Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 OCTOBER 1975

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under the Racing and Betting Act 1954–1974.

Regulations under—

State Transport Act 1960–1972.

Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act 1969.

Traffic Act 1949–1975.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. CORAL-DREDGING IN MORETON BAY

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

(1) What areas of Moreton Bay are subject to coral-dredging leases and what companies hold the leases?

(2) What effect will these leases have on Green, Mud and similar islands?

(3) How close to the foreshores are dredges allowed to operate?

(4) Has any study been made on the effect the dredging will have on the oyster and fish populations?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) Specified areas in Moreton Bay surrounding Mud, St. Helena and Green Islands and off shore of Cleveland and Wellington Point are subject to coral-dredging leases held by Queensland Cement and Lime Co. Ltd. and have been

for some considerable time without detriment to the islands. Dredges may operate in the leased areas surrounding Mud, Green and St. Helena Islands to mean high-tide level or may be excluded for a further 150 ft. seaward should this be deemed necessary. The off-shore areas of Cleveland and Wellington Point may be dredged to within 50 metres of high water mark with this distance increased to 200 metres from low water mark where the foreshores are under the control of the local authority. Comparable studies have been made relative to the effect of dredging on marine populations and the reports are available to my Fisheries Service, which will study any local development. The honourable member for Wynnum has made representations to me relative to coral dredging, following which discussions were initiated with the relevant authorities, and as a result further consultations will take place to ensure that the maximum possible and necessary protective and preventive measures are implemented.

2. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT MANUFACTURE OF FURNITURE AT WACOL PRISON

Mr. K. J. Hooper, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport—

Was an official investigation held into allegations by a prisoner named Leonard Gallagher, a former inmate at Wacol Prison, concerning the manufacture of furniture from Government material at the Wacol Prison carpentry shop for high-ranking prison officials? If so, has the investigation been completed and what were the findings?

Answer:—

I am aware of a Press report which appeared in the "Sunday Sun" of 24 November 1974, when it was alleged that a prisoner named Gallagher claimed that jail workshops and public funds were being used to make furniture and other goods for prison officers. The prisoner was reported to have said further that he had evidence to support his claims of corruption in the prison service and had written to me calling for an inquiry. In actual fact I did receive a letter from the prisoner just prior to the publication of this report in the newspaper, but no reference was made by him in that letter regarding the manufacture of furniture and other goods for prison officers. The letter in question sought assistance from me on matters arising from the prisoner being imprisoned for two years nine months on a charge of "deprivation of liberty". The honourable member might be interested to know that the prisoner pleaded guilty in the District Court to that charge. Referring again to newspaper reports, "The Courier-Mail" on 30 September 1972, in relation to the offence, reported that, "Police realised they had caught somebody less than Humphrey Bogart when their prisoner began to ask them to fix him up with a cocktail of morphine and 'coke' (cocaine)." The newspaper report went on to say—inter alia—

> "Before that, the District Court heard yesterday, Leonard James Gallagher, 31, alias Jimmy Leggo, alias Jimmy Diamond, was talking and acting like a real Hollywood tough guy.
>
> Dressed in sharp, greystriped 'Godfather' suit and wearing sunglasses, Gallagher walked into a pharmacy at Petrie Bight and produced a loaded pistol."

The same newspaper report stated that Gallagher had spent most of his time in gaols since he was 17, mainly for breaking and entering, car stealing and false pretences. The contents of both the newspaper report and the letter written to me by Gallagher were examined, but no evidence was forthcoming to substantiate any of the accusations made. Advice received from the Comptroller-General of Prisons regarding manufacture of items in prison workshops for prison officers indicated that all applications received from members of the staff for work to be done on their behalf in prison workshops are referred to him in the first instance and subsequent to obtaining his approval an order is issued to the workshop concerned for the manufacture of the item. Payment is received from the staff on the basis of the cost of the material involved plus an "on cost" to meet certain overhead expenses. I have already referred to the audit inspector's report on the books and accounts at Wacol Prison in my answer to the honourable member on Friday last, and I would now again indicate to him that the report does not reveal any irregularity regarding the manufacture of items in the carpentry shop.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF MT. GRAVATT SHOWGROUND SITE

Mr. Kaus, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) Is he aware of a proposal to construct a large department store and commercial centre on the area known as the Old Mt. Gravatt Showground?

(2) Is the land appropriately zoned for this purpose or would it have to be rezoned to permit the proposal to proceed?

(3) What will be the effect on traffic movement and density if such a scheme proceeds?

(4) Bearing in mind the history of the land, will this scheme be against the public interest and be an exploitation of the public estate by the Brisbane City Council?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) I am aware of the proposal mentioned by the honourable member. The subject land is included in the Special Uses A Zone under the Brisbane Town Plan presently in force, and I am advised that, under the town plan, the consent of the Brisbane City Council would need to be obtained before the development referred to could take place. I understand that an application for such consent was made to the council, was processed by the council in accordance with the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964–1975 and certain objections were duly lodged. The council subsequently decided to grant the application, advised objectors to that effect and I understand that an appeal to the Local Government Court has been lodged against the council's decision.

(3 and 4) These matters would be ones for consideration by the council when dealing with the application for consent and could be raised in the course of appeal proceedings. Accordingly, I do not feel that it would be appropriate for me to comment thereon.

4. HIGH COURT JUDGMENT ON MILK INDUSTRY

Mr. Gunn, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) As the High Court judgment handed down on 18 October will virtually mean a free flow of milk between Victoria and New South Wales, which will mean a breakdown of the New South Wales Dairy Industry Authority, what effect will this judgment have on the milk industry in this State?

(2) Will it mean that the Brisbane Milk Board will be in a similar position to that of its counterpart in New South Wales?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I regret that I am not as yet in a postion to give an authoritative answer to this question. The High Court judgment to which the honourable member refers is both complex and voluminous and is being examined in detail in regard to its effects, if any, on milk distribution in Queensland.

5. FUNDS FOR BOOM GATES AT RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Mr. Gunn, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

As there has been no variation in the amount of finance set aside for the installation of boom gates at railway crossings during the past 15 years and because of rising costs it necessarily follows that not as many boom gates have been installed over the past couple of years, and as railway crossings which do not have boom gates have been the scene of several fatal accidents recently, will he meet the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads with a view to obtaining a far greater allocation of funds for this purpose?

Answer:—

As suggested by the honourable member, I have discussed this matter with my colleague the Honourable R. J. Hinze, Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, and we are pleased to announce that the annual contribution by the Department of Main Roads and the Department of Railways to the fund for installation of boom gates and/or flashing lights at railway level crossings will be increased to $100,000 each.

6. HOUSING IN CHARLEVILLE

Mr. Turner, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) As the article in "The Sunday Mail" of 26 October claiming that 307 houses are unoccupied in Charleville is completely untrue and misleading and as a survey conducted by the Charleville Chamber of Commerce on 27 October shows no houses for rent and only three unoccupied houses for sale, can he state where the figures in the article were derived from?

(2) Will he completely refute the statement which appeared in "The Sunday Mail"?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I do not know whether this question should have been directed to me or to the Minister for Works and Housing. I can tell the House that the reporter referred to is Jack Lunn, who is regarded by members of the Queensland Press as being a very reliable reporter. I do not know where he got the information about the empty houses. I was surprised when I read the article, and I know that it has caused a good deal of concern. When Lunn telephoned me, all I tried to do was point out to him the perilous financial position of local authorities in some areas of the State. I am not in a position to refute the statements, but I know the Minister for Works and Housing would be. I think that is all I can indicate about it. I repeat that I do know that Jack Lunn is generally regarded as a reliable reporter.

7. WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR FAMILIES OF PROPERTY OWNERS

Mr. Turner, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

Why are members of a property owner's family who work on the property and are on the payroll not covered by workers' compensation the same as any other employee is?

Answer:—

Under section 3 of the Workers' Compensation Act 1916–1973, the term "worker" does not include a member of an employer's family dwelling in his house. Neither compulsory premium nor benefit therefore applies. However, voluntary cover under the Act is available to members of an employer's family living with him, with the same benefits as those that apply to ordinary workers should the person so concerned elect.

8. PROSECUTION OF WHITE-COLLAR LARGE-SCALE CRIMINALS

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Has he seen the report in "The Courier-Mail" of 18 October wherein Sir Richard Eggleston said that because prosecutors found their crimes too complicated, some white-collar criminals who stole millions of dollars were never punished?

(2) Is there a pressing need for a Government legal department staffed by lawyers expert in financial and legal matters?

(3) Does he propose to add to the staff of the Solicitor-General's Department persons expert in these fields?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2 and 3) No. Prosecutions in criminal cases are assigned from within the staff of the Solicitor-General or from the private bar, according to the nature of the trial.

9. JURISDICTION OF SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL OVER LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

In view of the action in the Full Court wherein it was held that the Small Claims Tribunal does not possess jurisdiction over claims arising out of or relating to contracts relevant to the sale of land, does he have any plans to amend the Act to allow such claims up to $700 to be heard by the tribunal?

Answer:—

This matter has been fully considered but it is not proposed to make any further amendments to the Small Claims Tribunals Act at present.

10. PETTIGREW ENGINEERING CO. PTY. LTD.

Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Did he receive a letter from Pettigrew Engineering Co. Pty. Ltd. dated 17 October, wherein the company explained why it had not been able to meet pay-roll tax commitments on time?

(2) Has the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission failed to pay the company moneys owing to it and was it instructed by the Commissioner of Stamp Duties not to pay the outstanding money?

(3) Why has industry in general to wait for the payment of moneys due to it from State Government departments for periods of up to six months or more?

(4) Is the Government in financial difficulties and unable to meet its commitments?

(5) Has the company refused to deal with State Government departments and has it denied its services in water treatment and water pollution control until such time as the Government can prove that it is capable of meeting its commitments?

Answers:—

(1) I did receive a letter from Pettigrew Engineering Co. Pty. Ltd., a copy of which I am aware was widely distributed.

(2) I am advised by senior departmental officers that all progress payments due were made by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission within 21 days in accordance with the terms of its contract with this company. One payment was delayed for approximately one week as a result of the Commissioner of Pay-roll Tax taking action in accordance with the provisions of the Pay-roll Tax Act to collect moneys owing by the company.

(3 and 4) Such comment is so far from the truth as to be absurd and in my mind creates grave doubts about the credibility of anybody making such sweeping and irrational statements.

(5) To my knowledge the company has not been specifically invited to carry out work for the State which it has then refused to do. However, if the company, for any reason, takes a decision not to tender for State Government contracts, then of course it is free to conduct its business in that manner; but I know of no State Government practice which would lead any reasonable business management to adopt such an illogical attitude.

11. HAZARDS FROM INSECURE LOADS OF TRUCKS AND TRAILERS

Dr. Lockwood, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Is he aware that trucks and trailers with insecure loads regularly drop branches, boxes, bottles and bricks on our roads?

(2) Is he also aware that quarry gravel up to 1.5 cm in diameter can be blown from a truck over a 15 cm board when the speed of the truck is above 80 km/h, with damage to windscreens then or after cars pick up this gravel?

(3) Are such vehicles and their loads considered to be road hazards to motorists and windscreens?

(4) Will he take action to have all naturally unstable loads compulsorily secured by ropes, cargo netting or tarpaulins?

Answers:—

(1 to 4) I am aware of the problems and hazards caused by insecure loads and realise that gravel thrown up from the road or bouncing from trucks can cause windscreen damage. I would invite the honourable member's attention to Traffic Regulation 77, and I quote from section (d) of this regulation which provides for the load to be "so arranged, contained, fastened or covered that neither the load nor any part of it will fall or otherwise escape from such vehicle", and which if observed would considerably mitigate the problem. Observance of this particular regulation has also been made a condition of hire licences issued for carrying vehicles. An informative booklet on safety of loads is at present under preparation by a committee representative of unions, industry and government. However, I shall draw the honourable member's concern to the attention of the Honourable the Minister for Police for further action.

12. SAND-MINING LEASES ON FRASER ISLAND

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) When will a proper instrument or deed of lease be granted for mining lease 102 Maryborough, on Fraser Island, where D.M. Minerals are currently conducting sand-mining operations?

(2) Why has he delayed the granting of a deed of lease for mining lease 102, as he issued leases for mining leases 93, 94, 95 and 96 on Fraser Island to Murphyores Incorporated Pty. Ltd. in April 1973?

(3) Will any terms of the memorandum signed by the Under Secretary, Department of Mines, and dated 24 August, 1973, be varied if and when a deed of lease is finally granted for mineral lease 102 and, if so, which clauses?

(4) With respect to clause 19 of the memorandum, mineral lease 102, does "rehabilitation" mean that trees must be established and growing as defined in clause 18d of the same memorandum?

(5) In view of photographic evidence exhibited to the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry that, in violation of clause 24 c iii, water and other substances were being discharged into Second Creek and on the land abutting Second Creek by D.M. Minerals, what action will he take to cancel mineral lease 102 on Fraser Island?

(6) Does the non-payment of lease rentals by 31 December each year, as required by the Mining Act regulations, result in the forfeiture of a lease and require the previous holders of leases to reapply? If so, why were all leases held by Murphyores Inc. Pty. Ltd. on Fraser Island not forfeited when it was more than 12 days late in meeting its rental payments?

Answers:—

(1) This lease was applied for on 4 January 1971, and, after a lengthy hearing, the warden recommended it for approval on 11 June 1971. After consultations with other parties, special conditions were prepared and the lease was granted on 23 August 1973. The instrument of this lease will issue when the survey has been finally accepted.

(2) It was considered that a survey of the area was necessary.

(3) The instrument when issued will contain the conditions detailed in the original grant. Any variations to those conditions will be noted by a subsequent endorsement.

(4) There is no condition 18 (d).

(5) I have not seen the supposed photographic evidence and perhaps the honourable member could forward a copy of the photo or photos to me. The information given to me by my officers is that mine water is not being discharged into Second Creek, and what possibly could appear in a photograph could be the path of the delivery pipeline from Second Creek to the mine and plant which traverses a swamp. On one particular night not long after production commenced, this pipeline burst where it crosses the roadway and scoured out the road before it could be repaired. This water did return to the swamp and the creek but it was only fresh creek water, which had not been through the mining plant.

(6) Rentals on mining leases are payable in advance on or before 31 December of each year. However, it is long-established practice to extend the time for payment up to 31 March with a penalty. Rentals with penalties are usually accepted beyond that date. As has usually been the case with propaganda concerning mining on Fraser Island, the statement by the honourable member is wrong. He should seek a more reliable source for his information in future. All rentals for 1975 on leases held by Murphyores on Fraser Island were paid by 31 December, 1974.

13. QUEENSLAND COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ORGANISATION

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Has the executive of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation placed before him regulations for inclusion in the Fisheries Act before fishermen at branches even get a chance to consider the proposals?

(2) Will the criteria for the holding or renewal of a master fisherman's licence for 1976 be altered before 12 months' notice is given to fishermen?

(3) Will a person presently holding a master fisherman's licence, and whose sole occupation is fishing, be compensated in any way if he is refused renewal of the licence because of new criteria?

(4) Will a person who is at present the holder of a master fisherman's licence, and whose sole occupation is fishing, be refused renewal of a licence because he will not pay the levy or annual per-capita subsidy to the Q.C.F.O. as a result of his dissatisfaction with the operation of the organisation?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) These questions relate to the Fisheries Act and should be addressed to my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries. The administration of the Fisheries Act was transferred to him earlier this year.

14. CONTROL OF SALES BY USED-CAR DEALERS

Mr. Yewdale, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Will he accede to the suggestion of the R.A.C.Q. to pass legislation similar to that in South Australia to control sales by used-car dealers?

(2) Is it a fact that in Queensland there is no onus on a dealer to give details of defects in a vehicle other than those revealed in a roadworthiness test?

(3) Will he urgently undertake a review of the relative legislation with a view to protecting purchasers from unscrupulous dealers who may cover a defect so well that a roadworthiness check will not reveal it?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) This is a matter which comes within the purview of my colleague the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

15. HERVEY BAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Mr. Powell, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Will he give a firm date for the completion of works for the establishment of the industrial estate at Hervey Bay?

(2) How many firms have expressed interest in setting up their operations at Hervey Bay?

Answers:—

(1) Initial estate development covering roadworks, kerbing and channelling, stormwater drainage and water reticulation has now been completed.

(2) Seven inquiries have been received from organisations interested in acquiring sites on the estate. Following completion of Stage 1 development, it is now possible to proceed with site allocations.

16 and 17. COMMONWEALTH ROAD GRANTS

Mr. Powell, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

How much money has the Commonwealth Government granted to the Queensland Government so far this year for use on (a) main highways, (b) arterial roads and (c) rural roads?

Answer:—

Under the National Roads Act and Roads Grants Act for the year 1975-76, together with the additional funds announced in the August Budget, the Commonwealth Government is expected to provide the following amounts for the use indicated:—(a) National highways—$27,650,000. (b) Arterial roads—(1) Urban, $16,280,000; (2) Rural, $10,870,000. (c) Rural roads—(1) Rural local, $15,540,000; (2) Beef roads, $10,610,000. Formal approval has not yet been received from the Commonwealth Minister for Transport to the dissection of the additional funds included in the above amounts. The above figures do not include $2,350,000 for export roads, $2,000,000 for urban local roads and $2,100,000 for minor improvements to traffic engineering and road safety.

Mr. Powell, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

As the Commonwealth Government extracts large amounts of money from motorists in this State, will he approach the Commonwealth Government for some of its vast pool of money to upgrade the roads between (a) Torbanlea and Hervey Bay, (b) Woodgate and Childers, (c) Goodwood and Bundaberg and (d) the airport and the hospital on Takalvan Street, Bundaberg?

Answer:—

As the honourable member would be aware, I tried earlier this year to extract an extra $22,200,000 from the Commonwealth Government just to cover the erosion of this year's allocation due to inflation. Only $13,200,000 was granted. Unfortunately many worthy causes just cannot be contemplated at present owing to the lack of funds. Currently the Main Roads Department has no plans to upgrade any of the sections of road listed, apart from some minor improvements to the Walker Street intersection on the Airport Road in Bundaberg which are listed for attention next financial year.

18. COASTAL LOWLANDS STUDY, ELLIOTT RIVER–BOONOOROO POINT

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Alison**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service—

With reference to the report of the coastal lowlands study by an interdepartmental committee of the area between the Elliott River and Boonooroo Point, which was expected to have been printed by July this year, what proportion of the 76,000 hectares of vacant Crown land in the area of the study would be suitable for softwood plantation and what types of softwood would be most suitable?

Answer:—

The Coastal Lowlands Study is being prepared under the jurisdiction of my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Primary Industries, and the question should therefore be directed to him for attention.

19. AEROPLANE CRASH NEAR CAIRNS

Mr. Tenni, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to the air disaster on 23 October when a Conair 4-engine Heron aircraft crashed whilst approaching the Cairns Airport, costing the lives of 11 people, will he have inquiries made and advise the House why this landing was attempted in a violent storm when the aircraft could have been diverted to Townsville, where I believe the weather was clear?

Answer:—

This is not a matter coming within my jurisdiction, but no doubt it would be taken into consideration in the course of the official investigation by the Commonwealth Department of Transport Air Safety Investigation Branch.

20. SELF-SERVICE REFRESHMENT MACHINES FOR "CAPRICORNIAN"

Mr. Jensen, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Will he give further consideration to the installation of self-service machines for tea and coffee and also pies and sandwiches on the "Capricornian" from Rockhampton to Brisbane, so that passengers may have a hot drink and a bite to eat through the night if they so desire?

Answer:—

The installation of self-serve food dispensers on the "Capricornian" would not seem to be a practical proposition, as I am advised that the movement of the train would affect the operation of the machine. As far as is known, such units are not provided on the trains of any other Australian railway system. However, I am prepared to have the matter investigated further. Refreshments are obtainable from the griddle car after 5.45 a.m. and until 9.30 p.m.

21. COMPLAINTS AGAINST BUILDERS

Dr. Scott-Young, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) What procedures are adopted by the Builders' Registration Board when a complaint is levelled against a builder for using inferior materials on a building?

(2) Is it a common practice for the board to suggest arbitration between the two parties, and, if this eventuates, does the board then consider that it has fulfilled and discharged its duty to the home owner or purchaser?

Answers:—

(1) If investigation by the Builders' Registration Board of Queensland does, in fact, establish in the opinion of the board the use of inferior materials, the board requires the builder to rectify such fault.

(2) No.

22. FAMILY JOY ENTERPRISES

Mr. Glasson, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

With reference to his answer earlier that the Queensland Government would ask the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs to investigate any complaints by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly into fly-by-night building companies operating in Darwin after cyclone "Tracy"—

(1) Is there any evidence of malpractice by Family Joy Enterprises?

(2) Did Family Joy Enterprises cancel a franchise agreement with another company, Seatoun, after allegations of certain irregularities came to light?

(3) Has Family Joy Enterprises been actively co-operating with the Northern Territory police and authorities in this matter?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Family Joy Enterprises Pty. Ltd. is a company which was incorporated in the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs on 20 June 1973. The records held in that office do not contain any evidence of malpractice by this company or the cancellation of a franchise agreement with the company of Seatoun Pty. Ltd., although it is noted that reference to this latter aspect has been reported in the local Press in recent days. I also understand that company officials of Family Joy Enterprises Pty. Ltd. have indicated to the Northern Territory police and authorities that they are willing to assist where possible in any inquiries which might be undertaken.

23. IMPROVEMENT IN RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, CAIRNS

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Further to his answer to my question on 18 September 1974 concerning the purchase of major equipment for a three-phase teleprinter and carrier telephone communications system at Cairns, is he aware that the installation has not yet been undertaken and, if so, what is now the projected date for the operation to commence?

Answer:—

Delivery of the voice frequency telegraph equipment necessary for the teleprinter service is expected in four weeks. Installation work is currently scheduled to commence in December, with commissioning anticipated in the first quarter of 1976.

24. FLASHING LIGHTS ON SCHOOL BUSES

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Has any further action been taken to investigate the proposal originating from the Mulgrave Shire Council to have flashing lights fitted to school buses for simple identification and universal operation, to protect and provide safety on the road for children embarking and disembarking from school buses?

Answer:—

The question of flashing lights for school buses is one of many suggestions which have been made both in correspondence and representations to me and to the Brisbane "Telegraph" newspaper in its school bus safety campaign, which I duly acknowledged by an appropriate news release in April this year and on which I have received strong reresentations from honourable members including the honourable members for Cairns and Mulgrave. The honourable member will no doubt recall my answer to a question from the honourable member for Isis on 6 March 1975. I have had recent discussions with my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Education and it is planned for the Director-General and the Commissioner for Transport to carry the over-all review of the position to finality. So far as flashing lights are concerned, it is already permissible under traffic regulation 46 to use the turning signal lamps as four-way flashers where a vehicle is stationary in a hazardous position.

25. REFLECTORISED NUMBER PLATES FOR CARS

Mr. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) As the R.A.C.Q. has endorsed as a road-safety measure reflectorised number plates for cars, has his department made any decisions on this matter?

(2) Is there any evidence to show that these plates are a safety factor?

(3) What would be the additional costs involved in ensuring that all new number plates were reflectorised?

Answers:—

(1) The department has given full consideration to the use of reflectorised number plates but it has not yet been proven that the benefits gained would justify the additional costs to vehicle owners.

(2) Up to date, no conclusive case has been demonstrated that their use in the Australian Capital Territory has contributed to any reduction in accidents.

(3) It is anticipated that the cost to the motorist of a pair of reflectorised number plates would be of the order of $4.00.

26. PRIORITY ROAD SIGNS

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Further to my question on 10 September 1974, is he aware that "give way" signs are still one of the greatest causes of confusion at intersections, particularly to the motorist who is on the left of the one who is obeying the "give way" sign, as he is endeavouring to give right of way without any indication that he has been given priority because of the "give way" sign?

(2) If no general agreement has yet been reached on a solution for incorporation in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, in the interests of road safety will he legalise in Queensland the use of "rocket signs" and/or "priority road" signs, as is being done in other States?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) The honourable member's question is allied to the major/minor road system concept and I would refer the honourable member to the answer given on 22 April this year to a question by the honourable member for Sandgate. The various questions associated with the problem of intersection control were reviewed by the Australian Transport Advisory Council in August last but have not yet been resolved at national level. Consequently, I am not in a position to add anything further at this juncture to my reply of 22 April.

27. GOLD COAST MOTORAIL EXPRESS

Mr. Casey, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Is he aware of a service known as the Gold Coast Motorail Express, which has been transporting passengers and their cars in special trains from Sydney to Murwillumbah for over two years and which enables Sydney residents to have a holiday at one of Australia's major tourist centres using the comfort and familiarity of their own cars, thus avoiding the long drive to the Gold Coast on high-density roads and cutting down the accident risk?

(2) Is he aware that this service has also been introduced on the Sydney-Melbourne run?

(3) Will he consider the introduction of a similar service from Brisbane to the North Queensland cities of Mackay, Townsville, Mt. Isa and Cairns, to enable southern motorists to see the beauties of North Queensland during their holidays whilst avoiding the long drive either one way or both ways, particularly as the removal of road transport fees will mean that our already inadequate northern roads will become more cluttered with heavy road transports and thus more dangerous to traverse?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Double-deck motor-car carrying wagons similar to those used by the New South Wales Public Transport Commission are not capable of being used within Queensland owing to height restrictions. In this State motor-cars are required to be carried on single-deck wagons, which are not suitable for attachment to the air-conditioned passenger trains. Further, the use of such wagons, which would convey one large or two small motor-cars, is not a satisfactory arrangement. A charge attractive to the customer would be uneconomic to the department, and conversely, an economic charge to this department would be unattractive to the customer. However, as indicated to the honourable member when he raised this matter in the House previously, the suggestion will continue to be examined.

28. RIGHT TO SEARCH SHOPPING BAGS

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Is it a fact, as reported in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 October, that in New South Wales there is no legal right to search shopping bags carried by customers?

(2) Does this same legal situation pertain in Queensland and, if so, is it correct that managements cannot reserve the right to search bags legally?

(3) If they cannot, will he take such measures as are necessary to see that the rights of individuals are not infringed by such signs or similar directives?

(4) What redress does the public have against such intimidation?

Answers:—

(1) I am not able to give any information as to the legal position in New South Wales.

(2 to 4) The questions seek expressions of opinion on questions of law and it is not my function to express any such opinion. The conditions of negotiating transactions are regulated by the parties thereto. Individuals should be guided by their own legal advisers as to their rights and obligations, when, no doubt, the factual situation would be considered in determining the liability or otherwise of any person.

