. KNOX: No official notice of the strike was given to the Commissioner for Railways or his senior officers this morning.

Mr. Bennett: He was told last Monday. Didn't you listen to the radio news this morning?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have repeatedly warned the hon. member for South Brisbane that when questions without notice are being asked or answered he is not to interject. It is not fair to the "Hansard" reporters or to the hon. member who asks the question. I will be forced to deal with the hon. member if he interjects once again.

Mr. Aikens: You know your words are wasted on him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Townsville South can take warning also.

Mr. KNOX: As I have said, no official notice was given of the strike that occurred this morning. In fact, as we learned subsequently, the strike was not decided upon until 7 o'clock this morning. So little notice was given that many railway employees who are members of the union involved were not aware of the strike and continued to perform their duties.

Mr. Marginson: It was decided before 7 o'clock.

Mr. KNOX: If the hon. member was in possession of this information he might well have helped his constituents by letting them know about it.

Mr. Marginson: I did.

Mr. KNOX: As a result of this, no information reached the public from any official source. When the Transport Department received the information it endeavoured to take whatever action was necessary to assist, but many people have been stranded in the city this morning, including both university and secondary-school students who are sitting

for examinations. This action by the union can be described only as thoughtless and capricious, and it must accept full responsibility for the inconvenience that has been caused.

Mr. R. E. MOORE: I ask the Minister for Education: Because the railway strike has disrupted the various public examinations that are being held today, will he make every effort to have another day set aside for students who have been unable to attend as a result of the strike so that they can sit for their examinations subsequently? Will a new paper have to be set?

Mr. FLETCHER: I have already been in touch with the university people as a result of the veritable deluge of inquiries of this nature from people who are naturally very concerned on behalf of student children. I have been assured by Dr. Rayner, a senior university authority, that a booklet has been distributed to supervisors giving them the right to adjust the situation to cope with late arrivals at examination centres. After a reference back to Mr. Green, who is running the show from the university, I think the matter is sympathetically and practically under control. As a matter of fact, very few students have been unable to attend examinations. In the event of some of them finding it impossible, the matter will be attended to.

In country areas authority is given to supervisors to adjust to the situation, both sympathetically and practically. It is not thought that there will be a need for any dramatic change in days, or for new examination papers.

As a result of what I have heard this morning from all sides—from people who are naturally concerned—I should say that if the strikers involved wanted to make the greatest possible impact and to draw the greatest possible notice to their affairs, they have succeeded in doing so. But if they wanted to win friends and influence people, I warn them that the average public attitude is that this is a most brutal, unfair and inconsiderate disregard of community interests.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Hughes: They couldn't care less.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the hon. member for Ithaca.

STATEMENT BY MEMBER FOR WAVELL ON CONDITIONS IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Mr. MELLOY: I ask the Minister for Health: Further to my question and his answer thereto of 10 November, and his reference to what he called the nonsensical statements of the member for Wavell, will he deny the statements made by the member that patients could be treated at less cost

by booking them into Lennons Hotel, presumably without any nursing attention; that some patients were dying needlessly because essential services were not provided; that patients had been known to walk out of Lowson House of their own volition and actually commit suicide; that patients are discharged and given a handful of tablets without any follow-up treatment?

Can the Minister quote any further statements by the member for Wavell which he considers to be nonsense? In view of the seriousness of the Minister's allegations against the member for Wavell, can he indicate any action he may propose to take to curb the rebellious and sometimes disloyal attitude that the hon. member has adopted towards his department?

Mr. SPEAKER: For a question without notice, that was an excellent speech. I will leave it to the Minister. Because of its length, it does not deserve answering.

Mr. TOOTH: I can remember only certain parts of the question. If the hon. member is seeking a detailed answer, I ask him to put the question on notice.

Mr. MELLOY: If that is the Minister's wish, I do so.

RAILWAY UNIFORMS

Mr. R. JONES: I ask the Minister for Transport: Did the previous issue of uniforms to railway employees include alternative summer and winter uniforms? If so, does the present issue of only one uniform a year indicate the provision of all-season attire that will cope adequately with the extreme variations in temperature from Wallangarra to Woree?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question has a very familiar ring. A similar question was asked yesterday morning.

Mr. KNOX: It so happens that I have the answer in my hand. (Laughter.) As it covers several foolscap pages, I suggest that, if the hon. member cares to put his question on notice, he will receive a full and complete answer.

Mr. R. JONES: Not having seen the three foolscap pages, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If a question is not answered, an hon. member cannot direct a supplementary question.

Mr. R. JONES: In that case, I shall ask another question in a different vein.

RAILWAY SHIRTS

Mr. R. JONES: I ask the Minister for Transport: Is he aware that, by authorising the reintroduction of the starched shirt as part of the railway uniform, he has become

very unpopular with the wives and mothers of railway employees in this day and age of the no-iron shirt?

Mr. KNOX: I am not aware that I have become unpopular with the wives and mothers of railwaymen. It is wrong to assume that a no-iron shirt does not need ironing, as no doubt hon. members realise.

DROUGHT-RELIEF SUBSIDY ON ROAD TRANSPORT OF GRAIN

Mr. P. WOOD: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries. I refer to his answer to my question this morning concerning subsidies on the road transport of grain for drought-affected stock, and his statement that relief rains have eased the situation in some areas. As these areas are still suffering a shortage of fodder, will the Minister reconsider his department's decision?

Mr. ROW: These areas have not yet been taken off the drought-declared list. Whilst they remain on that list, they qualify for certain measures of drought relief.

DRESS REFORM FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. HINZE: I ask the Premier: Has his attention been drawn to a newspaper article in which it is reported that the Premier of South Australia has indicated that he intends to introduce dress reform in the South Australian Parliament? Will he give consideration to a similar proposal for this Parliament because of Queensland's excessively hot tropical conditions?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the question is directed to the wrong person.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am interested in the question that the hon. member has asked. I think I was the one who instigated earlier dress reform here, because I was the first member to go into the Parliamentary Dining Room without a coat. Mr. "Johnno" Mann was then Speaker. This matter has been considered from time to time, and it is now under consideration. There may be some announcement on it at a later date. In the meantime, I assure the hon. member that it is being considered.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Premier—Barambah): I ask leave of the House to withdraw notice of motion No. 1 standing in my name on the Business Paper.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

SERVING OF FEMALES IN HOTEL BARS

Mr. HANLON (Barooka) (12.5 p.m.): I wish to raise a matter of public interest. I feel that although it is not one that concerns everybody, it is causing quite a deal of unnecessary dissension and I suggest that the Attorney-General might take some action to clarify the situation. I refer to the position that now exists following the amendment of the Liquor Act in March of this year to remove the restriction on the serving of liquor to females in bars and the consumption of liquor by females in bars.

It will be recalled that until the Act was amended in March of this year it was an offence for liquor to be served to a female or for her to consume it in a bar. The amending Act removed that restriction, so that there is no longer any prohibition in the Act against females being served or consuming liquor in bars.

I do not think it is fully understood by the public that there is no compulsion on a licensee to serve a female in a bar, and difficulties are being caused both to licensees and to those people who wish to avail themselves of the facility. The Act provides that a licensee, for reasons that he considers valid, can refuse to serve anyone, whether it be a male or a female. He is not obliged to serve anyone if he considers the circumstances warrant a refusal. The provision is meant to apply, I suppose, in cases of drunkenness and similar instances where he has the right to refuse service; indeed, there is something of an obligation on him to refuse it.

During the debate in March, when discussing the question of females drinking in bars, I pointed out that some problems would be encountered in this direction. I think it was expected—this has largely been the case—that not many females would actually avail themselves of the opportunity provided by the removal of the restriction on serving them. I advanced the belief that the Licensing Commission would be faced with some difficulty in calling on licensees to provide in public bars toilet facilities and so on for females.

Not long after the Act became law I received a complaint from a gentleman who, accompanied by his wife, had gone to one hotel where his wife had been readily served in the public bar. He had then gone to another hotel and the licensee had declined to serve his wife on the grounds that he did not have available in the bar toilet facilities for women. He had no objection to the individual lady concerned but stated that it was a matter of policy in his hotel not to serve females because the facilities were not such as to enable them to do so.

Mr. Hughes: Licensees have the right to refuse service to anyone.

Mr. HANLON: I have already said that—male or female.

The gentleman concerned took the matter up with me and I wrote to the secretary of the Licensing Commission and pointed out to him that I had posed this question in the debate in March and had suggested then that there would probably be a settling-in period before the Commission laid down any strict requirements relative to what it expected of licensees in this direction. In due course I received a reply. As always, the Licensing Commission was very courteous and efficient in answering my query and I had a reply from the secretary confirming my understanding of the situation.

Some months have passed since then, but only last night I was approached by a gentleman who had gone into a bar with his wife where she had been served a couple of times, apparently before the bar manager noticed it. He then advised her that under the policy of the hotel she would not be further served, probably for the same reasons as I outlined in the previous case. He suggested that she leave the hotel. Her husband, in the belief, which is widely held in the community since the Act was amended, that his wife had the right to be served, insisted on her being served.

The incident developed into what I regard as an unsatisfactory situation. The police were called and the husband was "lumbered" and later spent four or five hours in the watch-house prior to being released on \$2 bail. I have not had an opportunity to check on the nature of the charge that was laid; the gentleman concerned has informed me that he had asked what the charge was but was not advised of its nature. I can only assume that he was charged with being drunk; however, he firmly denies that charge.

This incident is indicative of the confusion that exists in the minds of the public and the unnecessary dissension that has resulted from it. I realise that not a great number of people would be concerned, but confusion arises from the fact that a number of hotels will readily serve women whereas others will not. Female members of the public have the idea that the Act gives them the right to be served, whereas that is not so.

I suggest that the Licensing Commission give consideration to this matter. The Act was amended six or eight months ago and by now the Commission should be able to gauge the call made upon hotels to serve women in bars. I suggest that the Attorney-General make a statement pointing out what the situation is.

Mr. Hughes: You think the Act should be amended to withdraw that?

Mr. HANLON: No, I do not suggest that. All of us are aware of the confusion that existed when the Liquor Act was amended. For some months following the amendment, Q.C.'s and other learned people were trying to work out the provisions of the Act as they related to bottle sales on Sunday. Thanks to my colleague the hon. member for South

Brisbane, "Hansard" records that the Opposition was at no time in any doubt about the legality of Sunday bottle sales. However, some time elapsed before the matter was sorted out and recognition given to bottle sales on Sunday, as the Licensing Commission had not used its powers to restrict them in any way.

The Liquor Act is a very involved piece of legislation, and as a result of the amendments that were made to it in March the great majority of people have the mistaken idea that a female has a right to be served in a hotel bar and can insist on service. As I have said, under the Act a licensee can, for reasons that he believes to be sufficient, refuse service, and the Licensing Commission can acknowledge those reasons as sufficient. A conflict has arisen, which is not fair either to the licensee or to the customer. Each feels that he is right. The licensee is aware of the provisions of the Act, and the customer feels that a female has the right to be served and is being denied that right.

It is an unhappy situation when a man is charged and put in the watch-house as a result of a misunderstanding. I suggest that similar incidents could arise in the future, and it is not fair or reasonable that as a result of misunderstanding and confusion a certain amount of ill feeling arises between licensees and their customers. That is the last thing we want to see arise from the amendment that allows females to be served in hotel bars.

I have raised this matter this morning as one of public interest because it was brought to my attention last night for the second time. The circumstances of this case prompted me to bring the matter to the attention of hon. members, and I ask the Attorney-General to request the Licensing Commission to examine the matter and to try to work out a suitable arrangement. I suggest that in the meantime he make a public announcement so that this type of unfortunate incident will not again occur. As I have said, as a result of trying to uphold his wife's right to be served in a hotel bar, this man was placed in a very invidious situation.

USE OF TALLOW IN MARGARINE

Mr. AHERN (Landsborough) (12.15 p.m.): I wish to refer to the raw materials used in the production of cooking margarine. Hon. members will remember that over 18 months ago I raised this matter in the House by directing the following question to the Premier:—

"Has his attention been drawn to an article in the Queensland Dairyfarmer of February 21 headlined 'States Urged to tighten up on Tallows—Some Obviously Inedible', which contained a report of a recent meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council which stated that although some abattoirs and knackeries treat edible and inedible products separately, others combine both types in their product and

that while fats produced from inedible materials can doubtless be made safe by effective refining and heating processes, the practice is nevertheless objectionable?"

The Premier replied that he had knowledge of this type of practice in Queensland, and added—

"This is a matter which has caused me concern for a considerable time. It was essential, however, that any action to implement standards be taken by all States on a uniform basis. Accordingly last year I wrote to all State Premiers indicating the need for health standards in this respect and sought their agreement to raise the matter at the January 1970 meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council. I might mention that there was ready agreement to my request and the Queensland submission was unanimously accepted by the Council."

On that occasion, I also asked the Premier—

"Has he any knowledge of any margarine companies purchasing tallow for the purpose of manufacturing cooking margarine from abattoirs producing a single-grade tallow which is manufactured primarily for industrial purposes?"

In his reply he said that he had knowledge of it. It is now some 18 months since I raised the issue in the House, and I know that at least four abattoirs are still producing a single-grade tallow in their manufacturing process. After producing this tallow, which contains all the end products of the abattoir, they call tenders for it. I must admit that they are not responsible for the actions of those who purchase it, but in at least four instances in the past in this State, this tallow has found its way into cooking margarine.

As hon. members no doubt know, in Queensland cooking margarine must by law contain at least 90 per cent. animal fats. It must be disturbing to all hon. members, however, to know that for some considerable time cooking margarine has been manufactured in this State from such products as I have mentioned. There has been considerable unrest throughout Australia about this matter. I was concerned, and I raised it; it was raised at the Australian Agricultural Council; and it was mentioned quite recently in the Senate by Senator Jim Webster, during the debate on Appropriation Bill No. 2. In the New South Wales Parliament, the member for Gloucester, Mr. Leon Punch, was very vocal about the situation in that State. This is a short extract from some of his recent statements in the New South Wales Parliament—

"The almost unbelievable fact is that although the production of edible tallow for export is supervised strictly in this State, there is no such supervision of tallow produced for local consumption. It is a fact also that tallow rendered partly from diseased skins of animals is finding its

way into the manufacture of edible products, and I refer specifically to cooking margarine, the producers of which are the main users of such edible oil.

"With the introduction to the market recently of super-spread, soft type margarines, housewives throughout the State are purchasing a commodity made from the product of diseased and condemned meat, from meat and skin with cancerous growths, from meat and skins with cysts, from meat, bones and off-cuts of meat that are carried in open trucks and, in hot weather, frequently become fly blown and susceptible to all types of diseases."

Mr. Hughes: The tragedy of this is that people are eating it not knowing this.

Mr. AHERN: That is very true, and I will get to my point very shortly.

It can be said, as I pointed out previously when discussing this matter, that ultra-high-temperature treatment of the product can remove most of the disease organisms. However, I was most concerned at one abattoir I visited when I was told that in making their product even T.B. carcasses were placed in the pot. Every portion of an animal that was condemned for one reason or another went into it. What came out one end was industrial tallow and what came out the other was meat-meal. It was proved subsequently that this tallow was going to a Queensland margarine manufacturer.

This practice is unacceptable from the aesthetic point of view, if not from the health point of view. The public of Queensland ought to know of this practice. This is probably the reason why cooking margarine can be marketed so cheaply in Queensland. The raw materials are cheap, and, while it is not cheap to process this low-grade product into a reasonably presentable product, it can still be put on the market at less than half the price of the vegetable-oil or butter product. Because of this, large amounts can be spent on its promotion. In fact, research disclosed that one particular company spent some \$80,000 a year in promoting a particular brand. I have revealed how they are able to do it.

To Queensland's credit, it is the first State in Australia to tackle this problem, to show great concern about it, and to say that it will do something about it. Very shortly, regulations will be introduced to control what is, at least, an aesthetically unacceptable practice, and, from the health angle, a slightly dangerous practice.

POLICE FORCE

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (12.23 p.m.): The matter of public importance I should like to deal with relates to the Queensland Police Force. It is a matter that should be engaging our consideration in view of all the reports that we have had and

the fact that the imported Commissioner of Police has had an opportunity in the past six months to indicate his wares.

At this stage I do not propose to denigrate his efforts. He was heralded with anxious expectation and the Government and the Minister controlling the Police Department indicated he had bright prospects for the improvement of the Queensland Police Force, but, after his six months of office, we wonder whether any improvements have been made or whether in fact there has been a further deterioration in the Queensland Police Force, not because of the effort or lack of effort of the new Commissioner, but because of the many pressures put on him by individual members of Cabinet and others who can coerce this Government into doing as they desire. Because of the mass resignations, particularly of some of the well-experienced and top officers in this State, I venture to say that there is something rotten in the State of Denmark.

I feel also—and I make this observation with conviction—that the new Commissioner is not apprising the Minister properly relative to questions asked by hon. members in this House. I became sick and tired of the subterfuge, the chicanery and the evasiveness that was indulged in during the regime of the erstwhile Commissioner of Police, Mr. Frank Bischof. With the ending of that regime, I thought we had seen the last of the practice under which members were given false and incorrect answers in the House. I am beginning to think that some of the answers now given through the lips of the Minister for Works and Housing are symptomatic of the disease that set in when Frank Bischof was Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Hughes: I cannot get any action from the police on the things that are happening at the university.

Mr. BENNETT: Exactly. Many conflicting answers concerning the activities of the police are given by the Minister in charge of the Police Force and the Minister for Education.

I am not satisfied with the answers given by the Minister concerning the recent loss of two lives in a Moreton Bay tragedy. From information given to me personally and directly by members of the Water Police, I am quite satisfied that the Minister's answers are simply untrue. I concede that perhaps the Minister does not mix with the police officers whose company and friendship I enjoy and whose integrity I respect. These officers are ill at ease over the answers that have been given by the Minister in charge of the Police Force, and they are satisfied that some officers are deliberately giving him misleading information. Because of the short amount of time now at my disposal, all that I can say is that the Minister's answers to questions asked about the loss of those two lives are simply poppycock given

to him by some commissioned officer with a leather-like conscience in an attempt to protect his own hide.

We have also heard a lot of drivel about the college that is being conducted for police officers. Originally I was prepared to give my approval to its establishment in the belief that in all sections of the community education is a good thing.

Mr. Aikens: You were even prepared to address them.

Mr. BENNETT: Exactly. I accepted an invitation extended to me by both the then Commissioner of Police (Mr. Bauer) and the Minister to address policemen at the college in an endeavour to instil into them high standards of integrity; to point out their obligations to the community; and to instruct them in the law relating to confessions and investigations. But what happened? After the dilettantes in Cabinet had communicated with me and taken up my valuable time discussing the possibility of my lecturing at the college, and obtaining from me an indication of the type of address that I proposed to give, nothing more transpired. That happened about six to nine months ago, and I have heard nothing more about it since. Apparently they do not want decent men of intelligence lecturing the police. Police officers at the college are, in the main, being addressed by certain detectives whose tactics are devious, whose integrity is in some cases questionable, and whose methods of investigation do not conform to the Judges' Rules.