29. REGISTRATION AND INSURANCE OF LOW-POWERED MOTOR-CYCLES

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

As there has been a marked increase in the proportion of cycle vehicles over 100 c.c. since the determination of the regulations and the average lower-powered cycle or scooter now made exceeds 100 c.c., will he rationalise the present anomaly in relation to the registration of the vehicles as the Treasurer is to review the provision of third-party insurance based upon the same facts?

Answer:—

There is a uniform rate for the registration of motor-cycles. This is $7 per cycle irrespective of the horse-power. It is not proposed to make any change in the near future.

30. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Is he aware of the statement in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 October by Mr. T. W. Chard, a former Building Workers' Industrial Union State Secretary, that trade opportunities this year for school leavers would be the worst ever?

(2) In view of the concern already expressed not only by Mr. Chard but also by parents and future school leavers themselves, what are the causes of this dearth and what measures does he propose to take to alleviate such probable difficulties?

Answers:—

(1) I read the statement referred to by the honourable member.

(2) This dearth of opportunities for apprentices is directly related to the policies which have been initiated by the Federal Government since December 1972. These policies have created such havoc in all sectors of private enterprise, which employs approximately 90 per cent of apprentices and which is obliged under the Australian apprenticeship system to provide not only wages but all facilities for the on-the-job training of apprentices from its own resources, and consequently I am amazed at the Labor Party promoting and implementing such policies without having due regard to the effect that these policies would have in reducing apprenticeship opportunities for young persons. Arrangements are being made and will continue to be made by the State Apprenticeship Executive to endeavour to demonstrate to employers that they should, in their own interests as well as in the interests of the community in general, continue to employ apprentices. I and the officers under my control will continue to place before employers how it is in their own interests to employ as many apprentices as possible. The financial assistance to employers presently being provided by the Commonwealth Government in this regard is also explained to employers in the hope that this will also assist in encouraging employers to employ the maximum number of apprentices. In addition, at a recent meeting of Commonwealth and State Ministers for Labour and Labour Relations I drew attention to the present inequitable financial treatment by the Commonwealth Government of those undergoing apprenticeship training as compared with those undergoing tertiary training. All Ministers acknowledged this situation and the Commonwealth Minister for Labor and Immigration, Senator James McClelland, promised to keep this matter closely in mind when consideration is being given to the preparation of future Commonwealth Budgets. Another aspect which I also pressed at the meeting of Ministers was that the subsidies payable to employers on account of first-year apprentices will not be of full benefit or assistance to employers while the Commonwealth Government continues to tax such allowances and consider them as part of income. The extension of the allowances being paid to employers in regard to first-year apprentices to the employers of at least second-year apprentices has also been advocated by me. I intend to continue pressing for favourable consideration to be given by the Commonwealth Government to those three aspects, which I feel would assist considerably in encouraging employers to indenture the maximum number of apprentices.

31. MEANS TEST FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR GRADES 11 AND 12

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) With reference to the new scheme for 500 scholarships to be awarded in each year for grades 11 and 12, have the application forms been devised yet and will he ensure that the forms are distributed at the earliest possible time to all students wishing to be considered?

(2) As the awarding of such a scholarship will certainly be the deciding factor and parents will want to plan accordingly, has he determined the criteria for the means test and, if so, what are they?

Answers:—

(1) (a) The design of the application form will be completed by the end of the week. (b) Yes. Forms will be available at the earliest possible time to all students wishing to be considered for the scholarship. This will be done through schools and the Secondary Correspondence School.

(2) The means test will operate on a sliding scale commencing at an annual family income of $5,000, with adjustments for each $100 received in excess of that amount. However, the criteria for the awarding of a scholarship go beyond the means test alone. To be eligible, the student must firstly qualify for the remote area allowance. Two factors will then be considered in awarding scholarships—(a) Academic performance based on six subjects at grade 10 level; and (b) The means test.

32. HAZARD FROM ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

Mr. Doumany, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to an accident in Sydney last week involving the shattering of a radioactive glass-thickness measuring-device in the home of a consultant engineer,

will he ensure that adequate safety precautions exist in Queensland in respect of such hazards to the community?

Answer:—

The possession and use of radioactive substances are controlled in Queensland by the Radioactive Substances Act of 1958. This Act requires that all persons who have in possession or use radioactive substances shall hold a licence under the Act. Such licences are only granted on the recommendations of the Radiological Advisory Council of Queensland, which is composed of people well versed in the use of radioactive substances. The regulations under the Act lay down procedures to be followed for the safe use of radioactive substances. The technical administration of the Act and regulations is undertaken by the Radiation Health Physics Section of the Department of Health. This group is staffed by experts in radiation health methods and is equipped to handle any foreseeable accident with radioactive substances. The staff of the Radiation Health Physics Section make inspections of facilities and working methods of licensees and the containment of the radioactive sources to ensure adequate safety precautions are being undertaken to limit the exposure of the user of the device and to prevent release of radioactive material into the environment.

33. FIRE HAZARDS OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Mr. Doumany, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

In view of a recent report by the N.S.W. State Emergency Services Organisation regarding the greatly increased fire hazards and risk of fatality resulting from the use of plastics and other synthetic construction and furnishing materials in city buildings, will he investigate this matter thoroughly and take steps to ensure adequate protection of property and lives in Queensland?

Answer:—

It is recognised that cellular plastics are a fire hazard, and the general rule under the Factories and Shops Act classifies the substance in the high-hazard category. Two years ago the State Fire Services Council issued advice to fire brigade boards so that their officers would be aware of the problem and be in a position to give necessary fire-prevention advice, and recommended precautions to both commercial undertakings and the public. The council is keeping in touch with overseas sources in relation to a proposed code of practice for the storage and use of such material. The Press report concerning this matter also refers to the use of plastics and other synthetic materials in the construction of buildings. This is a matter which will be controlled by the Building Act 1975, and in the meantime it is a matter which is subject to control by the various local authority by-laws.

34. UNCLAIMED T.A.B. DIVIDENDS

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

What is the total of unclaimed dividends for each year of the operation of the T.A.B.?

Answer:—

The information is readily available to the honourable member by reference to the annual reports of the Totalisator Administration Board.

35. L. N. SPORK PTY. LTD. AND SPORK MANUFACTURING PTY. LTD.

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Is there any connection between a company known as L. N. Spork Pty. Ltd., and a new company called Spork Manufacturing Pty. Ltd.? If so, what is the connection and who are the principals and major shareholders of each?

(2) What is the paid-up capital of each company?

(3) What is the present position with regard to each company?

Answers:—

(1) Yes. The directors of L. N. Spork Pty. Ltd. are—Leo Neville Spork, Maxwell Edmund Hocking, and Michael John Venes. The directors of Spork Manufacturing Pty. Ltd. are the foregoing together with Beth Marea Spork. The records held in the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs indicate that Messrs. Hocking and Venes hold 51 per cent of the share capital, and Mr. Spork and Ms. Spork 49 per cent.

(2) L. N. Spork Pty. Ltd. paid up capital is $20,000. Spork Manufacturing Pty. Ltd.—return of allotment of shares has not, as yet, been lodged in the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

(3) L. N. Spork Pty. Ltd. has been placed in liquidation by order of the Supreme Court. Spork Manufacturing Pty. Ltd. was incorporated in Queensland on 16 January 1975.

36. FREEHOLDING OF LAND BY MR. G. STEVENS

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Did he have a letter sent to Mr. George Stevens giving him permission to freehold an area of leasehold land at

Cape Palmerston on the proviso that he grant a portion of the site as a national park?

(2) Is Mr. Stevens in a financial position to freehold land and what is the value and area of the land concerned?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) My department has no record of any letter being received or sent to Mr. Stevens relating to the freeholding of land at Cape Palmerston. As the land in this vicinity is not within a mining field, there would not appear to be any reason why I should be involved.

37. ABORIGINES IN BIRLEY STREET-SPRING HILL AREA

Mr. Lowes, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) Have the police authorities a tolerant and hands-off policy towards the unruly and troublesome Aborigines in the Birley Street-Spring Hill area?

(2) If not, will he assure this House and all law-abiding residents of Brisbane that every effort will be made to put down the unlawful behaviour so that they may go about their affairs and live in peace and safety?

Answers:—

(1) No. Police are instructed to use restraint in their dealings with the public, irrespective of their race, colour or creed, particularly in instances where lack of such restraint could lead to open violence between the police and the public or sections of it. This of course does not mean that police are not to prosecute in cases where evidence of an offence is available. Prosecution action is not restricted to arrest but is also by way of complaint and summons.

(2) Yes.

38. COAL MINING SAFETY COUNCIL

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) Has he seen the newspaper report that the General Manager of Thiess Bros. Mining called for the establishment of a new Coal Mining Safety Council?

(2) Has his department ever decided whether it will establish such a council?

(3) Is the present situation of the coal-mining inspectorate causing difficulty in the services it should be performing and have there ever been submissions to him requesting reappraisal of the role of mine inspector?

(4) Has he ever been asked to support an urgent review of the study for the formation of a new Coal Mining Safety Council and, if so, what reply was given to the submission?

Answers:—

(1) I have seen such a report.

(2) No such decision has been reached.

(3 and 4) Verbal submissions have been made to me and this proposal is being examined.

39. CAPE YORK PENINSULA CONSERVATION

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service—

Has the Queensland Government received a request to support a joint-Government inquiry into the conservation needs of Cape York Peninsula and has it agreed to support the proposal? If so, when can we expect an announcement by the joint inquiry?

Answer:—

Yes. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is studying the area and the need for such inquiry. Obviously no announcement can be expected until the service's findings are completed.

40. NUISANCE FROM USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ON SUNSHINE COAST

Mr. Ahern, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

In view of the increased use of drugs amongst certain elements of the Sunshine Coast and in particular the use of drugs in association with alcohol, which has created problems of law enforcement in the hotels and noise problems late at night, causing considerable discomfort to law-abiding citizens, will he consider allocating more police at problem times, particularly week-ends, to assist local police officers with enforcement, particularly at Maroochydore and Caloundra?

Answer:—

An increase in the strength of the Police Force has been approved for over-all requirements throughout the State. Resources are allocated according to workloads and other factors. Additional staffing for the Sunshine Coast area, when personnel are recruited and trained, is being considered in that context. In the meantime, the honourable member may be assured that constant attention by local police will continue and this will be augmented by attention by personnel of the Drug Squad from Brisbane as occasion warrants.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DISCONTENT IN QUEENSLAND POLICE FORCE

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Police: Is he aware of the staggering amount of discontent that has arisen in the Police Force as the result of a recent decision in relation to their wages, in that police received a wage increase of about 5 per cent and lost

a similar percentage through a reduction in their week-end penalty rates? As the Minister is endeavouring to increase the strength of the Police Force at present, and as policemen are now taking home less money than they did before, what steps can he take to overcome this very depressing problem?

Mr. HODGES: Matters of wages and industrial conditions are left to the Industrial Commission.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN BY YELLOW CABS QLD. PTY. LTD.

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs: Is he aware that Yellow Cabs Qld. Pty. Ltd. are, I think from 1 November, going to implement a rule that will make it impossible for women drivers to work after 8 p.m.? They will not be able to take a call after 7 p.m. Are we a party to International Labour Organisation conventions on discrimination because of sex or race? If we are, is not this decision by Yellow Cabs Qld. Pty. Ltd. which will virtually force these women out of a job a breach of that rule?

Mr. CAMPBELL: For what it is worth this Government has ratified most International Labour Organisation conventions. In most cases, this is purely a matter of form on the part of Governments and most Governments of the world which have ratified I.L.O. conventions ignore them. When the last I.L.O. conference voted to admit the Palestine Liberation Organisation, United States representatives of employers and employees walked out of the conference. I understand that the United States Government, which provides 25 per cent of the funds for the I.L.O., says that it will withdraw its support if the motion is not rescinded within two years. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition has tried to tie in with the conventions of the I.L.O. what is quite a difficult social problem, that is, the security of women in the work-force who are engaged in the fairly hazardous occupation of driving a taxi-cab at night. I am surprised also that the Leader of the Opposition has raised the question from the point of view of discrimination. His action indicates to me that he is completely out of touch with social conditions.

ALLEGED Q.U.F. INDUSTRIES LTD. MONOPOLY OF BRISBANE MILK MARKET

Mr. GUNN: I preface a question to the Minister for Primary Industries by saying that on 28 October the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Burns) attacked Q.U.F. Industries Ltd. in relation to the Brisbane Milk Market. He accused Q.U.F. of monopolising the market, treating its vendors like dirt and making an "extra quid" from producers during the Brisbane flood. I now ask: In view of the seriousness of the allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition, will he comment on them?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The accusations were so wide of the mark that, quite frankly, I regard them as being somewhat absurd. The hierarchy of Q.U.F.—Mr. Biggs, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Miles—are all well, and I should say very favourably, known to me, and I believe they are all men of very high repute. It is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition elected, under parliamentary privilege, to make such an attack on them.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have told honourable members before that interjections will not be permitted when a Minister is answering a question. I will not tolerate interjections, and I ask all honourable members to obey the rules of the House.

Mr. SULLIVAN: By a strange coincidence, the original licence to develop the orderly marketing and distribution of milk in Brisbane was given to Q.U.F. by a Labor Government. Since then, the company has spent $9,000,000 in developing its service. The accusation that the company robbed housewives and vendors during the floods is completely without foundation. No complaints of this have been received in my department. It is easy to make such accusations. However, I remind the House that services do get out of control in time of flood, and my department requested and allowed farmers to bring milk to the Brisbane area so that people who would not normally have been able to obtain milk under flood conditions would receive supplies.

As to the honourable gentleman's reference to Beaudesert—the milk factory at Beaudesert is at present installing its own pasteurisation plant.

It seems that the Opposition takes great delight in condemning any business that has grown because of its own efforts and wise investment of finance. In my eyes, the Leader of the Opposition cannot condemn men such as Ernie Biggs, Lew Smith and Cliff Miles, all of whom are of high repute. I think it is damned disgraceful that the honourable gentleman spoke in the way he did.

REMOVAL OF DEAD ANIMALS FROM ROADS

Mr. GUNN: I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. With the increased traffic on highways and main roads, there has been an increase in the death of pet animals. In some areas road patrols remove the dead animals quickly, but I have noticed that that does not always apply along roads leading to Brisbane. Recently I noticed the bodies of several small animals in a decomposed state. In view of the distress this causes to motorists, plus the health hazard it poses to houses in the area, I ask the Minister if he will instruct patrols to remove dead animals as soon as possible?

Mr. HINZE: Yes.

COVER OF BRISBANE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Mr. LANE: I ask the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services: Has he been supplied with the 1975-76 issue of the Brisbane telephone directory, which no longer bears on the cover the usual brightly-coloured photograph of a Queensland scene? The new directory is now covered in what could well be described as good old socialist grey. I also ask the Minister whether in the past he saw some promotional advantages for tourism in the picturesque covers that were used and whether his public relations staff will co-operate with the Federal Government by supplying a suitable photograph of a Queensland scene for next year's directory?

Mr. NEWBERY: I have seen the cover of the new Brisbane telephone directory. It is a drab grey. It has some aspects of the dullness of the socialist Government that issued it. It is something like what one would expect to see in a Moscow post office. My department has appreciated past covers which depicted some aspects of the Queensland life scene. I can assure the honourable member that it would give me great pleasure to supply a photograph depicting some aspect of life in Queensland for the next Brisbane telephone directory.

ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICERS, TOWNSVILLE

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I ask the Minister for Police: Will he inform the House whether a special police squad known as "Murphy's Marauders" was sent to Townsville to clean up problems associated with alcoholic excesses among certain groups in the community of that city? If so, will he ensure that the Police Force is rationalised in a balanced manner so that each police district will be given men of sufficient number and quality to carry out their own designated duties?

Mr. HODGES: Additional police were sent to Townsville recently, at the request of the local authority. The council asked that attention be given by the police to the desecration of Anzac Park on The Strand and certain memorials in the park. Because of the manner in which this very valuable asset had been treated, the local citizens were unable to utilise it. It was necessary to remove from the park those citizens who were causing this desecration.

Mr. Lane: Were they Aborigines?

Mr. HODGES: They were citizens of Townsville and, therefore, citizens of Queensland. They had desecrated the park to a tremendous extent. Reinforcements were sent to Townsville to assist the local police to cope with the situation that had arisen. As the honourable member would realise, the Budget provides for an increase in the Police Force, and as new recruits are trained Townsville will receive its fair allocation of police officers.

VIABILITY OF COAL-MINING PROJECTS

Mr. AHERN: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: As tradesmen's assistants working on the Sydney-Moomba pipeline are being paid wages well in excess of $500 a week, and in the light of the Federal Government's attitude towards excessive wage demands, does he believe that this country is pricing itself out of world markets? Further, as Australia has become one of the leaders in the world inflation stakes, does he consider that major coal-mining projects, such as those at Hail Creek and Nebo, are still economically viable?

Mr. CAMM: Naturally the scale of wages will play an important part in the economic assessment of the development of any new mining project. However, the main deterrent to the development of coal-fields in the northern end of the Bowen Basin has been the withholding by the Federal Government of export permits and permission to open mines, for the reason, as claimed by it, that the projects do not have sufficient Australian equity. The Federal Government's hatred of any money that comes from overseas is quite apparent. As we know, the Federal Government imposed a tax of $6 a tonne on the export of coal from that area. So recently it relaxed these other impositions somewhat in order that it might reap some of the harvest, some of the profitability, from these undertakings. The export tax of $6 a tonne would act as a greater deterrent to the development of these coal-fields than would the wage structure of any particular undertaking.

DISCLOSURE OF CONTENTS OF FEDERAL BUDGET BY FEDERAL TREASURER

Mr. McKECHNIE: I ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer: As the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, broke the convention of Budget secrecy by discussing the contents of the Federal Budget with Mr. Hawke, who is a director of several business interests, including Burke's store, will he inform the House why he continues to follow the commendable and common-sense practice of keeping the details of the State Budget a secret from outside interests until it is presented to Parliament?

Sir GORDON CHALK: I was somewhat amazed on Monday evening last, when I had a few moments to watch television, to hear Mr. Hayden's comments on the release of his Budget prior to its presentation to Federal Parliament. The majority of the people of Australia certainly reacted with indignation to the release of this document to Mr. Hawke. I believe that the practice at all political levels, in all parts of Australia (and for that matter, I should say, in other parts of the world) has always been to keep the Treasurer's Financial Statement, when it is finally cast—the financial Budget for

the Commonwealth or a State—a highly secret document, the contents of which are known to only a very small group of people.

In preparing a Budget it is necessary to have the assistance and co-operation of the executive heads of all Government departments. Firstly, they are asked to provide the figures relevant to the year just completed and indicate the requirements of the departments if they were to continue as is. In other words, they are expected to take into consideration the rise in wages and costs generally in the period to which the previous Budget figures applied, and give the anticipated figure for the coming year. When all the figures are supplied, they then come within the ambit of the Treasurer of the State or Commonwealth. He, in turn, with his top officers, collates them and arrives at a total. To that stage there is no major degree of secrecy. Having arrived at an indication of the requirements for the coming year and having knowledge (which a Treasurer must possess) of the Government's policy concerning either increases or decreases in taxation (as was the case in this State with succession duty), the Treasurer has a responsibility to go to his Cabinet and indicate the difference between that which will be received and that which will be required. Cabinet then indicates what the end result might be—in other words, what is desired.

Because of my 10 years' experience as Treasurer, I can speak for the Queensland Cabinet about what happens after that. It is left to the Treasurer to make the final casting. As it is left to the Treasurer for final casting, what is done is known only to the Treasurer and certain officers, who are, of course, sworn to secrecy. They take an oath of secrecy covering that period.

It is hard to believe that the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia, having received the completed document, would hand it to Mr. Hawke several hours before it was to be delivered. Mr. Hawke is not an officer of a Commonwealth department and he is not a man who, I believe, would be sworn to an oath of secrecy on that document. I am not doubting his integrity or honesty but, on the other hand, I do not believe that he is in any way entitled to have such a document in his hands.

In the State of Queensland, we will continue to maintain the high degree of secrecy that we have had in the past. Even my closest Cabinet colleagues know very little of the actual final result until it is presented to Parliament. In Queensland it is the practice to have a meeting of Ministers and Government members at 1.30 p.m. They are then given a briefing of what will be voiced at 2.15 p.m. when the Budget is presented.

Mr. Burns: It is still the same thing.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that Government members are not presented with the document. They are told just as much as the Treasurer is prepared to tell them before the presentation of the document. They do know certain things but not the actual figures.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—ESTIMATES—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1975-76

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MAIN ROADS

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government and Main Roads) (12.1 p.m.): It is my pleasure to move—

"That $2,992,955 be granted for 'Department of Local Government'."

This is my first detailed review of the activities of my Departments of Local Government and Main Roads, and it comes at the end of my first year in the ministry.

I will deal with the activities of the Local Government Department first. I believe I could accurately, and with some pride, describe this as a year of considerable achievement, despite the trying financial times which have confronted us. I could even say that this development has taken place in spite of our friends in Canberra rather than with their assistance. The past year certainly has been a busy year of varied activity and involvement for the Local Government Department—a year of added responsibilities, new initiatives in some fields and consolidation in others, but progress over all.

A look at the Acts administered and functions performed gives some idea of the complexity of the department and the multi-purpose nature and growing community involvement of local government in Queensland. For the scrutiny of members, I shall table a list of Acts administered and departmental functions.

The Acts include—

The Brisbane City Council Business and Procedure Act

The Brisbane Tramways Act

The Building Act

The City of Brisbane Act

The City of Brisbane Town Planning Act

The City of Brisbane Flood Mitigation Works Approval Act

The Clean Air Act

The Clean Waters Act

The Litter Act

The Local Government Act

The Local Government Superannuation Act

The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act

The National Trust of Queensland Act

The Public Entertainment (Licensing) Act

The Sewerage Water Supply and Gas-fitting Act

The Somerset Dam Catchment Area Declaratory Act

The Townsville City Council (Sale of Land) Act.

On the functions side, the department administers those Acts and exercises statutory and administrative controls over local authorities; maintains advisory services to local authorities, other departments and the public on matters relating to local government; exercises water quality and air pollution control through the Water Quality Council and the Air Pollution Council; administers and directs building controls; exercises technical controls and advisory services, including technical assistance in design, construction, maintenance and operation for local authorities and other departments in such fields as town planning, water supply, sewerage, drainage, flood mitigation and swimming pools. The department is involved also in the administration and co-ordination of certain Commonwealth programmes in Queensland and with the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

The appropriation of $2,992,955 sought for the Local Government Department for this financial year compares with the appropriation of $2,016,297 for last financial year and actual spending of $2,265,585. It will be apparent to most members of this Committee that the Local Government Department—and local government generally—have considerable and increasing responibilities on matters of the environment, through involvement in such fields as land-use planning, air pollution and water pollution control, litter controls, water supply, sewerage, drainage and flood mitigation.

During the year, responsibility for the Clean Air Act transferred from the Ministry of Health to my Local Government portfolio, bringing responsibility for all controls on day-to-day community environmental problems (water and air pollution, litter, and soon noise) under the one roof, so to speak.

With environmental factors and proper planning today assuming more importance than ever before, town-planning has become an increasingly vital and busy role for the department, through the town-planning section set up 3½ years ago. It will be appreciated that the influence of town-planning cuts across so much that is a part of good local government. The department's new initiatives include moves to regionalisation in the fields of air and water pollution supervision and controls, new uniform local authority building standards, and wide-ranging amendments to the Local Government Act covering such matters as electoral procedures, pedestrian malls, minimum general rating and provision for essential services in the consideration of proposed rezonings.

The administrative and punitive provisions of the Clean Waters Act, the Clean Air Act and the Litter Act are presently under review. The review is aimed at giving the legislation more teeth, and making it more workable and more effective.

I have also previously indicated that I propose to present draft legislation to Cabinet soon on noise pollution controls, and I propose to introduce the legislation in the March session next year. Current controls on noise are confined largely to the by-laws of local authorities. Of course, as noise is essentially a localised problem, local authorities will continue to play a key role in the controls and other measures envisaged under the new legislation.

Another important move in which the department was heavily involved during the year was the proposal to form the Moreton Regional Water Authority. Its role primarily will be to control urban water supply within the Moreton region through authority to build and operate dams, and to supply water in bulk to local authorities in the region. The proposed Wivenhoe Dam will be the authority's first major undertaking.

The year has been marked by continuing financial problems for local government generally—even what might be termed crises, in some areas. It is of considerable concern to me that the financial future for the third tier of government continues to be clouded by uncertainty. Many problems and prospects remain unresolved and unfulfilled. Inflation and the resultant escalation of costs, and associated factors such as high interest rates, have added tremendously to the cost of many local government projects and aggravated the usual financial problems.

In areas dependent largely on the state of the beef industry, the problems have been compounded still further by the general slump in markets and prices, which has added seriously to the rates arrears problem of many councils. All Ministers of Local Government, in all Australian States and New Zealand, soon will receive the first report and recommendations on local government financing from a special committee set up at a conference in New Zealand, at which I had the honour of representing Queensland.

The Queensland Government has acted during the year to help ease the problems of local authorities, especially those in areas affected by the downturn in the beef industry. It has deferred payment of stock assessments, land rents and freehold investments, suspended road permit fees on the transport of cattle and sheep, approved low-interest loans to graziers for carry-on finance and to enable them to pay rates, and distributed grants totalling $5,000,000 weighted in favour of the depressed rural areas, and

decided on a formula involving area, population and general rate revenue. While local authorities in the major urban areas certainly have problems in common with the community at large, their revenue base is wider and they have drawn the most support from the Commonwealth Government.

Bills to amend the Local Government Act have been presented at almost every parliamentary session in recent years and these amendments reflect the need to continually update local government law in the light of changing circumstances.

Another important function of the department's administration branch is the processing and recording of all local authority by-laws, and dealing with matters related to them. Shortages of staff have presented problems, but the number of general sets of by-laws on hand has been considerably reduced over the past 12 months and it is anticipated that three general sets of by-laws will be submitted to the Governor in Council this financial year. The department meets the cost of printing sets of by-laws, and therefore the number of sets which can be approved and printed in the one financial year is limited by the availability of funds for this purpose. It is quite an expensive business.

The department's research section, established in 1974 to analyse and prepare information on local government finances, has an important role in future planning considerations. The section currently is involved in computerisation of statistics for the benefit of local authorities and departments. The department advises the Treasury on local authorities' financial ability to raise loans, and an important function of the research section is to examine the economic capacity of various local authorities.