We have also heard a great deal about the physical training now being undertaken by police officers. Surely it is a sad commentary on the Government that, after it has been in office for 13 years, its police officers are overweight, incompetent and inefficient. The Minister and the Commissioner are the ones who said that members of the Police Force are physically unfit. Surely men approaching middle age, in middle age, and even past it, should not have to be told how to keep themselves fit. The Army would not allow its members to become unfit, and the Police Force is comparable with the Army because its function is the protection of the people. Ordinary members of the community who have any intelligence at all know how to keep fit, and they are not given 1½ hours off a day for jogging and physical training. They get up early in the morning to do it.

As the hon. member for Port Curtis points out, he goes in the early hours of the morning to Snowy Hill's gymnasium, and anyone else can join him there and get himself into condition. Everyone in the community should be told that he has an obligation to do his work well. A prerequisite for doing one's work well is to keep oneself fit, and that is a personal obligation.

When there is a record number of unsolved crimes in this State, when the number of police in the department is inadequate, surely policemen who are not fit can be expected to make themselves fit in their own time. The Commissioner tried to set an example—and one has to admire his courage and fortitude—but he cracked under the strain and had to be carried off and has not been back for three or four weeks. Of course, instead of getting on to his publicity wagon and doing his P.T. in front of the "troops", the Commissioner might have been sneaking over to Snowy Hill's gymnasium and doing his training there early in the morning. I will have to confirm this with my colleague the hon. member for Port Curtis. I believe quite sincerely that the 1½ hours a day taken to instruct policemen in physical exercises is unwarranted. I agree with all union principles, and I submit that all awards should be improved; but I do not believe that any force or organisation should have to give its staff 1½ hours off each day to do physical training.

When trouble arises anywhere, surely there are key personnel in the senior administrative section of the Queensland Police Force who can report with integrity on the situation. Apparently that position does not prevail in Queensland, because when the hon. member for South Coast began to query and complain about the numerical strength of the Police Force on the Gold Coast, the Commissioner of Police, instead of asking for a report from an inspector, journeyed to Southport to observe the position for himself. On a matter of principle relative to the administration of the Police Force, surely certain fundamental tenets apply and are provided for. Surely it is laid down that so many policemen are needed for so many citizens, depending on the terrain in the locality.

One sees reports that the President of the Police Union has said it is necessary for policemen to mix with criminals to prevent crime. I suppose that is necessary to some extent, but I do not want to return to the days of an erstwhile Commissioner—his name probably is well known to all of us—whose detectives certainly did mingle with criminals. They shared the spoils that the criminals were receiving. There were not very many prosecutions, but it was argued, of course, that those policemen were preventing crime rather than detecting it.

As late as 8 November—within the last week—

(Time expired.)

PENALTIES IMPOSED BY COURTS

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.33 p.m.): I wish to raise today a matter that I believe interests the people of Queensland and causes a good deal of concern everywhere. I know that one cannot make an attack on the judiciary—far be it from me

to contemplate doing that—but one can at any time, either in this House or in public, speak about the administration of justice in the courts. That is the point I wish to raise today.

Wherever one goes in Queensland one hears people saying, after reading newspaper articles on certain cases, that the judge did not impose a penalty sufficient to act as a deterrent, a penalty that he could have, and should have, imposed according to law. I do not intend to discourse at any length about that today. However, in Tasmania recently a member of the Legislative Council pleaded guilty to charges of shoplifting. He stole a box of cosmetics and two pairs of panty hose. He admitted that he stole them for his de facto wife. He was brought before a magistrate and, despite his admissions of guilt, the magistrate was swayed by the evidence of a psychiatrist named Dick and refused to commit or punish. He allowed the member of Parliament to go free under some little loophole in the law.

It is about the acceptance of so-called evidence from psychologists and psychiatrists that I propose to speak today. It is about the drift that we unfortunately see, in our judges, towards accepting such evidence and themselves indulging in what I might call psychological dissertations, most of them ill-formed and half-baked, instead of getting on with the job of administering the law as passed by Parliament—the only law-making authority, although on occasions some judges consider that they have the right to make the laws.

I am going to quote the relevant portions of a judgment given by Sir Stanley Burbury. After a magistrate named Wood refused to commit and punish this member of the Tasmanian Parliament the Crown in Tasmania appealed to the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of Tasmania Sir Stanley Burbury heard the case. He upheld the Crown appeal and imposed a fine of \$100 on Shoobridge, the member of Parliament named, and, at the same time, of course, entered a conviction against him.

Unfortunately in the few minutes permitted in this particular debate I have not the time to read all of Sir Stanley Burbury's judgment, but I will read the relevant portions of it.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: Probably the hon. member for South Brisbane will not agree with Sir Stanley Burbury. I would be astonished if he ever agreed with anybody, but I feel that he should be interested in the opinions of this very eminent jurist, who is the Chief Justice of Tasmania. Realising how eager the hon. member for South Brisbane is to indulge in obsequious genuflection to the judiciary, I feel assuredly that he will listen to me.

These are the relevant portions of Sir Stanley Burbury's judgment as reported in this article—

"Sir Stanley said the first thing to be made clear was that Shoobridge was without question criminally responsible for these two distinct acts of theft.

"In each case he intended to steal and did steal," the Chief Justice said.

"... stealing from whatever motive and whether committed under emotional stress or not, remains stealing and must be punished as such if the law is to be vindicated.

"If a person steals something it must be presumed he does so because he wants it.

"If he steals a number of articles for the purpose of making money from the sale of them, that no doubt is an aggravating factor.

"But it is necessary to say emphatically that if gain is not an offender's primary motive that affords not the slightest excuse for his conduct.

"It is necessary in this case to emphasise that the main purpose of punishment is to protect the public from the commission of crimes by making it clear to the offender, and other persons with similar impulses, that if they yield to them they will be punished.

"I find it necessary in this case to emphasise these basic legal concepts of the purpose of the criminal law and punishment for those who commit breaches of it, because I think, in this case, this main purpose of punishment has been allowed to be overlaid by undue emphasis on the relevance of the emotional make-up of the respondent and his motivation for the offences.

"I detect a tendency in some of our courts to believe that these basic legal concepts are to some degree weakened or invalidated because of modern developments in psychiatry and criminology which give us a greater insight into motivation of human behaviour.

"Criminal conduct is nowadays more scientifically explained, but to say that it is explained, is not to say that it is excused and ought not to be punished.

"The maxim that to understand all is to forgive all has no place in the administration of criminal justice."

Sir Stanley added: "A court is not bound, and ought not to be bound, by an opinion expressed by a psychiatrist in the nature of a hypothetical opinion. The court itself must look at all the objective facts and test the validity of the opinion in the light of these facts."

Sir Stanley said the application of these principles to the facts in Shoobridge's case led to the conclusion that Mr. Wood had failed to give sufficient weight to the deterrent aspect of punishment as properly understood.

Sir Stanley said it also must be noted what Dr. Dick had said in the course of his report.

Dr. Dick had said, in part: "It is not perhaps difficult in view of his (Shoobridge's) early history, to see how feelings of injustice and a hatred of inequality became inculcated in Mr. Shoobridge.

"Nor is it difficult to see that he might take unorthodox and illegal methods to right injustice or balance inequality.

"That he could do this without any sense of guilt at the emotional level, one can also accept."

Sir Stanley went on: "If that be so, then the protection of retailers from further thefts by the respondent requires that he be convicted and punished.

"I have reached the conclusion that the magistrate erred in the exercise of his discretion, even assuming Dr. Dick's opinion should be taken at its face value."

Then he imposed a fairly salutary fine and a conviction.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: Without being derogatory or derisory of any member of our judiciary, I certainly have no intention of becoming sycophantic or obsequious to the judiciary, as one very prominent hon. member so frequently and sickeningly is, but I believe that many members of our judiciary, instead of saying, "I am in a well-paid job with wonderful conditions and my job is merely to administer and interpret the law as it is written and to punish and let the punishment act as a deterrent," have been carried away by this psychiatric advice and psychological evidence, with the result that they themselves lapse into long dissertations on psychology.

I point out that when a man is brought to trial, usually his counsel puts forward the popular defence that his client is emotionally disturbed and suffers from some psychological or psychiatric disturbance like "apobolicus dyptyptus" or is in a confused mental state. Any barrister will admit that he does not put a witness in the box unless he is certain that the witness will give the evidence that he, the barrister, desires. He more or less reaches an agreement with the psychiatrist, psychologist, or doctor—as the case may be—that, having been paid a substantial fee, he will go into the witness box and earn that fee.

I do not suppose that in this material world of ours there is anything wrong with that practice, but the trouble is that judges, in the isolation of their ivory tower, are carried away by that type of evidence. Having practised law at the Bar, they must know that evidence given by the psychiatrist, psychologist or doctor has been paid for and that that person would not be in the box unless counsel was sure that the evidence would strengthen his case. Instead of having an administration of the law as passed by this Parliament, the community suffers from a

churning-out of the law in accordance with the psychological and psychiatric claptrap of these people who go into the witness box.

I ask the Minister for Justice to have the judgment of Sir Stanley Burbury printed and circulated to everyone in Queensland who is interested in the administration of the law, even to a minor degree. That judgment sounds a note of warning that should be heeded by everyone.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: It would be wasted on the hon. member for South Brisbane. I have no objection to his earning a living by representing criminals. He has spoken of detectives who associated with criminals, but we know that not so long ago he was at Kelly's wedding with Darcy Dugan and even offered to drive Darcy over the border. I suggest that the pot should not call the kettle black.

The problem that I have raised is a serious one, and the sooner the Minister for Justice tackles it the better it will be for all of us.

I want to deal also with the quality of Kelvinator refrigerators, which I raised by way of question this morning, and say that I have been the sucker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will have to leave that till another day.

(Time expired.)

FLOODING OF ITHACA CREEK

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (12.44 p.m.): Like the matter raised by the hon. member for Baroona, the one that I wish to bring to the attention of the House concerns a small number of people. For that very reason I am prompted to raise it. I have no doubt that if many thousands of people were affected, the Brisbane City Council would have adopted an attitude different from the one it has displayed.

I refer to the flooding of Ithaca Creek and the untold hardship that is caused to the people whose premises back onto that creek. The Brisbane City Council has confused those people by statements it has made about which authority is responsible for the creek.

Mr. Bennett: The C.M.O. did nothing about it for 20 years.

Mr. MILLER: If the creek had always been prone to flooding or had been cleaned periodically I would not be bringing this matter forward today. But that is not so. To the best of my knowledge, and the knowledge of people who live along the creek, it has not been cleaned since Labour took over the administration of the Brisbane City Council.

The main reasons for the flooding of Ithaca Creek are the placement of a 4 ft. 6 in. diameter water-main across the creek, 3 ft. above its bed, and the construction of a footbridge alongside and level with the water-main. The pipe and the footbridge act as a dam, holding back the storm-water and

causing flooding in this part of Ithaca Creek. The council has also used the creek bank for storing soil for which it has no immediate use. This has resulted in a narrowing of the creek bed, which also causes water to back up further along the creek.

It is strange that the council accepts responsibility for spraying the creek to eradicate mosquitoes but will not accept responsibility for removing the sand and gravel that has silted up the creek over a number of years. The council also refuses to remove reeds that are so thick they endanger the lives of young children who swim in the creek when it is in flood. I point out that council storm-water drains flow into the creek and deposit in it sand and gravel from nearby roads, but the council persistently refuses to remove the deposits from the creek. Flood waters now build up to a dangerous level and cause severe damage to properties backing onto the creek. As I pointed out in my question this morning, creek flooding now lifts the lids of sewer pipes, thus subjecting nearby areas to a putrid stench.

In 1952 a Labour Government introduced legislation to provide funds to cope with flood problems, but unfortunately the Labour council does not appear to accept it and has not taken advantage of the 33½ per cent. subsidy afforded by it. I ask the Government to institute some means of getting the council to create a trust similar to those formed by 12 other local bodies throughout Queensland to handle the flood-mitigation problem, and thereby avail itself of the 33½ per cent. subsidy. I trust that the Minister will do all in his power to overcome the problem. I do not intend to leave the matter rest until the creek has been cleaned of the silt that has been causing hardship to people with homes adjacent to its banks.

ABORIGINAL CHILD DEATHS

Mr. B. WOOD (Cook) (12.48 p.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of hon. members a matter of considerable importance to the people in Queensland, who have been saddened and shocked by the death of six Aboriginal children at Camooweal. I know that all hon. members are full of sympathy for the Aborigines concerned, but these people and the people of Queensland demand more than sympathy. We expect urgent action to be taken to correct the circumstances responsible for the deaths.

Mr. P. Wood: That is most unlikely.

Mr. B. WOOD: I hope not.

We have heard and read of the shocking living conditions that have brought about these tragic results. One newspaper report referred to polluted water, no sanitation, no garbage disposal, and little shelter. Is it any wonder that there have been deaths? I am greatly concerned in that it takes such a tragic

incident to make newspaper headlines and to bring public attention to bear on the problem. In order to focus attention on the plight of these people, it seems that some tragedy like the death of six children or the conviction of a woman at Cunnamulla for the death of her children is necessary. It is not realised that this sort of thing is happening all the time. The public does not take note of the death of one or two children; it takes note only of a large number of deaths. However, these deaths are taking place constantly in isolated and scattered camps all over Queensland. Six children have died in one spot in a few days. How many have died in Queensland in a year?

Mr. P. Wood: The Minister for Health won't tell us.

Mr. B. WOOD: He certainly will not.

The position in Queensland is worse than is indicated by this deplorable incident in Camooweal, so it becomes a matter about which this Parliament should be very concerned. We do not know how bad it is.

Mr. P. Wood: I think the mortality rate is about 200 per thousand.

Mr. B. WOOD: It is certainly very high. My friend and colleague the hon. member for Toowoomba East has approached the Minister for Health repeatedly to ascertain the position and has got nowhere. He has been told that statistics of Aboriginal mortality are not kept. He has been told that separate records are not kept, that there is no racial discrimination.

Mr. P. Wood: That is merely a way of hiding the truth.

Mr. B. WOOD: That is correct.

I refer to a question asked by the hon. member for Toowoomba East on 11 November, 1969—exactly one year ago today. He asked for statistics relative to Aboriginal health, and the Minister, in his reply, avoided the issue. He said that he would await the outcome of a conference in December before giving any decision on a Queensland survey of Aboriginal infant mortality.

Mr. Davis: Which Minister was that?

Mr. B. WOOD: The Minister for Health.

That conference was held 11 months ago, and no decision has been made. His lack of action indicates that he is not very concerned about this matter and does not think it warrants any particular attention. He is endeavouring to avoid revealing the true position. And the true position is appalling. In fact, we do not know how bad it really is. The Minister should be ashamed of the position.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs cannot be commended in this respect either. Yesterday, in answer to a question, he became evasive and tried to pass the buck to the Commonwealth Government. This is not good enough. Quite often we have heard

from him that the conditions of Queensland Aborigines are improving, yet camps like Camooweal have existed for years with no improvement. These conditions are evident in 50 camps or more throughout Queensland. No changes have been made and no changes are coming in those camps of humpies and hovels, filth, malnutrition, infection and illness; and, of course, death, because it comes inevitably in those circumstances.

The Government must act immediately. It must not evade the issue, as the Minister for Health has done and did specifically a year ago. It must immediately start a full survey of Aboriginal health in Queensland and, more importantly, Aboriginal child health. It must obtain the true statistics; in that way it will discover the horrifying facts.

Mr. Davis: Isn't the Queensland Institute of Medical Research investigating Aboriginal health?

Mr. B. WOOD: Yes. The Queensland Institute of Medical Research has been doing some work on it.

Mr. P. Wood: Do you think the Maternal and Child Welfare Division should be expanded?

Mr. B. WOOD: I know the hon. member's interest in this matter, and the questions that he has asked on it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's colleagues seem to be giving him a good deal of assistance.

Mr. B. WOOD: No, Mr. Speaker. I think they are merely indicating that they have a concern in this matter, which is not shared by members on the Government side.

The Government needs to ascertain statistics. Once it has them, it can start to attack the problem seriously. I am not suggesting, of course, that it has to wait till all surveys are completed before beginning remedial action. Unless great care is taken and the Government acts immediately, Aboriginal children will continue to die in ones and twos throughout the year till a sizeable total is reached at the end of the year, and only when a number die together, or there are other spectacular and unfortunate results, will the situation be brought to public attention. The situation at present is most drastic and dreadful, and it must be corrected immediately by the Government.

[Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.15 p.m.]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(Mr. Ramsden, Merthyr, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 16 October (see p. 1175) on Mr. Herbert's motion—

“That a Bill be introduced to constitute a Consumer Affairs Council and to provide

for its functions and powers and the conduct of its affairs; to provide for the establishment of a Consumer Affairs Bureau and the appointment of a Commissioner for Consumer Affairs; to provide with respect to the description and advertising of goods, and for other purposes."

Mr. HOOPER (Greenslopes) (2.16 p.m.): Naturally, I support the proposed legislation. I wish first to congratulate the Minister on his introduction of the Bill and to thank him for the privilege of being chairman of the committee appointed to investigate consumer affairs in Queensland. I thank him also for the facilities that he made available to me and other members of the committee during the time we were making our investigations. To Mr. Muhl, Under Secretary of the Department of Labour and Tourism, I also extend, on behalf of myself and the members of the committee, sincere thanks for the assistance he gave and the facilities he made available.

Secondly, I compliment the members of the committee who served with me investigating consumer problems in this State, and I shall refer to them by name: my colleague the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt, Mr. Chinchin; my colleague the hon. member for Redcliffe, Mr. Houghton; the representative of the Department of Justice, Mr. Pearson, a solicitor; and the secretary, Mr. Humphries, a top public servant.

In referring to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition—who, by the way, was completely off side with the submission made to the committee by the Queensland Trades and Labour Council—

Mr. Houston: That is not true.

Mr. HOOPER: I shall prove it. I have the submission with me and I shall read it to the Committee.

Mr. Houston: I hope so.

Mr. HOOPER: The Leader of the Opposition was critical of the committee.

Mr. Houston: Yes.

Mr. HOOPER: I was in the chair when he was speaking, and I reserve to him the right to criticise me at any time. I welcome his criticism. However, the hon. gentleman said that the committee had no ability, and that is recorded in "Hansard".

Let us have a look at the composition of the committee. There was the hon. member for Redcliffe, Mr. Houghton, a former banker and a successful man not only in Parliament but also in his own real estate business. Who would be better suited to serve on the committee? The hon. member for Mt. Gravatt, a man with a number of years' experience in business, particularly in the motor industry, one of the major industries that the committee investigated.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! I remind the Committee that the hon. member for Greenslopes has the floor. As I have laid down previously, I do not mind interjections that the hon. member on his feet answers, but I will not have cross-firing between other hon. members.

Mr. HOOPER: Let us have a look, Mr. Ramsden, at the two public servants. First, a solicitor from the Department of Justice, a person very competent to deal with the legal matters that the committee investigated. I pay a tribute to him. Mr. Humphries, the secretary, is in a top position in the Public Service.

If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to be critical of me and my colleagues, let him be critical, but I ask him not to level his criticism at two public servants who have rendered sterling service to the committee and to the Public Service in this State.

Let us look at what the Leader of the Opposition had to say. He criticised my ability. I will accept that criticism, but I ask him, through you, Mr. Ramsden, what qualifications one must have to be a consumer. Let me go on and ask him another question: what qualifications must one have to be Leader of the Opposition, not once but on a continuing basis? I ask him to answer that question.

Mr. Houston: I will answer it.

Mr. HOOPER: He cannot. He tried what he tried on me and my colleagues at the last election and was not successful. Hon. members opposite tried to steal from this Government a punch-line, but it did not come off.

The Leader of the Opposition says that the A.L.P. policy is to inform the public, but he criticised this legislation because he said it had no teeth. In other words, he does not want us to have tabled in Parliament each year, not one but two documents, one by the council and one by the bureau, telling the story as is done in New South Wales. He said that goods are shoddy and there are dishonest people in business. I agree with him on this point, but the great majority of people in industry, trade and commerce are honest, decent people who want to make an honest, decent living.

If the A.L.P. have their way, it will not be a matter of consumer affairs, guidance and education but a clamp-down on industry, trade and commerce. That is exactly what the hon. member said, and it is exactly what Mr. Burns said in a Press article on 14 October. Mr. Burns went on radio before this legislation was introduced into Parliament, commenting on it and saying that he knew what was in it. The interviewer asked him, "How do you know?" and he said, "I looked in a crystal ball." Nobody told him; he guessed it. So, the lie has been

thrown in the teeth of both the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Burns, the Federal president and State Secretary of the A.L.P.

Let us look at what the Trades and Labour Council said over the signature of Mr. Egerton. Let us face it; the Leader of the Opposition said, "Why do we follow New South Wales? Why do we follow the other States?" We have learned by the experience of other States and other countries. Thank God, we can learn from their mistakes. Do not let the Leader of the Opposition try to talk me out of it. This is what the Trades and Labour Council said—

"The Labour Council believes—

(1) That there should be a Minister directly responsible, and known by the public to be responsible, for consumers' affairs. This need not necessarily be his only function. The Office of Minister for Consumer Affairs could be allied with one of the other recognised Ministers.

(2) That the membership of the Consumer Affairs bodies set up by the Government must be protected from interference or the suspicion of interference, either from the Government or other sources."

Is this not exactly what the Minister indicated when introducing the Bill?

Mr. Houston: He did not.

Mr. HOOPER: Of course he did.

The submission continues—

"(3) That each body, therefore, must have security of tenure and some of the forms of privilege available to quasi-judicial bodies."

This is exactly what has been indicated in the legislation.

Mr. Houston: I will give you something.

Mr. HOOPER: I am not afraid of the Leader of the Opposition. So far as I am concerned, he is small fry.

Let me go on with what Mr. Egerton said—denied by the Leader of the Opposition—

"(4) That the most important weapon available to anybody concerned with Consumer Protection is publicity."

The tabling of the documents in this Parliament is the publicity that will be given to the people in the field of business who will not negotiate or do the right thing by the consumer.

This is interesting—

"The committee would therefore be comprised of a Minister for Consumer Affairs, charged with administering the Council, and a Consumer Protection Council made up of persons nominated by organisations such as the trade unions, housewives' organisations, the Australian Consumers'

Assoc., manufacturers, retailers, pensioners, and possibly some academic representation."

The Minister was criticised; yet his proposals are embodied in the recommendation of the Labour Party's boss.

The Leader of the Opposition has said that the two women who, as indicated by the Minister, would be appointed to the council are not sufficient. I point out that more women could be appointed to the council. Again the Leader of the Opposition is flying off half-cocked and, like Mr. Burns, who gazes into the crystal ball, is trying to read into the legislation things that are not there.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that the great majority of union members are consumers. Are not all people consumers? Where is the dividing line between a consumer and any other person? Trade unionists are not the only consumers in the community.

Criticism was levelled by the Leader of the Opposition at the inspectors whom the Minister intends to appoint. He said that inspectors should be appointed on a full-time basis and do only inspection work. He is ignorant of what goes on in other places. In other States and other countries it has been shown quite clearly that the work of any consumer affairs council or bureau is very heavy in the first two years of its operations, but after that time it levels off so that the body is only required to look at the matter from time to time. Experience has shown that very few prosecutions are laid and that in nearly all instances the matter is sorted out by negotiation.

In answer to an interjection, the Leader of the Opposition said that he was not in favour of negotiation. I put it to him that if an aggrieved person is not willing to negotiate, surely some other person, who may be just as ignorant as the complainant, should not be prosecuted.

Let us examine the situation that develops when negotiations are entered into. I shall illustrate this by referring to certain dealings between a Brisbane motor-car firm and a man named George Kenny. In October, 1969, the firm sold a new Australian-assembled motor-car—it was not assembled in Queensland—to Mr. Kenny. In "Sunday Truth" of 26 October, 1969, this article appeared—

"Seventeen days after George Kenny bought his new car in Brisbane it needed repairs to the speedometer, paintwork, demister, differential, wipers, solenoid switch, distributor and gear-box oil sealer," and so on.

George Kenny applied to the distributors to have the faults rectified, but they would not do anything about them. He wrote to the manufacturers, who then ordered the distributors to carry out the necessary work. The distributors still refused to do the

work; however, the paintwork was touched up, and the rust came through. For the full warranty period of 12 months Kenny fought the distributors, but he got nowhere at all with them.

The moment the firm suspected that the matter would receive publicity in Parliament it started to have second thoughts about it. However, it apparently then thought that it would not be raised in Parliament, until the day the Minister gave notice of the legislation in this Chamber. The following morning, before the legislation was introduced—eight days after the warranty had expired—the motor-car firm phoned Mr. Kenny and asked him to come into the office, when it purchased the car back from him. He was asked if he would be prepared to pay \$200 for the use of it for 12 months. Naturally he asked why there was such a change of heart. I state that it was purely and simply because the legislation was to be introduced into this Assembly. The company had the right to negotiate and it took advantage of that right because it did not want its name mentioned in any report to Parliament. Negotiation is one of the big weapons in this field—and it will work.

My colleagues who served on the committee with me know full well that when we felt we could help people and made inquiries relative to their problems, many of their complaints were rectified by action initiated by negotiation. I therefore throw the lie back in the teeth of those who say that, in the majority of cases, negotiation will not work.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that a central office should be established. That is so. The officers will have to be trained not only as expert investigators but also as public relations and research officers. He said, too, that the legislation did not have enough teeth, but Mr. Egerton recommended the adoption of the southern legislation.

I must refer to Mr. Egerton's submission, because over and over again he referred to publicity. That should be the main weapon in any legislation that is introduced. The Leader of the Opposition was critical of the bureau being a Government department, but Mr. Egerton said that the council should be provided with a permanent secretariat comprising a chairman, a secretary and office staff as required from time to time. He said that the chairman and the secretary should hold permanent positions, subject, of course, to usual Public Service superannuation rights, and so on. The Leader of the Opposition was again off-side with Mr. Egerton.

Mr. B. Wood: What was Mr. Egerton speaking as?

Mr. HOOPER: Mr. Egerton was speaking as president of the Trades and Labour Council.

I repeat that Mr. Burns, too, was off-side with Mr. Egerton. In consumer affairs, members of the Labour Party have only one thing

in mind, namely, price-fixing. Why are they not honest enough to say, "We are not concerned with consumer affairs; we are concerned only with price-fixing and squeezing businessmen, particularly the small men, out of business.?" If they were honest they would admit that.

I welcome personal criticism but I must defend, to the best of my ability, the other members of the committee. I believe they warrant my defence, and I give it to them freely.

My friend and colleague the member for Norman (Mr. Bromley), said that the Chairman of Committees—that is me—was not happy with the legislation. I inform him that I am completely happy with it. He said he wanted to be a member of the committee. I know that he had the capacity to serve on the committee and to help us. I am sure that any advice from him would have been helpful. However, he said that if he had served on the committee the legislation would have had teeth. I doubt that. We all know that the hon. member for Norman was a dental mechanic. If the inference can be followed to its logical conclusion, the legislation would have had false teeth.

Spokesmen for the Trades and Labour Council have said that they were happy with the New South Wales and Victorian legislation, but the Leader of the Opposition is not.

The member for Ipswich West was complimentary of the committee, and I thank her for her trust in the people who undertook these investigations. She complimented the legislation, and again I thank her.

The hon. member for Sandgate was a little disappointed with the legislation and wanted to wait and see.

Criticism was levelled at me and my committee, and I have the right to answer it. Mr. Egerton recommends that two unionists be appointed to the council. The Minister could appoint more than two unionists.

I say very sincerely that when this council is set up—if all Opposition members are as honest as the hon. member for Ipswich West, they will admit that it will act as it should. It will be the governing body and will be responsible only to the Minister, it will be entitled to initiate any investigations it wishes, it will be able to undertake product testing, and so on.

At the second-reading stage I shall give details of some of the matters that concerned the committee during its investigations.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (2.37 p.m.): I have waited 11 years to hear a refreshing speech like the one just delivered by the hon. member for Greenslopes. I never thought I would live to see the day when a Government member would defend Jack Egerton. It is passing strange that, over the years I have been here, Opposition members have been slated as being craven cowards,

dictated to by the Trades Hall. The hon. member for Greenslopes, throughout the whole of his speech, complained that the Leader of the Opposition was bucking the Trades Hall on this issue. It is very refreshing indeed to hear this type of speech emanating from the Government benches. I believe that there is possibly still hope for some Government members.

A study of the Minister's speech makes it painfully obvious that this legislation, which is being introduced for consumer protection, follows the usual pattern of legislation introduced in this Chamber by the present Government. I believe that the legislation as enunciated by the Minister is another example in a long list of examples of the political whitewashing of a problem. It follows the pattern set by the Government when it is caught in a situation of its own making and, after 13 years of office, suddenly finds that, despite its early contention that healthy competition was in the best interests of the consumer—

Mr. Campbell: It still is.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If that is so, why is it necessary, after 13 years of healthy competition and honest trade practices by Queensland merchants, to introduce consumer protection legislation? As I say, it follows the pattern of the Government, caught in a situation of its own making, bringing out the whitewash brush to placate not only the consuming public but also the supporters for the past five or six years of the political parties that have formed the coalition.

Never in the history of government in this State has the consuming public been subject to such confusion in the marketing of goods and services as has existed since the dead hand of Country-Liberal Government fell on this State. During this time, every safeguard introduced by Labour Governments has disappeared under the legislation of the present Government. An unprecedented upsurge of false packaging raged unchecked for many years, despite the pleading by Opposition members for some action to control it.

Finally, to placate the outraged feelings expressed at conventions of their own parties, the Government belatedly introduced legislation controlling packaging. Although Opposition members pleaded for such legislation, action was taken only after similar approaches were made by Government supporters, particularly at a Liberal Party convention held at the university, where there was talk of blatant profiteering.

Since the Government came to office, there has been in Queensland an upsurge of marked-up prices and mythical discounts, particularly in trading in electrical goods. There has been a removal of compulsory grading of meat and the issuing of dockets in butcher shops. There has been a removal of price control.

The hon. member for Greenslopes tried to imply that the introduction of price control is our only aim. Anybody with an ounce of acumen would know that price control is part of consumer protection, if consumer protection is really going to work. The Government removed price control, despite the recommendations of a committee, namely, the Prices Advisory Board, set up by the Government. Because the recommendations of that board, which included retention of price control on certain essential items, did not suit the Government, the heads were lopped off the members of the board, and it has not met since then. Any sensible Government would realise that consumer legislation that does not embrace price control is not really worth the paper it is written on.

Mr. Porter: They are not getting control of prices in South Australia under a Labour Government.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not intend to waste time on the hon. member for Toowong, as I have a lot to say. It is strange, however, that the Government is quite happy to make use of price-control legislation in South Australia for the determination of petrol prices.

We have also seen, of course, the confidence trick of the so-called "specials" sold in the chain stores. I firmly believe that the prices of "specials" are the prices that should always be charged for those articles. It would do the hearts of many Government members good to read Wednesday's "Telegraph" and compare the prices of so-called "specials" with the prices of the same items in other stores. At times the difference in price is 3c or 4c.

Is it right that people at St. Lucia should pay more for their meat than those at Clayfield? And should the people at Coopers Plains pay more for butter than those at Mt. Gravatt? That is the situation that has arisen under this Government. Caught in a situation of its own making, the Government suddenly comes out as the champion of the consumers in its desire to introduce consumer protection. I believe that it is nothing but a political confidence trick. Everything possible has been done to mislead the consumer since the Government came to office in 1957.

Government members talk of the rule of caveat emptor—let the buyer beware. Even the Minister, when introducing a Bill to make statutory provision for the protection of the public, had the audacity to say that the rule of caveat emptor must prevail. The Oxford Dictionary definition of "caveat emptor" is, "Disclaiming responsibility for buyer's disappointment." Obviously that is a rule of law that was introduced back in the dark ages, and was designed by merchants to protect themselves from the protesting public. If statutory provision is to be made for consumer protection, how can the rule of caveat emptor apply when the Government

has already legislated to ensure that articles are merchandised in such a way that the buyer knows he is getting value for money?

Mr. Campbell interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The hon. gentleman should go and bathe in Albany Creek. He has made a mess of many things.

The Minister spoke of the rule of caveat emptor. How can any housewife be expected to assess the quality of goods in any type of shop, particularly in view of the present patterns of merchandising? If she goes to a grocery store, she is confronted with a choice of 3,000 items of groceries. How can she be expected to be an expert on all of them?

If we listen to one of the jingles on the radio—much of the advertising on radio and television almost drives me crazy—we hear a store in Brisbane advertising that it has “thirty thousand sixteen hundred and fifty-four different items”. How can any woman in the community faced with a choice of 31,654 items say with confidence, “I am an expert in every one of these.”? In spite of that, the Minister has the audacity to say that the rule of caveat emptor should prevail.

With the virtual disappearance of the corner-store type of merchandising, the housewife has nothing but the hidden persuaders of advertising to guide her. They have often been referred to and criticised as the silent salesmen. Again, we see that one of the members of the council is to be a person who has had experience in the selling and advertising of goods.

If we read deeply into the processes being followed in advertising goods, we find that advertising takes the place of the salesman and is, as I said, the silent salesman. It is used only after a very careful psychological survey has been made of the consuming public. Some people may contend that it is honest advertising, but I believe that it deserves a great deal of scrutiny. How can the ordinary housewife be expected to know whether or not she is getting good value, how can she tell whether or not the price level is correct, if price control is not part of consumer protection?

Let me refer now to what I think consumer protection should mean. Are we to design a system of consumer protection in this State that takes care of a deceit only after it has been perpetrated? Are we to be content with introducing legislation that will fine the person who commits fraud or cheats the consuming public? Surely the object of a consumer protection organisation should be to guide and assist purchasers of materials. I would expect to see spelt out very clearly that the proposed legislation will not only act as a deterrent to the fraud and the cheat but will also serve as a guide to the consuming public.

I remind the Committee that in enlightened countries which have not the dead hand of Country-Liberal Governments on them, consumer protection boards accept the responsibility of advising the public by means of a brand or seal that they can confidently purchase the article being offered.

In my opinion, one of the duties of a consumer protection council should be to give a manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer the right to submit an article to it for testing. If the council considers that it is a product worthy of purchase by the consumer, that it is of good quality, and that the price is correct, the person concerned should have the right to use an official seal on the article. If a housewife entered a shop and was confronted with a whole host of items, she would know that no problems would be associated with purchasing an article clearly marked with the official seal of a consumer protection council. Its quality and value would already have been recognised.

I believe that the obligation of a consumer protection council is to satisfy itself that any article that is marketed for purchase is of fair quality and gives fair value. Once it has done that, the company concerned should receive the official seal of approval, and very heavy penalties should be provided for any person unlawfully using that type of seal. The consumer who is faced with a plethora of articles would then immediately know whether an article had the official blessing of a consumer protection council. I am not referring to the type of thing that has been going on in the community, where some purely voluntary body gives its blessing, on television and in other forms of advertising, to “Farmer Greenfield’s product”, or something else. There is a vast difference between somebody getting a bit of “payola” to give his blessing to the quality of a product and the blessing given by an official Government department such as the proposed Consumer Protection Council.

Mr. Bromley: What about the pair of bed sheets?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Yes, and the pair of bed sheets, too. That is now history in the southern States.

It is passing strange that a body set up on the basis of consumer protection is to be so liberally salted with members whose interests are in no way connected with consumer protection but rather with protection of their own interests. To me, the appointment of an advertising man as a member of the council is fraught with many possibilities. A great number of the problems and complaints connected with consumer protection spring from advertisements appearing in newspapers and other advertising media, where certain articles are advertised at a price together with an illustration that purports to be representative of the article advertised. However, when one

goes to purchase it one finds that the article offered is a superseded model or something along these lines.

For how long has the public been misled by so-called discounts and special prices, with firms advertising that they have only 50 of the said articles left, that they are valued at \$40 but tomorrow will be sold for 20c during the first part of a sale? I know of women who have had one foot in the door as it opened in the morning; they have reached the counter only to be told that all those articles have been sold. This is the type of phony advertising that the consumer is continually subjected to.

How often have we seen allotments of land advertised for sale at from \$700 and, although one rushes in first thing the next morning one is taken to a swamp or told, "Sorry, they are all gone"—even though one is the first person there. In my view, the inclusion of an advertising man on this body has very doubtful value indeed.

We do not have to use much imagination in this matter when we read the annual report of the Chamber of Manufactures for 1967-70. We can immediately see where some of the prompting for the ideas in this legislation came from. Under the heading "Consumer Protection" we see—

"In a submission to the Minister the Chamber said that in considering any legislation extreme care must be taken that, whilst making it as difficult as possible for the cheat, the honest man was not handicapped or hindered," etc., etc.

Speaker after speaker on the other side of the Chamber has risen and repeated this almost word for word. They have all stressed that we must be careful not to penalise the honest trader in the community. I ask: what has the honest trader to fear from legislation? Speaker after speaker has mouthed the words in the annual report of the Chamber of Commerce. Over the page we see this—

"We strongly suggest that the Bureau should be advised by a small council representative of various interests to whom it would make reports."

Again it is the very same pattern as is seen in this legislation.

That is passing strange. I do not know of any employers' organisation, designed to protect employers, that would have a trade-union representative on its governing body. Nor do I know of any trade union, designed to protect employees, that would want a member of an employers' organisation on its executive. In any council that is set up to protect the consuming public, surely those who, over the years, have been responsible for bad merchandising, false packaging and advertising, and phony discounts, should not be entitled to representation.

Mr. Hooper: They are not all like that. You just said that yourself.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I know, but how is a distinction to be drawn?

I wish I had more time available to me to put forward certain information that I have. However, I shall content myself by saying that one thing the council should do is ask for a tabling in this Parliament of a report of the amount of money that has been spent on the promotion of goods in Queensland over the years. That expenditure has been built into the price structure of goods. Millions of dollars have been spent on the television and radio promotion of articles, and the cost of that advertising is embodied in the price of the goods. People who promote goods in that way hold themselves up as great contributors to the interests of the community, whereas in fact the associated cost is passed on to the consumer in high prices.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (2.57 p.m.): The hon. member for Salisbury is very knowledgeable on sand-mining and conservation. I only wish that he had spent as much time on research into prices of goods as he has on inquiries in those fields.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rise to a point of order. I know that the hon. member for Ithaca is a new member; however, I inform him that I was interested in this matter long before he was elected as the member for Ithaca. I knew it was hopeless to pursue it any further with this hillbilly Government.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! The hon. member for Ithaca.