The department's Town Water Supply and Sewerage Branch has been very active during the past year in all aspects from design and planning to construction of city, town and shire water supplies, sewerage, septic systems, swimming pools, stormwater and agricultural drainage, flood mitigation and the like. The branch also acts as adviser to the Treasury, to other Government departments and institutions, and to local authorities. The branch's design section has been heavily involved with other departments and specialist consultants in the North Pine Dam catchment study, which is now nearing completion. This study is looking at land use over all in the catchment area, to define activities which can be tolerated while maintaining reasonable water storage, methods of treating water of different quality from the storage, controls on land use in the catchment, and benefits and costs to the community as a result of these controls. The section has become increasingly involved in the investigation and review of flood mitigation schemes—most notably, in recent months, for the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas.

On the sewerage side, new schemes attracting State finance have come into operation during the year at Ayr, Brandon, Tin Can Bay, Dysart, Lowood and Kallangur, and new schemes have been started in Charters Towers, Pittsworth, Canungra, Camira and Kingston. Master drainage plans have been examined for such centres as Bowen, Roma and the Gold Coast, and the Douglas, Landsborough, Thuringowa and Redland Shires, while working documents have been reviewed for work in most cities and towns in the State. Special or major projects involving the department during the year have included:—

The Moreton regional growth strategy investigation, in conjunction with the co-ordinator General's Department and the Cities Commission;

The Gold Coast sewage disposal study, in conjunction with the Co-ordinator General's Department and the Federal Department of Urban and Regional Development;

Sewerage backlog works (through D.U.R.D.) to the value of $12,040,000;

The North Pine Catchment Land Use Study; and

Construction of the Advancetown Dam in the Gold Coast hinterland.

Work on major augmentation of the Gold Coast water supply, through construction of the Advancetown Dam, intake works and a pipeline to the existing treatment works will be completed during 1975-76. Work on major augmentation of Gladstone's water supply should begin during that year also.

A look at local authorities' loan-subsidy programmes for 1974-75, and for this financial year, gives some indication of the extensive involvement of the department in major service projects. Last financial year, local authorities' approved loan-subsidy programmes totalled $49,000,000, including $18,800,000 for water supply works, $25,400,000 for sewerage works, $3,600,000 for drainage works, $1,030,000 for swimming pools and $130,000 for septic tanks.

Approved sewerage backlog works totalled just over $11,000,000. This financial year, the approved loan-subsidy programme totals $72,300,000 and involves $37,300,000 for water schemes, $30,000,000 for sewerage schemes, $3,000,000 for drainage works, $1,600,000 for swimming pools, $130,000 for septic tanks and $150,000 for flood mitigation. Sewerage backlog approvals total $13,200,000.

The Water Quality Council of Queensland, set up in March 1973, has met on 32 occasions and up to 30 June this year there have been 508 applications for licences under the Clean Waters Act. I think everybody who travels around Brisbane would have to agree with me that the Brisbane River at last is starting to look like a river.

Mr. Jensen: You can even catch a fish in it now, they tell me.

Mr. HINZE: Yes, and that is quite a change. I am told that fish are moving up the river now thanks to the activities of the Director of Water Quality, Mr. Leon Henry. As I said, at least it now looks like a river.

Of the 508 applicants, 300 have been granted licences subject to conditions aimed at preventing water pollution, 18 refused, and the remainder have either lapsed or are still being investigated. Water quality measurements are made at 637 stations in 88 waters in various parts of the State. Provision has been made for additional staff and it is hoped that laboratory facilities will be improved soon so the extent of monitoring water and effluents can be expanded.

The establishment of divisional offices and staff in Townsville should materially improve the monitoring of water pollution, and the supervision of anti-pollution controls, in northern areas of the State. There appears to be some cases where sewage effluent could be used for industrial purposes, and these are being investigated. Several industries already are recycling part of their wastes to reduce the quantity to be disposed of—and sometimes to avoid the cost of treatment.

On the air pollution side, additional staff have been approved and are proposed for the department's Division of Air Pollution Control. The proposed appointment of an engineer to Townsville is the first move towards regionalisation of the division's staff, and it is intended that this will be followed by the appointment of an inspector to Townsville and an engineer and inspector to Gladstone.

With the transfer of responsibility for the Clean Air Act to the Local Government Ministry, the Air Pollution Control Division has become closely involved in the examination of new town plans and review of current plans. The objective of this is to ensure, by a combination of judicious industry siting and other means such as buffer zones and emission controls, that the detrimental community effects of industrialisation are kept to a minimum.

The need for such co-ordinated planning is very well illustrated by the current position and pollution problems in two long-established highly industrialised areas of Brisbane—the Murrarie-Hemmant-Tingalpa area, which is represented by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Darra area. Both areas have air pollution problems which not even the best technology can eliminate completely, and this situation has been brought about largely by short-sighted and inadequate planning in the past. Regrettably, in recent years increased housing development adjacent to these industrial zones has added to the conflict between industry and residential interests.

The motor car also is a major air polluter, of course, and the problem is being tackled Australia wide (and overseas) by such measures as the compulsory fitting of increasingly stringent emission control devices on new vehicles.

Monitoring stations such as the one recently opened by me in Fortitude Valley in Brisbane—the biggest yet established by the Air Pollution Division—will help us to gauge how successful these measures are, or what other measures might be necessary. This monitoring is being undertaken not only in situations of heavy traffic density but also in industrial areas, and even in residential areas.

All round, there is greatly increased community awareness today of environmental pollution, and the litter nuisance, too, comes into this category. Recently, I have initiated a State-wide anti-litter campaign, and I am currently considering substantially increased on-the-spot penalties for litter offences, along with other measures, to induce litterbugs to "kick the habit".

The Local Government Department has adopted a much more active role in the field of town planning, and I am pleased to report that local authorities throughout the State are more and more beginning to realise the value of proper town planning. This trend has been influenced very largely by heavy pressure exerted on local authorities by land developers in the boom period of a few years ago, an increasing awareness of the value of environmental protections, and proposals for new towns to cater for specific types of industrial development.

The department has played a very active role in encouraging town-planning. The State Government has helped significantly, also, through increasing subsidies for the preparation of plans from 20 per cent to 30 per cent in the case of plans covering part of a local authority area, and to 40 per cent in the case of plans for total areas.

Town-planning is naturally a local authority responsibility because it is so closely allied with other basic local government functions, such as the provision of roads, water and sewerage services and drainage. Of the 131 local authorities in Queensland (including the city of Brisbane), 74 had statutory town-planning schemes in force as at 1 July 1975. This included 15 schemes for cities (including Brisbane), four for towns, and 55 for shires or parts of shires.

Every city and town council in Queensland now has a statutory town-planning scheme in force, and at present a further 73 town-planning schemes are being prepared. Thirty-two of these are for whole shire or balance areas. Five town-planning schemes currently are with the department for final review, 22 draft schemes are with the department for preliminary review prior to their being placed on public exhibition, and six currently are open for public exhibition and public objection. These include revised schemes for the cities of Bundaberg, Mackay and Townsville.

You will recall, Mr. Hewitt, that the Local Government Act has been amended to provide that local authorities may require an environmental impact study for proposals of major importance. The Town Planning Branch has prepared guide-lines on this for the benefit of local authorities.

The department also has encouraged the preparation of policy plans to accompany statutory town-planning schemes to provide a more rational basis for future development in relation to the provision of services and the protection of the environment.

The Town Planning Branch currently is undertaking the onerous final review of Brisbane's proposed new town plan and the 29,437 objections lodged in relation to it.

The new State Building Bill, which I referred to earlier, is a very important piece of legislation. By providing uniformity in building standards following metrication of the building industry, it will benefit not only the building industry and its suppliers but also local authorities and the community generally.

Because of the multiplicity of building regulations there has been considerably overlapping and conflict between standards—even in neighbouring areas in some cases—to the detriment and annoyance of everyone. This also has helped to keep building costs higher than they need be The new regulations should result in many economies in building, especially construction involving companies operating interstate.

At present there are some 131 varying building codes in use throughout Queensland. The new regulations will set uniform standards on such things as building types and designs, types of material suitable for specific buildings, standards required for multi-storey construction, and stress factors in acknowledged high-wind areas (such as the northern cyclone belt).

The Queensland standards are patterned on a recommended national code which emerged from an exhaustive study initiated in 1964 from a conference of State Ministers of Local Government. This code, with minor variations to allow for specific or unique problems or conditions, has now been adopted by almost all States.

The Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board continues to function in its important role of exercising controls (including licensing) of these activities, which are closely tied up with the public health aspects of local government.

The National Trust of Queensland has again had a busy year; indeed, its 12th annual report recently released and given extensive publicity points to a record year in activity and achievement. The trust now has eight branches throughout the State, and there are moves to form new branches in other areas, too.

I turn now to the other string to my ministerial bow—the Department of Main Roads. And here again, it has been a year of considerable achievement, notwithstanding the enormous pressures and demands which have been placed on available resources (financial and otherwise). I took over responsibility for the Main Roads Department in December last year from my friend and colleague Mr. Ron Camm, and I would like to place on record here the tremendous job which he did for the State in the office of Minister for Mines and Main Roads over a record period. It will be recalled that his predecessor was the late Ernie Evans. The State was very lucky to have Ron Camm to fill that role for 10 years. Great progress was made right throughout the State in the period he occupied the important portfolio of Minister for Mines and Main Roads in Queensland.

Mr. Jensen: He promised that road in Bundaberg from the airport to the hospital. It was supposed to be done this year.

Mr. HINZE: You threaten me, brother, and you won't get it next year!

Mr. Jensen: It will affect your member now—Powell, not me. It's in his electorate.

Mr. Powell: It's in my electorate.

Mr. HINZE: That, of course, makes it different.

The strides which the Main Roads Department took, and its achievements under Mr. Camm's ministry, are very clear reflections not only of the ability and dedication of the Main Roads Department staff, but also of the contribution to the State by that very experienced and capable Minister.

Summarising the department's financial position, I point out that the amounts required this financial year for the various funds administered by the Main Roads Department, compared with the expenditures from the same funds during the previous financial year, are as follows:—

Main Roads Fund $152,365,936 (compared with $133,766,613 in 1974-75);

Loan Fund $1,000,000 (compared with $5,800,000);

Commonwealth Aid, Local Authority Roads, Fund $9,214,000 (compared with $7,438,536);

Road Maintenance Account $5,000,000 (compared with $5,108,292); and

Main Roads Department Special Standing Fund $3,000,000 (compared with $2,058,442).

Included in the 1975-76 requirement of $152,365,936 for the Main Roads Fund is an amount of $93,570,000 for permanent works, compared with an expenditure of $78,780,000 last financial year. This is required to further upgrade the network of

24,727 miles (39,563 kilometres) of road declared under the Main Roads Act. These include—

State highways, 6,325 miles (10,120 kilometres); developmental roads, 4,728 miles (7,565 kilometres); main roads, 5,044 miles (8,070 kilometres); secondary roads, 8,552 miles (13,683 kilometres); urban arterial roads, 32 miles (51 kilometres); and urban sub-arterial roads, 46 miles (74 kilometres).

The Commonwealth Government, having the major revenue-raising powers through its fuel taxation, is naturally the major contributor of funds for roadworks. It provides these funds under the National Roads Act 1974 and the Roads Grants Act 1974, both of which have a currency of three years. The Main Roads Department's works programmes are very largely dominated by the provisions of this legislation, which makes separate and distinct allocations for the following specific categories of works:—

Under the National Roads Act—national highways and export roads;

Under the Roads Grants Act—rural arterial roads, rural local roads, urban arterial roads, urban local roads, beef roads, and minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements.

In addition, there is an allocation of funds for transport planning and research under a separate Act, the Transport Planning and Research Act 1974.

In drawing up the works programmes, the Commonwealth funds together with available State funds are allocated to the categories of works laid down in the Commonwealth legislation.

The permanent works component of the proposed Main Roads Fund expenditure includes the following allocations to these categories of works:—national highways, $21,800,000; export roads, $2,800,000; rural arterial roads, $26,300,000 (including $15,430,000 of State funds); rural local roads, $9,200,000 (including $1,570,000 of State funds); urban arterial roads, $17,300,000 (including $1,960,000 of State funds); beef roads, $11,200,000; and minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements, $1,000,000.

The abrupt change in Commonwealth priorities in favour of national roads and beef roads has had an adverse effect on all other categories, particularly the rural arterial roads, which include 12,973 miles (20,757 kilometres) of the State's important highways. This involves more than half of the State's declared road network.

To illustrate the position—there are 2,441 miles (3,906 kilometres) of national highways, and the Commonwealth allocations per mile for these rise from $6,500 in 1974-75 to about $10,900 in 1976-77. In the case of rural arterial roads, the mileage increased from 6,414 miles (10,262 kilometres) under the previous Act to 12,973 miles (20,757 kilometres) under the current Act, and the allocations per mile fell from $2,432 in 1973-74 to $933 in 1974-75, $686 in 1975-76 and $755 in 1976-77.

There are 8,980 miles (14,368 kilometres) of State-controlled rural local roads, compared with 17,920 miles (28,672 kilometres) under the previous Act. The Commonwealth allocations per mile for these are equivalent to:—1973-74, $887; 1974-75, $1,581; 1975-76, $1,470; and 1976-77, $1,370.

It can readily be seen, therefore, that the overwhelming shortfall in funds is in the rural arterial category, particularly when the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads recommendations (on a needs basis) are compared with the Act allocations for this category. The bureau's recommendation for 1974-75 was $21,000,000 and the allocation under the Act was $12,100,000. The recommendation for 1975-76 was $24,600,000 and the allocation under the Act was $8,900,000. The recommendation for 1976-77 was $32,600,000 and the allocation under the Act was $9,800,000. Frankly, this is scandalous!

The pressing demands for works on these roads are very much in excess of available financial resources. Because of this shortfall, as much as possible of available State funds for permanent works has been applied to the rural arterial category, to help achieve even a minimum viable programme of works on the most important roads. It is disheartening, to say the least, that more recognition has not been given by the Commonwealth to the role of these roads in the over-all transportation system.

As I mentioned earlier, the Commonwealth has the major revenue-raising capability through fuel taxation. It collects huge sums from the motorist from this source and yet it now diverts more than half of these taxes to purposes other than road works. Under such circumstances, it becomes most difficult to accept the Commonwealth philosophy that the States should raise additional taxes of their own to offset their road needs deficiencies. It was against this background that Queensland recently had no alternative to raising motor vehicle registration fees by 50 per cent to help avoid a chaotic situation. This was a step that was taken most reluctantly, and as a last resort. I can at least state that every cent of motor vehicle registration fees collected in Queensland is ploughed back into road construction and maintenance for the benefit of motorists. This is in marked contrast to the Commonwealth's use of taxes imposed on the motorist.

Also included in the Main Roads Fund requirement is an amount of $25,380,000 for declared road maintenance compared with $25,550,000 spent last financial year. The State has to bear all maintenance expenditure on categories other than national roads and rural local roads. Last financial year, there was a critical road maintenance problem, as very large expenditures were required on the

restoration of failed sections damaged by floods and abnormal wet weather. Available funds were insufficient to cope with these abnormal works in addition to the normal maintenance needs, and the result was an inevitable scaling down of some maintenance activities. Some of the additional revenue to be derived from the increased motor vehicle registration fees will enable funds to be provided this year for the maintenance effort to approach its normal level. An amount of $1,000,000 from the Loan Fund is included in the department's estimates for 1975-76, and while a much greater allocation could be used to advantage to help bridge the gap between available road funds and road needs, it is realised that priority on these funds must necessarily be given to those authorities that are substantially or solely dependent upon this source of funds to finance their capital works programmes.

When State loan funds can be made available to the Main Roads Department, they are normally used to speed up highway (rural arterial) construction throughout the State, where the demands are so much in excess of the funds normally available. For 1975-76, the whole of the Loan Fund allocation is required to supplement other funds programmed for expenditure on the Flinders Highway, completion of which to bitumen standard has been given a high priority.

The department's estimates this financial year also include an amount of $9,214,000 as anticipated expenditure from the Commonwealth Aid, Local Authority Roads, Fund. This is to meet estimated payments to councils for works on roads under their control to be financed from their Commonwealth aid allocations.

The amount of $5,000,000 shown in the Estimates as being required for expenditure from the Roads Maintenance Account represents the collections anticipated by the transport department under the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act. This Act imposes on the operators of vehicles of over four tons carrying capacity charges based on the mileage travelled on public roads. These charges, which are paid by truck operators to the Transport Department as the collecting authority, are then passed to the credit of the Roads Maintenance Account at the Treasury.

The whole of this money, without any deduction for collection expenses, is then distributed between the Main Roads Department to assist with the maintenance of declared roads and the local authorities as a contribution towards the cost of maintaining roads under their control. Revenue for this financial year is estimated to be $5,000,000, with the proposed disbursement being—local authorities $1,750,000; Main Roads Fund $3,250,000.

There is also an amount of $3,000,000 shown in the estimates as required for expenditure from the Main Roads Department Special Standing Fund. This fund is in the nature of a suspense account in which charges are accumulated against work carried out for other bodies, including jobs in which local authorities have a joint financial responsibility. Other accounts, in the form of reserves, are also contained within this fund—for example, annual leave reserve, workers' compensation insurance reserve, payroll tax, supervision fees, etc. The items concerned are either wholly or partially recoverable, or are reserves established for payment at certain times, or under certain conditions. The fund is also utilised to facilitate the costing operations of the various departmental workshops and repair units, these accounts being cleared at regular intervals mainly by transfers against the maintenance of plant Vote. This concludes the presentation of the Estimates for the Department of Main Roads, the framing of which as I stated earlier is largely influenced by the Commonwealth's roads grants legislation.

In conclusion, I would like to place on record my appreciation, and the debt that the people of Queensland owe, for the untiring efforts of the staff of both the Local Government and Main Roads departments. In particular, I would mention the sterling work of my Director of Local Government (Mr. Harold Jacobs), his deputy (Mr. Neil McPherson), the Commissioner of Main Roads (Mr. Bill Hansen), his deputy (Mr. John Andrews), the Director of Water Quality (Mr. Leon de Witt Henry) and the Director of Air Pollution Control (Dr. Graham Cleary). I am sure that the Committee appreciates the sterling work done by those responsible officers, who are always available to advise me and every other member of this Parliament. As I said at the outset, it is a pleasure to work with gentlemen of such great knowledge and experience in the development of the State of Queensland. They have held their offices for a long time. After my first year in the Ministry, all I can say is that at all times I have found them courteous, always trying to help and giving the best and soundest advice and knowledge to every member of this Parliament. These are men of high calibre who have around them, also, men of dedication and ability. It has been my privilege to work with them over the past 12 months for the benefit of Queenslanders and the betterment of our State.

I now commend the Estimates to this Committee.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (12.37 p.m.): The Opposition welcomes the opportunity given by this debate, for it provides a means by which the citizens of this State can be made aware of the utter hypocrisy of this Government towards their problems—their problems of trying to live a decent life, their problems of being able to provide or obtain a home and their problems of being able to afford a home and live in it in comfort and with dignity in the community.

The problems of living a comfortable and dignified life—the right of every Queenslander—are inherently bound up with the problems of local government and no-one

should know better than the Government the severe and constraining influences which affect local government today.

What is this Government doing about these problems? What practical and positive steps are being taken to restore some vigour to the tarnished, jaded and embattled local authorities of this State which for so long have existed on a hand-to-mouth basis? As the Minister knows, that is quite true. The local authorities are living hand to mouth on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis. And what is the Government doing about it? Absolutely nothing! The Government has provided piecemeal hand-outs to keep the worst-troubled areas quiet and there is, of course, the hopelessly outdated and ineffective subsidy scheme which is no longer appropriate to modern conditions.

But, when we get down to the basic fundamentals of the local government problems in Queensland, that is, the basic fundamental problems of matching functions and responsibilities with an adequate system of financing, what do we find? We find a Government in control of this State which continually increases the load on local authorities by increasing their responsibilities, but refuses to take any measures to provide an adequate financial base so that these work-horses of the State and for the State can effectively carry out their tasks.

When this Government introduces socially desirable legislation in the interests of the State it should foot the bill, and not pass on the costs and problems to our councils and councillors.

To indicate what I mean, I point to the Clean Waters Act. Its provisions place a problem on the shoulders of the local authorities. Under that Act—a socially desirable Act—local authorities not only are required to pay for the disposal of waste material into rivers and water-courses (a charge delegated from this Parliament) but also are required to pay staff to police the Act on behalf of this Parliament. As well, under the terms of this Act, local authorities in many instances are now required to augment and improve their sewerage systems, again a highly desirable move. But this is an expensive business today and I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that augmentation of a sewerage scheme attracts no subsidy from this Liberal-National Party Government. It will be the ratepayer or home-owner who pays.

The Litter Act is another example of this Government's imposing responsibilities and costs on local government. The appointment of one litter officer costs about $5,000 a year at current rates of pay. Has this Government done anything to financially assist the local authorities to control litter in the manner directed by Parliament? The answer is, of course, "no". Again, the home-owner will pay.

Recent decisions in regard to utilising local government officers in the fields of supervision of licensed premises and wholesale food outlets are further examples of State Government responsibilities being imposed on local authorities. Local authorities are also now required to licence, inspect and control child-care centres, at some cost, by virtue of this Government's legislation. Again, the costs will be met by ratepayers or home-owners.

The list I have given is not exhaustive; I could go on and on. There is the problem of the disposal of food scraps which this Government has agreed should not be fed to pigs. Even discounting the high cost of the collection of this waste, it will cost local government hundreds of thousands of dollars in the installation and operation of special waste-food incinerators.

The fact is that this Government continually imposes functions and responsibilities on local authorities without facing up to the financial realities of its own decisions. It continually keeps local government in the role of a poor cousin instead of upgrading it to the status of a partner. Local government has not the resources to accept the extra demands placed on it by the continual delegation of authority by the Government. It has not the resources to pay for the expensive social welfare programmes now being sought by the local government communities. It has not the resources to provide the increased capital and operational expenditure necessary today to restore our cities, towns and villages to some semblance of reasonable places in which to live.

The fundamental problem therefore, which this Government will not face up to, is that, while local government faces attack financially, economically and politically, the Government sticks its head in the sand in a display of ineptitude and Micawberism, while the once-virile local government movement falls deeper into a morass of despondency and despair.

The corollary to this situation, of course, is that the Government is supporting a strong and unexpected boost to, and emphasis of, community bodies which are now tending to compete with local authorities in the provision of welfare services and community facilities. I refer to community bodies such as the Australian Government's regional councils of social development.

Although I would never have thought it possible, the facts are that this Government, the upholder of States' rights, is, by default, giving positive aid and encouragement to the organisations now competing with local authorities for influence in their communities. It is doing this by the simple expedient of its heavy-handed control of local government, and by its failure to make any meaningful attempt to solve its financial problems. It is therefore only natural that these ad hoc and alternative bodies must reap some benefit from the fact that, because of the

failure of this Government to provide adequate resources, local government cannot face up to its responsibilities and provide all the services now expected by an interested and articulate electorate.

Local government itself deplores this situation. It believes in self help—but in reality what can it do? It cannot accept the costs involved, and it therefore suffers the odium for these apparent sins of omission.

The fact is that this Government just does not know how to solve the problems of local government, because the fundamental consideration in answering such a question is: what do you expect your local authorities to do? Once that is defined, quite obviously the problem of providing an adequate resource base becomes easier to solve. The reason this Government cannot solve the local government problems that now exist is that it has never clearly defined what it expects its local authorities to do. It has never clearly defined what role it expects local government to play in this State. It has never clearly defined what tasks local authorities are expected to fulfil on behalf of the State Government.

I know the simple answer for the Government is to refer to the Local Government Act and the other Acts which detail functions and responsibilities to local authorities. But that is not enough. It is too simplistic to answer the questions adequately. If the Government is prepared to endorse that those functions and responsibilities are a valid expression of Government policy, then quite obviously the Government has moral and legal responsibilities to adjust the State financial arrangements so that local government cannot only accept these functions and responsibilities, but can also effectively undertake them satisfactorily.

I mentioned a few moments ago that local government was under attack on three fronts; but it is quite obvious that this attack stems completely from the inadequate help provided by this Government to the local government problems. These problems are severe; these problems are real. They are here now and they affect people. But these problems can be solved by some positive action and by the Government's discussing, rationally and objectively, with local government how to overcome the issues. This has never been done. Of course, I know that there is contact between the Minister and the local authorities, but this is only a piecemeal approach which does not canvass all the problems that exist, let alone supply all the answers.

What is urgently needed is positive action and, despite the overwhelming evidence of the load now being carried by the local authorities, it is obvious that this Government is most reluctant to take it. It is just not good enough any more for this Government to keep imposing its will on local authorities to their detriment. Local government is akin to this Parliament in its operation, responsibility and accountability to the people of this State; and, as representatives of the people, aldermen and councillors deserve respect and must be given respect. A Government from my side of the Committee would acknowledge the place of local government in Queensland and, unlike this Government, would impart the respect so deserved by the 1,300 or so men and women of this State who work tirelessly and usually at great personal disadvantage to improve their communities for the benefit of their neighbours.

In the present circumstances, to what avail are their efforts? The outlook facing their councils is grim, to say the least, and all that the great majority of local authorities can look forward to from now on are deteriorating roads, less road construction, less capital works, fewer services, and possible staff retrenchments—all because this Government will not face up to its responsibilities in the local authority sphere.

I would remind the Government at this point that local government does not want charitable hand-outs in the form of short-term solutions to current problems. It does not want to be a medicant. All it wants is a reasonable resource base which will enable it to provide the works and services which most communities are now demanding. But perhaps this Government wishes to retain the situation in which local government always has to have its cap in hand; perhaps this Government is afraid of a virile independent local self-government movement; perhaps this Government is afraid to let the people of Queensland participate in the control of their own communities and their own destinies; perhaps this Government is afraid to let the people of Queensland make a positive contribution towards the welfare and development of their cities and towns.

For that, Mr. Hewitt, is what local government is all about—the creation and maintenance within our society of a system of local communities, adequately serviced, pleasant to live in and catering for the reasonable needs of all sections of the community. Those words, of course, are not mine; nor are they those of my Party. They are in fact the policy expression of local government itself. They are the expression of local government's aims and ideals. And if you examine the statement closely, Mr. Hewitt, it will become clear that what local government says is only what every Queenslander is entitled to expect, whether he lives in a small village or in a large metropolis.

But can local government ever hope to achieve this ideal? Of course not, for under the National-Liberal Government it does not know where it is going. Local government remains repressed financially, repressed politically and repressed legislatively. The Government is afraid to break this control, this repression of the local authorities, for in fact, although the Government is always "reviewing the situation", it never really does anything to improve that situation. Reviewing

the situation does not solve local government's problems. The problems are here and now and, unfortunately for the Government, they will not go away, no matter how much it ignores them.

The Government is fond of saying that local government is its child and should not, therefore, have dealings with the Federal Government in money matters to try to overcome the financial problems now existing. By its actions in relation to the establishment of regional organisations, this Government has shown its great reluctance to allow any form of self-determination to exist in the local authorities, particularly in financial matters. For example, what action has been taken by the Government to review and update, in line with modern thought, the Local Government Act? It obviously needs adjustment now.

The truth of the matter is—and I am not sure whether the Government accepts this or not—that the State Government can no longer afford to keep local government under its wing as it has for the past 100 years. It is fighting the urge of the local government movements. But, like the conservatives they are, the members of this Government refuse to acknowledge the march of time. Of course, it must be said that this childish, petulant attitude is completely in accord with the repressive policies which this Government imposes on local government. Every member representing a country electorate will, I am sure, acknowledge that he is aware of the difficulties and of the way in which repressive legislation is restricting local government.

Local government must be made a full partner in the administration and development of this State. It must not be left as a mendicant, for while local government suffers, the people of Queensland suffer. Local government today needs the assistance of this Parliament and the Government, but all it gets it trite platitudes—"Yes, we know your problems, but we can't do anything about them; our own problems come first". Mr. Hewitt, the problems of local government are the problems of this Parliament, and we can no longer ignore them as the Government does.

It is a cruel irony for local government that when, for the first time, it has become the focus for Federal financial initiatives, the Government of Queensland has moved so positively against it and refused to see the desirability of direct contact between local authorities and Federal financial institutions.

Mr. Hinze: Tell us about the R.E.D. scheme.

Mr. MELLOY: Queensland would have been in a bad way but for the introduction of the R.E.D. scheme, and the Minister knows that. He knows how beneficial the R.E.D. scheme has been to local authorities in Queensland. Work is going on all over the State under that scheme, and local authorities have benefited greatly by its introduction. Of course, the repressive Senate in Canberra is restricting the availability of finance for the R.E.D. scheme.

I was referring to this Government's attitude to direct contact between local authorities and Federal financial institutions. That is not the way to govern Queensland in the interests of the people; that is not the way to create effective local self-government units; that is not the way to develop our communities. In pure and simple terms it is a policy of repression and regression and clearly illustrates the petty mindedness of this Government in the face of the great problems now existing in the cities and towns and rural areas of the State. A Government concerned with Queenslanders would not have let this situation develop. It would not have cut back the subsidies and imposed the extra functions, and so placed local government in such severe financial straits. By cutting back subsidies to local authorities and imposing more work and responsibilities on them, the Government has added to the difficulties facing them, particularly the councils in the Far West where it is almost impossible for them to collect rates at the present time. A Government concerned with Queenslanders would not treat local government as a poor cousin.

My party would and does actively seek to overcome these difficulties, and we would and do seek to achieve this end in consultation with local government itself. We recognise the heavy responsibilities borne by local government today. We would therefore be seeking to improve the conditions under which local government today is forced to operate. For example, my party would look to some of the following matters in its rehabilitation of the local government movement. First of all, interest rates for local government borrowings could be reduced. It has been demonstrated that a 1 per cent variation in the interest rate can mean about 12½ per cent additional cost or saving in annual redemption on interest charges. In the same vein, the massive increases in capital costs for local authority works have hit very hard, and no attempt has been made by the Government to adjust subsidies or spread the range of subsidies to compensate for this. It is unpractical to raise property rates at the same rate as cost increases.

(Time expired.)

[*Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2.15 p.m.*]

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (2.15 p.m.): In Queensland the legislative control of local authorities dates back 117 years to 1858, when the city of Brisbane was, by an Act passed in New South Wales, proclaimed a municipality. Since then, and after Queensland became a separate State, a good deal of local government legislation has passed

through this House. In 1864 the first municipal law in Queensland was passed. It has been succeeded by various local government Acts.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to speak on behalf of my electors during the debate on these Estimates. I wish to cover certain matters, but before raising specific points I shall comment on some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Nudgee. As is usual with people on his side of politics, his whinges about various aspects of local government are nothing more than a load of rubbish. I notice the honourable member walking out of the Chamber. Probably he does not want to hear what I say; but no doubt he will read it later on.

Practically the whole of his speech dealt with money and his complaint that the State Government did not make finance available to local authorities. Apparently he would like to see local authorities controlled by the State Government. That certainly is not the desire of the State Government or of local authorities. They believe that local authorities should control themselves. Just as the State and Federal Parliaments are made up of representatives elected by the people so, too, local authorities comprise the people's elected representatives. Members of local authorities are responsible persons and should have the right to guide their own destiny.

The honourable member for Nudgee claimed that the State Government should give local authorities more money and the right to do more things. I wonder whether he would care to ask his friends in Canberra to give back to the States the rights that the Federal Government is filching from them in its attempt to bypass and belittle the States. There is no need for the Federal Government to make finance available direct to local authorities; all funds should be channelled through the Local Government Department.

Many statements made by the honourable member were incorrect, and I am sure that the Minister, in his usual flamboyant style, will correct them in his reply.

After my election to Parliament, the first Government department that I had any dealings with was the Local Government Department. From it I have always received cordial co-operation. The main issue I raised with the department concerned the presentation of two reports on local authority boundaries in my area. One was prepared by Judge Mylne and the other by Professor Gates. When the contents of the reports were made public, pressure was exerted on the Government to take action on them. In its wisdom the Local Government Department drew up proposed boundaries, defining a new town of Hervey Bay and changing the boundaries of the city of Maryborough as well as the Tiaro and Woocoo Shires. The publication of the proposed boundaries and the objections to them produced some rather heated argument in my electorate, and subsequently the Local Government Department came up with a compromise. It proposed that the city of Maryborough be enlarged, that the Tiaro Shire remain much as it was before and that the Taroom Shire not be included within the town of Hervey Bay but be amalgamated with the Woocoo Shire, thereby forming one large rural shire.

I put forward many suggestions on what should be done with the shire boundaries. Like everybody else concerned in this matter, I realise that very real problems crop up when shire boundaries are altered. All involved in the issue accepted that the boundaries of the city of Maryborough had to be extended. As Maryborough city is a very small area, with virtually no land on which housing development could take place, something had to be done. The fact that the people of Hervey Bay felt that they should have their own local authority was one of the criteria that had to be used in formulating new boundaries, although the department did all that it could to satisfy as many people as possible. I disagree most emphatically with the proposal that rural land—especially assigned cane land—should be included in the city of Maryborough. That is not in the best interests of the cane farmers or the locality as a whole, although it may be in the best interests of the city of Maryborough, by way of revenue. The people are fearful that the cane lands included in the Maryborough City Council area will be highly valued for revenue production.

Mr. Jensen: What about the Bundaberg boundaries?

Mr. POWELL: At the moment the Bundaberg boundaries are not under review. Until such time as they are, I shall not mention them.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. POWELL: The honourable member for Bundaberg will be able to make his speech very shortly.

Many of our provincial cities are in the same position as Maryborough in that all the land within their boundaries has been subdivided for housing development. However, that is not the case in Bundaberg. It is reasononable that the Maryborough area be expanded. The idea of extending Maryborough to the north along the railway line, to include the area out to the industrial estate and around it, is quite reasonable; but I disagree with the principle of including cane land in the Maryborough City Council area. Although objections were raised, the decision was made and we will have to wait to see how it works out when the boundaries are gazetted and the new councils get under way next year.

Fraser Island presented another problem. It has been divided into two areas. The southern portion of the island is included

in the Maryborough city area and the northern part—and rightly so, in my opinion—is included in the Hervey Bay Town Council area. I believe that the whole island should have come under the Hervey Bay Town Council. However, a compromise decision was made. In the light of the number of representations received by the department, it did what it could to satisfy the interests of as many people as possible.

As member for Isis, I am in very close contact with four local authority areas—the Bundaberg City Council, the Woongarra Shire, the Isis Shire and the Burrum Shire. To a lesser extent I am involved with the Maryborough City Council, but when the new boundaries are gazetted a major part of the Maryborough City Council area will be in my electorate. My dealings with these local authorities have been very cordial.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. POWELL: As I said, I have little to do with Maryborough at the moment, but with the new boundaries it will be quite different.

I understand the real problems that are being faced by the shire councils, particularly those that are reasonably small and govern quickly growing areas. The new Hervey Bay Town Council will have some real problems to overcome.

One matter mentioned by the honourable member for Nudgee was local authority finance. Local authorities can rate people. It is a truism that if the people want services, they must pay for them. The money can come from only one group—the people asking for the services. It is an unfortunate truism also that the Federal Government is the major taxing authority in this country and, as the Minister so capably pointed out in his introduction, that Government takes from us a lot more money, especially in petrol tax, than it gives back to us.

The R.E.D. scheme that the honourable member for Nudgee mentioned was possibly a good scheme, but there should never have been the need to bring it in. Had it not been for the red policies of the Government in Canberra, there would have been no need for the R.E.D. scheme. The Opposition statement that the R.E.D. scheme is being phased out because the Senate has refused to pass the budgetary measures is so much rot. The Federal Treasurer said that the R.E.D. scheme would be phased out at the end of October or November, anyhow. Opposition members are simply looking for political capital. Unfortunately they do not consider people. They consider only the expediency of their own philosophy at a particular time. It is a pity that they do not get back to the facts when they talk about political matters.

It was wise to put under the wing of the Local Government Department the environmental matters of water pollution and air pollution and the policing of the anti-litter laws. It is reasonable to have those important matters under the control of local people. I have always been one of those who believe very sincerely in the decentralisation of effort. I am blowed if I would like everything controlled from Canberra—or, for that matter, from Brisbane. It is a very reasonable idea that the local authorities should have control in their areas over water pollution and air pollution and the policing of anti-litter laws. It is very good to see the strides that are being made in that direction.

The Main Roads Department is confronted with some very real problems. As I have said before—including a speech I made in the debate on Matters of Public Interest some time ago—this State and its motorists are being affected adversely by Commonwealth Government policies—if they can be called policies.

Mr. Jensen: It has been going on for 23 years. Don't go saying that it has changed in the past few years.

Mr. POWELL: The honourable member is wrong. He does not know what he is saying. Before 1972, the petrol tax was used specifically for road maintenance and construction. Since 1972, his socialist mates in Canberra —I know that he does not think that they are his mates—are ripping off 28c on each gallon of petrol sold and are giving back a miserable 10c of it to improve our roads. I think that this is disgusting and more publicity should be given to it.

Mr. Jensen: That's right.

Mr. POWELL: I am glad that the honourable member agrees with me.

Mr. Miller: It is highway robbery.

Mr. POWELL: It is highway robbery and also by-way robbery because it is the by-ways that are being affected adversely.

It is a very interesting study to look at the amount of money received from the Commonwealth Government by the Queensland Local Government Department and the way it is told to spend it. The Federal Transport Minister (Mr. Jones) is interested mainly in the highways that he is likely to use. He would not bother to see what the country really looks like. He says that $10,900 a mile should be spent on national highways. But on the roads that you and I, Mr. Gunn, and all the other citizens of Queensland have to use daily, only $686 a mile is allowed for construction and maintenance. That is a disgusting state of affairs. Why is it that $10,900 a mile can be spent on main highways on which some Federal Labor politicians will travel probably once a year in Queensland during the winter whilst only $686 a mile can be spent on the roads in my electorate and other country areas?

This morning I asked the Minister a question about several roads in my electorate that certainly need upgrading. They carry a great many tourists, and in the crushing season they carry very heavy loads of cane.

Mr. Jensen: He ducked it, didn't he?

Mr. POWELL: No, he answered me in his usual sensible manner. He pointed out that the Main Roads Department, because of the attitude of the Federal Government, just does not have the money needed for all of this work.

This is what country people have to be told. We have to get through to them the message that their roads are not well constructed and maintained because the people of Queensland cannot get the money that is due to them. That is what really galls me. In my view, the money paid by the people to the Federal Government in petrol tax should be returned to them for use on their roads; but the Federal Government will not do that. Instead, they trump up the R.E.D. scheme, the Australian Assistance Plan and schemes of that nature. They trump up these schemes and say what good fellows they are, whilst at the same time road construction and maintenance are being deprived of finance.

The road from Torbanlea to the Maryborough–Hervey Bay Road is one that particularly needs attention.

Mr. Houston: It has been bad for donkey's years.

Mr. POWELL: Yes, and it is getting worse, because no more finance is being made available for it. The honourable member for Bulimba would not know what I am talking about. He has travelled on bitumen roads in and around Brisbane all his life.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): I remind the honourable member for Bulimba that he is out of order in interjecting when he is not in his customary place in the Chamber.

Mr. POWELL: The road from Torbanlea to the Maryborough–Hervey Bay Road is a most important tourist road, and one that must be upgraded. As the traffic to Hervey Bay increases, the worse that road will become and the more it will cost the new Hervey Bay Town Council to maintain it. It will have to be maintained, because it is the tourist industry on which Hervey Bay is firmly based.

Another most important road in my electorate is the one between Woodgate and Childers. John Citizen likes to go fishing, or to the beach for an afternoon's relaxation. He does not want to travel on roads so narrow that he is in constant danger from stones pelted at him from oncoming and passing traffic. He wants a wider road, and I believe that he is entitled to it. I cannot see why Brisbane people should be entitled to road improvements because they have already got highways to their beaches. We in the country have only rural roads. I believe that more money should be returned to this State so that it can be spent on roads such as the one between Woodgate and Childers, the one from Torbanlea to the Maryborough–Hervey Bay road and the one from Bundaberg to Goodwood and then to Woodgate. These roads have to be upgraded to take the tourist traffic that uses them. It is most important that tourists be given good roads to travel on, thus obtaining some return from the money that they pay in petrol tax. It really upsets me that we give all this money to the Federal Government but they will not give it back to us.

When we look at the Estimates of the Local Government and Main Roads Departments, we can see how much more work could be done if finance were available. The plans, men, machinery and initiative are there, but there is simply not sufficient finance. I think it is a criminal shame that finance for the roads of this State is being stifled at Canberra. It is being siphoned off into all sorts of things, and we are not allowed to use it in Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (2.35 p.m.): There are several aspects of local government which concern me. I would like to support the case put forward by the honourable member for Isis. When we see the state of the roads in Outback Queensland, we realise how shocking is the action of the Federal Government in retaining 18c in excise tax from the sale of each gallon of petrol for its own purposes. At the moment the Prime Minister has a very popular saying, "The user must pay." He refers quite often to the Post Office and to airports and other facilities and tells the people of Australia that the user must pay for these facilities. But as far as Outback roads are concerned, we see the reverse—the user is paying but not getting the facilities—and so I support the case put forward by the honourable member. The user should benefit from the tax and that is what the Prime Minister should be saying about our roads.

Mr. McKechnie: Would you say the Prime Minister makes misleading statements all the time?

Mr. MILLER: Of course they are misleading. Every statement made by a member of the Federal Government is misleading. In a moment I will give honourable members an example of how the Brisbane City Council misleads the public. The Department of Local Government covers many aspects of local government administration including the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. This morning I attended an auction of land in the Bardon area conducted by the Brisbane City Council. This land was resumed under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. I have spoken before in the Chamber about

this Act and of the powers given to the local authority under it, and I will continue to do so until something is done.

This morning I saw an incident that could have turned into something very nasty indeed. With the exception of one couple who were interested in buying a block of land, all the people at the auction were local residents. Quite a number of these people informed the auctioneer that they were holding the deeds to the land that he was going to auction. Their deeds had not been altered. Land had been resumed under the Act and was being auctioned by the Brisbane City Council, but the people had not been paid for that land. This is what this legislation allows, and so I will continue to speak about it until the Government decides that there is too much power to resume land under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act.

A Government Member: What was it being auctioned for?

Mr. MILLER: For building allotments.

A Government Member: Residential?

Mr. MILLER: Yes. I do not mind the Brisbane City Council having power to resume land for public purposes, but I object most strongly to the power it is given to resume land from private individuals, redevelop it and sell it at auction to the highest bidder, particularly when, as in this case, the owners of land received only $10 a perch for it. One owner said to the auctioneer this morning, "I will give you $100 a perch for the land that you resumed from me for $10 a perch." Of course, the auctioneer could not accept the tender, but here was an owner prepared to pay $100 a perch for land that was resumed from him by the city council for $10 a perch. Surely this type of legislation needs to be looked at. I realise I cannot call for the repeal of legislation in a discussion of the Estimates but I am allowed to bring forward in such a discussion the problems that we see with this type of Act.

Mr. Ahern: Has the price been agreed to at $10 a perch?

Mr. MILLER: No way in the world! I know three people who have not accepted one cent from the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Frawley: Surely the city council wouldn't do a thing like that?

Mr. MILLER: The honourable member must realise that the city council has done exactly the same thing in an area very close to his electorate. I ask you, Mr. Gunn, whose land is going to be next? Under the Act, the city council can resume anybody's land! Is it going to resume your land, Mr. Gunn, or mine? Is it going to resume the land of the honourable member for Toowong? It can resume any block of land in Brisbane for redevelopment purposes.

Mr. Ahern: It does not happen outside Brisbane, does it?

Mr. MILLER: As far as I know, it does not happen outside Brisbane. It is done wholly and solely under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. In my opinion, the power must be taken out of that Act as quickly as possible, because I do not want people to be wondering whether or not they are to be next on the list of resumptions.

In introducing the Estimates, the Minister made two statements in particular that attracted my attention. The first was—

> "The Town Planning Branch currently is undertaking the onerous final review of Brisbane's proposed new town plan and the 29,437 objections lodged in relation to it."

The other one was—

> "Town planning is naturally a local government responsibility because it is so closely allied with other basic local government functions, such as the provision of roads, water and sewerage services and drainage."

Those two statements attracted my attention particularly because at the moment I am concerned about open space within the city of Brisbane.

The Minister told the Committee that there have been 29,437 objections to the new town plan put forward by the Brisbane City Council. Today, many people believe that State Governments have a responsibility to the people of Australia, and I should like to quote first from the findings of one of the committees of inquiry set up by the Federal Government. I realise, of course, that the Federal Government has set up quite a number of committees of inquiry, but I agree whole-heartedly with the findings of this particular committee and intend to quote from what it said about parks and open space. This particular passage read—

> "Urban parks, and particularly those comprising natural or near-natural areas, are always liable to attract the attention of highway and other authorities. This tendency must always be resisted, and alienation should generally require the sanction of Parliament."

In my opinion, the sanction of Parliament is essential. Quite a lot of land in the city of Brisbane is held in fee simple by the Brisbane City Council, and later I shall endeavour to show the Committee what the council is doing with its open spaces. It is using them for many purposes, but certainly not for open space and parks.

The passage continues—

> "The general principle that parklands should be inalienable and their dedication irrevocable without the consent of Parliament is as applicable to urban parks as to other parks. We have received many submissions to support this view, and consider it has great merit."

As I said, that committee of inquiry has looked into parks and open spaces throughout Australia, and that is the recommendation it has made.

I hope that the Minister will take note of the findings of that committee, because I am not prepared to agree to the willy-nilly attitude of the Brisbane City Council in using parks and open spaces instead of acquiring other areas of land. I believe that the responsibility sits squarely on our shoulders. Should we in Brisbane be concerned? Does the passage that I have quoted from the findings of the committee that has investigated the situation in the whole of Australia give cause for concern in Brisbane? I believe it does, because in 1974 the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Clem Jones, presented a paper to developers in, I think, Sydney, and it was reported in "The Developer" of May 1974. I will quote a few paragraphs from that paper because it conveys the feelings of the Brisbane City Council towards open spaces in Brisbane. It stated—

> "First of all, we have in Brisbane, 5,685 acres of land in the park and open space area within a five-mile radius of the central city. Melbourne has 4,956, approximately 700 less, Adelaide 4,687, Perth 3,025, Sydney 3,630, Hobart 4,979. Now I want to stress difference between Brisbane and Melbourne and its effect. There are 700 acres more open space of land within a five-mile radius of the City Hall or G.P.O. whichever you like to take.
>
> "Now let's look at the effect of this sort of thing. First of all it means that an enormous number of people, take for example the fact that probably within that area you have people living in multi units, it means you have something like 105,000 people. Imagine taking 700 acres of land out of the centre of the City of Melbourne in the five-mile radius and grabbing it into open spaces. First of all it would add enormously to the cost of transport. It has a tremendous effect on the ratings, the incomes, the property incomes of the authorities; it has an effect on spreading the whole city out, the time of travel to the centre of the city area with people living in it; all of these things and the cost of providing roads, services and so on simply shift the people out. Now this is one of the most significant effects and disabilities we have in the city."

They are hardly the words of a Lord Mayor dedicated to open spaces. As the committee of inquiry indicated, as a State Government we must look at the intrusion of the Brisbane City Council into park areas. What has happened to our parks? Brisbane City Council depots have been built in 12 parks; roads have been built through 11 parks and 12 parks are highly developed, enclosed sporting areas. All those parks are supposed to be open spaces for the benefit of the community.

Some parks have an excessive number of buildings in them. I shall refer to some of them because I do not think the average person in Brisbane realises what is happening to our open spaces. The Brisbane City Council has allowed 16 buildings to be built on the Chelmer reserve. Marchant Park has 13 buildings, Windsor Park 11 buildings, Yeronga Park 18 buildings, Albury Oval 8 buildings, Davies Park 11 buildings, Mowbray Park 6 buildings, Balmoral Park 9 buildings and the reserve at Coopers Plains 11 buildings.

Mr. Burns: Have you ever been in Balmoral Park?

Mr. MILLER: No, but open spaces haven't got to be parks.

Mr. Burns: That is the trouble with reading figures. You must look at the parks to see what they mean. Balmoral Park is a cemetery.

Mr. MILLER: The Leader of the Opposition does not seem to realise that we have different sorts of parks and different sorts of open spaces. We should not clutter them up with buildings. The Brisbane City Council is using open spaces for its buildings. That is what we are trying to stop. We believe in breathing-space.

Mr. Houston: Some of them have been there for over 50 years.

Mr. MILLER: I don't care how long they have been in the park. From now on I want this Government to take the responsibility that clearly rests on its shoulders to see that local government does not intrude into open spaces in that way. The numbers that I have given show what is going on. Surely the Leader of the Opposition would agree with me that the handing over by the Brisbane City Council of parks to sporting bodies so that they can fence them and erect club-houses on them is leading towards a most unsatisfactory type of development.

A number of parks contain sewerage-treatment plants; others contain parking compounds for Brisbane City Council vehicles, water-supply depots, gravel depots, pipe yards, two-storey office blocks for the Electricity Department, sand and gravel depots, roadways and large areas of bare earth. Our parks are being cluttered up by all those things. If our open spaces are taken over by the Brisbane City Council for its own use or by the R.S.L. or subnormal children's associations——

Mr. Houston: So what?

Mr. MILLER: So what! The honourable member's attitude is also that of the Brisbane City Council, and it concerns me greatly as it does thousands of other people. Open space must be retained, and this fact is recognised by town planners all over the world.

Mr. Porter: What happens when Brisbane grows?

Mr. MILLER: The Brisbane City Council is not concerned with what happens then.

Mr. Chinchen: Another thing: what has happened to all the money they got from the developers for the parks?

Mr. MILLER: The honourable member for Mt. Gravatt has made a very valid point. What has happened to the money taken by the Brisbane City Council from the developers for the provision of parks within a radius of one mile from the development? I do not see the development of such parks.

Mr. Houston: How could you see them if you never go round them?

Mr. MILLER: I wish the honourable member would make sensible interjections. If a park has not been developed, how could I possibly go and see it? The point I am making is that the Brisbane City Council has taken money from developers and, under the Act, is required to provide open spaces and parks, but it has not done so. Homeowners pay high prices for land, and included in the purchase price is a sum of money that goes to the Brisbane City Council as a contribution towards the cost of provision of open spaces.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. MILLER: I hope the Minister is taking note of the fact that, whereas Government members are concerned about this matter, those members on the Opposition benches show a total lack of concern for it.

Recently legislation was passed to allow the library that had been built in New Farm Park to remain there. During the debate on that matter, I claimed that we were creating a precedent. We must make sure that that type of thing does not happen again. Once a precedent is set it can be followed time and time again in park after park. The new town plan must spell out clearly a prohibition on the erection of libraries in open spaces.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why don't you become an alderman? You have never spoken on a State issue in your life.

Mr. MILLER: While the Brisbane City Council contains aldermen of the type who are in it at the present time, it is the responsibility of the Government to keep them in line. They are desecrating the open spaces of Brisbane. All fair-minded citizens are deeply concerned at the attitude adopted by the Brisbane City Council. I remind the honourable member for Archerfield that the Government has the responsibility to make sure that the council works within the confines of its ordinances. He would like us to sit back and say nothing. I wonder what his attitude would be if the Brisbane City Council were a Liberal council. We will, of course, see his attitude in the very near future when the Liberals take over. I have no doubt that he will voice his concern at what the next city council, a Liberal city council, does. While Brisbane has a Labor city council, Opposition members remain silent.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (2.55 p.m.): It is a pity that the honourable member for Ithaca has not represented his area properly. In the last three years, large areas in my electorate have been purchased for parkland. The Brisbane City Council, in conjunction with the Federal Government, bought a large area of land at the corner of Kianawah Road and Wynnum Road at a cost of $130,000. In addition, the Bulimba Creek scheme is now being developed. I understand that Porter's property, which is an old, historic piece of land on Bulimba Creek, has been taken over recently as part of a planned 27-hole golf course. A boating lagoon, a trail bike area, and a walk area have all been planned as part of the Bulimba Creek scheme. If the people of Ithaca are not getting a fair go, it is because over the years their representation has been very poor and nothing has been done for them. Their representative has spent most of his time whingeing in this Parliament instead of doing a job for the area.

I wish to deal with the Clean Air Act and the Clean Waters Act. I compliment the Air Pollution Council on its last report. I also compliment the Government on at last bringing water and air under the one control. Anybody who has ever complained about odours and creek and river problems knows that the buck is always passed. If a creek is smelly, the air pollution people say it is a water quality matter, and the water quality people say, "It's in the air; it's an air-pollution matter." At last we have one Minister to receive our complaints. We should at least be able to get an answer; now the buck stops there.