Mr. MILLER: I fail to see the hon. member's point of order, so I repeat that I believe he is a specialist in the field of conservation; however, I do not consider him to be a specialist in the matter of food prices. He has spent nearly half the time allotted to him in criticising the variety of products that are available in local grocery stores—apparently he believes that the shopper should have only one variety available to him—and in contending that the cost of food has increased out of all proportion to wage increases. I point out to him that the weekly grocery requirements of the ordinary family can be purchased today in a Cut Price Store for 4c less than the cost in 1955, when price control was in existence.

Mr. Davis: Name the products.

Mr. MILLER: If I had time to name the products, I would do so.

Mr. Davis: You have plenty of time.

Mr. MILLER: I will be only too pleased to show the hon. member the list when I have more time. At present I am rebutting the argument put forward by the hon. member for Salisbury.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I should be pleased if both hon. members would address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MILLER: Very many aspects of commerce require the attention of the Consumer Affairs Council. Certainly the legislation is overdue, and I have no doubt that it will receive the whole-hearted support of all consumers and the great majority of retailers, manufacturers and servicing organisations. Over the years it has become obvious that legislation is necessary to afford protection to consumers, who, today, are at the mercy of unscrupulous business people who indulge in all sorts of sharp practices, particularly in retailing, servicing and other operations.

Like all other protective legislation, this Bill is introduced to protect the public from a very small but not insignificant number of businessmen. They see in old age, lack of education, and the Australian's love of a bargain, the opportunity to take down the unwary and the gullible. It is unfortunate, while Queensland is seeking additional finance for education, that this not insignificant number of businessmen has been able to cause such problems as to warrant the channelling of some of this finance into consumer protection. I am therefore very much in favour of making this new department as self-supporting as possible by the imposition of fines that are large enough not only to be a deterrent, but also to finance its operations.

I do not believe that by publicising the name of a person or firm we will necessarily stop that person or firm from carrying on nefarious dealings, or that publicity will help to finance this important department. Publicity will play an important role in the protection of the public, but I stress that publicity, important though it is, should be looked on as a minor part of this legislation. We should not forget that we are legislating to deal with sharp operators who will try, by any means, to defraud the public. This Bill has to be adequate to stop them from doing so.

We have introduced legislation to protect the public in certain fields. For instance, we introduced legislation to overcome problems associated with door-to-door salesmen; we introduced legislation to protect the community against deceptive packaging and labelling, and we are now introducing legislation giving a blanket cover over the whole field. This Bill is not introduced to embarrass a company that, because of failure in raw materials supplies, has a breakdown in the quality of its products. Over the years it has been recognised that reputable companies are always prepared to rectify those problems. I trust that the provisions of the Bill will be adequate to deal with the sharp operators who prefer to make their living from dealings that cause heart-break and sorrow to the unwary.

It is pleasing to see that more and more manufacturers are now using the approved sign of the Standards Association of Australia. As members of the public are educated in the ways of buying, I believe that more manufacturers will display this

sign of approval, which associates the articles being sold with the high standard required by the Australian Standards Association. This association has played, and will play, a vital role in our scheme to protect the unwary. The public also has the guidance of the Australian Consumers Association, which through its magazine "Choice" tries to bring to the notice of the public products that do not come up to the required standards of quality and safety. But neither the Australian Consumers Association nor the Australian Standards Association has the capacity to protect the public from shady car dealers, unscrupulous house repairers, or firms that specialise in deceptive packaging.

I understand from the Minister's introductory remarks that the legislation we are debating today incorporates the best of the New South Wales and Victorian legislation. I certainly trust that that is correct, because I doubt the capacity of the legislation in those States to play the role that it was envisaged it would play.

If I interpreted the Minister's remarks correctly, the Consumer Affairs Council will consist of a council of 12 members of the community who are specialists in their own fields. A bureau will deal directly with the public. The council will do the research and the bureau will carry out the investigations after a complaint has been made. I noted that the bureau will have inspectors from the Factories and Shops section, inspectors from the Weights and Measures section, and inspectors appointed for the purpose of the Profiteering Prevention Act. I am concerned—and I should like the Minister to enlarge on what he has said—about what powers these inspectors will have that they do not already possess.

The fields of used-car sales, the repairing of houses (wall cladding, texture coating or sparrow proofing) and advertising will demand the greatest attention in this State. As I said earlier, we have already introduced legislation to overcome deceptive packaging and door-to-door salesmen, and I believe that that legislation is operating very well indeed. However, I have my doubts about this legislation overcoming the problems associated with used-car sales and the repairing of houses.

Will this legislation make it an offence, for instance, to sell a used car which is unroadworthy? There is a need for a certificate of roadworthiness to be supplied with each car sold by a used-car dealer. If a certificate were issued, it would certainly reduce the number of complaints, and make the legislation easier to implement.

I am concerned about what action can be taken against a car salesman who deliberately endeavours to mislead a purchaser by giving false information. In a previous debate, the hon. member for Greenslopes

gave us a typical example of what could happen and what is taking place in used-car sales.

Mr. Hooper: New cars.

Mr. MILLER: No, the hon. member was speaking about a taxi. He gave the example of a car used as a taxi, which was presented to the public as a low-mileage vehicle. This is only one of many cases in the used-car field. The filling of badly rusted car bodies with filler for sale purposes is another matter that warrants the closest scrutiny. Will the Minister inform us what action can be taken under this legislation that could not be taken under existing legislation to stop these practices?

A large number of manufacturers now stamp their goods with the approval of the Australian Standards Association. This is extremely beneficial to the buying public. However, there is no such stamp of approval for repairs to electrical appliances and other goods such as motor-cars.

The Minister, in his opening remarks, said that the bureau would receive complaints of fraudulent or deceptive practices in matters that affect or are likely to affect the interests of consumers, and would take such action on such cases as the commissioner deems proper. These words will be of great comfort to the consumer who has had the misfortune of tangling with one of these sharp operators, and it will be all the more comforting if the Minister will enlarge on what he has already said and inform the public just how a television repairer who has not adhered to the ethics of his trade would be brought to justice.

I am also concerned with the buying of new homes and the repairs that have to be carried out from time to time. This is a field that involves the average person in a contract that must be regarded as the largest contract he will make during his lifetime. Personally, I doubt the advisability of including housing in this legislation, but, at the same time, if there is no intention on the part of the Government to consider the registration and bonding of contractors associated with the building trade, I would welcome the inclusion of housing in this legislation.

Mr. Hanlon: What about rentals?

Mr. MILLER: Rentals?

Mr. Hanlon: And substandard accommodation. They are consumer problems.

Mr. MILLER: I believe that there is enough competition in housing and flats to ensure that nobody lives in a substandard flat.

At least this will be a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, in the building trade, unlike most other businesses, it is possible to commence business with little or no capital, so that it is extremely difficult

to recover the cost of repairs or the cost of making good any defects in a new building. There is a constant need for the community at large to be alerted to such bad practices, but publicity is of no benefit to a person who has been taken down by a jerry-builder. It has been suggested by the Opposition that the only action that the council could take would be to engage in name-dropping, and thus draw attention to a specific person, company or firm. Let us make sure that this legislation does not simply become an exercise in public relations.

Of course, there is also the field of consumer credit, and legislation can play an important role if it is geared to handle this problem. I am concerned that there are still people who are being fleeced by some credit companies. Many articles can be bought cheaper today than they could be bought 15 or 20 years ago.

Mr. Bromley: What are they?

Mr. MILLER: Refrigerators and washing machines, to name only two. There are many articles that are cheaper today than they were 20 years ago. Quite often a consumer finishes up paying more than he should pay for an article because of the unrealistic terms imposed by the finance company. Until people become educated in consumer credit and the need to belong to a credit union, this field of activity will demand special attention by the council.

Mr. B. WOOD (Cook) (3.12 p.m.): When I was first elected to Parliament 18 months ago and came to Brisbane and started to move around here, one of the things that surprised me most was my discovery of the vast labyrinth of Government departments, boards, bureaus, subdepartments, and so on, that make up the bureaucracy in this State. As an ordinary citizen I had a fair idea of the size of the vast ship of State, but it was not till I arrived here that I realised just how large it was. No doubt most of the things that go to make it are necessary.

After the Bill now under discussion is passed, something extra will be added to this bureaucracy. I know that in the Federal Parliament, if not in this Parliament, some members have been querying for how long this trend can continue. This legislation is badly needed—let there be no mistake about that—as something has to be done about consumer protection. There have been too many abuses, for too long. But I cannot help wondering whether it would have been possible to effect the same purpose by incorporating the provisions of the Bill in current legislation. My legal adviser, the hon. member for South Brisbane, mentioned, for example, that a good deal of what the Bill proposes could have been incorporated in the Sale of Goods Act. I think this problem could have been handled by including what the Government wants done in legislation already existing.

Mr. Bromley: Some of the things in existing legislation will probably be taken out.

Mr. B. WOOD: I noticed that in his introductory speech the Minister said that certain legislative provisions would be repealed when the Bill came into force.

Certainly the Bill concerns all members, as I do not suppose there is one member who has not received frequent complaints from constituents concerning goods that they have purchased. Some examples have already been given during this debate, and no doubt we will hear of a good many more. Legislation of this type is obviously needed. I shall mention one case which I hope will be covered by this legislation. I would be interested to hear the Minister state in his reply whether the type of situation to which I am about to refer will be covered.

Hon. members would know that a pensioner, or any person subject to a means test, can acquire a hearing aid for \$10 through the relevant Commonwealth Government department, but that, of course, depends on the issuing of a doctor's prescription. Therefore, people who can benefit by the use of a hearing aid and who are eligible can have one at a very low price.

One of my constituents in Mossman acquired a hearing aid in about March of this year from "Sonar" Laboratories Pty. Ltd., a firm that has an office in Brisbane. It was sold to her for approximately \$280. The person concerned was very obviously a pensioner, and very obviously a poor pensioner. She is somewhere between 75 and 80 years of age, so there is no doubt about her eligibility on that ground, and she lives in poor circumstances. The person who sold the hearing aid to her would know that, because repayment of the purchase price extends over a long period.

Mr. Bromley: Is that \$280 cash?

Mr. B. WOOD: No. It is to be paid back over a period in a number of lump-sum payments. She was able to obtain it only because one of her friends gave her some of the money.

Surely the representative of "Sonar" Laboratories Pty. Ltd. who supplied the hearing aid to that woman knew that she was almost certainly eligible to receive a hearing aid from the Commonwealth Government for \$10. He must have known that. Being in the business, he would know the facilities that are provided by the Commonwealth.

Mr. Kaus: Why didn't she know?

Mr. B. WOOD: She is a very old person.

I approached "Sonar" Laboratories Pty. Ltd., but I have not yet received any indication that it will refund the money for the hearing aid, which, incidentally, is not working properly. I do not know what training the person who supplied the hearing aid

had; I do not know what equipment he used. A doctor should have been consulted, but in this instance he was not.

I have twice asked the Minister for Health whether the State Department of Health will interest itself in the matter, but he has not given any indication that it will.

Mr. Bromley: He is too busy "rubbishing" Dr. Crawford.

Mr. B. WOOD: That does keep him occupied.

Having in mind the sort of things that the Minister wants to bring under the proposed legislation, I believe that the matter that I have raised could be referred to one of the inspectors who are to be employed under the legislation. He could investigate the matter, refer his findings to the bureau that is to be established in Brisbane, and the bureau could perhaps take the matter up with "Sonar" Laboratories Pty. Ltd. I hope that the Minister will indicate to me that this is what will happen. If he does not, I shall be disappointed with the proposed Bill.

Mr. Bromley: That is one of the problems associated with high-pressure salesmen.

Mr. B. WOOD: High-pressure salesmen are a problem everywhere.

The Minister pointed out that the responsibility is on the buyer—"Let the buyer beware", he said—but it should not be overlooked that there is also a responsibility on the manufacturer. He produces the goods that are to be marketed throughout the Commonwealth or in a particular area. Very often he advertises them. He says that he produces a quality product that will do a certain job. If he makes claims in his advertising, I believe that he is obliged to back them up. If the "blurb" printed on the package says, "This washing powder will do this or that", or whatever it might be, the manufacturer has a responsibility. It is in fact evading that responsibility if the obligation is passed on to the buyer.

The hon. member for Greenslopes, who spoke earlier in the debate, made brief reference to the guarantee on motor-cars. One is provided with a guarantee on many of the goods that one buys. Sometimes it is printed on the packet; sometimes it is on a piece of paper enclosed in, for example, a refrigerator. On occasions I have signed a guarantee and returned it to the retailer, but I have since had doubts about this. I am not at all sure that a guarantee is in the best interests of consumers. All it does is restrict the consumer's claim on the manufacturer. It restricts him to claiming for certain specified deficiencies, as with a refrigerator that I once purchased. I signed the guarantee. I do not recall all the details, but it said that a certain breakdown in the motor within a certain period would be repaired. The refrigerator now has a large amount of rust through it, but that is not covered by the

guarantee. Surely a manufacturer should be able to produce a refrigerator that will not rust out in two years.

Mr. Bromley: And often under the guarantee you have to get the article back to the manufacturer through the retailer.

Mr. B. WOOD: That is right, and pay to get it there. Is that what the hon. member means?

Mr. Bromley: Yes, and pay to get it there.

Mr. B. WOOD: And often one has to pay for the labour to have it repaired as well.

I think that a guarantee is a dangerous thing. I do not suggest that a manufacturer should be expected to produce something that will last for years and years without some breakdown, but I think it is reasonable to expect a product to last for a certain period in good condition and that, if anything goes wrong with it because of faulty manufacture, it should be repaired. I think it would be much better if the restriction of a guarantee did not apply and manufacturers were responsible for the replacement of shoddy products.

In this speech I will raise one other matter that has concerned me for some time. It is the way that so many manufacturers promote their products by awarding prizes. Only the other day I received a letter through the post. It had a stamp in the corner reading, "This lucky stamp has already won a prize for you."

Mr. Baldwin: Did you get one, too?

Mr. B. WOOD: I hope you win a prize. You might have got the Mercedes Benz. These letters usually go into my waste-paper basket, although I confess that frequently when a reply-paid envelope is enclosed—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! I should like to hear the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. B. WOOD: Sometimes when a reply-paid envelope is enclosed I put nothing in it and post it back so that those concerned have to pay 6c on it. It is a nasty thing to do, but sometimes I am a bit vindictive.

Mr. Bromley: Is that the "Reader's Digest"?

Mr. B. WOOD: No, although I know they do this on a large scale.

Mr. Bromley: That is the greatest racket of all times.

Mr. B. WOOD: The hon. member says it is a great racket. Surely if the "Reader's Digest" had any pride in its product it could stand on its own merits and would not need this type of promotion. However, I do know that it did extremely well with this sort of promotion. I was in my small local post office one day when the mail was being sorted. The "Reader's Digest" was in the mail that day, and I was amazed at the number of householders who receive

it. The promotion was certainly very successful, although I do not think very much either of the product or of the methods used to sell it.

Mr. Porter interjected.

Mr. B. WOOD: One of the reasons why I do not like it is that every issue includes something about sexual matters. That is perhaps the main reason why I do not like it.

This letter that I am referring to was put out by Heron Books, a group associated with the Concert Hall Record Club.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order! I wish the private conversation with the hon. member for Cook would cease so that the Chair can hear what he is saying.

Mr. B. WOOD: The firm that distributes the Concert Hall material is not a "bad" firm, either. It sells records. Once a person becomes a member, on the inducement of a free record, he continues to receive records by ordering them simply by not returning a circulated list. If the person does not say he does not want a particular record it is automatically sent to him. This is a poor way of marketing products, and I do not think it is at all necessary.

I am not sure that this practice is covered by the legislation. I do not expect that the Bill would envisage every type of sales promotion that is engaged in. By all means let there be advertising and promotion of products, but let us get away from the constant offering of so-called free gifts, prizes for nothing, and other artificial inducements.

Mr. Bromley: Frank Adler is one of the worst.

Mr. B. WOOD: He certainly is. He engages in false pricing on all sorts of goods.

There is no doubt that consumers need protection. Opposition members hope that the Bill will do what we want it to do. We have listened to and read the Minister's comments, and we will look very carefully at the Bill when it is printed to see just what it contains.

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (3.28 p.m.): The longer one remains in the Chamber the more one becomes bewildered by the time-wasting tactics adopted on the introduction of legislation. I am quite sure that this is the second appearance at the wickets of the Minister and his team, and from the way the debate is being extended by tedious repetition I am sure there will be an appeal against the light, with the result that the match will not be resolved today.

As a member of the committee that helped to frame this legislation, I point out that I have an open mind on the matter. I am quite sure that I am expressing the

thoughts of my colleagues who served on the committee when I say that it was, and still is, their intention to do something for the consumer. I am sure that members of the Opposition realise that. The Bill contains many clauses, but only some of them have been referred to in the debate, so I ask hon. members opposite to allow the Bill to be introduced without any further delay and, if they wish, to talk until the next new moon at the second-reading stage.

I suppose the Bill appeals to all hon. members, but the Committee is at sixes and sevens and the Opposition has not been able to get to the meat of the Bill. This is a weakness in our form of democracy. Nobody wants to deny any member of the Opposition the right of speech on a Bill, but this tedious repetition makes me wonder just how long our form of democracy can survive.

I urge hon. members opposite to study the Bill. I assure them that if they put forward any suggestions that will benefit the consumer I will join forces with them, because, as I have said, those of us who served on the committee have a completely open mind on the matter. That was one of our fundamental principles.

I congratulate the Minister and those who served on the committee. It was a pleasure to work with them because we tackled the problem with an open mind. When the Bill is printed and everyone has it in his possession, if it is apparent that we have failed in our submissions or done anything wrong, by all means let Opposition members point it out.

This is the second occasion on which we have debated the introduction of the Bill. We are getting bogged down, which concerns me greatly. It seems that, irrespective of the Bill that we are discussing, we all ramble on and gabble—

Mr. Houston: Well, sit down.

Mr. HOUGHTON: I will, after I have had my say. The Leader of the Opposition has had his say.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HOUGHTON: I challenge the Leader of the Opposition, if I sit down now, to expedite the introduction of the Bill.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsden): Order!

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. Bromley: I wish you would stop interjecting while the Chairman is on his feet.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Norman will wish all the harder in a moment.

I deprecate this constant inter-argument among members. Will hon. members please address the Chair? The member on his feet can feel free to ignore interjections that he

does not wish to answer. I will not tolerate constant uproar or any disorder in the Chamber.

Mr. Casey: Every member on this side of the Chamber has as much right to speak as the hon. member for Redcliffe has.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Nobody is disputing that.

Mr. Casey: The member for Redcliffe is.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have his turn when the time comes.

Mr. HOUGHTON: I listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Greenslopes. The Leader of the Opposition has every reason to be concerned, as he is entirely in conflict with the submissions of the member for Greenslopes, who was chairman of the investigating committee.

The proposed Consumer Affairs Council will deal with many matters that affect the people of Queensland. Education of the people has been referred to briefly by hon. members opposite. It is vital that their education be broadened, and that people should gain more knowledge so that they can have a better understanding of much of the legislation that is introduced, particularly as our social standards and everyday living conditions are changing.

I could take this discussion on the education of the people a step further by saying that probably one of the reasons for strikes is that the Opposition does not want the people to be educated. The moment they are, the Opposition believes that they are lost to its cause.

Let us be fair and decent about this legislation. By all means let everyone have his say—no-one wants to stifle the debate—but—

Mr. Casey: Mr. Houghton,—

Mr. HOUGHTON: The hon. member can have his say later.

As a member of the investigating committee, I am quite happy to accept any criticisms and submissions from the Opposition that will be of benefit to the people of this State in the implementation of this legislation.

Mr. DAVIS (Brisbane) (3.34 p.m.): I will take note of the remarks of the hon. member for Redcliffe and will certainly not waste the Committee's time. As he said, we must educate the people of Queensland not only in consumer protection, but in many other ways. It may be that the Opposition is taking so long to debate this Bill because it is a little suspect in that the hon. member for Redcliffe was one of the prime movers in framing it.

This Bill is perhaps the most important legislation to come before us for a long time. We have waited since the last election for its

introduction. Consumer protection was one of the main platforms of the Liberal Party and the Country Party in the last campaign. The Australian Labour Party included this in its policy and we would have introduced a better type of legislation. Unfortunately, because of the rigging of boundaries, because of the gerrymander, and because of preferential voting, we were denied the opportunity, and this particular Bill is now before the Committee.

Mr. Bromley: Don't you think the suggestion I put forward last year would have been far better?

Mr. DAVIS: I happen to be a member of the committee headed by the hon. member for Norman, and I have a high regard for him. I know that he has done a tremendous amount of work in this respect and I am sure that his statement is correct.

When the Minister was introducing the Bill we asked him who would be the 12 honest people on the council. There are many rumours around the city that the majority will be good Liberal supporters. I shall have to wait to see who the members are before deciding whether that is a "furfy".

I will be interested to learn the objects of the council. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, said that the functions of the bureau would be—

"To receive complaints from consumers concerning matters touching their interests as consumers, to consider and, if the commissioner deems it warranted, to investigate such complaints received and to take such action in respect of any such complaints as seems proper to the commissioner."

I am biased in this matter because the Minister who introduced this Bill is in charge of the Department of Labour. In my opinion, the Department of Labour leaves a good deal to be desired. I hope that the Minister will investigate consumer protection better than he investigated the question asked by the hon. member for South Coast this morning relative to union fees. The Minister was about a mile astray in saying that Transport Workers' Union fees rose from \$4 in 1965 to \$20 in 1970 because, in fact, the fees rose from \$7 in 1965 to \$16 in 1970, which is very different from what the Minister said.

The hon. member for Salisbury referred to people who endorse certain products. One advertisement which appears each week in both Sunday metropolitan papers concerns Farmer Greenfield's Family Foods. These products are recommended by G. Horan who is associated with the Brisbane Housewives' Association.

Mr. Thackeray: Wasn't she a Liberal candidate?

Mr. DAVIS: This lady stood everywhere. She stood in my electorate. However, I do not say that, because she is a Liberal, she is not "fair dinkum".

Mr. R. E. Moore: She nearly "did" you.

Mr. DAVIS: The hon. member should not be foolish. I will not even answer that interjection. I will not even tell the Committee how the hon. member for Windsor ate a toad for lunch.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Would the hon. member speak up because it is very difficult to hear him.

Mr. DAVIS: This Bill should contain some protection against the endorsing of certain products, and I shall quote an example. The following advertisement appears in the pink pages of the current Brisbane Telephone Directory:—

"Dick McCann says:

Rent TV

No deposit

Lowest rates

Best service

Rent for a day, a week or as long as you like—all screen sizes—free licence, antenna, service, installation, delivery within 1 hour to all suburbs. Call Canberra Television Services Pty. Ltd."

The advertisement then gives the telephone number and address.

I know a person whose television set broke down. He telephoned this firm thinking that he would rent a set for a month and then decide whether to buy a new one or have the old one repaired. When the salesman arrived in his van, this person told him that he wanted the set for a month only. The salesman said, "I'm not here to rent television sets. I'm here to sell them." When this person said that he did not want to buy a set but wanted one for a month only, the salesman said, "Then that's it. I'm here to sell." Obviously that advertisement was a complete lie.

Some people buy articles as a result of advertisements that feature personalities such as the woman I mentioned before, Dick McCann, and the woman who endorsed certain sheets, Mrs. Peacock. If something is found to be wrong with the products that these people recommend, will they be pulled into line? If their names are associated with products that turn out to be faulty, will they be "hauled over the coals" and perhaps fined? I think that that is a pertinent point, and one of which the Minister should take notice.

The consumer protection organisation proposed by the A.L.P. would have more teeth than the body to be set up under the Bill. Bearing in mind what has happened in New South Wales, I shall be greatly surprised if there have been any prosecutions after this legislation has been in force for 12 months. I think it was the hon. member for Windsor

who said that 2,800-odd complaints had been made to the New South Wales Bureau of Consumer Affairs, and that eight people have been named. It does not seem to me that consumers will receive any real protection if crooks, profiteers and rort merchants who are making a fortune by "touching" people know that the only publicity that they will receive if caught is the recording of their names in "Hansard".

The A.L.P. would have the Door to Door (Sales) Act brought up to date. I think it is true to say that anyone who is home during the day-time would be lucky if not more than three or four callers invaded the privacy of his home every day. We would have a Car Sales Act to cover the sale of second-hand cars. In my area, there are more used-car yards in a mile than there are in any other comparable distance in Queensland. I should like to see legislation governing used-car yards that would make it possible for a person to buy a second-hand car knowing that it was not going to cost him a fortune.

Mr. Thackeray: And knowing that it was not a stolen car, too.

Mr. DAVIS: Yes. That is another matter; I am quite sure that the hon. member for Rockhampton North will deal with that. The Government claims that the responsibility in buying an article is on the buyer. A person buying a second-hand car can have it inspected by the R.A.C.Q. or by his own mechanic, but each inspection costs from about \$5 to \$10. Before I bought a car recently, I had about three or four inspections of vehicles made. As a matter of fact, one salesman had a good car lined up for me. He found out that I was a member of Parliament, and suddenly that car became the greatest "heap" he had ever had in his yard. He said, "It certainly is not a car that would suit you." I think eventually I received a worse deal than if I had taken the first car.

Mr. R. E. Moore: You were the victim of a "three-car" trick.

Mr. DAVIS: I think the salesman was a friend of the hon. member.

Mr. R. E. Moore: Fancy that!

Mr. DAVIS: Now I turn to the laws relating to labelling and packaging, which I think could be administered by a consumer protection bureau. The hon. member for Norman has referred repeatedly in this Chamber to flammable fabrics, but I do not know of any law that has been enacted to prevent the sale of such fabrics.

The hon. member for Ithaca made a good point relative to educating people in credit lending. In my opinion, that should be given more publicity than anything else, because thousands of people are compelled by economic circumstances to buy products on time payment. When television came to Queensland in 1959, people living in my area purchased television sets. Because of the

very high interest charges that were imposed, it took them almost five years to pay off those sets. Unfortunately, few people look carefully at hire-purchase agreements, and many of those who do look at them do not understand them.

Mr. Bromley: Some of the finance companies are giving lessons in hire-purchase to school children.

Mr. DAVIS: It would be a good idea to carry them through into adult education.

I believe that the Consumer Affairs Bureau must have teeth and not be merely, as the Leader of the Opposition said, a white-washing organisation. It must be able to say to the profiteers and rort-merchants, "If you break the law, you will be fined, and fined heavily."

As I said earlier, I do not think that the bureau should be under the control of the Minister for Labour and Tourism. It would be preferable to have it under the control of the Minister for Justice, because there is certainly more to the proposed legislation than merely providing for inspectors. Unless the present small number of inspectors is increased drastically, I do not know how they will be able to cope with an entirely new section and the additional work associated with it. As soon as the bureau begins operating—and I reiterate that the Opposition is not satisfied with the provision contained in the Bill—it will receive a flood of complaints. Hon. members on both sides of the Chamber know that a large part of their work comprises investigating complaints from consumers.

I reserve further comment till the debate on the second reading of the Bill. At the moment, the Opposition believes that the proposed legislation is unsatisfactory, and we look forward to studying it in detail.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (3.49 p.m.): I state at the outset that I and other members of the Opposition are entitled to express opinions at this stage of the proposed Bill, in spite of the advice given by the hon. member for Redcliffe. There was some criticism earlier in the debate, both today and on the day on which the Minister introduced the proposed Bill, that the committee set up to investigate the need for consumer protection did not contain one member of the A.L.P. That is why every member of the Opposition has attempted to bring before the Committee instances in which his constituents have been affected by practices that ought to be covered by the proposed Bill. He has even more than a right to do it; he has a responsibility to do it. That is the purpose for which he has been sent here. The fact that Government members sit back and do not express their opinions on a Bill is entirely their affair. They are answerable to their electors for that, but I can assure them that A.L.P. members will accept their responsibility to their electors.

I feel that the whole concept of this Bill is cock-eyed. As outlined by the Minister, the idea behind the setting-up of this body was that it would receive complaints and investigate problems connected therewith. I think we might say that its major purpose is to cover up. I further believe that any consumer protection legislation should provide that the commodity must receive approval before being marketed in Queensland. In actual fact, protection of the consumer is required at the point of manufacture, and there is no reason why any person desiring to manufacture goods in Queensland or any interstate person desiring to market goods in Queensland should not submit his product for examination under the consumer protection legislation. As a matter of fact, by agreement between the State Ministers on this matter we could achieve uniformity throughout the Commonwealth on the type of legislation to be introduced and the way in which it should be implemented, and every commodity manufactured in Australia would then have to bear the stamp of approval of a consumer protection council before it could be marketed.

If we introduced such legislation in Queensland it could be a great boon to Queensland manufactured goods. We like to support the "Buy Queensland Made" programme, but it would be more successful if locally manufactured goods were stamped with the imprimatur of the Consumer Protection Council. There would be a greater demand for them in other States and in other parts of the world. The consumer, wherever he lived, would then know full well that the commodity had been passed at its point of manufacture by a body appointed by the Legislature of this State.

I should like to go further on action that should be taken at the point of manufacture, because I believe that the main offender in extortion of the consumer in Australia is the Commonwealth Government itself. It does this through its sales tax legislation. We all know that sales tax is charged on the sale price of goods, whereas it should be on the cost of manufacture. In addition to paying sales tax on the cost of manufacture, the consumer pays it on the distributors' profit, the marketing agent's profit, the public relations agents profit, and the profit made by everyone else who can get into the racket anywhere along the line. Sales tax is paid on the profit made by all of the middle men and, indeed, even the Queensland Government itself, because everywhere in this State away from the manufacturing centre consumers have to pay sales tax on rail freight or other freight charges on goods. This again points to the fact that legislation should apply to the point of manufacture and not the selling point.

I also believe that there should be some form of inspection of goods at the point of sale to ensure that commodity standards are at all times maintained. At the present time people in the country areas of our State are

flogged to death, first of all, by the exorbitant freight charges and, secondly, by the sales tax levied by the Commonwealth Government on freight. Many members of the Country Party who engaged in rural pursuits prior to entering this Parliament would know what I say to be a fact. To prove my point, I need cite only one commodity, spare parts. Prices in country areas of Queensland are exorbitant.

In country areas the sale price of an article is not simply a commodity price or manufacturer's price, but both that and the cost of freight. Spare-parts firms, for example, work on a percentage basis. The situation is so ridiculous that an axle that weighs over 1 cwt. is carried at a lower freight rate than a small parcel containing only a master cylinder kit for a big grader. A high freight rate is imposed on that very small package because freight is worked on a percentage of cost, with the result that the customer pays an exorbitant price for it, whereas, as I have said, a lower freight rate is imposed on the large axle. The value of which is much less. The Consumer Affairs Council should look at anomalies of that type, and, as well, investigate all aspects of sales.

Another matter that I wish to raise is the plight of, say, a farmer who suffers a breakdown in a piece of his farm machinery. In order to carry on with his farming he requires a spare part to be delivered to him urgently, but very often he finds that the spare-parts firm does not carry a sufficient number of the part that he requires, with the result that he cannot obtain it quickly. I suggest that legislation should make it mandatory for spare-parts dealers, whether they sell motor-cars, trucks, tractors or other farming implements, to carry a certain percentage of spare parts. People in the country areas are being held to ransom. Actually, they are subsidising this nation's airlines by paying high freight charges on goods that they receive. I have seen an invoice for a small washer for a hydraulic system. The cost of that article at the agent's counter in Brisbane was 6c. The cost of air freighting that article from Brisbane to Mackay was \$1, which is the flat rate, and on top of that 22½ per cent. sales tax was imposed. I point out that sales tax is based on the cost of the article plus air freight. The result was that the sales tax amounted to 25c. Therefore, the final cost to the customer was \$1.31. I took this matter up, but, as the law lays down the manner in which sales tax is charged, I could not do anything about it. I suggest that consumer protection legislation should cover that type of anomaly and exercise control over all manufacturing and marketing practices. I have cited only one example; I could mention many more, but I do not want to take up the Committee's time. I simply wish to point out that these practices react against the country people.

I wish to refer now to certain variations in prices. I know, Mr. Hooper, that you said that the Labour Party talks about price-fixing, but I believe that prices are the most important aspect of marketing of commodities. Prices play a very vital part in any discussions on the protection of consumers. All we are trying to ensure is that the consumer receives value for his money.

I have compared certain variations in prices charged by a major Australia-wide retailer. I am not picking on the corner-store man or the operator of a small super-market who is trying to beat this huge organisation. I do not intend to name it, but it is a major Australian retailer in foodstuffs and other commodities. I have compared the prices that it charges in Brisbane with those charged in Mackay. This retailer is the company that sets the trend in the market, and by its method of purchasing it controls the manufacture of goods. In effect, it dictates to the manufacturers the types of commodities that it requires for sale to the public.

I will cite one example that is easy to follow. Most married members know the weight of a pair of panty hose. They are very light indeed, but the difference between the advertised selling price of panty hose in Mackay and Brisbane was 10c a pair. If I were to say that a packaged pair of panty hose weighed 4 ozs., I would probably be overstating the weight. If the 10c difference in price were attributable to rail freight on a package of 4 ozs., the freight rate per ton would work out at more than \$900. I know that there are some queer practices in fixing railway freight rates, but I bet that even the department would not charge \$900 a ton to freight goods from Brisbane to Mackay.

At one stage this Australia-wide retailer advertised a special book for children. In Brisbane it cost \$2.99, but the same book was advertised in Mackay at \$4.10. I purchased a book here for a Mackay friend for \$2.99 and posted it to him at a cost of 40c—we all know that postal rates are very high—and he was still 80c to the good. Somewhere along the line the major Australian retailers, the trendsetters—and they are supposedly the consumer's friend—are adding an inbuilt cost. Because of their bulk buying they are forcing manufacturers to sell to them at a low price. They are retailing goods in their metropolitan stores at reasonably low prices, but are charging high prices in country areas and thereby picking up their profits.

The difference in price does not pertain only to panty hose and books. The price of women's hair spray in Brisbane is 55c and the Mackay price is 72c. The cost of Matchbox friction cars in Brisbane is 79c, whereas in Mackay they cost 95c, making a difference of 16c or 20 per cent. Strangely enough, a plastic laundry basket that retails in Brisbane for 89c costs \$1.5 in Mackay,

a difference of 16c. Fancy comparing panty hose with a plastic laundry basket in size and weight. The weights differ greatly, but the differences in prices are much the same. My point is that somewhere along the line the major Australian retailers are not being fair to the consumers outside the metropolitan area in their method of applying freight and extra handling costs for goods.

I should now like to refer to deceitful packaging. This matter has been referred to on many occasions, but I have a glaring example to cite that affects the sugar industry in my area. I refer to a drink sweetener that takes the place of sugar in cordials. We all know the position with sodium cyclamate. It is regarded in most overseas countries as a poison and is banned by legislation, although our Minister for Health has done nothing about it despite my persistent requests. This sweetener also contains saccharin, which takes the place of sugar. It is supposedly packaged for diabetics. The current legislation states that if the contents are supposedly for diabetics, that advice should be printed on the package in lettering not less than one-fifth of the maximum size of the other printing on the package. As hon. members can see, the word "diabetics" on this lot is on the side of it, which in a matchbox would be the striker plate. That side is not displayed in the supermarket. Only the front of the packet is visible, and the housewives accept this packet. The product it contains takes the place of that wholesome, energy food, sugar, which is so good for our children.

Mr. R. E. Moore: And ruins their teeth.

Mr. CASEY: If the children brush their teeth regularly they have no worries with sugar.

We all know some of the shoddy practices adopted by book salesmen in this State. How many hon. members have had complaints from husbands and wives whose children have come home from State schools with a little slip of paper saying, "These are the books required by your children"? Everybody likes to see his child given a good education. Sometimes women are taken in by these things. They think these books are required for the school curriculum, and, before they know what is happening, they have signed a hire-purchase agreement with a major publishing house for a great stack of books that they do not want and will never use.

The same could apply to other strange ways in which some products are marketed, and I instance door-to-door salesmen, and the methods used to sell plastic goods. Most women have attended parties where they more or less have to buy these goods simply because they do not want to offend Aunt Minnie or Aunt Tessie or Aunt Jeannie who is running the party at her place. This is the greatest selling racket and lurk I have seen in my life. These parties are now being held to sell cosmetics.

I note that there will be a medical man on this council. I hope that the legislation will cover the services provided by medical men. Recently, a doctor visited a person at his home in a Brisbane suburb, and then visited a relative of that patient who lived next door. The doctor sent each of them a bill for \$8.50. Doctors are in the racket as well, and if there is a medical man on this council, he should look at what is being done by his fellow practitioners.

An hon. member has already dealt with second-hand vehicles. We must have very sensible legislation that hits right at the core of the problem, which is the point of manufacture. The hon. member for Cook referred to guarantees. Some guarantees are not worth "two bob" to people in country areas. If a person living in Cloncurry or Mt. Isa has a mixer which goes "bung", the company will repair it provided it is sent to the point of manufacture, which is probably Sydney. The cost of sending it to Sydney and of getting it back would be as much as the article was worth. Most people "kick it in the guts" and throw it away because it has had it, and then go and buy another one. That is what happens with these so-called guarantees. Consumers should be protected in this regard.

One member of the council will be a primary producer or a person who has engaged in primary production. I hope that we do not get another Queen Street cowboy on this council. We have seen a few of them around.

I suggest to the Minister that people from other areas of the State should be taken into his confidence and put on the council. Why does he not legislate so that representatives from North Queensland, Central Queensland, and Western Queensland will be appointed to the council? They could bring forward the points that I have mentioned today.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BALDWIN (Logan) (4.10 p.m.): I rise to point out that the Government is running true to its usual form with too little, too late—this is what has happened with drought relief—too much, too badly directed, or the right thing for the right people, the Government's friends, at the right time. From the manner in which the Bill has been introduced, that is what its main purpose appears to be.