One of the State Government's problems is that it has never really believed that pollution should be controlled. It believed that it had to appear to do something about it, but it did not really want to do anything in case somebody might be hurt along the way. At last the people will not cop it any longer, and are saying that they want action. Even the report of the Air Pollution Council shows that more and more people are complaining about pollution.

In 1959-60, a parliamentary committee investigated air pollution in Brisbane. One reason for our problems today is that four years elapsed—from 1959 to 1963—before an Act was even introduced to Parliament to do something about the problems highlighted in 1959, and it was not until 1965 that it was implemented. And at that stage it was brought in only to cover Brisbane. It was not until September 1970 that it covered the rest of the State. We gave polluters in Brisbane and elsewhere seven years to comply with the provisions of the Act, that is, until May 1972 in Brisbane, and until 1977 outside the capital city. From

1959, when we first carried out the investigation, to 1972 in Brisbane, and until 1977 in the country, the Government was misleading the people of the State when it said that it was interested in pollution. It was doing nothing about it. That is a fact that cannot be denied. Government reports and Acts indicate how the legislation was slowly proclaimed and implemented over the years.

Government members believe that if they set up an industry they have an absolute right to pollute to a certain level. Sooner or later we must say "We want clean air". The people are entitled to breathe clean air. If we are amending the Act, it is time that we wrote into it a right for citizens to sue when their privacy is invaded in this way by the polluter who sets up next door and pollutes them out of their homes. In the same way, their privacy is invaded by people who burn fires in their back yards on washing days or when neighbours have friends in for a barbecue.

In other countries people have a right to use similar legislation for their own protection. But it seems that we cannot do it here! I should like to see the Government do it, but I do not think it will. I feel that we may have to change the Act so that the ordinary citizen can do something about it—so that he can go to court and sue for justice.

The report indicates that the Act is to be amended at a later stage. While we are changing the Act we should seriously think about restoring the union representation on the council. The previous union representative resigned because the Governor in Council overrode a decision that the Air Pollution Council made believing it to be in the interests of the people of the State. Edgar Williams, the union representative, resigned and was not replaced. We should also extend the number of people on the council. The people ought to be entitled to have a say. The public are entitled to be involved because there is nothing more personal and important than the air a person breathes and the way his home life is destroyed. On page 3 the report refers to areas such as Murarrie, Hemmant and Tingalpa. Honourable members should read the type of industries in those areas and the comments of the experts. They would then realise that something must be done about town-planning.

We must start to give some autonomy to the Air Pollution Council or, when town plans are prepared, it will simply lodge an objection to the town plan. In fact it lodged an objection to the last town plan. That was its only way of trying to protect the citizens.

We cannot allow planning to continue in this way. Year after year we have lived with the mistakes that were made in the past and have added to them. Industries were built on the southside of the river at the beginning of the century. Because they were established there then, we have allowed new industries and other polluting industries to become established beside them.

We have just made another decision regarding the new port. As a result large areas have been rezoned. Every polluting harbour industry has a right under the Brisbane Town Plan to establish in the area from Bulimba Point to the mouth of the Brisbane River. All they have to do is to obtain a certificate from Sir David Muir to the effect they are involved in harbour industries or export industries and they are allowed to establish there.

The Brisbane City Council can force them to comply with the building and structure ordinances; but the State Government is responsible for making certain that these industries are clean. It is a joke in the community that only one industry in the whole of the State has been fined—$50 plus $2.50 costs of court!

Mr. Moore: What was that—Bretts?

Mr. BURNS: It was Mount Isa Mines Ltd. No-one in Brisbane has been fined. A person who drives across the bridge every day can see the smoke pouring out of the factories in South Brisbane, but no fines have been levied.

No educational facilities are available. The report says that there are few educational facilities that can be provided to help us. It says that an industry must pass or fail the test on smoke pollution based on the Ringlemann chart. But where can a copy of it be obtained so that people can judge whether white, grey or black smoke passes or fails the test or is acceptable under the standards? There is little or no material to hand out to the children in schools and to other people who want educational facilities. I am not saying this; it is being said by the experts that the Government employs.

Look at the list of staff employed to police the Clean Air Act—one inspector. He is named in the front of the report. To police the Clean Waters Act, we have two inspectors with one vacancy.

Now that the Minister is in the Chamber, I give him credit for doing a good job. He is far better than Sir Douglas Tooth, who was never interested in the part of his portfolio covering clean air. Every time the people tried to ask him something about it, he ignored them. When they had a problem, he should have been prepared to front up to them and listen to them. But he always refused.

The Government cannot continue to avoid its responsibility on the ground of a shortage of inspectors and a shortage of staff. Reports from the water quality people indicate that the conditions under which they work are bad. Neither the Water Quality Council nor the Air Pollution Council has the staff required to carry out its job. Pollution from some of our industries occurs regularly after

5 p.m. and over the week-ends and never on week days. Fish are killed in Bulimba Creek over the week-end.

On Saturday mornings, people ring up and say that fish are lying dead along miles of the banks. Obviously an industry let polluted material flow into the creek on Friday night because it knew there were no inspectors to look into the matter until half past 8 or 9 o'clock on Monday morning. People who ring up at 8 o'clock at night and say that they cannot breathe because of the smell of the rubbish being poured into the creek laugh when told that all we can do is advise them to ring up on Monday morning and complain. They say that by then the breeze will have blown the smell away and the pollution will be gone.

We cannot continue to claim that we are interested in the environment or doing something for these people if we have to say, "We do not have the staff." We must do something about it. We have to spend more money on staff. We have to prove that we are interested in cleaning up the environment; that we are interested in doing something to combat pollution. If we are, the Minister must be allowed more money and staff so that he can supply 24 hours a day, seven days a week a service to which people can report this problem.

In some departments a man is on call at home and is available. He can take a complaint and, if necessary, arrange for an inspector to go out. I do not suggest that an officer has to sit in the headquarters of the Air Pollution Council or the Water Quality Council all night waiting for someone to ring and complain. But someone should be available to talk to local residents who are experiencing pollution problems at the time pollution occurs.

Some people sitting in the lobby have probably been driven crazy by members of the community. From time to time they have probably had a few things said to them that should not have been said. I do not really object to that, because I know that people get upset and concerned when these things happen to them. A fellow who is at home watching TV, who is not on duty and not being paid for his time, must be concerned when people contact him about these matters. But the people who complain cannot be blamed. They are suffering and need action. And we must see that they get it.

Pollution in Lytton affects the whole of this city. Sea breezes blow across Lytton into the city, and are finally stopped by hills that surround the city. The first committee set up by this Parliament in 1959 to investigate pollution found that Brisbane has a greater pollution potential than Los Angeles. Now, in 1975, even more industries are to be established at the mouth of the river. We congratulate ourselves that we stopped the construction of a cement works at Hamilton. Where did it go then? To the mouth of the river near Pinkenba, where possible pollution from it will be even worse. It is stated in this year's annual report that the fall-out from the Darra cement works was worse than it was last year. And we are supposedly progressing! The same company is now building a cement works at the mouth of the river, with an output of 40,000—or is it 400,000?—tons a year. If it is 40,000 tons and the fall-out is 1 per cent, that represents 400 tons. If it is 400,000 tons, the fall-out is 4,000 tons.

People now understand that these things are happening; one learns this from talking and listening to them. If people build homes worth $30,000 or $40,000, are others to be allowed to set up industries across the road and pollute them? This is what has been allowed under Brisbane town-planning laws, laws that have been passed by this Assembly. Town-planning is under the control of the Minister. I will say to his credit that he listened to people in my area who approached him and showed him the folly of some of the decisions of planners. In this area are two meatworks, two bacon factories, a chicken abattoir, a fish market, a tannery, two hide-drying works, a fertiliser plant and an oil refinery.

Mr. Hinze: Would you like to swap?

Mr. BURNS: No; I am quite happy. I live in Lytton. On 7 December last, I was more than pleased with the result in Lytton. I was very pleased to have them all on my side, and I shall be more than pleased to stay with them for years to come.

Mr. Hinze: Nobody else wants it.

Mr. BURNS: Maybe that is so. But with the Minister's help, and the implementation of the Act, the area can be cleaned up. The people there will then live in an area that is both close to the city and very beautiful.

I think that the State should give consideration to the construction of industrial sewage plants. State industrial estates are being established in this area. There are such estates at Colmslie, Gibson Island and Lytton, and Fisherman Islands at the mouth of the river is to become an industrial complex. The Minister will be aware of the discussions that have taken place over sewage planning, and whether these facilities will be provided by the Brisbane City Council or some other authority. Before estates that are to handle heavy and dirty industries are established, the Government should be prepared to install treatment plants that will break down industrial discharge and make it acceptable to the city council sewage system. I do not think the ordinary ratepayer in the area could reasonably be expected to pay for the extra treatment required.

There would not be an industry established along Bulimba Creek that would not accept such a proposal. Indeed, they would probably be pleased to have such a plant built because it would save them the charges that

they now have to pay to have their discharges treated. I think that this should be a cost on taxpayers generally, because it would be of benefit to all. Obviously sewage charges would be set according to the type of discharge.

I also think that industries that are prepared to reduce their pollution levels below acceptable standards should be given tax incentives. The Government should say to them, "We want you to clean up pollution. If you are prepared to clean it up and spend money in this way, we would be prepared to assist you by way of tax incentives."

Mr. Lee: A rate incentive, too?

Mr. BURNS: That is another question. It is not our decision. If a firm is prepared to spend a sizeable amount of money on pollution control, why should it not be given some assistance? There are, of course, many industries that are not prepared to spend money in this way. They are hiding behind the Act and taking advantage of the lack of inspectors. We all know that in polluting on Friday nights and at week-ends, they are merely dodging the law. They know that there are no staff and facilities to cope with the situation, and that they can get away with what they are doing. It is essential to provide facilities for handling this situation.

The Minister has been making some play on noise and what he will do about it. May I suggest that we ought to know the Government's attitude to the new airport in Brisbane because I am becoming more and more concerned about the decision to build a new airport on the north side in the Nudgee area. What will be the position with regard to noise pollution and even accident control in the future?

Honourable members should think about what happened the other day in Cairns. We have to start to think about people who live somewhere around the airport. It is a built-up area now. It is not a matter of saying that the airport is to be built out in an open area; the area, which has been left as swamp land for some years, is to be built up. We are talking about taking millions of tonnes of sand out of the bay, yet honourable members talk about the environment.

I want to talk about present noise problems. The Department of Civil Aviation tell us that there is no noise problem from the airport along the south side of the river bank. If honourable members talk to anyone who lives at Wynnum North, Lindum or Cannon Hill, they will soon be told about the noise problem they experience early on many mornings. They should come to Cannon Hill and hear the Air New Zealand jet leave the airport and turn on a course which takes it over my home. I have letters here from the Department of Civil Aviation. I have only five minutes left, so I will not read them into "Hansard", but I ought to. The department makes excuses about the reason for jets turning that way.

Now we even have the F111As doing test landings at the airport so that, in the event of problems at Amberley, the pilots will be familiar with it. We now have to bring them into the Brisbane airport to practise emergency landings. We have these planes flying in and out on these tests and always at 8 at night. They fly right over the people in the caravan park at the mouth of Bulimba Creek at Morgan's Moorings. They fly over Lindum and other residential areas, yet the department says to us, "It is only an occasional occurrence." Today noise is a chronic disease rather than an occasional ailment. It drives people off their heads, and many people today——

Mr. Lee: Do you think it is not a wise idea to shift the airport out?

Mr. BURNS: Yes. I think it is time we looked at the proposal before we spend any money on airport development, especially on new runways and equipment. We have to look at it to see whether we still firmly believe it should go there.

Mr. Lee: Do you think it should be there or not?

Mr. BURNS: I do not know whether it should be moved at this stage or not, but I think we ought to consider it. It is not just a matter of saying that a decision was made five or six years ago that the new airport would be built when the money is made available.

Mr. Wharton: I think we should shift the noisy members.

Mr. BURNS: I am probably a noisy member, but I think it is time we got a little bit noisy. It is about time we spoke up and were heard on these questions, because for too long pollution, for instance, has been pushed under the counter. People have been buying homes in my area across the road from industries which have been allowed to pollute for years. Those industries have said, "We will get away with it. We will push the people out of the area as they arrive." Complaint after complaint still comes in about the Ampol Oil Refinery at the mouth of the river. The management says it does not cause any pollution and that it does not create the greasy fall-out that builds up on the sides of houses and ruins the paint. Members should go to Wynnum North Heights on some nights when the after-burner is operating. It roars on and causes a greasy fall-out.

The Minister's inspectors are currently at Tingalpa looking at houses that went black overnight for some reason. Those officers say they cannot supply us with information. We need more and more officers and more and more information. One of the ways we will get people to assist us—and this

is what we have to do when we are short of staff—is to supply them with information so that they can understand what is happening. One of the biggest problems I see with the Clean Waters Act and the Clean Air Act is the secrecy associated with them, and even with the department. Departmental officers write to people such as me and say, "I am not really supposed to make much contact with politicians. I'll come down and see you with the Minister." The provisions of the Clean Water Act provide that he is not required, in fact he is forbidden to give anybody details about discharges, which are allowed by the Government, into our rivers. That is crazy. The Government seems to be saying, "We will give you a licence to pollute. We will let you pour a certain amount of rubbish into the river but we will not tell the public what it is."

(Time expired.)

Mr. GIBBS (Albert) (3.15 p.m.): I rise——

Mr. Hanson: What are we going to talk about now?

Mr. GIBBS: The old publican from up there now.

Mr. Hinze: Tell us about his watered beer up in his Gladstone pub.

Mr. GIBBS: Yes, I think I will bring it up under the Clean Waters Act. I support the comments of the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads and compliment him on the way he introduced these Estimates.

Local government has come out of a low-key period. There is no doubt that the Local Government Department had very little significance before 1956. It did very little for local authorities and, as far as I can ascertain from my research, subsidies, if they existed, were negligible. After 1956 the improvement was slow, and things did not really begin to look up until the Honourable Henry McKechnie became Minister for Local Government. It was unfortunate that, because of health problems, he was unable to carry on the job, but it was very pleasing to see the present Minister, the Honourable Russ Hinze, take control of the Department of Local Government as well as the Department of Main Roads.

Mr. Frawley: Do you think it may have been because of his local authority experience as chairman of the Albert Shire Council?

Mr. GIBBS: Yes, I think his experience as chairman of the Albert Shire Council for many years has given the Minister the background that he needs to make the Department of Local Government and his Ministry really tick. With the combination of the Minister and the very competent officers associated both with the Main Roads Department and the Local Government Department, success is assured.

In the early days before 1956, of course, no-one encouraged local authorities to introduce by-laws that would bring developments up to very high standards. As a result, today many local authorities such as the Gold Coast City Council and the Albert Shire Council have tremendous backlogs of work to overcome. In the ward that I represent on the Gold Coast alone, there is a backlog of about $3,000,000 worth of work. If assistance could be provided for that backlog to be overcome, it would be possible for the council to coast along and handle the situation without very much trouble.

As member for Albert, I represent part of the city of the Gold Coast and part of the Albert Shire, and together the city and the shire have greater potential than any other area in Queensland or, indeed, in Australia. I take great pride in representing these areas.

It is very interesting to note the number of Acts which are administered and the number of ministerial responsibilities that are carried out by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. He administers the Clean Air Act, the Clean Waters Act and town planning Acts, all of which are important to people. In fact, the Department of Local Government is the closest Government department to the people of this State. It works down through the Local Government Association of Queensland and the local authorities to the people. Almost everything that affects the people of Queensland comes under the Department of Local Government.

Many problems confront local government today. Local authorities are assuming greater responsibilities and are being saddled with welfare services that traditionally have been the province of the Federal Government because of the direct relationship between taxation and social services to the community. This additional burden, instead of being channelled, as it should be, through State Governments, is being handled directly by the Federal Government. In my opinion, that is a very bad policy. Everything that goes to local authorities should go through the State Government—there is no doubt about that—because it gives local authorities great support by way of subsidies.

As to subsidies, I ask the Minister at this stage—I have already mentioned the matter to the Premier—to change the word "subsidy" to "grant". "Subsidy" is not a very strong word; it does not mean much to the people of the State. I speak to people who are very surprised when I tell them how much the Government makes available in subsidies. I should be able to say to them, "So much has been made available as a grant for the Advancetown Dam."

I should like to indicate to the Committee the total capital works subsidies paid by the State Government in 1974-75. Fifteen cities received a total of $11,050,000; four towns received $492,000 and 12 shires received $10,780,000—a total of $22,322,000. Breaking down that total—subsidies on water totalled $9,276,000, on sewerage $9,297,000, on roads, streets and bridges $3,084,000 and

on sundry items $665,000. The Gold Coast City Council received a total of $3,348,000 as subsidies on works for 1974-75. In addition, a special Treasury grant of $5,000,000 was set aside. That grant had no strings attached. The money could be spent by a shire wherever it wanted to spend it. That $5,000,000 was allocated on the basis of $1,500,000 for local authority main roads works, which would be shared expenditure, and $3,500,000 for straight-out grants to local authorities—non-repayable grants with no strings attached. That financial assistance helped much more than the R.E.D. scheme money. We must not knock the fact that R.E.D. scheme certainly kept many men employed, but the money was wasted on all sorts of unproductive stone-work and rock-work. Any money that is spent on something that is not productive is wasted.

In the 1975-76 programme, the Treasurer has set aside $30,000,000 for subsidies and $5,463,000 for direct grants, with no strings attached, to local authorities. It is significant that 40 per cent subsidy is paid by this Government on all sewerage projects. In addition it pays 15 per cent subsidy on normal permanent works and 33⅓ per cent on dam construction. They are called "subsidies" but they should be called "grants". They are grants to the local authorities. I ask the Minister to consider submitting to Cabinet that the name be changed. That money is not like the money Mr. Uren dishes out. He sends a letter to a local authority saying, "Here is a grant." It was printed in the newspapers that the Gold Coast City Council was given a grant by Mr. Uren. He gave us a grant of $750,000 to help with our sewerage. Of course, we found out from the small print that it was repayable at the bond rate of interest on the worst possible repayment terms.

Mr. Hanson: You knocked it back.

Mr. GIBBS: We did. We refused to take it because it was money we could not afford. In our area it would have taken the pedestal charge from about $80 up to about $150. After we hassled with Mr. Uren he offered us 30 per cent subsidy as sewerage backlog money. That is not too bad, but it is not nearly as good as what we can get from the State Government. The Federal Government should give the State Government the money to dish out.

Mr. Hinze: What did the Commonwealth Government give you in grants this year?

Mr. GIBBS: Nothing. Of course, nothing from nothing leaves nothing. The year before, it was the same—nothing. Next year it will probably be nothing again.

Mr. Burns: What did you get from the Liberal Government?

Mr. GIBBS: We know which side our bread is buttered on. There is the A.A.P. programme, this programme and that programme. The Federal Government is always saying what it is going to do. It is long on promises but short on results.

Mr. Burns interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member for Lytton has had an opportunity to make his speech.

Mr. GIBBS: He talks about air pollution at Lytton. With all the rubbish he carries on with, he causes more pollution than anyone else.

In my electorate the Advancetown Dam is under construction, and I am told that it is the biggest undertaking by any local authority in Australia. I am disturbed to learn that a Water Board has been set up and that my area may come within its jurisdiction. I ask the Minister to give special consideration to the Gold Coast and the southern portion of the Albert Shire, where there is no problem in the reticulation of water. The engineers and officers of the Local Government Department are doing a wonderful job in implementing the Advancetown scheme. When completed, the dam will solve the problem of water reticulation in my area and will also become a place where people can pleasantly spend their leisure time.

The Minister has taken the lead in the fight against pollution. He and his departmental officers have made a positive approach to overcoming the problem. In our local newspapers I have had articles published concerning litter on the highways. It is time that on-the-spot fines were introduced for people who make a mess on the highways.

The highway through my electorate is now in first-class condition. It has been restored completely by the Main Roads Department since the 1974 floods. I do not know where the department found the necessary finance, but the highway is now in beautiful condition and, with the grass alongside the road surfaces kept mown, it presents a picture. It is, however, spoiled by people whom I would term filthy fools—those who thoughtlessly throw rubbish out of their cars. It seems to be a case of "out of sight, out of mind." To overcome this problem, perhaps the Minister could institute a Filthy Fools Award of the Year to be presented to the worst litter bug on the Gold Coast. I have no doubt that it would be won by the member for Archerfield.

The Minister is continually upgrading legislation, much of which was introduced by his predecessor, Henry McKechnie. The introduction of standard building by-laws is worthy of special praise. Later I should like to see the introduction of standard subdivisional by-laws to do away with bad development. Much of the backlog in local government works programmes is due to past bad development, which was encouraged by the Labor Government prior to 1956. It

gave no incentive whatever to local authorities to upgrade their ordinances and by-laws. It will cost millions of dollars of ratepayers' money to catch up with this backlog. The problem is aggravated, of course, by rising prices, the escalation of costs and inflation.

It was interesting to hear the comments of the Leader of the Opposition concerning Brisbane Airport. Guess who is responsible for it—Charlie Jones! He would be the greatest at misleading the public. He makes half-statements and utters half-truths. Our Minister has to do his best to try to put the facts straight. I hope the Leader of the Opposition has a go at Charlie Jones, though I doubt it. He has never supported me or the Minister in our condemnation of Mr. Jones. Fancy him telling the Minister to have a look at the airport and the pollution problems there.

I agree that the airport should not be extended as proposed. When Tullamarine Airport was established, the Federal Government bought large tracts of land surrounding it and then sold the land to developers. I venture to suggest that the same thing will happen in Brisbane. People have urged the imposition of curfews on the arrival and departure of aircraft. Such curfews are in force at Brisbane Airport. But the situation is unreal, because tremendous advances are being made in air travel and it is not right that they should be hindered by curfews and similar restrictions. The local authority scene is becoming bigger and bigger. We must be very careful how we look after local authorities. They need more money from the Federal Government. It should come from taxation, through the State Governments, rather than being fed directly to local authorities; but it should be set aside precisely for them.

In 1975-76, the Gold Coast City Council will pay approximately 37 per cent of its general rate income in debt-servicing charges. In many other local authorities in Queensland the ratio is much higher. This problem will have to be looked at very closely to give local authorities a big income other than rates. We have just about reached the limit in how much we can take from people in rates.

Today, I read a Press release from the Treasurer which indicated that the decision of the Full Bench of the Industrial Commission which gave a 3.5 per cent increase in State awards will cost the Government $21,000,000 for the remainder of this financial year and $28,400,000 in a full year. Nobody minds people getting wage increases —inflation demands that wages keep up with the increase in the cost of living—but it is hard to think of finding an extra $21,000,000 without literally drawing a breath. And there are likely to be further increases if the inflation rate continues. Local authorities are in the same trouble. The effect will be devastating.

Last year the cost of one road in our area increased from $29,000,000 to $43,000,000. This means that the council has an unprecedented amount of work that it cannot carry out. We are doing only half the work we want to do; we are achieving only half results. The bread-and-butter works like sewerage are very important to the Albert Shire and the Gold Coast City Council. In Kingston, Daisy Hill, Beenleigh and many other places it will be impossible to overcome the backlog of work.

Luckily most shires and cities have up-to-date by-laws under which the developers provide everything. They even pay external water and sewerage charges. But is this fair? The people buying the land meet the whole bill and automatically pay high rates on their high valuations. The council does not have to spend anything in these areas other than to meet certain administrative and street-cleaning costs, and the cost of electricity for street lighting which the people have paid for already. The high rates paid by these people allow the council to do something for the older areas; they are really subsidising them. At least this has turned the tide of our sewerage and permanent works programmes. The cities and shires have only to catch up on the intermediate backlog of work to be able to spend much more money on parks, gardens, sports fields and other facilities that will improve the environment for the people.

I heard the honourable member for Lytton say that very few officers are engaged to police the Clean Air Act and the Clean Waters Act. The Albert Shire and Gold Coast areas have received wonderful service from these men. However, we could well try to oil the wheels between the local authorities and some Government departments. I am not picking on any department in particular, but some Government departments really hassle local authorities for months—and sometimes years. That makes the whole procedure expensive as well as making fools of many local authorities in a lot of ways.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AKERS (Pine Rivers) (3.35 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Estimates of the Departments of Local Government and Main Roads and to support the Minister who, contrary to the expectations of many people, is displaying concern and sensitivity in administering a portfolio which covers two of our most difficult departments. In this debate I shall comment on several aspects of local government and, as other honourable members have done, submit my shopping list for the Main Roads Department.

First of all, I must comment on the contribution made by the honourable member for Nudgee, who led the Opposition debate on these Estimates. He said that local government wants a stable financial basis and that it does not know where it is going. I am pleased to hear at last from a member of

the A.L.P. who understands what local government has been complaining about. It has been complaining about the actions of the Federal Government in its area improvement scheme, its sewerage backlog scheme and the other untold number of schemes, plans and systems that local authorities have to try to comprehend. They have a vague system of finance. They do not know when money will be available; it appears at odd times and must be spent immediately. At last one member of the A.L.P. understands this difficulty. I hope that he tells his friends in Canberra.

I support the honourable member for Albert, who commented on the funds that are made available by the State Government to local government as direct grants.

Mr. Houston: Do you believe in Federal grants to local government?

Mr. AKERS: I believe in Federal finance.

Mr. Hinze: As of right.

Mr. AKERS: I believe in Federal finance being made available to Queensland as of right, to be spent as the State Government decides.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. Hinze: Why don't you do something about it?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member for Bulimba will cease interjecting.

Mr. Houston: I was only arguing with the Minister.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow the honourable member to argue with the Minister.

Mr. AKERS: The presence of only one A.L.P. member in the Chamber indicates the lack of interest of that party in local government and main roads.

As the honourable member for Albert said, the Queensland Government makes direct grants to local government in the form of subsidies and has done so for many years. I agree with the honourable member for Albert that they should be called grants. As an example, I cite the Pine Rivers Shire, which I know well. Last financial year, the Government made $860,000 available as free money to this local authority. There were none of the grandiose Press releases to the effect that it would sewer Albany Creek, as was claimed in one case. In that case the money was a loan from the Federal Government which had to be repaid at the bond rate of interest over 30 years. There was no subsidy.

The wonderful grants, as the Federal Government refers to them, have lifted sewerage rates in the Pine Rivers Shire from $60 to $85. The subsidies from the State Government have resulted in the repayments being much lower, but all of the Federal money has to be paid back. Let there be some truth for once. The people of Queensland should be made aware that the State Government is assisting local government by making free grants to it. Those grants are made for the mundane but important matters such as sewerage, roads and swimming pools, and not for the airy-fairy matters that make the headlines.

I again refer to the vague system of the Federal Government in dealing with local government. Previously under the Commonwealth assistance roads programme, the system of local authority financing roads was simple. Now the system has been complicated by putting road works under seven different headings. They are miters, urban arterial roads, urban local roads, rural arterial roads, rural local roads, national highways and the maintenance and planning section. Someone in Canberra decides where a north-western local authority will spend its money and almost names the road on which the money must be spent. He says that a certain amount of money will be provided for a rural arterial road. In most shires provision is made for only one or two roads. Where the money will be spent is decided in Canberra, and the local people do not matter. The fact that the people here want money spent on a particular road is of no consequence, because it will be spent where someone in Canberra decrees.

To ease the conscience of Opposition members just a little, I must explain that the new system has made more money available to the Pine Rivers Shire. In fact last year it made $129,000 available compared with $75,000 in the previous year under the old scheme. That is laudable, but the money should still be made available in such a way that the people in the area concerned decide on which roads it should be spent.

I return to a consideration of the Main Roads Department. The Pine Rivers Shire desperately needs an increase in permanent works expenditure in its own district. All of the answers that I have been receiving over the years have been to the effect that a tremendous amount of money has been spent there on permanent works. But those permanent works consist of the Bald Hills-Burpengary deviation of the Bruce Highway. That is a road that will relieve main roads of traffic, but it will not relieve the council of the necessity of maintenance. It certainly does not help those who wish to drive from Strathpine to Samford or from Strathpine to Dayboro, or on any of the other roads that need construction. They are still rough and dirty roads, yet they are within 11 or 12 miles of the G.P.O. in Brisbane.

Mr. Tenni: Are they bitumen roads?

Mr. AKERS: No, they are not bitumen. They are completely unsealed. Little other than the work on the Bald Hills-Burpengary road has been done by way of permanent works in the Pine Rivers Shire in the last five years.

In a speech during the passage of a Bill amending the Local Government Act I referred to motor vehicle registration fees being spent entirely on main roads, with none of it being made available to local authorities. The people who pay these fees drive on shire council and city council roads, yet none of the money they pay in this way finds its way back to local authorities for the provision of roads. I again appeal to the Minister to make some of this finance available to local authorities. I know that local authorities were established in Queensland 100 years ago almost solely for road construction. Governments over the years have been loading them with more and more work, and local authorities have themselves asked for many of those responsibilities. Implementation of the Litter Act is such an example. But they all involve local authorities in added costs. The finance that was originally made available purely for road purposes now has to be spread over a much wider field. I implore the Minister to consider ways of making money available to local government in addition to the normal subsidies for construction of small roads that serve many people.

I have begun my shopping list, and I shall now deal with a few in detail. I have spoken in the Chamber before about the Sideling Creek bridge on the Petrie-Dayboro road. It is quite frightening to cross, yet it is within 12 or 13 miles of the Brisbane G.P.O. It is said to be a double-lane bridge. Every time I have complained about it I have been advised that it is a double-lane bridge; but, to a driver facing a 60 or 70 ton truck loaded with gravel hurtling towards him at about 60 miles an hour, it becomes in fact a single-lane bridge and he gets off it if he can. It is a long bridge, and it is dangerous. Every day 60 or 70 children cross it each way in school buses, and every day mothers and fathers take children to school across it in private cars.

Mr. Jensen: The council could put up a sign saying, "15 miles an hour when crossing the bridge."

Mr. AKERS: I'm afraid the honourable member does not know what he is talking about, because the bridge is on a main road and the council has no control over it.

Something must be done about this bridge very soon before someone is killed on it. Just recently in a very dangerous situation a slow-moving council loader was hit by one of these trucks doing between 40 and 50 miles an hour and was pushed back over the bridge. In answer to questions from me, the Minister for Police has supplied the number of accidents that have occurred there.

Another place that is potentially dangerous is the crossing of the Anabranch of the North Pine River.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: What about the Samford Valley?

Mr. AKERS: I will explain the Samford Valley to the honourable member. I have the opportunity to explain it because we are discussing the Estimates of the Department of Local Government. I will show him where he has gone wrong.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! The honourable member for Archerfield is not in his correct seat. If he wishes to interject, he must do so from his rightful seat.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I am taking my leader's place, Mr. Miller.

Mr. AKERS: The Anabranch bridge is on the Bruce Highway. It is a narrow two-lane bridge on a curve. The surface of the road is always broken and sooner or later someone will die in an accident on that bridge. There must be about six files in the Main Roads Department containing requests by residents of that district for the Bald Hills flats to be made flood-proof. The area between Strathpine and Bald Hills floods regularly. It is the main highway to the North Coast at present. I am continually advised that the problem will be overcome when the Bald Hills-Burpengary deviation is built. But it will not be overcome. Twenty or thirty thousand people living there will still be cut off every time it and the North Pine River flood. We must have some work done in that area, even if only two lanes are raised. The greatest problem for this urban area is flooding.

Many of my complaints are about the Bald Hills-Burpengary deviation, and it might appear that I am very much against it. I am not. My complaint is only about the method by which it is being built. Another problem it will create is the elimination of access for tourist traffic to the Alma Park Gardens and Zoo, which was built at a cost of something in excess of $500,000 by a very enterprising man, Mr. Bill Williams. He put a massive amount of effort into it and has advertised it all over the world. A tremendous number of tourists go to this park every year—last year of the order of 100,000. There is no other facility like this close to Brisbane.

Mrs. Kyburz: It is a beautiful spot.

Mr. AKERS: As the honourable member for Salisbury says, it is a beautiful spot, and it is getting better and better all the time.

Mr. Aikens: Have they got an S.P. shop there?

Mr. AKERS: No. Mr. Williams is an extremely honest man and he has created some real problems for people by standing up for his rights. This in turn has created some problems for him in getting things done. I again implore the Minister to have this situation investigated. On the North Coast road there will be an access about seven or eight miles before the zoo and

about three or four miles past it. Not one tourist would turn off that road to go into the park. As a result, this free-enterprise project will be destroyed by the actions of this Government. The Government Tourist Bureau is encouraging people to build tourist attractions; yet we will destroy this one by the construction of this bypass.

I must go outside my electorate to discuss another very important matter, and I hope the honourable member for Aspley will excuse me for doing so. Many of my constituents travel along Albany Creek Road through Aspley. This road is extremely rough. It is a disgrace that the Brisbane City Council allows a road to stay like this. Clem Jones has been saying, "We bitumened every road in Brisbane." I admit there is bitumen on it, but there are pot-holes about three feet deep and six feet wide. But only half a dozen residents live along the road, so the Brisbane City Council is not interested in it.

Our esteemed present Lord Mayor is the alderman for that area. He told people from Albany Creek who went to see him that he does not give a damn about that road because only four or five of his constituents live along it. He does not care about people who live outside the Greater Brisbane Area.

I implore the Minister to investigate whether Albany Creek Road can be regazetted as a main road. It was a main road, but it was transferred to the Brisbane City Council when the agreement was made for the State Government to take over the construction of freeways. It has not had one cent spent on it since then, judging by its appearance. The Lord Mayor has even tried to bypass it by building Beckett Road. However, Albany Creek Road is still there and motorists are still smashing the suspension of their cars on it. Someone will be killed there very soon, and it must be regazetted as a main road and repaired urgently.

Another question with which the Minister is familiar—I have mentioned it before, but I must raise it again—is: What is going to happen when the second stage of the Bald Hills-Burpengary freeway is constructed? I am informed that this will run out to the Redcliffe Road. For a year—until the third stage is constructed—everyone who lives in Kallangur will have motorists passing his door at 60 miles an hour. The freeway will feed into a small road, which means the traffic has to go back about three or four miles and make a sharp "U" turn or use a short-cut through residential areas. You know where the people in motor vehicles will go, Mr. Miller. They will use the short-cut and travel at 60 miles an hour, or probably faster, between the Kallangur school and its playground. Tremendous problems will be created.

Let me now deal with the road from Strathpine to Samford, about which the honourable member for Archerfield was very excited—I really do not know why. It is an extremely important road; it is a main road. It is another of the roads that I believe need reconstruction.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. AKERS: I gather from what the honourable member for Archerfield says about the Samford scheme that he is trying to discredit me. He must have shares in the Samford project, because I have been shown on television, in the newspapers and in other places as clearly opposing what is going on at Samford.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Do you deny categorically that you have shares in the Samford Valley development scheme?

Mr. Frawley: Of course he hasn't. I know he hasn't. I have checked up on him.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Wait a minute. I am asking Mr. Akers, not the member for "Maniac".

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order!

Mr. AKERS: The Minister came to Samford and was shown by the developer concerned land that the developer said he owned. Since then the Minister has been shown quite clearly that the developer does not own that land. The people who are involved in the development worry me considerably. They have not done any work; they have produced only one or two very minor subdivisions.

Mr. Neal: Does the honourable member for Archerfield have shares in it?

Mr. AKERS: I am sure that he must have shares in it. Anybody who tries to show that I am in favour of it must have shares in it, to discredit my argument against it.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I asked you a direct question earlier and you evaded it. Do you own land in the Samford Valley or have any shares in any business project in the Samford Valley?

Mr. AKERS: No, I do not have shares or own any land in the Samford Valley. At all stages, I have been trying to ensure that the Samford Valley is developed in the way in which it should be developed. I have never been opposed to development there. I have been opposed to the haphazard and sloppy proposal that has been put forward to put in 400 allotments without any water or sewerage. Because of that, I have received some publicity. I am sure that the honourable member for Archerfield must be trying to discredit my opposition to it so that he can make money out of it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.55 p.m.): It must be admitted by even the thick-skinned members of the A.L.P. that if the Whitlam Government is allowed to remain in power in Canberra and dole out the

money as it has been doling it out for roads of all sorts, taking into consideration the shocking inflationary spiral caused by the same Government, it will not be long before roads in Queensland, whether they be main roads, subsidiary roads, arterial roads or any other sort of road, will go back to the dirt roads, bush tracks and camel pads of the old days. People should realise just what part the Commonwealth Government has played and is playing in the deterioration of all types of roads in Queensland.

I wish to deal particularly with the administration of the Main Roads Department in this State. We have in charge of the Main Roads Department at the present time a very forthright Minister, who I think is showing some slight signs of being able to look after his department very well. He certainly is a forthright type of chap. If he has something to say, he will say it whether it is right or wrong. He still says it, and that is to his credit.

It is about time the Crown Law Office was instructed to draft laws that would enable the Main Roads Department to deal with those people who are destroying main roads almost as fast as the Minister can build them. I refer to those who run heavy transports egregiously overloaded purely for the purpose of increasing their profit. When such people are brought before the courts for an offence that might cause scores of thousands of dollars' worth of damage to the main roads and bridges of Queensland, they are fined a piffling amount. Many of them say, "Why shouldn't we take the risk? The odds are on our side of making an extra thousand dollars on this trip just by taking the risk of having to pay a $50 fine in the Magistrates Court."

I will point out how piffling some of the fines are and ask how we have to get over the argument put forward by the legal vultures in the Chamber. One of them is with us. I hope he is listening and that he will attempt to assist his Government to get over this problem. The other fellow is not here. Probably he is at the Supreme Court representing some poor unfortunate client and charging him $400 or $500 a day for doing it. The egregiously overloaded trucks tear along the roads and over the bridges and smash them up, but it is almost impossible to get a conviction against anybody because of a heavily overloaded truck smashing a bridge or damaging a road.

I will give one instance. A big firm in Townsville—Brambles—decided to take some stuff from Townsville to the North. I think it went to the Tablelands. Its truck was monstrously overloaded. A police motor-cyclist went with the truck. The load was wide and high, and the police motor-cyclist was instructed to ride ahead of the heavily overloaded vehicle to warn traffic coming in the opposite direction. A short while after the truck got over the very fine bridge across Crystal Creek, about 40 miles out of Townsville, it was discovered that the bridge was irreparably damaged. Scores of thousands of dollars' damage had been done to the bridge. Naturally the Main Roads Department tried to pin it on Brambles, but it couldn't. When the department couldn't pin it on Brambles, it got the best legal brains available to it in the Crown Law Office. The Crown Law Office said, "The police motor-cyclist should have been riding to the rear of the truck, not ahead of it. The mere fact that the truck went over a bridge that previously was undamaged, and that after it went over it the bridge was monstrously damaged is not evidence that will be accepted by any court. The court must have it proved to its satisfaction that that truck actually did the damage to the bridge."

Mr. Lowes: You can't tell which straw broke the camel's back.

Mr. AIKENS: No, I don't suppose we can; nor do I suppose we can tell which law book the honourable member found that silly little principle of law in. It is, of course, based on an old axiom that we heard in our school days. I have no doubt that if the honourable member for Brisbane continues to go on as he is, we will find him and the honourable member for Rockhampton playing the new game of snakes and ladders that has been invented by the honourable member for Rockhampton, at so much a time.

If the police motor-cyclist had been riding behind the truck, he might have given evidence that would be accepted by a court. However, as he was riding ahead of the truck he could not give such evidence. No other vehicle was on the road at the time, and the bridge was found to be in a damaged condition by a railway fettler only five or 10 minutes after the truck had passed over it. The bridge was not damaged before the truck went over, but it was damaged after the truck had passed over it. I suppose that the legal vulture from Brisbane will tell us that, although the truck was the last straw, no-one can tell which straw, or which truck, broke the bridge. That is the type of thing we would expect from a legal man, and that is why I urged the Minister to get the Crown Law Office to close up such silly little legal loop-holes.

I have spent many years in local government. For six years I was on the Cloncurry Shire Council, and for three of those years I was deputy chairman. Next, I spent 13 years on the Townsville City Council, of which time five years were spent as deputy mayor. I served on the local authority in Townsville with honour and distinction. I know that, if an alderman or a councillor is sincere, his job is much harder than that of a member of Parliament. The aldermen and councillors are closer to the people, they receive all sorts of complaints and are the butt of a host of pinpricks. In the middle of the night, they are awakened by complaints of anything from a leaking sanitary pan to a cracked garbage-bin lid.

There are, unfortunately, many local authorities that seem to have gone haywire, and the Townsville City Council is one. In the olden days, local authorities attended to roads, kerbing and channelling, water and sewerage reticulation and health matters in general. Now they employ welfare officers. What on earth for? Various other Government and semi-governmental departments have welfare officers attached to them, yet the Townsville City Council also employs a welfare officer. What such an officer in Townsville would do, I do not know. Nearly every member of Parliament is an unpaid and unofficial welfare officer, and most members, if they do the job I do, do a damned good job. In addition to welfare officers, councils appoint officers concerned with arts and crafts, culture and the exhibition of pictures that would astound anyone. Ratepayers' money and Government subsidies are being wasted on matters that should not be handled by local authorities. The sooner the local authorities get back to doing the job they were set up to do, the better it will be for all concerned.

One aspect of civic growth in Townsville worries me greatly. I do not know whether it is apparent in other local authority areas; I hope it isn't. In Townsville there are scores and scores of little concrete boxes, at ground level, joined together in rows of anything from five to 10, for each of which the landlord is paid up to $45 a week rent. The area at the front of each little box is concreted, and there the tenants park their cars and do their washing. They live in the little centre concrete boxes. Behind each there is a rotary clothes hoist. Behind the clothes lines is another row of little concrete boxes. In some Townsville streets there are groups of 11 or 12 concrete boxes. If the average density of population is still 4½ residents to a house, 45 to 47 people are living in rows of concrete boxes joined together, where once there were only two houses with nine people.

I do not know if this is the position in other parts of the State. If the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads has the time and inclination, I shall show him these plague spots on the fair city of Townsville the next time he is there. They are the forerunners of slum areas that will put the slum areas of Singapore and Bangkok right out of the picture. Where there are now two residences on two 32-perch allotments, very shortly there will be 11 or 12 concrete boxes joined together, with 45 to 50 people living in them. I do not know if the Minister favours that sort of thing, but that is what is happening.

Within this concentration of people, each family in a concrete box has a car, and some have two. Imagine trying to go to sleep in the early hours of the morning when these people go to work and roar off in bottom gear. Imagine the noise that they create in the early hours of the morning when they are tearing back in top gear with brakes and tyres squealing! Just try to think of living alongside them! I do not condemn the people who live in those concrete boxes. That is the only way they can get a roof over their heads, and they are paying up to $45 a week in rent. It is a shocking, monstrous situation. It goes right back to the dark ages, to the days when we had little alleyways between rows of houses, with the people throwing urine, excreta and everything else out the window onto the road. It will not be long before we revert to that state in Townsville.

Townsville has a sports reserve, which has been the subject of a considerable number of questions asked by the honourable member for Townsville and me. It has also been the cause of considerable discussion, conjecture, debate and confrontation in Townsville. It is a standing disgrace to a city the size of Townsville, with a population of 85,000, that it should have a sports reserve which is a disgrace to an outback village like Bulimba or Pine Rivers. Since cyclone "Althea" it has had no grandstand for the people. They have to sit out in the boiling sun. Quite a number of letters and articles have appeared recently in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" about sun cancer. Unless a person ties something round his head or uses an umbrella (and if he does that someone throws a beer can in protest)—while watching a sports function on the Townsville sports reserve, he is unprotected from the sun. The reserve can only be described as a haven for those pitching to get sun cancer.

The reserve is held by a trust, and I know that the trust is not controlled by the Minister. But I appeal to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads to approach the Minister for Lands to revoke or abolish the trust and transfer the sports reserve to the Townsville City Council.

Dr. Scott-Young: Hear, hear!

Mr. AIKENS: I am glad to have the support of the honourable member for Townsville on this matter.

We will get nowhere until the sports reserve is controlled by some organisation with which the people can deal. At the present time the trust is set up in such a way that the members appointed to it by various organisations are not required to report back even to the organisations that appoint them. I believe that one representative has not attended any meetings of the trust. So it is that we have that situation in Townsville which should be rectified. The best way to rectify it is to cancel the sports reserve trust and have the Minister for Local Government consult with the Minister for Lands on transferring the sports reserve to the people of Townsville and, of course, to the body who controls their affairs—the Townsville City Council.

I pay a tribute to all of the people who serve in the local authorities. Many people believe that local government is the springboard into politics, and sometimes it is.

It was the springboard from which I dived into politics. I was the most reluctant politician to enter this Parliament. I was deputy mayor of Townsville and had no intention of entering Parliament.

When I was in the A.L.P., I did not have a bolter's chance of getting into politics, anyway, because in those days the A.L.P. was controlled by the A.W.U., which was tyranny personified. I was not persona grata with Tom Dougherty who was the big boss of the A.W.U.

Mr. Hanson: Years ago many railwaymen came into politics.

Mr. AIKENS: Very odd ones. I should like the honourable member to name one railwayman who came into politics and I will name 10 shearers, 14 wool-pressers, 16 cane-cutters and a number of dag-pickers. If he can name one railwayman, I will name 10 to 15 A.W.U. members. This is a little off beat but let me inform the honourable member for Port Curtis that, when I entered Parliament, no matter what profession, trade or calling a person followed or which union ticket he held, as soon as he entered Parliament as a member of the A.L.P., he was granted a complimentary A.W.U. ticket so that Fallon's boys could keep him under the whip. I should like the honourable member for Port Curtis to tell me the name of one member of Parliament when I entered Parliament in 1944 who was not either a fully fledged A.W.U. ticket-holder or the holder of a complimentary A.W.U. ticket.

Mr. Hanson: There were about five of them who were A.W.U. ticket-holders.

Mr. AIKENS: Like——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member for Townsville South to return to the Estimates.

Mr. AIKENS: I was innocently led astray by the honourable member for Port Curtis.

I pay a tribute to the people who serve this State as aldermen and councillors. I know there is always a grizzle about them. The Minister has raised the amount per year that they can draw. I do not know exactly what it is now but it is round $1,000 or $1,500. When I was an alderman of the Townsville City Council, the maximum was £100 a year and I had to attend 100 meetings to get it. I did not get it simply because I was an alderman. When I acted as mayor, which I did on many occasions, my munificent stipend was £18 a fortnight. It was nearly as bad as when I came into this lousy joint and received £19/3/0 a fortnight plus £50 a year allowance, the same as metropolitan members. Of course they are sneaking up on us again. They will leave all the country members for dead shortly, anyhow, but that does not matter.

Let me stress the points I have made. I should like the Minister for Local Government to have a look at these little concrete boxes being built in Townsville which are potentially slums and also to have a look at the sports reserve. Above all I adjure him to consult the Parliamentary Counsel and tell him—not ask him—to frame laws that will close up all the little piffling loop-holes through which the legal vultures are protecting the big transport drivers who are smashing our roads and bridges with impunity. Until that is done we will not have any roads that are worth travelling on.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (4.15 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure and, I think, a great deal of knowledge that I rise to speak to the Local Government and Main Roads Estimates. I have been in local government for just on six years. First of all, I was a councillor for a division of the Mareeba Shire Council for three years and have been chairman of that council for the past three years. I congratulate the Minister on the way he has handled his portfolio during the past 12 months. He is a man who at times is rather like a bulldog. He is a man with whom one can have a fight, but he is straight and one with whom a person knows where he stands when he asks a question. I think that that is a very important attribute.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Harrold Jacobs and Mr. Bill Hansen who have been towers of strength to me since I have been chairman of the Mareeba Shire Council and a member of this Assembly. They are two whom I respect and to whom I look for advice. Not long ago I had the pleasure of having Mr. Hansen in my area on inspections. This was to be followed by a visit by the Minister. Unfortunately he is a very busy man, and he has not yet made the trip. I hope that he will be in my electorate in the near future so that I can show him the problems experienced in the Far North in an electorate that was represented for many years by Labor and forgotten.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Why did you rat on the A.L.P.?

Mr. TENNI: I have some brains. Apparently Opposition members still do not have any brains, nor will they ever have any. They should not blame me for their mistakes.

Local government has problems, and they have been caused by the Opposition's mates in the socialist Government in Canberra. One particular problem has arisen as the result of the silly R.E.D. scheme introduced to this country. I do not know whether the Committee is aware of what is happening in shires such as mine, and no doubt in most other shires today, since the cessation of the R.E.D. scheme. Goodness knows when we will be paid for the work that we did under that scheme. Payments are now four or

five months behind, and this position has nothing to do with the present political problem in Canberra.

During the time of the R.E.D. scheme, more foremen, overseers, deputy engineers, draftsmen and other employees were engaged because they were needed to carry out the work then made available. Now the shire is left with very little work and many men, and a considerable number will have to be retrenched. This is no doubt the general situation of local authorities throughout the country, and the thanks for it go to Gough Whitlam and his socialists such as the Labor members in this Parliament who support the Whitlam Government in this retrenchment of men. It is very unfortunate indeed.

Mr. McKechnie: Don't you think that if Gough Whitlam was fair dinkum he would have given the R.E.D. money to local authorities without strings attached?

Mr. TENNI: I am sure he would have, but he has never been fair dinkum in his life. So how could he have been fair dinkum with the R.E.D. scheme? If one feeds a fowl for six months and then takes its tucker from it, it dies. Similarly if local government is fed with R.E.D. money for six months and that finance is then taken from it, there must be unemployment. It is about time Opposition members woke up to that fact. Unemployment has been created by the attitude of the Federal Government to its silly R.E.D. scheme.

I am not wholly critical of the R.E.D. scheme, because at least it was the means of getting a little work done. Admittedly my shire employed many who were virtually unemployable, which means that we got about 20 per cent of the value of the money spent. But at least we got something. We are now in trouble because we have an oversupply of men and equipment. Thanks to the Main Roads Department, I was successful, by the use of special funds, is getting a complete gang, with a foreman, employed on the Cooktown Road. This helped the Mareeba Shire Council to unload some of its staff and equipment. It helped to keep men in employment, and it helped keep the Cooktown Road open throughout the wet season. I must thank the Minister and his department for their assistance in making this work available for the staff of the Mareeba Shire Council.

Another big problem facing councils today is the Gestapo stand-over tactics of unions such as the A.W.U., as shown by it in its camping equipment requirements in the Mareeba Shire. Some six or eight months ago the Mareeba Shire Council had to throw away its 6 ft. camp beds because the A.W.U. demanded that it supply 6 ft. 3 in. camp beds, even though the same men slept the night before in 6 ft. beds. This is the type of thing that is happening with all unions. They are only increasing costs and naturally the councils are forced to pass on these increased costs to the ratepayers. Union members are ratepayers themselves, but they are too stupid to see it that way. They are led by the nose—in many cases by very pink, if not red, union leaders throughout the country today. They will be the ruination of this country.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Would you suggest that the A.W.U. is a red militant union?

Mr. TENNI: No; but it is about the only union that is not. I think the honourable member's union is led by them, isn't it? I think the A.W.U. is pretty clear.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Which union is that?

Mr. Gibbs: The Communist union.

Mr. TENNI: The honourable member for Albert is right there. One thing I am very happy with is the co-operation between the Department of Local Government and the Department of Main Roads. This is very important because they do work hand in hand. We in the Far North get the best of co-operation from the Main Roads Department in Brisbane and its local engineer in Cairns. We could not wish for anything better and are very happy with that co-operation. We are also very happy with the co-operation we get at all times from Mr. Jacobs and his department. I would like the Minister to pass on my thanks to his departmental heads for their co-operation with the Mareeba Shire Council, and with all shire councils, as far as I know.

One problem we have as a shire is the issuing of new sets of by-laws. I know very well that quite a few others have the same problem. I have spoken to the Minister and Mr. Jacobs about this. It is a big problem and I do not know what the Minister is going to do about it. The Government Printer can do only so much work and I think the Minister will have to consider getting outside printers to make up the plates and have them ready for the printing by the Government Printer. The Minister is going to have to do better than issue three sets of by-laws a year; it should be more like a minimum of eight or nine sets. Somehow or other this will have to be pushed ahead and I ask the Minister to look at it very seriously and arrange some way of issuing these sets of by-laws more promptly than is the case at present.

Another point that worries me at the moment is the non-receipt of money from the Grants Commission. All councils need money, but as yet the Federal Government has not come good with the Grants Commission cheques. Perhaps honourable members opposite will be able to tell me when we can expect them.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Next week.

Mr. TENNI: I was told that five weeks ago.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: You have my word on that.

Mr. TENNI: I was told that about five weeks ago, too.

That just about covers all I want to say about local government. The next subject I wish to raise is the problem of roads in my electorate. I come back to what I said a while ago: honourable members know that my electorate was controlled by Labor for many, many years, and they can imagine the state of the roads in the area in general. I must admit that a great amount of work has been done there since 7 December and I congratulate the Minister for his efforts over the past 10 months. I look forward to a greater allocation of funds and more work being done in the area, particularly after the inspection which I know the Minister intends making with me and the councils in the area in the very near future.