The difference between Labour Party and Liberal-Country Party philosophy has never been more clearly illustrated than it is in this proposal. Even the very name that the Government parties propose to give to this body, namely, the Consumer Affairs Council, as opposed to that suggested by the Labour Opposition for many years, namely, a Consumers' Protection Council, speaks for itself on the difference in thinking and illustrates the total difference in orientation of purpose and ideals of the legislation. This point was also

mentioned by my colleague the hon. member for Ipswich West. Of course, I intend to enlarge on it on the second reading of the Bill if I get the opportunity to do so.

Every enlightened consumer—and there are perhaps not many of them in this State—will know that his affairs as a consumer en masse are equally the affairs of the producer, the manufacturer, the retailer and the salesman. The history of spiralling prices in this State in the last half decade leaves hon. members on this side in no doubt as to whose affairs a council composed, constituted, regulated and directed as this one is proposed to be, will guard. It will, as usual, guard the interests of the "big-man" monopolists, the southern and overseas interests, whereas the Labour Party, as usual, will come out in the defence of that section of society that most needs defence, namely, the lowest 75 per cent. of income-earners of all kinds.

The Minister himself said that there is insufficient protection of the consumer; that great power is exercised by the advertiser. I could not agree more. He went on to say that consumers are most vulnerable to fraudulent marketing practices; that they are unsophisticated in modern marketing practices. That is so. I say, in support of my opening remarks, that this is being allowed to remain so, and I fail to see, from anything that has been presented so far, that it is to be changed. I hope I will be proved wrong when I see the Bill.

The Government has so far failed to educate the consumer to develop a stable psychological resistance to certain kinds of advertising. But when the Minister says that, he is using it only to implement the aims and objectives of his friends, as is his committee. Of course, I believe him. His attitudes are more genuinely expressed by his previous and contradictory statements, with which I do not agree, namely, that in the modern marketing complex the consumer exercises absolute sway over the direction of production. I maintain that the converse is true. With the sophisticated advertising, high-pressure salesmanship and marketing methods to which the unprotected consumer is heir, he is led along the paths of consumer activity. He is led to buy things that he does not really need and that are not necessarily very good for him.

We on this side of the Chamber will be interested to see how Government members rationalise these contradictions, and how, where and when the Government will commence to educate the consumer, and to what purpose. I shall return to this later.

For the moment, I want to look at some other aspects of the proposed legislation in the light of the Minister's speech, and associated problems. The Minister has claimed that this proposed council, and the structure of the legislation proposed for it to work within, is the result of study, interstate and overseas, and that it is the best in existence; that is, that there is none other the same anywhere else. That might be so. I hope it

is and that it has a high degree of success. But I wish that the Minister for Labour and Tourism would educate his colleague the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, whose co-operation he implies that he might be seeking and who has recently rejected a widely acclaimed suggestion for new legislation to establish an education commission on the grounds that such a commission does not exist anywhere else in the world. It will be interesting to see how they get together on the problem.

The wide composition suggested for the proposed council sounds good, as does most of the proposed legislation; but, as with the appointment of all boards on recommendations by Government members, it will never achieve what it purports to achieve. I cannot conceive of this Government, with its whole political philosophy cast in the mould of the *laissez-faire* that bares the mass of the community to the predatory practices of the rapacious monopolists, setting up any organisation to protect the pay-packets of the wage and salary-earners and the incomes of the small farmers and businessmen. I do not believe it will; I do not believe it can; and I do not believe it wants to. Instead, I believe that the Government is setting up another instrument to further the interests of its "big-man" monopolistic friends from southern States and overseas under the guise of something to protect the mass of consumers who need protecting. I can see this sham council quite easily becoming an instrument to remove small retailers and small manufacturers and to expand the areas of production and marketing of the Government's "big-man" friends in the way in which it has been introduced by the Minister. However, I shall reserve further comment on that till the second-reading stage.

We, the Labour members of this Assembly, the only true guardians of the welfare of nearly 80 per cent.—the great majority—of the population, are the only ones with the interest and the integrity to implement legislation for the good of the wage and salary-earners of this State. As my colleague the hon. member for Salisbury said, the Government has revoked all the machinery provided by former Labour Governments and now is telling hon. members that it proposes to set up different machinery for a similar purpose. It expects me and other hon. members on this side of the Chamber who have worked in unions, who have come from families that have suffered as a result of the predatory actions of its friends, to believe what it says. That is too much to ask!

Boards whose members are selected and appointed by Governments run the very grave risk of becoming sinecures for sycophants. If by accident some good members do filter through to them, they soon become frustrated and worn out with their efforts. That has happened more than once in the past. In the light of the Minister's

introduction, I can foresee that the proposed council could act as an instrument to justify price rises. If it did, it would not belie its name—Consumer Affairs Council—because price rises are just as much consumer affairs as price control and price repression.

The history of consumer organisations in other States in which they were constituted in the same manner and by the same method as is proposed for the constitution of this council should be enough to make any hon. member who conscientiously hopes for some measure of protection and justice stand aghast. I cannot see that the Minister or any of those who delivered sycophantic diatribes in praise of his proposals can possibly be included in the list of those who want to get a better deal for the mass of the consumers. Their philosophy is in their acclaim for the rights of the superior individual, and their attitudes are those of the *laissez-faire*.

The two basic ingredients that trammel any efforts to improve the lot of the little man are present in the party philosophies of the coalition group, and they were well expressed by implication in the Minister's reply to question No. 4 in Votes and Proceedings of 14 October, a question asked by one of his colleagues. Admittedly, the answers that were given were factually true and the conclusions drawn were valid, but only within the limits set by the Consumer Price Index in Australia.

In the United Kingdom and in some North American countries and States, the basic idea was for consumer protection. This seems far from the purpose here, if the Minister's introduction and the support given by his colleagues on the other side is to be taken as serious, and it will only play perhaps a minor role in the proposed council.

Advice and education are important, but we need consumer protection first, and advice and education in the direction of enabling consumers to protect themselves. The greatest scope for protection, looked to first and as most important by the consuming public at large, is in the area of price control. It is this area that is a root cause of many of the problems in this State. That is not mentioned. In fact, this Government, with its strong "big-man" bias, does not dare mention the phrase. "Wage control", yes, they love it! They drool at the thought of tighter wage control, and "freak off" into fantasies of delight at the possibility of wage-pegging.

In his answer to the question I mentioned before, the Minister flashed the red light to all who are not colour blind to the needs of the electorate when he said, *inter alia*—

"Average weekly earnings have risen to a substantially greater extent than prices."

This is no news. We all knew that would happen years ago when price control was abolished and the huge inflationary take-overs by southern and overseas monopolists commenced. These pay-packet pilferers would

never have been interested in take-overs if price control had been retained. Take-overs and speculation in farm produce, minerals, housing and land are the strongest inflationary forces of all, and can only flourish under a Government which has abandoned its responsibility to legislate for the little man.

When the Minister produced the figures to show that the average wage earnings had risen by 109 per cent. in 14 years compared with 44 per cent. for prices, he neglected to mention that in this period taxation took almost another 15 per cent. of the workers' wages and salaries, and that services which were once free to the vast majority of workers under a Labour Government—services such as education, health, pensions and public protection—have since risen in cost by startling proportions as this Government rejects its responsibility to wage and salary-earners.

If the proposed Bill does have sections to back its supposed protections as enumerated by members of the Government, I will be pleasantly surprised. Suitable punitive measures must be taken, otherwise the whole effort will be a mockery.

Some time ago in the United States of America a well-known firm of rot-gut soft-drink pedlars made certain claims for the health benefits of the drugs contained in their wares. These were examined and found to be false. The firm was prosecuted and found guilty. The consumer protection machinery in that country's legislation imposed as a penalty that for a long period this firm had to publicise on the labels of its bottles the fact that it had made false claims for its products. Such a punishment, analogous to the practice of putting rogues and thieves in the stocks in the market place, has a lot to recommend it.

We have heard it said by the hon. member for Greenslopes that the naming of such offenders in this Chamber would be sufficient bad publicity. What a farce! Look at what happens now in this Chamber. Many hon. members on this side bring forward matters of great moment and back their claims with evidence. But they rarely, if ever, get publicity for their good work because it is aimed at the friends of the Government. However, when a Government member presents some triviality of novelty it gets a write-up. If a Government member attacks the efforts of Labour members to help the thousands of unfortunates created by this Government, or the efforts of the trade unions to raise the living standards and protect the interests of their members, again he receives wide publicity. I do not see this Bill alone as being a deterrent to those who engage in fraudulent practices.

One of the most frequent promises made by Government members in their contributions to this debate is that the consuming public will be educated in consumer affairs. It will be very interesting to see how this will be covered in the Bill. If it is anything

like what goes on in Government public relations, we are in for a very interesting but expensive time.

Perhaps the Government intends to throw responsibility for consumer education onto its education services. After all, this would be the cheapest way out. The Government could spend a few thousand dollars on an in-service school for head-teachers and require them to return to their staffs and re-teach them during their lunch breaks.

No doubt the council members, who, we are coaxed to believe, might have a union representative in their number, will be paid fat fees to write a textbook on the subject, and that will be sold to the parents through the channels of the textbook-robbery retailers. I have no doubt that the book will retail at a high cost, so I hope that textbook-robbery will be controlled by the proposed council. After all, educational textbooks are growing in importance as a consumer item in the household budget, and the Government subsidy to the textbook trade is a mere drop in the bucket when compared with the cost to the parent.

If the council does not carry out its proposed education through Government channels by further overcrowding of school services, perhaps it could do it another way. It has a large number of advertising and public relations people to call on. If that is done, another interesting situation will arise. Will the firms that derive their income from high-pressure advertising be called upon to educate us and our children on consumer protection and buyer resistance? That would be a farce, so I will be interested to see how the proposed education programme will be implemented. But I will have more to say about that at the second-reading stage.

I hope I will hear more about other aspects of the great robbery that is being perpetrated on the consumers. We have the discount disgrace and the big-percentage operator. Without price control these people can set prices based on the profits they want to make, mark the article up another 20 per cent., and then take it off again. This might provide unproductive employment for a host of ticket-writers, but it does not add to the efficiency of business methods throughout the State.

We have seen the film racket, and this applies to both colour films and black-and-white films. Many firms sell expensive films to the public and charge for printing and developing when the films are sold. If anything goes wrong they claim it is the fault of the photographer. I fail to see how a photographer of no mean ability, who had very few duds in his long career, could produce the unsatisfactory results that he showed me.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BLAKE (Isis) (4.30 p.m.): I wish to comment on the Bill, because the lack of provision for the proposed Consumer Affairs Bureau to exercise price control disappoints me greatly. I voice my disquiet in that the term "consumer protection" does not seem to be present in the Bill's title. I doubt that very much consumer protection will flow from the Bill as it has been foreshadowed. However, I hope it will be something of a deterrent to shady business practices although, on what has been outlined so far, it seems that it will fall far short of the hopes raised in the hearts of the people by the Government's promises about consumer protection.

I know that, of necessity, all people expect a lot from the Bill, particularly in view of the present tidal wave of rising prices. Between March and June of this year the cost of living rose by about \$1 a week.

Obviously some control is necessary if the average person, let alone our export industries, are to survive the price spiral. At nearly every rural convention that I have attended or read about, resolutions have been carried—I expect that they are passed on to the Government as it is intended that they should be—calling for investigations into prices, or asking that price control be imposed on the highly priced components used in rural production.

Although the Country Party claims rural producers as its special responsibility, it studiously avoids and denies the worth of price control. At the same time, almost every major primary-producing industry is operating under strict price control for its product. Most of them are also subject to strict Government scrutiny before they can get a price increase for their products. The Government, in denying the use of price control in this Bill constituting the proposed Consumer Affairs Bureau, in effect is saying that price control is a pernicious practice in a free-enterprise society, pernicious in the component costs of rural production, but essential in fixing the cost of the end product of rural production.

Many people will be disappointed if price control of essentials is not envisaged in the Bill, but none would be more disappointed than the primary producer. He believes that what is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander. The policies to which he is subject in pricing his product should apply equally to those who produce the goods that he uses.

To be fair, the details of the Bill are unknown. I hope that when they are known the proposed Consumer Affairs Bureau will not be as toothless as a sainted grandmother.

Previous speakers have referred to false labelling, the exploitation of widows by the building trade, false advertising, etc. I wish to deal with false advertising because it gives me the opportunity to speak on this subject in

this Assembly. When I received a letter from five of my constituents in Hervey Bay requesting me to ask questions here about certain land development companies and the advertising being used to promote land development in the area, I refused to do so. I refused to raise the matter because if I did I would be doing so under privilege and, even though that may be done with the best of intentions, at times damaging aspersions may be cast against people who are in fact quite innocent.

As I say, I refused to ask the questions, but I made representations to the Minister for Justice. I asked him to investigate the allegations about unlawful practices in land development and advertising, and he replied in the following terms:—

"Dear Mr. Blake,

"I refer to your representations to me regarding some questionable advertising and enclose a copy of a Memorandum to the Solicitor-General by Mr. Gibney of that Office which sets out the legal position in this matter.

"At this stage I am not aware of any move to alter the existing law in relation to false advertising which at the moment appears to be more a matter for my colleague, the Honourable the Minister for Labour and Tourism."

I shall now refer to the memorandum, which, on the first page, quotes my letter, as follows:—

"I have arranged for representatives of the authors of the letter, the land developers, and representatives of the Burrum Shire Council to meet and discuss Local Authority aspects involved. Therefore, with the exclusion of anything of a purely Local Authority content, I submit the letter for your comment and advice.

"It is my duty to state that comments on advertising on page 2 seem thoroughly justified.

"The attention of your Department to all queries relevant to the Justice Department would be greatly appreciated and I await your advice with interest."

Investigation by the Solicitor-General's office revealed certain things. The part relevant to misleading advertising reads—

"Mr. Blake has forwarded the letter from the residents and has requested that the attention of our Department be directed to all queries relevant to the Justice Department. He adds the comment, it will have been noted, that the remarks on advertising on page 2 of the residents' letter seem thoroughly justified.

"The reference to the misleading advertising commences at the second paragraph of page 2 of the letter from the residents, where reference is made to the advertisements by the developers in 'The Courier-Mail' and the 'Sunday Truth'. The Hervey Bay area is described in the advertisements

as being 'under three hours leisurely, scenic drive from Brisbane' and the land being offered is described as being 'almost the only land available in the area'. The residents complain that this advertising would appear to be of dubious nature and misleading to the public not familiar with Hervey Bay. The advertisements also list as one of the attractions, 'sea breezes and panoramic ocean views,' and the writers have indicated that this is not so."

Hon. members who have journeyed in that direction will be quite aware that it is not a three-hour, leisurely scenic drive to Hervey Bay unless every road law in the book is broken; four hours would be more to the point, and a leisurely scenic drive would take nearer five hours.

The memorandum continues—

"It is obvious that the statement that Harvey Bay is 'under 3 hours leisurely, scenic drive from Brisbane' is not only misleading but false, and it would appear to be puffing to say that the new release of land is 'almost the only land available in the area.'

"In a memorandum of mine dated 16th April last in relation to certain letters received from Mr. Walter Smith of Indooroopilly, regarding advertisements relating to the sale of distributorships, I mentioned that Queensland of course, has dealt with publications of false statements in regard to goods, etc., in Section 85 of 'The Factories and Shops Acts, 1960 to 1964' which prohibits the publication of such statements in regard to goods, and 'goods' is defined to include anything that is the subject of trade, manufacture or merchandise.

"Victoria has dealt with the subject of false advertisements in Section 36 of the Summary Offences Act, 1966. This Section deals with false statements which are intended or likely to promote the sale or disposal of any real property or any personal property (including chattels real or stocks, shares, bonds or other securities) or any services, or which is intended or likely to increase the purchase, consumption or use of any such personal property, or which is intended or likely to induce any person or persons to enter into any obligations relating to any such real property or personal property or services or any interest in any such real or personal property. It will be seen that the Victorian provisions are of wider ambit than the Queensland provisions.

"Moreover, the Victorian provisions were recently amended by the Summary Offences Act which was passed at the last session of the Victorian Parliament. The Act was amended by extending the prohibition to include not only the making of false statements, but of deceptive or misleading statements also."

I take it that there are many ways of wriggling around whether a statement is or is not false. The implications of "deceptive or misleading statements" would certainly throw a much finer mesh round some of the people who are trying to subvert the law and mislead the people with false advertising.

When introducing the Bill, the Minister said—

"The provisions presently contained in the Factories and Shops Act regarding false advertising are to be repealed, as the appropriate place for these provisions is in this Bill associated with the false trade descriptions mentioned. Upon the promulgation of the consumer affairs legislation, this provision presently in the Factories and Shops Act will be repealed."

I am pleased to hear that that provision will be embodied in this legislation, and I hope that the Consumer Affairs Bureau is given sufficient teeth to enable it to stop the false advertising that is so prevalent and that can lead to people being deprived of their money by false pretences. I have forgotten the Latin phrase which means that in all purchases the onus is more or less on the buyer to see that he is getting a fair deal.

Mr. Herbert: Caveat emptor.

Mr. BLAKE: Caveat emptor—let the buyer beware.

I bring one specific instance to the attention of the Committee. A person reads of a land development scheme which is said to be a leisurely three hours' drive from Brisbane. It would be quite natural to assume that many people would fly there to see the land.

Mr. Hughes: Hervey Bay is a beautiful area, you must admit.

Mr. BLAKE: Don't worry about that. I did not mention this matter in Parliament before I had the facts, because I want to see everything possible done legally to develop Hervey Bay. I do not want to jeopardise such development. I say here and now that, according to the Registrar of Companies, there is nothing unlawful about the company involved in this development. The company is registered as Ramson Towers Development Pty. Ltd. However, Mr. Andrew Clempson, late of Commercial Consultants, with a paid-up capital of \$10, who introduced this company to Hervey Bay, has, I am told by the Registrar of Companies, something of a police record in the South, where he had formed quite a few building companies which had not been successful.

I do not want people investing their money in unsuccessful land development schemes at Hervey Bay. I want them to invest their money with full knowledge of what they are investing in. I do not want them investing as a result of false advertising; I want them investing in the healthy development of Hervey Bay. I repeat, in case

someone thinks that I might be prejudicing Ramson Towers Development Pty. Ltd., that, according to the Registrar of Companies, it is quite a lawful company.

Let me return to the subject of misleading advertising, about which we have heard so much on many occasions in this Chamber, and the need to wipe it out. If the Consumer Affairs Council is to work satisfactorily, it must have power not only to recommend that various Acts be amended to enable it to deal with complaints that come before it but also to ensure that legal action is taken against the people concerned. When asked a question about misleading advertising, the Minister for Justice said, "It seems to be a matter more for my colleague the Minister for Labour and Tourism." On another occasion, when reference was made to Kindy Kreations, about which hon. members will recall that questions have been asked, it was said that the question was one for another Government department.

Mr. Baldwin: The Police Department.

Mr. BLAKE: That is correct. It was the Minister for Works, who controls police matters. Three departments have been mentioned, none of which seems quite certain it has the power to take action against people who engage in false advertising.

I have before me a copy of the relevant Victorian legislation. As has been said before, it seems much more comprehensive than the proposed Bill, but I do not think I need read much of it to the Committee. The recent amendments to the Victorian Summary Offences Act, 1966, were made following representations by the Consumers' Protection Council for Victoria in its report for the year ended 30 June, 1969, pages 8 and 9 of which dealt with dishonest and misleading advertising—I emphasise the word "misleading". It is very desirable that legislation should be introduced to close the loop-holes in the law relating to misleading advertising.