The first road I want to mention is what we call the Captain Cook Highway, which is the Cairns-Mossman road. I believe something like $6,833 was contributed by the Cairns City Council towards the maintenance of that road over the past 12 months and $64,495 was spent by the Douglas Shire Council. Although it is narrow, it is a good road and has tremendous tourist potential. It is one of the most magnificent drives that one could possibly take along the coastline in the Far North. The road is in urgent need of widening or the provision of passing areas for the sugar trucks and other large transport vehicles that cart supplies to and from Mossman. Requests have been made through me, as a member of this Assembly, and by the Mossman Mill in the past six weeks for widening of the road. I plead with the Minister to look very closely at this problem because of the serious hold-ups that are occurring in the movement of traffic to and from Mossman.

Large sugar trucks use the roads every 20 or 25 minutes, and they slow down the general traffic considerably. The truck drivers are very courteous and would like to pull over, but there is no room. They have made places themselves on the dirt shoulders of the road to allow other traffic to get through. Perhaps the Main Roads engineer in the area could look at the problem. In my opinion, it would not be a big job to construct passing areas in which the truck drivers could get their vehicles off the road. I seek the Minister's co-operation in an endeavour to overcome the slowing down of traffic that now takes place.

I am also worried about the Mowbray River bridge on the Cairns-Mossman Road. I understand that it is to be completely redecked in the next dry season. I presume that will be in this financial year and that work will begin perhaps at the end of March or early in April. The construction of a concrete bridge should be considered seriously because of the volume of traffic using the road. It should be borne in mind that there is no sea, rail or air transport, and everything has to go by road. The cost of maintaining wooden bridges on the Cairns-Mossman Road is very high. I suggest that consideration should be given to providing a pre-stressed concrete bridge, or something solid, to replace the existing wooden-decked bridge.

As the Minister is aware, the Cairns-Mareeba Road was constructed during the Second World War—I think in about 1943—by the Civil Construction Corps and the Americans, and very little has been done to the road other than resealing and general maintenance. At present, anyone who is inclined towards seasickness will become sick on that road. It is in a deplorable state. It is full of hollows and humps, and it is virtually impossible for a driver to hold his vehicle on the road at any speed. It certainly is not possible to do 60 miles an hour in safety, which is the speed limit on the road. It is very narrow and has bad shoulders. The Main Roads Department did spend a bit of money last year on widening the road in certain places, but not sufficient work was done on it. I ask the Minister to consider the situation.

I appreciate that work on the road was to begin last year and that so many miles were to be done each year over the next 10 years. But because our favourite gentleman, Mr. Jones, the real socialist, the bloke who cannot lie straight in bed, has withdrawn funds from rural arterial, rural local and beef roads, the work has automatically fallen behind schedule. However, the stage is being reached when the State Government will have to ignore Mr. Jones and raise funds to enable some work to be carried out on roads such as this.

As honourable members are aware, Mr. Jones has put all the money into national highways. My electorate is not even bordered by a national highway, and if I have to wait for money from Mr. Jones I will not have any roads in my electorate after the next one or two wet seasons. I ask the Minister to consider making finance available for the construction of roads that do not go anywhere near national highways. Mr. Jones has stopped the national highway on the southern side of Cairns and my electorate begins on the northern side of that city. I have nothing to gain from the so-called national highways that the socialist Mr. Jones in Canberra is talking about; but I have a great deal to lose because he has ripped money from the rural arterial, rural local and beef roads. Therefore, it is very important that my electorate should receive a bigger allocation of funds for these roads.

Mr. McKechnie: The A.L.P. has no feeling for the Far North at all, has it?

Mr. TENNI: The honourable member is completely right. The A.L.P. has no feeling whatever for country people in general. The honourable member for Archerfield more or less admits that. All the A.L.P. does is look after the cityites. That is correct, isn't it, Mr. Hooper?

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. TENNI: Thank you very much. They kid themselves they do, but they do not.

The other road I am very concerned about is the Rex Highway section that Mr. Hansen inspected. That seven miles of dirt road requires immediate work. Certainly it needs bitumen. No one would dream that a road so close to a city would be as bad as that part of the Rex Highway. Its condition is deplorable. I know that the Minister and Mr. Hansen are giving sympathetic consideration to the bitumen-surfacing of that section.

I thank the Minister for the two mile of bitumen surface he intends putting on the road between Maryfarms and Mt. Molloy. That is another very bad stretch of road. That is the type of work the Barron River electorate is now seeing. It never experienced that sort of thing when it was under Labor control.

I thank the Main Roads Department for the allocation of money for work on the Daintree Road. Widening on half of the road has been carried out. I should like to see the other half widened, followed by gravelling, and perhaps next year an 18 ft. strip of bitumen.

In the Barron River electorate we are not very interested in national highways or main-road specifications. If we have to wait for roads to be brought up to national highway or main road standard throughout the electorate, with the amount of finance being made available from the socialist Government in Canberra we will be riding on rough old gravel roads for a long time to come. We would prefer to have a reasonable, all-weather, bitumen-surface road, We do not mind if it has a few more bends and kinks in it than the roads around Brisbane and the road from here to the Gold Coast. We want roads with a trafficable surface, not like some of the roads we have now where a car can't be held on the road. There is no gravel on some of them. It is more important for us to have a reasonable, all-weather road than a road of national highway standard. I ask the Minister to just give us a road that is reasonable to drive on. That is all we request of him.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. TENNI: I don't know what you're saying. You're not speaking up. There is something wrong with you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to address the Chair.

Mr. TENNI: I am sorry, Mr. Miller.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. K. J. Hooper: That's a reflection on the Chair. You should withdraw it.

Mr. TENNI: What's a reflection on the Chair? I think he is a funny boy. He is a really funny sort of fellow.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not need the assistance of the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. TENNI: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

Mr. Hinze: He is as far Left as he can get.

Mr. TENNI: Somebody told me the other night that he was more Left than left—if you can work out what that is, Mr. Miller. Anyway, that's his business. I am glad it is he that is that way, not me.

I congratulate the Minister on his efforts in both facets of his portfolio of Minister for Local Government and Main Roads. I congratulate his officers. He has a marvellous staff to back him. I look forward over the next two years to the support and backing I know I will get from the Minister. I look forward to the roads in the Barron River electorate being improved to the standard required by the people in that electorate.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (4.35 p.m.): The debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads is probably as good a time as any to raise the matter of planning throughout the State. The Government does seem to have a fragmented approach towards planning generally. I find it difficult, as I am sure the average layman in the street finds it difficult, to understand what part the various Government departments play in planning in this State.

For example, the Minister presenting these Estimates administers the Local Government Act, the City of Brisbane Act and the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act, and we look to him for supervision of the City of Brisbane Town Plan when it eventually becomes law. In addition, however, the Co-ordinator-General's Department seems to play an important role in planning, for example, in the current Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation. Already the team of technical experts carrying out that investigation have compiled a number of reports, and although they are concerned with planning they are under the control of the Premier's Department. As well, the portfolio of the Minister for Survey, Valuation, Urban and Regional Affairs would seem to impinge on planning. Furthermore, the Lands Department has a major say in the implementation of land development policies. It also exercises direct control over the development of leasehold land, and recently it has been engaged in in-depth consultation with the Federal Department of Urban and Regional Development in relation to the planning and development of land for housing. The Lands Department is, therefore, another department that has a responsibility in planning. Consequently, one wonders who is in charge of what and where we are going.

Mr. Hinze: When I reply to you I'll leave you in no doubt as to who is in charge of town-planning in Queensland at this particular time. You'll be left in no doubt whatever.

Mr. LANE: I thank the Minister; that is exactly the type of statement we want to hear. Everyone in Queensland should know exactly where he stands.

My approach to planning is an old-fashioned one. I believe that our local government structure throughout Queensland is a very good one, based as it is on the democratic political election of local authorities. I am very happy to know that town-planning and the responsibility for over-all planning lie in the hands of people who are elected to office for three-year terms. This system is a very good one, and one that should continue. I would be most happy if the Local Government Department assumed major responsibility for planning, particularly urban planning, as it affects people. I will be heartened if, in his reply, the Minister tells us that he holds that responsibility.

As I have said, the Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation is being conducted by a group of technical officers, who are endeavouring to tie together all the loose ends in the area of planning and to compile all their recommendations in one report. The largest part of the Moreton Region is that area under the control of the Brisbane City Council, namely, the Greater Brisbane Area. I hope that the report will be made available to the Minister and to the Local Government Department so that it can be considered by them in arriving at decisions affecting land use in the Greater Brisbane Area. The land-use problem in the Greater Brisbane Area is indeed large.

One of the findings of the technical people associated with this study is that by the year 2000 the estimated population of the Moreton Region will be between 900,000 and 1,200,000. That represents an increase of as many as 800,000 people. The Government must be ready to meet the challenge. Plans must be prepared by the best, and most highly qualified, people in a properly integrated way. The study has also shown that, in the area available, Greater Brisbane can accommodate only a further 100,000 people. That leaves about 700,000 people to be accommodated outside the Greater Brisbane Area. We can look forward to more urban sprawl. If the present growth rate continnues, we are told that only about six years' supply of subdivided land remains in the Brisbane City Council area, with about five years' supply in the Moreton Region between here and the North Coast and about two years' supply, on the present growth rate, in the Southern sector which takes in as far south as the New South Wales border. It averages out at only eight years' land supply in the region.

This land will have to be serviced with many facilities, and an adequate water supply is essential. At this stage we are ill-prepared in decision-making on domestic and industrial water supplies for this area by the year 2000. Decisions will have to be made fairly soon on where the additional water supplies are to be situated.

A few years ago, a report was prepared by a senior officer in the Minister's department on the water resources of this part of Queensland. The report made several recommendations, one of which was that a dam be constructed on the South Pine River. But no decision has been made by the Government on whether that will or will not proceed. There is a great deal of uncertainty because decisions have not been made on where the water supplies will come from by the year 2000.

I am concerned about our fragmented approach to planning. If Queensland is to have a Department of Urban and Regional Affairs, perhaps it should have a greater say in planning. I do not suggest that local authorities should be ignored. As a traditionalist, I believe that they have a very important part to play. They have a responsibility to the people. The councillors or aldermen are answerable to the people, just as the Brisbane City Council alderman will be answerable to the people on 27 March next year. On that date they will face the test of the popular vote. They will have to answer for the town plan prepared under the direction of the Brisbane City Council. They will have to answer for what it contains.

Mr. Jensen: It will have to be approved by the Minister, won't it?

Mr. LANE: I thank the honourable member for Bundaberg for his interjection. He has been indoctrinated by the A.L.P. propaganda line that is being pedalled around this city. I thank him for introducing that factor into the debate, because it is exactly what I intended to raise. What concerns me is that the Labor aldermen in the Labor-controlled Brisbane City Council will attempt—I think they have already done so—to escape responsibility for the City of Brisbane Town Plan.

Mr. Akers: They are passing the buck.

Mr. LANE: They hope to pass the buck to the Minister for Local Government. Although they have received many thousands of objections, they have passed the plan, without amendment, to the Minister for Local Government. It now sits on his departmental plate.

Mr. Jensen: He does nothing about it.

Mr. LANE: That is quite unkind. He has a number of very capable officers who have studied the town plan in depth.

Mr. Jensen interjected.

Mr. LANE: I am talking about who is responsible for the Brisbane Town Plan. The responsibility rests very firmly on the shoulders of the Brisbane City Council Labor

aldermen, who are colleagues of the honourable member for Bundaberg. I thank him for raising their plight so that it can be debated. I hope that other metropolitan members deal with this matter.

In March next year, when the council election campaign is on, I will be standing on the back of a truck in the many suburbs in which I move, telling the people just who is responsible for the Brisbane Town Plan. The Minister is very conscious of the fact that the responsibility for the plan rests with the Labor aldermen and not himself. He has merely a supervisory role to play in this matter. He will not allow them to pass the buck to him politically, nor will he allow them to make him responsible for the sins that are in the plan—and there are many hundreds of them.

In March next year he will not allow them to say publicly, "The Brisbane Town Plan is not our responsibility. It was prepared without our knowledge by an obscure body known as the City of Brisbane Town Planning Advisory Committee. It was given to us the day before it had to be displayed. We did not have a chance to look at it. We placed it on display for the public to look at it. It is not our town plan. We sent the plan and the 30,000 objections to the Minister."

That will be the tactic that the Labor aldermen will try to use. They will try to pass the buck to the Minister. They hope that he will clean up the mess for them, and that in March next year they will be able to point the finger at him and his political colleagues and say, "It was Mr. Hinze who was responsible for this dreadful town plan. It was Mr. Hinze who drew a 90-metre line back from the river frontages between the William Jolly Bridge and the Hawthorne ferry. It was Mr. Hinze who imposed the seven-year rule on non-conforming uses." That is the blame they will try to shelve onto the Minister and, indirectly, onto the shoulders of the Liberal Party and National Party candidates on 27 March next year. The residents of Brisbane are not just that bloody stupid! I suggest that they will not fall for this nonsense.

Mr. Akers: They have had their chance to fix it.

Mr. LANE: Yes, they had their chance to assist in its preparation. They must be a dreadful mob of political incompetents administratively if they allowed a person to pore over a chart downstairs, drawing lines over the wards they represent, yet not investigate week by week what was going on and bring to the knowledge of the technical officers any local factors that affected their constituents—the ratepayers and citizens. That is what they would have us believe—that it was given to them a day before it had to be displayed publicly, and that they had no say in it. If they were incapable of having any say in a document that was being prepared under their administration, they should not be on the job. On 27 March next year, because they are incompetent, a lot of them will not be on the job.

I know that there are many who are incapable of understanding the contents of the town plan. In fact, there are two or three who are quite incapable of reading the English language, let alone understanding anything else. Even when 29,000 people told them what was wrong, they took no notice, because that was written in terms that required average intelligence to understand. It was too much for them. They are politically incompetent, and incompetent as aldermen. They should be kicked out, and I am confident that the people of Brisbane will do that next year.

The problem of planning is bigger than the problem in only the Greater Brisbane area. A proposal has been adopted that planning in depth be undertaken on a regional basis—in the case of Brisbane, on the basis of the boundaries of the Moreton region. Work along these lines is being done in the current Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation now being undertaken. Probably some of the recommendations of the report that will follow that investigation will cut across some of the recommendations of local authorities. Each local authority has been invited to make submissions and consult with the officers concerned, and I know that many shire councillors, particularly from areas outside Brisbane such as Redland, Beaudesert and Landsborough, have made time to have discussions with the professional officers who are carrying out this study.

The big question that will be asked is whether this plan should have such overriding authority that it will lay down what local authorities should include in their town plans. It is a very serious question, and I am sure that the Minister has it very much in mind. He knows that these investigations are almost complete, and it is a question that he and his Cabinet colleagues will, in the first instance, have to face up to. I know that he has been in the office looking over the shoulders of these officers to see what they are doing and generally maintaining a personal supervision over their studies. I am sure that he has very much in mind the big decision that he and Cabinet will have to make.

The matter will then come before us, and we will have to decide whether there should be a new planning concept on a regional basis, and whether such a plan should have overriding authority over town plans. At that time, we will all have to face up to the question and give an answer. I look forward to reading the report, which I hope will become available as soon as possible.

I personally have some reservations about regionalisation. I can see that much will depend on its aims. The aims of Labor in Government in Canberra are blatantly

political. Ours, I hope, are to allocate resources more usefully and reduce wastage. There is no doubt that the development of regions as proposed by the Labor Government amounts to a change in the political system. If there is any confused thinking on the divisions between the Government parties and the Labor Party, it results from the failure to recognise that the concept of regionalism can be used to achieve quite different and separate objectives. There is in fact a vast difference in approach.

(Time expired.)

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (4.55 p.m.): I am pleased to enter the debate for a few reasons, some of which concern my area and some of which concern the Minister. I say at the outset that I feel sure that the Minister and his departmental heads will be rather sick of the debate before it is finished, especially with every member representing a city electorate getting up and having a smack at the Brisbane City Council. But I suppose they have heard this over the past three years and can take it. I think they will ignore most of it; but they have my sympathies because they are here. I think the situation should be looked at as a whole. I do not want to cop this week after week, whether it is in the debate on Matters of Public Interest or the debate on the Estimates of a department. I am very sorry for some of the Minister's departmental heads because they have the bother of taking all this rubbish down. In the same vein, I too am sick and tired of listening to the arguments between the Minister and Mr. Jones week after week. All city and shire councillors are heartily sick of it, too, because they cannot rely on the Minister, as far as I can gather, or on Mr. Jones.

Mr. Hinze: You want to add your 20c worth.

Mr. JENSEN: No, I will back the Federal Government on what it says it has given this Government. From what I have read in the newspapers, even some of the Minister's men have said that the money was spent down here on highways and not in the country areas—something for which the Minister blames the Federal Government time and time again.

Mr. Hinze: If you've got any intelligence or if you can hear—I have refuted that in this Chamber.

Mr. JENSEN: The Minister might have refuted it, but I am just saying that everybody is heartily——

Mr. Hinze interjected.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not believe the Minister, and I am heartily sick and tired of him rising here every morning to answer a question about local government or Main Roads affairs and repeating the same rubbish every day. Why doesn't he get down to facts and put things in perspective?

Mr. Hinze: If Jones and Crean and Cairns and all the rest of them keep telling lies, I will refute it on the floor of this Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: I am very pleased that you have entered——

Mr. Hinze: You're weak.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: Mr. Hewitt, you are not only one of the best debaters in the Chamber, but one of the best chairmen—the best I have seen. You put some of these people in their right place.

I will not go into that further. We get that all the time. We know how the Minister comes back with his powerful voice and tries to take all the credit for everything that is being done. But let us get back to the Department of Local Government and how the Ministers change over the years. I remember Wally Rae, one of the Minister's predecessors——

Mr. Hinze: The Agent-General in London.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, a very nice chap and someone who wanted to do something about local government. He was in Bundaberg about five years ago and said, "These small councils will have to go out; they are too costly." He said this in the Bundaberg Council office to the mayor and the chairmen and engineers of the Woongarra and Gooburrum Shire Councils. He said, "It won't be too long before we will have to do something about small councils; they can't carry on." But what did I read in the newspaper the other day? The Minister said, "We can't do anything about these small shire councils unless they ask to be amalgamated." I have a cutting here from the "Telegraph" under the heading "Shire merger bid"—

> "Roma Town Council has asked Gatton Shire Council to support a move at the Local Government Conference for amalgamations of some councils."

Some of these councils in the West want to amalgamate, but, while we get some councils asking to be amalgamated, some others are not interested. They are big frogs in a little puddle. The Minister was one, and, like him, the rest of these shire councillors will not amalgamate unless they are forced to. Wally Rae was going to do something about it. Of course, he was pushed over to the Department of Lands, and when he wanted to do something about it——

Mr. Goleby: Have you ever investigated what happens with an amalgamation of shires?

Mr. JENSEN: We can argue these things later. I do not have time now. I was just saying how the portfolio changes. When Wally Rae was Minister, he said this would have to happen. The present Minister says, "Not unless they ask for it." Do you expect, Mr. Hewitt, that any chairman of a

shire council will ask for amalgamation of shire areas when he is a little king in his own area? The Minister was one.

When Wally Rae was transferred to the Lands portfolio, he wanted to do something about buying land for homes for the people. Of course, that was knocked on the head, too, when he tried to do something worth while. Wally was sent over to London as Agent-General because he too was a good bloke. He was going to do something for the people.

Mr. Hinze: You will accept his hospitality when you go to London representing the A.L.P.

Mr. JENSEN: I will accept the Minister's hospitality when he comes to Bundaberg and does something up there.

Let me get back to the amalgamation of councils. In Bundaberg, the Bundaberg City Council has its office about 150 yards from the post office. The office of the Gooburrum Shire Council is about 100 yards from the post office, and about 100 yards to the south of the post office is the office of the Woongarra Shire Council. The offices of these two shire councils are situated closer to the Bundaberg post office than the office of the Bundaberg City Council is. Do you think, Mr. Hewitt, that the chairmen of these shires would want amalgamation when they are little kings in their own areas? Virtually every country shire council in Queensland is controlled by a chairman who is a member of the National Party.

Mr. Frawley: Oh, rubbish!

Mr. JENSEN: They are virtually all controlled by National Party chairmen. I see on the Government benches now one honourable member who was chairman of a shire, and one of the new Government Ministers also was chairman of a shire. He held two positions in this State for many years. The Minister in charge of these Estimates was chairman of a shire council. The honourable member for Mt. Isa was shire chairman, as also was the honourable member for Albert. I repeat: virtually all the councils throughout Queensland country areas have National Party chairmen. After serving in that capacity for a while, they come into this Chamber but do not resign their other position. They certainly would not want amalgamation. As I said, they are little kings in their shires and they love being kings.

Bundaberg is a city of 17½ square miles. The beaches used by the people of Bundaberg are within 10 miles of the city but are within the boundaries of the Woongarra and Gooburrum Shires. If the Minister increased the area of Bundaberg to 100 square miles, he would achieve something worth while. The Bundaberg City Council could then take over the shire offices of the other councils and their staff—the engineers, the health inspectors, the employees of the Works Departments and so on—and all their machinery and motor vehicles.

In Woongarra Shire, divisions 1 and 2 include the beaches at Bargara, Burnett Heads and Elliott Heads. They could go to the Bundaberg City Council without any difficulty. Division 3 could go to the Isis Shire and give it a little more revenue, because it is principally a farming area. The honourable member for Burnett would not mind that, because he has lost division 3 to the honourable member for Isis. The fact that divisions 1 and 2 went to Bundaberg would not upset the honourable member for Burnett, because he has his office in Bundaberg. He will support me on that. The Gooburrum Shire, which begins two miles north of the post office and then extends a further 10 miles north, includes the Moore Park beach. All these areas should be under one council.

The Minister took action at Maryborough —I do not know whether he was asked to do so—and made a complete botch of it. He divided Fraser Island in half. He did not have the guts to carry on with what he did there. I hope when he takes action in Bundaberg he will not do half the job; I want him to get in and do it properly.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: I will tell you where the biggest smell in any shire in Queensland is—the Albert Shire.

Mr. JENSEN: I have not been down there lately. I used to go down there a couple of years ago.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: Let them have a little talk amongst themselves. If the Minister wants some newspaper cuttings on it——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. JENSEN: Since 1973 it has been supposed that the Woongarra Shire Council was putting in an amenities block at The Oaks beach. On 14 July 1973 it was reported that talks were going on about The Oaks plan. Those talks are still going on. The departmental heads were brought into it, I understand. It was proposed to put a toilet block where it should not go. The argument is still going on. On 23 September 1975, more than three years later, we have the headline "Three Tenders for Beach Project". The lowest one is the one to be erected where it should be going.

Mr. Hinze: You want to wipe out all those little councils. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. JENSEN: The Minister's Government is amalgamating them into regional councils. His Government has made 10 regional areas.

It has 130-odd little councils. Big fat frogs in little puddles; that's all they are. They should be amalgamated.

After all the argument, tenders have been called for the amenities block. I have here letters to the editor of the paper. One is from Mr. Peter Nielson, who is one of the stalwarts of the National Party in Bundaberg. In fact, he is a life member. He wrote about The Oaks on 19 June 1973. So did Mr. Chamier. I would not say it outside, but I think he would be a good member for the Government. He said to me, "Will you do something about this?" I said, "Yes. Bring the matter along and I will do something. I know Claude Wharton won't." My good friend Mr. Wharton won't lift a finger to stop Clem Maughan, the chairman. He supported him at Palmer's Creek when I did him cold. He was stopped from putting a causeway across. He tried to get the harbour at Bargara, but I did him on that and it went to Burnett Heads. Mr. Wharton, my friend, didn't support me at all.

Mr. WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is quite wrong in a lot of the things he said. He is talking a lot of poppycock. The chairman of the Woongarra Shire is the chairman, and as such I respect him. He has a very good council down there. All those councils are very good. If the honourable member wants those shires amalgamated they will be.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. JENSEN: I know the Minister respects him. He is the National Party campaign chairman for the area. I know he has to respect him. He can't oppose him.

Mr. WHARTON: I rise to a further point of order. Mr. Maughan is not the chairman of my electoral council. I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to——

Honourable Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When the Committee comes to order, I will rule on that point of order. The honourable member for Bundaberg will withdraw that statement.

Mr. JENSEN: I will accept his denial and apologise.

The CHAIRMAN: And withdraw it.

Mr. JENSEN: And withdraw it, yes.

He has always been the chairman of the Bundaberg regional National Party campaign, and the Minister can't deny it. Whether he is the chairman of his little dunghill out there, I don't know. He is the chairman of the Bundaberg National Party campaign committee every election. Don't let anybody tell me he's not. The Minister is not game to oppose him.

Mr. POWELL: I rise to a point of order. I ask the honourable member for Bundaberg to withdraw that remark. Mr. Clem Maughan is not the chairman of the——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order on that.

Mr. JENSEN: He is the chairman of the council and does not want to be amalgamated, because he is a big frog in that little puddle. The area of Woongarra is 10 miles from the Bundaberg Post Office, and 10 miles in the other direction is Mr. McLellan, the chairman of the Gooburrum Shire Council. He is in the same boat. Does anyone think they want to be amalgamated when they can sit in their nice offices in Bundaberg controlling their shires, which, as I say, are within 10 miles of the post office? What rot this is, when the Bundaberg City Council, with 10 aldermen, could control the lot.

Mr. Cory: Do you think it's right——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Warwick will interject only from his own place in the Chamber.

Mr. JENSEN: I hope the Minister will have a look at The Oaks plan. I telephoned his departmental head telling him about the dissension among the people at Burnett Heads, and one of the departmental officers came up and inquired into the matter. Serious trouble was brewing. Even the local progress association was opposed to the council in relation to many aspects of the town plan, including the installation of toilets, the cost of which was to be thousands of dollars in excess of a fair cost. But how could anyone expect a National Party-dominated Government to go against National Party supporters in the council? My friend the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries will support me in anything except my campaign against Clem Maughan and Basil McLellan.

Mr. Cory: Do you think it is right that the farmers of these areas you are commenting on should be paying rates to supply kerbing and channelling to the city of Bundaberg?

Mr. JENSEN: I shall deal with the farmers in the area.