I have tried to be impartial, and when the principal of Ramson Towers Development Pty. Ltd. came to see me and assured me that it was a lawful company, I said that if investigation proved this to be so, he had no need to worry. However, I did say to him, "You have to be fair about this. When you advertise real estate as being a scenic drive of under three hours from Brisbane and in fact it is a drive of four, or almost five, hours, you cannot blame people for being suspicious of a company that carries on in that way. I, for one, would not blame them for being suspicious." The person purporting to be the principal grinned and said "So what? We instructed our advertising agency correctly, and they made a mistake." When you or I make a mistake, Mr. Wharton, we have to pay for it, and so should others, particularly if it involves people's money.

(Time expired.)

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (4.49 p.m.): The Minister said in his introductory remarks that 97 submissions had been received by the investigating committee—66 from individuals, two from miscellaneous organisations, 13 from employer organisations, eight from women's organisations, four from employee organisations, two from consumer organisations, one from academics, and one from progress associations—and I ask him this question: did the committee sit in any of the provincial cities and towns, or did it sit only in the Brisbane metropolitan area? Was it indeed a "Queen Street" committee?

I realise, of course, that this is Liberal legislation and that hon. members opposite are concerned only with the metropolitan area. But I am sure that people outside the metropolitan area may have wished to be given an opportunity to give evidence at a hearing of the committee had it been advertised and moved into provincial and country centres. Of course, we know the hardy old axiom of the Liberal Party: "caveat emptor"—let the buyer beware. This phrase has been used by the Government over a number of years and has resulted in public outcry at the lack of protection for the consumer.

The only defence that this Government has had over the years is the Latin phrase, "caveat emptor". It has thrown that phrase around this Chamber and at election-time around the country, as much as possible since it repealed price-control legislation, an action for which it alone is responsible. Over the years the buyer, or consumer, has become singularly disgruntled at being duped and robbed, and this has fomented a collective public outcry against lack of legislative protection in Queensland for Queenslanders.

Because of the snide practices of the sellers of goods, the need for legislative protection has grown. Not only workers and wage-earners need protection; safeguards should be provided for all consumers. All employers and employees—peasant, poet, actor, milkmaid and the man in the street—need protection. Widows, aged pensioners and unemployed are consumers just as is anyone else, and they are all in need of legislative protection. Now, of course, businessmen and farmers have joined in the demand because they are just as much affected as any other members of the community. They are being caught by the snide practices of sellers in both private and business transactions.

I am no Latin scholar, as hon. members opposite have intimated that they are, but the old phrase "caveat emptor" is one that I have learned since entering Parliament. It has been bandied about by hon. members opposite, especially Ministers, both Liberal and Country Party, in defence of the withdrawal of price control and the open-handed, "open-slathe" attitude to any form of business that has prevailed under the name of private enterprise.

This Bill will disappoint many. In the terms of the sales world, it could be called "bait" or "switch-selling", the aim of which is to gain entry to one's home by a high-pressure salesman. He operates either by enticing the customer into his domain, or, in the retail sphere, into his store, or by gaining an invitation for himself into the consumer's home. The advertising is generally gaudy and coloured, and the speech cultured, slick and fast. The well-known article is usually advertised at a very low price, but when the buyer reaches the point of sale he finds to his dismay that the stock-in-trade of these sellers is to claim that the article is out of stock, or that the stock as advertised is not listed or has been exhausted. Then comes the switch and the glib salesman has just what the customer wants. It is a different brand and much dearer.

I feel that here we have first been subjected to the bait and then to the switch-sell, and we have now had placed before us the legislative sales talk after the advertising build-up. Like certain articles, the legislation is not up to expectations. Alternatively, I suggest that the quality article is out of stock and we are forced to take a substitute. I refer again to the phrase, "Let the buyer beware." I would say, "Let the elector beware. Do not buy this."

From the Minister's introductory speech and the failure of Government members to support the Bill, I have come to the conclusion that it is milksop legislation and a greatly inferior article hidden behind a facade of respectability. In effect, it is a dodge to fool the people into believing that they will be protected. I venture to suggest that its advertising cost will be included in the cost to the consumer, even though it is an allowable tax deduction.

The Bill has received a great deal of advertisement, but I believe that it is a deception. Until I have the opportunity to read it I can only gather from the Minister's remarks and the portions of the debate that I have read that it is an inferior product. The Bill itself is a piece of deceptive advertising, and I suggest that it is the first thing that the proposed bureau should investigate.

The purpose of the Bill is to constitute a Consumer Affairs Council and establish a Consumer Affairs Bureau. Prior to the last State election the leader of the Liberal Party said in his policy speech that he proposed to examine the demand—I emphasise the word "demand" and use it advisedly—for more attention to consumer affairs and to introduce a Bill in its most satisfactory form. From what I have heard of the Bill, I do not believe that it is in its most satisfactory form. In his introductory comments the Minister did not say the Bill was in its most satisfactory form, but that it was being assessed and determined in its most desirable form. I ask: most satisfactory to whom, and most desirable to what?

I sincerely hope that my interpretation of the comments I have heard today is wrong. The consumers should be protected and the proposed legislation should afford protection to them. I hope that the Bill will be of benefit to the consumer, will provide redress to the buyer, will favour the individual and, more importantly, will protect the buying public of Queensland. We do not want to see the public exploited any longer as they have been over the years, when their demands were heard behind the scenes in the Liberal Party.

The main purpose and function of the proposed council should be the protection of the consumer. I repeat that it appears that the legislation is not designed to give protection but rather, as the Minister has said, to educate and inform the consumer, to give an opportunity to the consumer to take part in the evaluation of the economy, and to take into account in legislation the interests of the consumer. Whatever those words might mean, the Minister spoke them. He dodged the issue of protection to the consumer; instead, he uttered those false words.

Protection is what is required. The consumer needs to be protected from things like the gift gimmick, the practice of selling goods in what are called "sales", the practice of referral selling and of supplying unordered goods. Everybody is aware of the old gimmick of the gift. Before a person is induced to buy a certain article he is offered a "free gift". My advice to the public is to check the price of the item elsewhere. Usually the "gift" is far from free and the price of the original article is inflated to include the cost of the "gift", and a little more for the seller.

To anyone reading "Hansard", I say advisedly, remember that someone has to pay for the "gift" and, most often—on virtually every occasion—it is the person buying, or the consumer. Do not be misled by something advertised at a sale. The word "sale" could be one of the first matters for consideration by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. Sale tickets are placed on all sorts of things. Before buying at sales, people should check prices against selling prices elsewhere.

Since the retraction of price-control legislation, sale prices have appeared everywhere. When a sale is advertised it does not necessarily mean that goods are being sold cheaply. Unscrupulous traders put false original prices on merchandise to make phoney sale prices appear good by comparison. It is an easy matter to compare prices with those in a nearby store, and I advise consumers to make the effort.

I believe that these practices should be encompassed by this legislation to ensure that a sale price is a real sale price, with a real reduction in price for value for the consumer. Customers go to a sale believing that they will save money. This field should

be covered by the legislation to ensure that those who advertise sales do not merely sell cheap merchandise.

Another item of consumer protection that should be covered, in the selling world or the world of salesmen, is termed "referral selling". There are many variations of the practice, but the essential features are the same. During an interview a salesman asks a buyer for the names of friends who might be interested in the same goods. He is promised a commission on the sales made to these people. It is something like the chain letter.

Alternatively, the salesman for, say, home-improvement materials asks a would-be buyer for permission to use his house as an example of the use of the materials and promises him a commission on subsequent sales. Countless consumers have fallen for these practices and have over-reached themselves financially in expectation of receiving commissions that were purely fictional. If someone makes an offer of that nature, have him put it in writing. If he balks at that, call the sale off.

Another practice is to supply unordered goods. This gimmick is often used in this way: goods generally come through the mail, although the person to whom they are addressed has not asked for them. Such goods should be returned at the expense of the sender, or the sender should be written to and told that the recipient does not want the goods and that they will be held until he picks them up. In those circumstances, the goods must not be used.

The hon. member for Cook referred to this practice in relation to the "Reader's Digest" records and other articles. Some unscrupulous dealers follow up such merchandise with bills, threats to resort to debt collectors, threats to inform the consumer's employer and to endanger his credit rating in some way. That has been a practice in salesmanship for many years, particularly since the retraction of price-control legislation.

If the Minister denies that the Government's policy is *caveat emptor*, I point out that in his introductory speech he stated that the rule of *caveat emptor*—let the buyer beware—must still apply even under this legislation as, he said, all individuals have a responsibility to protect themselves from fraud or misrepresentation.

Mr. R. E. Moore: That is fair enough.

Mr. R. JONES: I point out to the hon. member for Windsor that I am not talking to the block; I want to talk to the butcher this afternoon.

The rule of *caveat emptor* does not override any statutory provision of the law. It should be embodied in all types of legislation. The rule used to be *caveat emptor*. But where the buyer, expressly or by implication, makes known to the seller the particular purpose for which the goods are required,

then section 17 (1) of the Sale of Goods Act of 1896 generally implies a condition into the contract that the goods shall be fit for that purpose. So if a person relies on the seller's skill or judgment, then if the goods do not fulfil his purpose, he is entitled to return them. I think that the hon. member for Salisbury dealt very effectively with this point this afternoon. However, this condition is not implied in the case of a contract for the sale of a specified article under its patent or other trade name; for example, if a person asks for a "Primus", it is implied that he knows what he wants. But if he asks for a stove suitable to cook on during a camping trip, the item sold to him must be suitable for the purpose.

More importantly, when goods are bought by description from a seller who deals in goods of that description (whether he is the manufacturer or not), there is an implied condition that the goods shall be of merchantable quality.

The Minister said that all manufacturers were "good blokes anyway," and that if they were told they were not doing the right thing they would pull themselves into line. My interpretation of what the Minister said might be a little broad, but that is my interpretation and that is what I believe he meant.

These rules do not apply to private sales, for example, from one neighbour to another, but they do provide protection for the businessman-buyer provided he does not contract out of this protection, if and when he sees fit. Section 56 of the Act provides that the implied terms and conditions may be excluded from the contract by express agreement.

"Who in his right mind would do such a thing?" you might inquire, Mr. Hooper. In practice, protection is most often given away by accepting warranties or guarantees from the seller. These warranties or guarantees bear careful watching, because usually the buyer has to give up his protection under the Sale of Goods Act to obtain the doubtful protection of the warranty or guarantee. Quite often, repairs or other work to be performed by the seller during the period of the warranty or guarantee is to be carried out to the satisfaction of the seller, not the buyer, generally at the place of sale or manufacture. As the hon. member for Mackay pointed out, the article has to be sent back, with the owner paying freight both ways, before the warranty is honoured.

A person cannot require or force a seller to sell on his own terms, and a person displaying goods for sale may decline to sell to anyone unless he accepts his terms of sale.

The English businessman or consumer has the advantages of the Misrepresentation Act, 1967, and the Trade Descriptions Act, 1968.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton South) (5.9 p.m.): This is one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before the Committee—at least this is how I view it—because it deals with a problem that is by no means parochial or limited to one section of the community. It is universal, and is faced by all of us, because, regardless of our occupations or roles in life, we are all consumers. However, it is unfortunate, because of its importance, that the Bill, as it has been introduced, contains aspects that one might say are completely artificial. The Bill is artificial in its structure and in its function or terms of reference, although this may be purposeful on the part of the Government. As the hon. member for Windsor said, it will do the right thing by the manufacturer, so one might look upon it simply as a compromise to please the bosses, we might say, of the Liberal Party and the Country Party.

There are two important aspects of the proposed authority. Firstly, there is its structure; it has been divided into a Consumer Affairs Council and a Consumer Affairs Bureau. Secondly, there are its functions and aims. The many malfeatures of the structural aspect have been clearly outlined by previous Opposition speakers. I should like to endorse the suggestion made by the hon. member for Norman that pensioner bodies should have direct representation. Throughout this country pensioners number about 1,000,000. I believe that in this State they constitute a great proportion of those in need and should therefore have representation. Furthermore, I concur with the Leader of the Opposition in his criticism of the farcical attitude of the Government to trade union representation on the council.

My main comments, however, relate to the functions of the council and the bureau. I know that this matter has been raised by many members, but I repeat that the names of those bodies, the "Consumer Affairs Council" and "Consumer Affairs Bureau" do not contain the word "protection". If one looks into the terms of reference, it will be seen that the word "protection" is not mentioned in the roles of the bureau and the council. One must therefore conclude that protection of the consumer is not really intended. Instead, I believe the Bill to be more or less "after the crime" legislation.

The functions of the bureau are couched in vague and intangible terms. I bring them to the attention of the Committee. The first function of the bureau is stated as—

"To promote the interests of consumers and to assist them to a greater awareness in relation to their assessment and use of goods and services."

That might sound all very well, but what does it mean in hard, cold cash to the consumer?

The next function is—

"To collect, collate and disseminate information in respect of matters affecting the interests of consumers."

Before one can appreciate that, one must understand what the Minister means by "the interests of consumers". The functions of the bureau then continue—and these are the only two fangs that it has—

"To receive complaints from consumers concerning matters touching their interests as consumers, to consider and, if the commissioner deems it warranted, to investigate such complaints received and to take such action in respect of any such complaints as seems proper to the commissioner."

I ask, "As deemed warranted by whom?" The functions continue—

"To receive complaints of fraudulent or deceptive practices in relation to matters which affect or are likely to affect the interests of consumers and to take such action in respect of such cases as seems proper to the commissioner."

In other words, it is possible that no action will be taken in some cases, even though fraud and deception are involved.

The functions continue—

"To advise and assist consumers who seek from the bureau information or guidance on matters affecting their interests as consumers."

Finally, its function is—

"To encourage and undertake the dissemination of information concerning consumer affairs to producers, manufacturers and suppliers of goods or service."

I say that the terms of reference and functions are artificial, and in no way get down to the crux of the problem, which is the protection of the consumer from malpractices such as false advertising, false packaging and profiteering. I emphasise the last-mentioned.

The Minister made a passing reference to profiteering, and he assured us that provision is contained in the Bill for the appointment of inspectors of factories and shops to prevent profiteering. I question how this is to be done. How will these men prevent profiteering? How will they know, first of all, what is profiteering, and what is not? Are random checks to be made? Will price lists be prepared for various areas, or will they have some terms of reference so that they will know what is profiteering? What exactly does the Minister mean? I should like him in his reply to give his definition of profiteering. I believe that the Minister has purposely played on words in this matter. He has in fact completely overlooked the word "prevention". He has referred instead to "detection", and then detection only after a complaint is lodged.

The hon. member for Greenslopes endeavoured to castigate the A.L.P. for its concern about prices, and tried to belittle the idea of controlling prices. I believe that, if we are to protect the consumer, we must

take a very serious look at prices. I believe that legislation should be introduced not so much to control prices as to control profits. I believe that is the only effective way of controlling profiteering. It would not only prevent profiteering, but would, I believe, put an end to the questionable practices of some commercial interests. Most complaints that we receive are about misrepresentation, misleading advertising, exorbitant prices, and slick business methods, and I believe that these things occur because no restraints are placed on the prices for which articles can be sold. There is no control on the profit that can be made.

I am the first to admit that a reasonable profit is necessary, and I believe that all hon. members on both sides of the Chamber accept that, under the present economic system, a business house must make a profit. If it does not, there will be no funds for expansion, improvement of facilities, or modernisation. If there are no profits, there definitely will not be any employment.

Mr. Hughes: Spoken like a true Liberal!

Mr. WRIGHT: I believe that what I am saying is true. People must be allowed to make profits, but they should not be allowed to make excessive profits.

In my opinion, it is time a different attitude was adopted to selling. Instead of an article being sold at a price the consumers will pay, it should be sold for what it is worth. I am the first to admit that many firms and businesses in this State—in fact, most of them—stick to correct principles. In November last year I made a survey of Four Square stores in Rockhampton and Brisbane. It revealed that 20 selected articles cost \$8.01 in Brisbane and \$7.36 in Rockhampton. There was a total difference of only 65c. On checking again yesterday I found that, although there have been increases, there is still a similar relationship between the prices in Rockhampton and the prices in Brisbane of the articles surveyed.

I know that many firms try desperately hard to keep prices down. They are aware of the problems arising from excess profits. However, many others are completely avaricious and unscrupulous and embark on questionable practices simply because they have excess profits. If profits were limited, things such as "contest" or "competition" gimmicks would cease. It is quite obvious that firms can use these gimmicks only because they make such substantial profits. If they did not, they would not be able to meet the postal charges that they incur or send representatives on very high commissions to various parts of the State.

A firm that is able to offer \$100 cash with a purchase can do that only because the mark-up is so high. As the hon. member for Cairns said, the purchaser is not getting anything for nothing; he is paying with the other hand. If the profit margin were controlled, firms would not be able to make such offers.

In some instances a Christmas hamper is offered with every refrigerator sold. Some people are beginning to realise that they actually pay for that hamper. Again, the firm could not make such an offer if its profit margin was not very high in the first place.

The "free" racket has been referred to by other hon. members—the practice of giving a free iron, or something of that sort, with every television set that is purchased. That also comes out of profit, and the firm could not make that offer if profits were not excessive.

Mr. Porter: Don't you understand the mechanism of this?

Mr. WRIGHT: I understand it quite well, and I know that most of it is fraudulent.

We are all aware of the high pressure, door-to-door salesmen who work on exorbitant commissions, or who buy their products outright from the distributor and then re-sell at a huge profit. That could be stopped if the original distributor was limited in the profit that he could make. From time to time one sees advertisements in the paper saying, "Earn \$100 a week. Car necessary." If a man makes \$100 a week, someone else is making \$200, and again one comes back to the question of excess profits.

Take the land racketeers. As hon. members know, there are a few of them in the "ginger" group. If the price of land was controlled, those fellows would not be driving round in Mercedes Benz cars. In my opinion, that is one of the first matters that should be considered.

One also sees advertisements—there is one in the Brisbane "Telegraph" today, if hon. members care to look—saying "Sellout". I challenge the managers of firms advertising in that way to prove that it is a "sellout". We know that it is not, but one frequently sees the big headline "Sellout". In my opinion, that is false advertising, and, again, those people can spend money on it only because they are making excessive profits.

In another instance people are offered a \$25 trade-in on an old refrigerator. When the person making the offer sees the customer, he tells him he can keep his old refrigerator. And so it goes on!

I believe that practices such as these can be stopped only by limiting the profit margins of firms. The mark-up is another form of false advertising. A case came under my notice in Rockhampton recently in which a firm advertised an article for sale at \$10.50. In very big headlines, it advertised, "Save \$9.50". The trouble was that the original price of \$18 was shown in very small print. That is deceptive advertising.

Then there is the mail order racket for selling records or books. The first costs 25c and the purchaser contracts to buy the next six at \$6.50 each. And so it goes on. I believe that this Bill will not even touch

many of these anomalies. It has been said that the Bill is toothless. I believe this is so; it is also artificial.

Anomalies are everywhere. We encounter them in Rockhampton. The consumer needs protection in everyday matters. Cement is made in Rockhampton and sold locally at about \$1.75. The clinker in Rockhampton is brought to Brisbane, cement is made from it and it is sold down here for approximately \$1.15. Pineapples grown in Yeppoon are cheaper in Brisbane than in Rockhampton. The cement I spoke about is cheaper in Bundaberg and Mackay than in Rockhampton. Surely these are aspects at which the Government must look. I am afraid it will not, because it is involved with its railway policies.

It is time the Government looked at many other matters. There are so many that should be looked at but are ignored. The first thing we all think about, of course, is price control, to be followed by profit control.

I have raised some of the anomalies and the problems involved. I should now like to put forward a few suggestions. I believe that the role of the bureau and its officers should not be so much one of testing and checking complaints as one of random checking. The officers should go through the stores and check on prices, profits, packaging and so on. It should be part of their job to check repair shops and other such places over which we have no control and which charge whatever they like. They should not simply wait until a complaint is received. Furthermore, I believe that when a conviction is obtained the firm concerned should be forced to display an appropriate sign saying that it has been convicted of misrepresentation or profiteering, and it should be displayed in such a position that everybody can see it. It should be published and made public to everybody, not only in the interests of consumers but also in the interests of the firm's competitors who have been doing the right thing.

Mr. Hughes: Bring out the whips! Stocks in the city square!

Mr. WRIGHT: I know the hon. member would not believe in it because if anything is fraudulent he is for it. We know all about the hon. member and the way he worked his business.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Rockhampton South in that accusation was imputing improper motives and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes, Mr. Hooper, I withdraw it.

To continue, I believe also that there is need for an investigation into monopolies in this State, whether they be bakers, electrical firms, soap companies or anything else, because, although the Liberal and Country Parties say that we cannot control prices, in actual fact the monopolies are indirectly

controlling prices themselves but only for their own benefit. I think an immediate investigation into this aspect is necessary. I also believe that we should re-introduce and insist on compulsory meat grading. Today a person does not know what he is buying, but, as the Liberals say, "It is for the consumer to know." How would the consumer today know what meat he was buying when it is tenderized and pulverized. I think it should be graded.

I believe also that we should introduce a system of itemised dockets and that these should be available at chain stores if requested. Many people have complained to me that at chain stores customers receive only a long list of figures. There is no way of ascertaining what price they paid for any individual article or of knowing whether or not it was a special price. Usually they have not time to stand around and check each individual item, and if they ask the check-out girl for an itemised docket, they could be made a fool of in front of everyone else. People are just not prepared to make this request.

Mr. Hughes: That is an insult to the housewives of this State.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not an insult to the housewives. It is the housewives of this State who have complained to me about this problem. I believe also that there should be correct labelling and marking of the weights and ingredients of all articles. We had a recent case in Rockhampton of potato chips being sold to the A.M.I.E.U. and also to the National Fitness organisation. No weights or anything else were shown and the contents weighed one-third of a drachm or 1/46 of an ounce less than the weight of the packet itself. This practice must stop.

I believe that there must be random investigation of selected articles as to the factors that go to make up their price to the consumer. This should be itemised to show the advertising costs, the cost of packaging, the cost to the manufacturer and his profit, the cost to the distributor and his profit, the retail profit and also the Government taxes. This breakdown should be published, not on every article, but at random. Publication would act as a deterrent to those people who set out to make excessive profits. Above all we must exercise control over huge profits. I know that it is necessary, particularly in the sale of perishable goods, for the seller to make a profit of from 50 to 60 per cent., but there is no need for that in the sale of other products.

What profit does one need to exist, to modernise or to keep up with the Joneses in the business world? We must adopt a realistic approach towards profiteering. As I have said, it is time that we ensured that the price of an article was related to the article itself and not to what the consumer can afford to pay.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (5.26 p.m.): It is not my intention to reiterate the strong arguments that have been advanced by Opposition members in this debate. Many hon. members have spoken, and I would be making a belated speech if I were to summarise what has been said by them. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to matters that are of great importance to the people in the Far West. I do so because we have passed through a very serious decade in which we have suffered great material losses and experienced many industrial set-backs. As a consequence, many western people are taking a second look at their future. A great number are considering leaving the West and going to areas in which they say things could not be worse. We all know the areas to which I am referring, namely, the metropolitan area and the provincial cities.

These people of whom I speak are in urgent need of some body or organisation to protect their interests. I feel that protection could be afforded by an organisation such as that envisaged in the Bill, provided the proposed Consumer Affairs Council and Consumer Affairs Bureau are prepared to see that a "fair go" is extended to the people in the rural areas of this State. In so doing they would not only have to be supervisors of private enterprise but would also have to consider what occurs in Government enterprise as well.

Nobody will deny the claim that one of the most important matters in the minds of the people, particularly those in the far-flung outposts of this State, is freight costs, and rail freights are the responsibility of the Government. Over the years a tremendous amount of money has been paid by these people in order to keep the rail services going, and at times rail-freight rates have been exorbitant. This factor is of vital importance to the consumer.

I remember that, after repeated representations, this Government granted freight concessions, particularly on many food items. Then, to confuse the issue, a certain firm astutely used the implementation of reduced freights to help itself. It expanded into my electorate and set up certain organisations in the grocery stores. Hon. members know them; they have seen them advertising in Brisbane. I refer to organisations like Foodland Stores Pty. Ltd. They went into operation on the exact date that the new freight rates came into operation. Consumers in country towns did not get a chance to find out exactly how they benefited as a result of the new freight rates.

I believe it is important to use publicity to deter the unscrupulous, but it should also be used to educate people so that they may be au fait with what they are actually paying. In this instance I refer not to the price of an article but to the freight on it. If there was some way of making public the freight charges, the consumers would be able to assist in policing the price structure

as they would know exactly how freights figured in what they had to pay for essential articles.

Research could be undertaken by the proposed bureau to implement on the widest basis a State-wide price system. During the last election campaign the Leader of the Opposition proposed uniform electricity charges throughout Queensland. In western towns—perhaps this applies also in northern towns—people pay the same price for, say, a packet of cigarettes as is paid in Brisbane. Certain articles on store shelves today have a State-wide price. In the interest of consumers throughout Queensland—particularly those away from the congested areas—and to give them an opportunity to make their money go further, we should design a system by which they pay a price as close as possible to that charged in the metropolitan area for the necessities of life. That could be done.

In various parts of Queensland a zone allowance is paid to assist workers in a certain area to cope with high prices. That is all very well for a school-teacher, a public servant or a policeman who lives in a country area and whose pay comes from Brisbane. His zone allowance is included in his pay. However, a shop-keeper, or anyone else with employees in rural areas where zone allowances are payable, has to make the money in that area to pay the additional allowance. It is only logical that he should pass the cost on to the local consumers.

I do not advocate that the zone allowances should be abolished, but surely a more sensible substitute can be found. Nothing can be sillier than having to raise the money locally to pay this allowance to local employees. In this matter I am referring to people who are honest in their business transactions with the general public.

In our approach to these matters we must take into consideration unscrupulous people, of whom there is a certain percentage in every community. To a certain extent the bad publicity given to them by a consumer affairs bureau would be an important deterrent. But something more than that would have to be done to achieve the desired result as some people—they are confidence men and they are so called—after exhausting one project come up with another. Then, when that one plays itself out they come up with still another. They are constantly endeavouring to "take in" the gullible and exploit the unfortunate in any way they can.

In every community there is a small element that endeavours to do this. These people should be hit very hard. We cannot rely on publicity alone. It must be impressed on these people that any action that is in any way distasteful or fraudulent, or batters on unfortunate people, will be stamped out by the imposition of severe penalties.

There has to be a realisation that the people in western and other outside areas must be given more assistance and more

encouragement to remain in their communities. They must be given protection. Anyone who goes from the metropolitan area to a rural area cannot fail to notice the higher prices ruling there. The people who pay these prices realise that they are frequently unjust.

Quite frankly, the Government is not above overcharging. In this regard I refer to licensing fees. A hotel licensee in Brisbane pays a licence fee based on the price of liquor purchased in Brisbane, whereas a country licensee pays a licence fee based on the price of liquor purchased at the local brewery or, if there is not a brewery, at the local agency. This means that country licensees pay 6 per cent. not only on the cost of the liquor but also on the freight paid to the Government.

This indicates that people at the head of affairs are not always as scrupulous as they should be, and I feel that this is wrong. After all, there is a big difference between paying a percentage on an article straight out of store and on one that includes a freight charge. I am not saying that this would ruin any hotel licensee, but I am saying that there is an underlying principle in this. What does the Bill intend to do? In the main, it intends to see that certain people in the community abide by certain principles, and if we have to legislate to make people abide by certain principles it is incumbent on the Government or a Government department to set an example.

I want the proposed council to be given teeth. I do not see why an approach cannot be made to the Prices Branch, because this would indicate to any person who is likely to be an exploiter that he will receive his just deserts. A couple of years ago I was approached by a pensioner who suffered the unfortunate experience of having his refrigerator, washing machine and television set all break down on the same day. The charges for the three services amounted to more than \$30. I took the matter to the Prices Branch. One of the officers there was so concerned that he went to see the person who made the charges. As a result of my action, the pensioner had to pay virtually nothing. There is therefore some point in making a strong personal approach to those who engage in exploitation. One of the articles supplied for the refrigerator was 7 feet of flex worth about 70c. In addition to that, there was a service charge of \$3.60.

In matters such as these, what is needed is a frontal attack by some responsible person who is in a position to carry out investigations and point out to people that the bad publicity they will obtain from such actions will do them considerable harm, and that their business future will be very dim indeed. If the pensioner whom I mentioned had not come to me, he would have been faced with a bill for \$30, which is quite a considerable amount. I think there should be more than just an

interview. Those who engage in sharp practices should be faced with the possibility of having penalties imposed on them if they continue to operate in such a way.

I shall conclude on that note. I feel that the Opposition has given the Minister a number of points to consider. He may reject many of them, but among our criticisms there will surely be some facets that he will take into consideration. I sincerely hope that they will assist in implementing action to prevent anything that is harmful to the consumer, deter those who may feel that they have an opportunity to take in "mugs' money", and, finally, imbue the commercial world with the finest principles of business practice.

Recently a prominent Japanese executive said to me, "The buyer is always right." Whilst this is not necessarily valid, at least we must all agree that the buyer has rights which a Government should protect.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (5.42 p.m.): I desire to speak on this proposal, which involves very controversial commercial aspects of trade dealings in Queensland today and into which the Government has not properly delved. The Minister has outlined a proposal to establish a Consumer Affairs Bureau and to appoint a Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. I suppose the fundamental principles involved are highly desirable and commendable. One is nevertheless left wondering with what hypocrisy the Government has approached this proposal, because we know only too well that it has "killed" every consumer protecting authority that this State has had.

Mr. Hughes: You don't know what is in the Bill. Why don't you allow it to be printed?

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member for Kurilpa says I do not know what is in the Bill. I can say quite clearly that I know what is in his mind, and I know very well that he has no genuine desire to protect the ordinary wage-earner because he is a slave to big business.

One authority who would be of value in protecting consumers is an ombudsman, and such an appointment has been part of the policy of the Australian Labour Party during the last two election campaigns. The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs will be a contained and confined ombudsman in a narrowed-down field. Why has not the Government the guts to appoint a proper ombudsman, one who would protect the ordinary taxpayers in all matters?

Mr. Hughes: Do you believe there should be one appointed by the city council?

Mr. BENNETT: I have had similar interjections when I have been speaking on this matter on other occasions. I say now, as I said then, that, in spite of what the Lord Mayor may think about it, I subscribe completely to the appointment of an ombudsman.

I do not try to hide behind the policy of the Australian Labour Party. I am prepared to pronounce it in this Parliament.

In reply to the interjection by the hon. member for Kuriipa, I point out that if there are any queries or suggestions relative to the conduct of the Brisbane City Council, the Minister for Local Government and Electricity, who supervises that field, has never said so in this Chamber.

Let me return to the question of the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs and the ombudsman. There has been a commissioner by another name, but his authority has been taken away and his life-blood cut off. The rent controller in this State did much to protect the consumer—the housewife and the ordinary worker—but he has virtually been rendered useless and now has nothing to do. It is not his fault, but I think he spends most of his time wondering how to get rid of the o'd files when the Government annihilates the section completely.

It is futile to complain about any dishonesty, exorbitant demands or profiteering in the field of rental accommodation. A landlord who is corrupt and dishonest will take in a tenant, allow him to place furnishings and fittings in a flat or house, and then prod him from time to time with increases in rental. That usually is done when the tenant cannot afford to pay the increase demanded but, equally, cannot afford to leave his accommodation. What is the Minister doing about that? He supports the laissez-faire policy of the Government that there should not be any protection for the consumer.

An ombudsman could apply his energies not only in that field but in the field of commodity prices as well. I have had occasion to correspond with the Minister—not often, admittedly, because the results generally have been very unsatisfactory—relative to unsavoury trade practices connected with second-hand motor vehicles, but he is better than Walter Lindrum at making “breaks”. First he says that used-car yards are not supposed to trade on Saturday afternoons and Sundays; then he says, “We cannot get evidence of trading.” Most of the inspectors do not work at week-ends, so the legislation that has been introduced is of little significance because it cannot be policed. The alternative conclusion, of course, is that the Government does not desire that it should be policed.

From time to time new products requiring maintenance come onto the market. The proposed Bill will not do anything to protect consumers in regard to these products. Skilled salesmen—perhaps not so skilled; very often they only have to lack conscience and be reasonably dishonest—go round selling household appliances, particularly electrical appliances. Housewives are prepared to buy appliances which, on demonstration, seem to perform their task in a reasonably satisfactory fashion. But what happens? When the time for maintenance

arrives, it is found that a trade protection group is operating. The bigger companies will not even attempt to repair the appliances because they are not produced by them. There is an inner ring—an inner circle—of big business that will freeze out anyone who has not been part and parcel of the world of big business for so many years under Country-Liberal Governments and will do its best to destroy him.

Alternatively, there are the mushroom companies and firms that produce a certain article. When the people who buy it wish to replace any parts, they find that the company has gone out of business or has introduced a new model, and they have to scrap the article they have bought. Again it would seem to me that the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs will have nothing like valid power with which to prevent that type of iniquitous activity. We have seen this so often.

If I may draw an analogy, we have seen the situation where this Government has appointed people to these positions and has done nothing further to help them perform their tasks. To take one example, the Director of Air Pollution operates with a staff of one or two in Brisbane. Although he is no doubt a very knowledgeable man, he has no facilities, no office staff and no equipment with which to carry on. Anyway, he is a “Queen Street” operator by virtue of the fact that he has insufficient staff to operate throughout Queensland.

We will find the same thing with regard to the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, who no doubt will be appointed in due course. I hope the Government does not take as long to appoint him as it is taking to appoint a Licensing Commissioner. Presumably it is waiting to discover the next political mate it can appoint who in that position will be prepared to bow to its dictates.

I suppose that when this legislation is eventually carried there will be some searching for a commissioner to fill the position. He will also have a bureau known as the Consumer Affairs Bureau. What politics will he follow? That is important. At the present time the State is governed by coalition parties who believe, as they say, in the right to open competition. But what have they done about the right to open competition? As far as possible, in all the consumer world and particularly in the licensing trade and traffic in the sale of hotels and so on—anything in which this Government is interested, such as the disposal of authorities to prospect—they will brook no competition.

Will the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs also be directed or indoctrinated with the policy of the Government, and will his sole occupation degenerate into protecting existing big business companies that already have a stranglehold on the sale of goods in this State?

I should like to hear more about the principles that are involved. It is all very well to speak on the academic side in these arguments. We can always, in principle, find suitable attractive arguments to academically support proposals such as those now before the Committee, but when we see them put into implementation in a practical fashion I doubt very much the validity of the arguments submitted here.

Before I embark on this particular field, I point out that we have heard from the Minister that the principle of caveat emptor will still apply. I doubt the wisdom of that argument or, in any case, its validity. The principle of caveat emptor, although well-established in the commercial world in the sale of goods and other property, does not apply in many circumstances. What has been done by this Government about the Companies Act? What has it done about the Hire-purchase Act and the Bills of Sale Act? They operate to enable the man who is normally comparatively insecure and has not the financial resources to purchase what might be regarded in this modern day and age as the essential utilities of life—a refrigerator for his wife and family, a motor-car, perhaps to get to work, and things of that nature. He must either purchase them under the Hire-purchase Act or, alternatively, under the more sudden-death legislation, the Bills of Sale Act.

These Acts are being used by commercial interests in this State to sell shoddy material and articles to teenage children who do not understand their rights and who do not realise they have no contractual capacity or ability. Very often their parents are inveigled into signing hire-purchase agreements, and in some cases the vendors will tell the parents anything to get them to sign. In bygone days a separate and independent agreement in the nature of a guarantee would be signed, but at present the vendors go the whole hog, as it were. Salesmen are instructed to write into the hire-purchase agreement the name of one of the parents and to get him or her to sign it.

In addition, it often happens that the hire-purchaser signs the agreement in blank without being aware of his rights and the obligations imposed on the vendor, and the vendor then deceives the money-lending firm. He says that the purchaser has traded in an article or a vehicle when, in fact, that has not been done, or, alternatively, if an article has been traded in the vendor writes up its value. Generally speaking the transaction is bristling with fraud and deception, and the Government knows it. Under the Companies Act and Hire-purchase Act certain rights are given to Government departments to investigate questionable and dishonest conduct of hire-purchase firms and the mushrooming money-lending firms, but, of course, they do not have sufficient staff to make those

investigations. Surely it behoves the Minister to tell us the number of people that he envisages will be placed on the staff, whom he has in mind as Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, and the nature of the inspectorial facilities that will be placed at his disposal.

It is all very well for the Minister, through his personal public relations officer, to obtain spreading headlines in the Press to the effect that the consumer is being protected, when, in fact, the Ministers are carrying on like certain hire-purchase firms and deceiving people into believing that they are getting the genuine article, whereas they are not. The Government is engaging in a certain amount of fraudulent misrepresentation, because the legislation, whatever it might be, is incapable of being policed in this State, or alternatively, the Government is unwilling to police it.

It is no use publishing headlines in the Press threatening dishonest commercial agents with legislation, when it is impossible, owing to the lack of inspectorial staff, to obtain the necessary evidence to prosecute those people. It is idle and stupid to lead consumers throughout the State, particularly those in the North and Outback, into believing that they are being protected. They should be told that they will never receive a visit from any departmental officer who is appointed under this Bill. He will be hidden away like the geologists in the Mines Department, who work in a little outhouse near the Botanic Gardens, or, alternatively, he will be secreted like the Director of Air Pollution and not be allowed to leave his office. He will be afraid to say anything in public in case it conflicts with what the Minister has released to the Press through his public relations officer.

Although I should welcome the proposed measure with a great deal of satisfaction, in view of the history of proposals of this nature that have been introduced by this Government, I can only view it with suspicion and anxiety. It will be like other legislation in its lack of teeth due to insufficient regulations or rules. As is so often the case, we will be told that, because the staff of the Crown Law Office is overworked, the rules, regulations and necessary equipment to go with the statute cannot be prepared. Because we are getting to the end of the session and because the Government desires to overcome the adverse publicity of which it is receiving so much at present, proposals are put forward in order to deceive the public. Nothing positive will be done. We know that the rules to prevent fraud and deception should be applied to the Government more than to some of the commercial undertakings in this State.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 6.2 p.m.