Earlier the honourable member for Barron River spoke about bitumen roads. If the Minister likes to accompany me on a tour of Woongarra and Gooburrum Shires, I will show him bitumen roads laid to every one of the cane farms and dairy farms owned by the councillors. There are more bitumen roads in the Woongarra Shire than there are in the whole of Western Queensland. The rates are taken from Bundaberg people who have seaside houses at Bargara and Elliott Heads; they are not taken from

the farmers. This is in spite of the fact that bitumen roads are laid to the farmers' homes.

Mr. Burns: Mr. Tenni wants to build a tunnel.

Mr. JENSEN: So he might, but he is still a little bit wet. He will get over this when he finds that, although the National-Liberal Party Government has been in office for 18 years, it is only now starting to do something up in his electorate.

This morning the honourable member for Isis asked the Minister a question about a certain road that passed through what was my electorate before the electoral boundaries were altered. The Minister's predecessor promised that it would be completed in 1975 or 1976. The present Minister, as usual, blames the Federal Government for the lack of funds and says that the road cannot be completed. It's up to the honourable member for Isis and me to see that the Minister does something about it. The highway along the coast to Mackay is in fairly good condition, yet in Bundaberg the three-mile road between Bundaberg airport and the hospital is in a shocking state. If I have time I shall talk about the Bundaberg bridge.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GUNN (Somerset) (5.15 p.m.): I think we should all thank you, Mr. Hewitt, for reminding the honourable member for Bundaberg that he had exhausted his time. It is easy to tell which honourable members have been involved in local government, and I should say that the honourable member for Bundaberg is not one of them.

As chairman of the Minister's committee, I pay tribute to him. Prior to coming to this Chamber he was a very successful chairman of the Albert Shire Council for 9 or 12 years. I am sure that is why he finds this part of his portfolio easy to grasp. It is imperative that any Minister who takes on this very important portfolio should have had experience in this field, particularly in areas such as Albert. In that way his job is made so much easier. I pay tribute also to the Director of Local Government (Mr. Harrold Jacobs), who has done an extremely good job in public relations, and to his Deputy Director. At the same time, I pay tribute to the Commissioner for Main Roads (Mr. Bill Hansen) and his deputy (Mr. John Andrews). It is a pleasure to approach these departments. I am sure that officers of their calibre make the Minister's job much easier.

The Minister's job is very important to the local government sphere. Queensland is a vast State with 131 local government areas. I hope that, unlike South Australia, the number of local authorities in Queensland is not diminished. It is imperative that the people should have adequate representation in local government.

Over the years, the three-tier system of Government in Australia has been very successful. While we understand that conditions must alter to meet changing times, the Government has always been ready to amend any Acts in the local government sphere if, by so doing, it benefits local authorities. Local government representatives have not found it hard to gain audience with the Minister or the Director of Local Government.

For a number of years I was involved in local government. When I first entered Parliament I found an unfortunate division between local government and the department. I think it arose through a misunderstanding. I recall that many years ago a Minister who attended a local government conference threatened amalgamations. Amalgamations are out of the question. The former Minister for Local Government (Mr. McKechnie) was a good Minister. I served as the chairman of his committee for a number of years. He brought councillors closer to the State Government. The present Minister, who has done so much in this field, has earned a name for himself as a very sincere Minister.

Mr. Houston: You are gunning for the job.

Mr. GUNN: No, I am not. I congratulate the Minister. I am sure that all members, including Opposition members, appreciate that the Minister is a man with whom they can work.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. GUNN: I would not tell the honourable member for Archerfield anything. If there is one honourable member in the Chamber in whom I would not confide, it would be the honourable member for Archerfield. To break away from the debate for a minute, and without wishing to denigrate any honourable member in the Chamber, I point out that some schoolchildren from my area who were in the public gallery the other day heard the honourable member for Archerfield speak. They said, "He talks like a Communist, but he looks like a capitalist." That is how they described the honourable member for Archerfield. One of them said, "He looks a lot like Gough Whitlam." That could be so. I don't want the honourable member to get the sulks and go outside.

It is fair to say that since 1957, local government has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. I think it was in 1955 that the Laidley Shire got its first main road. Today hardly a road in that shire is not bituminised or a secondary main road. As a matter of fact, as the Commissioner of Main Roads knows, the Laidley Shire, with an area of 246 square miles, has more main roads than any other shire in Queensland. It has done extremely well. The good results could not have been achieved without the generous subsidies paid by the Department of Local Government to provide those bitumen roads.

We had to borrow money. I was not chairman at that stage but the chairman before me had the foresight to borrow money so that today the Laidley Shire has the best roads in Queensland.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. GUNN: Over the years we have had a series of National Party chairmen. The honourable member would have to visit the shire to see the influence that we have had.

Mr. Frawley: He couldn't find his way there.

Mr. GUNN: He has found his way there before and he is welcome to come again any time he likes.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. GUNN: He is doing all right. Like me, he has been a member of local government and he appreciates what local government has done.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GUNN: I should now like to deal with what the Commonwealth Government has done for local government. There has been a good deal of discussion about the R.E.D. scheme. The Commonwealth Government handed our money back to us and told us what to do with it. This money would have been well spent had it been left to the local authorities to determine how it should have been spent. Local people have the best knowledge of what is necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The level of conversation on both sides of the Chamber is unacceptable. There will be order in the Committee.

Mr. GUNN: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt.

If the local authorities with the local knowledge could have determined where the money was to be spent, the result would have been better than it was with the matter being determined by an office boy in Canberra. The money would have been well spent, but that was not to be. It was spent on silly, idiotic things, such as chipping a few trees out and filling up a pot-hole here and there. If it had been left to the councils, they would have spent it on kerbing and channelling, road formation and so on.

This is what was done when Mr. McMahon was Prime Minister. He ordered that the money should be given to the local authorities as straight-out grants. The shires determined where the money was to be spent. It was during my term as chairman of the Laidley Shire that this money was spent on outside roads. The R.E.D. money could have been given on the same basis as money given under the Commonwealth Aid Local Authority Roads Fund grant.

Mr. Burns: Is the chairman any good?

Mr. GUNN: All of the councils throughout my area are good. The seven of them are doing an extremely good job and will continue to do so as long as they can get finance.

Mr. Burns: Did you vote for them?

Mr. GUNN: I would vote for them all. As a matter of fact, I do.

Not enough publicity has been given to what the Queensland Government has done for local authorities. Every little country town has sewerage, water supply and swimming pools. They were all subsidised by the Government. Probably we are wrong in calling them subsidies. They are grants, so we should call them grants. The people do not seem to understand. They take it for granted that a project attracts a 40 per cent subsidy. It would be far better if, like the Federal Government, we gave the money as grants. It is a pity, in a way, because there would be few shires today without a swimming pool that attracted a subsidy of over 30 per cent and sewerage that attracted a subsidy of over 40 per cent. If it were not for the generous subsidies granted by this Government, many country towns would not have the amenities they enjoy today. They have quite a lot of amenities and their living standard is comparable with that found in many suburbs of Brisbane and some provincial cities.

At 5.25 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307, progress was reported.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR MACKAY ON PORT OF MACKAY

Hon. T. G. NEWBERY (Mirani—Minister for Tourism and Marine Services) (5.26 p.m.): I wish to refer to statements made by the honourable member for Mackay in today's Mackay "Daily Mercury" which are so mischievous and purposefully misleading that I feel that the facts should be clearly explained in this House.

The honourable member yesterday asked me a question without notice which obviously indicated that his state of mind was so confused that he lacked even the faintest understanding of what was occurring in the port of Mackay. I requested the honourable member to put his question on notice. This, I felt, was necessary so that I could provide an answer to this House that would have the completeness and intelligence that his question without notice lacked.

That he did not do so clearly indicates his lack of sincerity in the matter, and his desire not to obtain the facts but to try to embarrass me. That he rushed straight to the newspapers with a statement which he thought might "chalk one up for him" for a change is further evidence of his mania for publicity at any cost—a mania he has demonstrated on too many previous occasions

to count. Never in my eleven years in Parliament have I witnessed a case in which a Minister has asked for a question without notice to be put on notice to enable a comprehensive answer to be provided and the honourable member concerned has not done so. The honourable member must surely have set yet another precedent for unorthodox and undignified behaviour.

For his benefit, and in the interests of truth and accuracy, I will explain the facts of the matter raised by the honourable member for Mackay. Owing to the growth of trade at the new port of Hay Point, it is now necessary that the pilotage service at that port provided by the Department of Harbours and Marine be reorganised for the safety of navigation at that port. I would point out that before Hay Point Harbour commenced operations, the pilotage service required at Mackay was provided by a harbour master, as was the case in other Queensland ports of commensurate trade. With the advent of this separate port of Hay Point, the duties of the Harbour Master, Mackay, were extended to cover Hay Point, too, and it was also necessary to appoint, as well, a pilot to Mackay/Hay Point. Naturally, with the increased duties and the appointment of a pilot, Harbour Master, Mackay/Hay Point, was necessarily recognised as a senior position to Harbour Master, Maekay.

As the second berth at Hay Point is to come on stream in the near future, a further pilot Mackay/Hay Point has been appointed, and the stage has been reached where it is necessary for safety of navigation to provide on-the-spot pilotage services and surveillance. The port of Hay Point will require the services of a harbour master and pilot, and the port of Mackay will require the services of a harbour master as previously was the case.

The position of Harbour Master, Hay Point, is to be advertised shortly, and following appointment of that officer, the reorganisation of pilotage services in the Mackay/Hay Point ports will be completed. Naturally, the Harbour Master, Mackay, who has given stalwart service, has the opportunity to apply for the position of Harbour Master, Hay Point, if he so desires. How these proposals downgrade the port of Mackay is beyond my comprehension as the change in pilotage services under consideration follows the same pattern that has applied in other growth ports such as Gladstone and Weipa.

I hope that the honourable member for Mackay agrees with the status of the pilotage service that is to be provided at Hay Point. If he does not, he would be guilty of himself trying to downgrade that port—an action he is so fond of accusing my Government of taking. I trust that this information will clear the honourable member's confused thinking.

I would point out that he began this whole issue by claiming that the development of Lucinda and Bundaberg by the sugar industry, using sugar industry money, was evidence of the Government's intentions to downgrade the harbours of Mackay and Cairns. He now raises the matter of my department's staffing arrangements at Mackay to try to justify his false allegations. His rather queer line of reasoning clearly indicates the fact that he is confused and does not know what he is talking about. a fact that is emphasised by his statement that I do not know what my department is doing.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. NEWBERY: The interjections indicate that he is one of your mob.

Mr. Burns: You're as gutless as they come. Why did you run away?

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. NEWBERY: He ran away.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Archerfield knows the rules of the House. If he wants to interject, he should do so from his right place. If he does not refrain from persistent interjections, I will deal with him under Standing Order 123A. I warn all honourable members.

RACING AND BETTING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (5.31 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

At the introductory stage, I gave honourable members a clear statement of the various provisions of the Bill. I do not consider I should delay the House by repeating what I said then. The general reactions to the amendments appeared to be favourable, although some honourable members did take issue with the mandatory gaol sentence proposed for illegal S.P. operators who are convicted for a third or subsequent offence.

When winding up the introductory debate I commented briefly on matters and queries raised by honourable members. However, since I acknowledge the right of honourable members to give expression to their views, I also believe that there is a responsibility on me to provide some further comments and explanations as to why the measures outlined should be implemented.

In regard to the contribution by the honourable member for Bulimba, I have already indicated that it is not the intention to overload any part of the State with night coursing activities; that indeed the 'Gabba track would remain as the sole metropolitan venue, but that the Gold Coast area and the Redcliffe/Lawnton area would receive due consideration. On-course bookmakers are to be allowed to operate on interstate night trotting meetings. This will not only be of benefit to the patrons but will also assist the club concerned. It is the Tuesday night

which presents the difficulty. On this night, no suitable interstate night coursing meeting is held but there are at least two interstate night trotting meetings which would provide a suitable fielding opportunity. The proposed amendment catered for this set of circumstances.

As to the question of owners or trainers not being allowed to start two dogs in the one event, I have mentioned that this is under consideration. It is a Control Board rule which has served a purpose, but I will be quite prepared to look at any recommendation made by the board with a completely open mind.

I am in agreement with the sentiments of the honourable member for Bulimba when he expresses the opinion that it is far better for clubs to be able to control their own tracks. Largely, however, this matter is one for domestic consideration between the clubs concerned and those who actually own or control the venue.

As to his reference to the T.A.B. activities at Lawnton—I believe from the figures provided to me that the trial period was indeed sufficient. As I indicated previously, I did look at the viability of that operation and it simply was not a profitable one. Nor did it seem that profitability would be reached as matters stand at the moment. I cannot see the board reversing its decision. I am certain however, that the board will be giving the utmost consideration to operating on night coursing meetings at the Gold Coast and on the north side when they come into operation.

It should be made quite clear that the amendment concerning the recognition of a new body representing the greyhound breeders, owners and trainers was proposed in anticipation that the present association may become incorporated. That was the sole reason behind the amendment. That body indicated to me the advantages that could be derived if it became incorporated.

The honourable member for Bulimba, along with other members, made reference to the high penalties for S.P. bookies and compared these with penalties applied to other offences. Let me say that the S.P. bookie breaks the law in premeditated fashion. He knows full well what he is doing. He does not act on impulse. His actions are well considered beforehand, and I can only say that the penalties proposed will make him think all the more about his illegal actions. As I mentioned previously, the profitability of these operations can be such that a smaller fine would merely decrease the profit margin and not act as any deterrent to the commission of the offence. That has been proved over a number of years.

What does the S.P. operator put back into racing? Nothing! His odds are usually starting price: but, in making these odds, he avoids the taxes and the monetary returns to the clubs which the legitimate bookmaker pays. These extra profits, he pockets. What then is so unfair about the penalties proposed?

I find it difficult to understand why some honourable members have been so vocal about the proposed penalties. It must be patently obvious to all concerned that for a person to be convicted three times, that person must have deliberately, constantly and continuously broken the law over a not inconsiderable period of time. In most spheres where the influence of the law is exerted, a reasonably lenient view is taken in respect of a first offender. This is because people can be, and are, tempted or influenced to become engaged in some sort of illegal activity, and our system is such that a fairly tolerant view is taken for certain first offences, and I believe rightly so. But I cannot be convinced that the same degree of leniency should be extended to those hardened types who, after a first offence, continue to show a disregard of the law, their only motive being one of personal profit. I repeat that these people must be motivated by their greed and, therefore, are parasites, not only on the racing industry but also on the community at large.

Of course, there are huge profits to be made by illegal bookmakers. This is the incentive that these people have to break the law! And while penalties remain inadequate, illegal activities will grow and grow to the stage where the legal off-course system—the T.A.B.—would be unable to operate profitably and, of course, this would be a disastrous blow to the galloping, trotting and greyhound industries. I admit that the Government, too, would lose a considerable amount of revenue, and this again would be to the disadvantage of the State as a whole. Are the opponents of the proposals suggesting that it would be preferable for these funds destined for racing and for the Government to finish up in the pockets of S.P. operators? In the interests of the racing industry and the thousands of citizens who rely on it for a livelihood, and in the intersets of the Government, the S.P. bookmaker is someone we should not encourage within the community.

As to the harping on mandatory prison sentence for the third offence—I bring to the attention of honourable members the fact that for many years a prison sentence has been mandatory for illegal S.P. operators in Queensland.

Mr. Moore: That still does not make it right.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I expected that interjection, so my next sentence is all ready. I can recognise those in this Chamber who are representing starting-price bookmakers. I knew that some honourable members would interject that, because it was mandatory before, that does not make it right now. In fact whereas we did previously specify minimum sentences, we are now going to leave

it to the courts to determine what the sentence should be in the light of the circumstances and the nature of the particular offence. In the minds of those honourable members, such will, therefore, be a progressive move, but I might say that, while the mandatory sentence has been operative over many years, I have heard no complaints until now that it has resulted in offenders being treated unduly harshly.

It may be policy in this State to avoid, where possible, mandatory sentences, but let me point out that mandatory prison sentences for illegal betting offences are imposed under similar legislation by Western Australia, where circumstances are very similar to Queensland, and also in the Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand.

The honourable member for Windsor stated his belief that punters should be able to collect immediately after a race and then reinvest. With computerisation I cannot deny that the payment of dividends could be made after each race. It is done in New South Wales, but what is the effect on the race clubs that, after all, stage the programme? Anyone who has a close association with the administration of racing in Australia knows that the racing administrators in New South Wales are very seriously concerned at the drop in attendance in many country areas of up to 50 per cent.

In this Chamber there are many honourable members who represent areas where small country race meetings are conducted. If pay-outs are made after each event through the T.A.B. in small country areas, the race clubs in those areas will suffer seriously. That has been proved in New South Wales by the fall of 50 per cent in attendances. While there might be some grounds for a case to allow the payment of dividends through the afternoon or evening in areas far removed from a racetrack, it has never been the desire of the Government to encourage congregations of people at a T.A.B. agency. When the Government made what I regarded at that time as the progressive move to set up the T.A.B., it set out to provide a service, not to encourage the growth of a club-type facility. Still, the Government takes the view that people in outlying areas are just as entitled to have a T.A.B. facility as their fellow-citizens in the city, and a significant proportion of the smaller offices are today being conducted at a loss because of communications and other costs.

Because of the different cost factors in Queensland, it is just not valid to compare our operations with those in New South Wales. The Government may not possess the financial wizardry of the honourable member for Port Curtis, who, according to his statements at the introductory stage, would make it possible for the T.A.B. to provide increased prize-money to levels comparable with those paid in New South Wales and at the same time provide plush T.A.B. agencies all over the place. He cannot have his cake and eat it. Until we get a turnover like that of New South Wales, we must strike a happy balance between the share of T.A.B. funds going into agency premises and those going back into the racing industry.

On the point of the Government's take of 6 per cent of the T.A.B. pool, which was quoted by the honourable member for Port Curtis, I would like it to be recorded that ¾ per cent of this take from the T.A.B. pool and from totalisators operating on course in the metropolitan area is paid into the Racecourse Development and Assistance Fund. This fund, as honourable members know, provides advances to assist racing clubs develop and upgrade their facilities. The fund does not represent the only return made by the Government to the industry. We have maintained the 70 per cent distribution against rising costs and we now propose to increase the turnover tax return.

I listened with interest to the honourable member for Everton, and I would like to comment briefly on his suggestion that unclaimed dividends should go to improve the existing amenities for T.A.B. bettors. The State fixes a level of tax on racing transactions and it does this in the light of what it receives from sources other than the tax itself. In other words, if, to balance the Budget, we decide not to take a certain percentage from one area, we must take it from somewhere else. If one argues for the return of unclaimed dividends to racing, the Government would need to look at the percentage which it takes out in tax. I see no merit in an argument which says that, because some of the existing revenue is collected in a certain way, it should go back to racing and the over-all return to the State should thereby be reduced.

In New South Wales, the percentage of turnover going into, and staying in, Consolidated Revenue is higher right through the field of bookmakers' turnover and betting tickets, on-course totalisators, and the T.A.B., except in the case of non-metropolitan on-course totalisators, where the Consolidated Revenue take is similar to that in Queensland. For example, where we take 5¼ per cent out of the metropolitan on-course totalisator, New South Wales takes 9.5 per cent on doubles and 8 per cent on other bets. After the recent New South Wales Budget announcements become effective, the take-out of the T.A.B. on metropolitan events will be 8 per cent in that State for doubles and 6.5 per cent for other events, compared with our 5¼ per cent in both cases.

Mr. Houston: That doesn't make it right.

Sir GORDON CHALK: It may not do. All I am doing is indicating that here in Queensland, with a much smaller population, we are not taking out of the racing industry as great a proportion as that taken out in New South Wales with its larger population.

The percentage of on-course bookmakers' turnover finding its way to, and remaining in, Consolidated Revenue in New South Wales will be 2 per cent plus an additional amount of up to ½ per cent through a separate levy on the clubs, compared with our 1¾ per cent in the metropolitan area and 1½ per cent in the country. Betting tickets in New South Wales are charged with 4c in metropolitan paddocks and 2c elsewhere compared with 2c and 1c in Queensland. This shows that the statement that New South Wales is more generous to racing than we are in Queensland is entirely wrong.

Apart from wanting to cover the illegal bookmakers with the cloak of respectability, the honourable member for Bundaberg suggested that a punters representative be appointed to boards dealing with racing matters. The suggestion is not new. How is one to select this representative? I would have thought from what I have heard in this debate that the majority of members are experienced punters and, therefore, are themselves self-appointed punters representatives.

I do not believe there is anything that I need add. The Bill, as I see it, is self-explanatory. It is designed principally to benefit the racing industry. I draw honourable members' attention to the fact that there is little extra in it for the Government. As I believe that most honourable members are keen to see all forms of industry progress in this State—irrespective of the form of the industry—on that basis I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.52 p.m.): In the main, the Bill has been accepted by the House. However, some clauses in it, if not opposed strenuously, will certainly be referred to at length. It is not my intention at this stage to deal with the legislation clause by clause. Firstly I shall deal with parts of it that are not so controversial.

The introduction of novelty events to night coursing or trotting meetings is a good idea. As novelty events were allowed in the day-time at galloping meetings, I could not, for the life of me, understand why a different rule should apply to night meetings. I venture to say that far more young couples and their children attend night trotting and greyhound racing than day-time trotting, galloping and greyhound meetings. The night sports bring out young people. Although I believe that novelty events interest everybody, I think it can be said truthfully that they tend to interest the younger people more than the ardent punters, who are usually fully occupied with trying to get odds. Clubs have been interested in featuring novelty events. They bring people to the track and, if handled correctly, brighten up a programme and create a little interest for people who are not directly interested in gambling when they visit a racetrack. I am sure that all honourable members realise that some people—particularly one member of a family—can attend a race meeting without putting a cent on a horse or dog. The others attend meetings to be in the company of the member of the family who likes to gamble. It is a good idea to introduce novelty events and it should certainly help promotion. The Gabba club helps the life-saving organisations through one race it holds. This type of thing can be extended to the advantage of the clubs, the public and also the charitable organisations that benefit. I am not suggesting that every novelty event should be associated with a charity. It could be a promotional exercise.

The proposal to extend the purposes of the Racecourse Development and Assistance Fund will be acceptable to the House. When this fund was created, the idea was to make money available to the clubs as loans. It was not easy for a club to borrow money if it did not own its grounds or any other assets to put up as a guarantee against the possibility of non-payment, to develop, for instance, the track, the stables or kennels or the public amenities. Through this fund, the money is provided and to the best of my knowledge—the Treasurer can correct me if I am wrong—all clubs who have taken advantage of it have maintained their repayments or have carried out the terms of their contracts. I am sure that this situation will continue. As the clubs become more used to handling these applications, more good will come from the fund.

It is necessary that existing clubs be able to obtain cheap money compared with some of the dearer money that is available through recognised money-lending organisations. If a sporting club has to borrow money at a high rate of interest, it can meet the interest charges and redemption from only two sources: either increased admittance charges or a reduction in prize-money. Looked at from that angle, this provision will be of advantage.

The Treasurer, in replying at the introductory stage, menioned some matters that are of importance in the operation of the clubs and can be raised during the second reading. He pointed out that the number of greyhound race days will be kept under control. This is a very wise move. I would be the last person to knock any provincial city or body that wanted to run these sporting events, because I know the enjoyment derived by those associated with them.

I believe that the operations of the Cairns Club and the Cairns Galloping Club have been to the mutual benefit of both organisations. The only criticism I have ever had is that the running track is so far from the viewing public. As time goes on, some means may be found to allow the public to get nearer the greyhound track to see the events. I realise that there will be a problem with the distance between the betting ring and the track.

Clubs in other provincial cities are well under way. I was pleased to hear that Townsville has been offered money. I hope that it takes up the offer and gets on quickly with the provision of the track. Unfortunately, when announcements were made 12 or 18 months ago, people thought that they were doing the right thing in buying young greyhounds to rear, train and race. However, like all other animals and human beings, greyhounds get old. The racing life of a greyhound is not very long. Some people in provincial cities who bought racing dogs when the announcements were made are finding that the dogs are almost too old to race. So I hope that the Townsville club will get on with the job and I hope to see clubs established in other areas.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. HOUSTON: I was pleased to hear the Treasurer say that, for the time being at any rate, there will be only one night greyhound racing course in Brisbane. I think that that announcement is welcome, because there has been speculation on the possibility of another track and I do not think that that does the industry any good. Naturally I want to see the Mt. Gravatt project go ahead as a sporting complex—and perhaps as a training track—and it could be further developed in the future as Brisbane expands and the sport of coursing grows with it. But at present I think everyone will be happy with the Treasurer's statement.

If the Gabba Greyhound Racing Club is to be the sole club conducting night coursing in Brisbane, there is a heavy responsibility on the club and its committee. I believe that everything must be done to make it possible for the club to conduct top-class greyhound racing in this city, and the record shows that that is being done. There are, however, some weaknesses in the present set-up, and it is because of them that I want to say a little more about the control of the club's main facility, which is, of course, the track. The Treasurer said that he believes that tracks on which galloping, trotting and greyhound racing are conducted should be under the control of the club concerned. In essence, I think that is what he said. I believe also that he indicated that the present arrangement is more a matter of mutual agreement between the club and those who own or control the ground. Naturally I agree with that, too.

The Gabba Greyhound Racing Club is, however, in quite a different position, because the ground is controlled not by a proprietory body, person, or show society, but a body known as the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust. I do not know the names of the members of that trust, but the fact remains that they are approved by the Government. The trust members are not elected by any outside body. Under the constitution of the trust, a certain number are Government nominees and the remainder are virtually nominated by the Queensland Cricket Association.

In the days when the ground was basically a cricket ground, I do not think anyone had any quarrel with that constitution of the trust. When Lang Park developed into a more comprehensive sporting complex the main tenants were given a direct voice in its control, and I believe that it is now necessary for the Gabba Greyhound Racing Club to be given a direct say on the body that controls the coursing track. In the alternative, the track itself could be given to the club for it to operate and maintain.

Except on rare occasions, the track itself is not needed for the viewing of cricket matches. If I had my way, I would not allow the public anywhere on the track, because I have seen what people can do to it. I do not know why human beings do some of the things that they do. I have seen people stick match sticks into the track end upwards. Anyone who has seen a dog injured in this way certainly does not want that to happen. Various other objects that are left on the track, such as the metal rings from flip-top cans, can make it very dangerous. Nothing except banning people from the track can be done to stop this behaviour. For ordinary purposes, it is not necessary for the cricket ground trust to have control of the track. I hope that the letter the Treasurer sent to the secretary of the Gabba Greyhound Racing Club recently, in which he indicated that he did not presently intend to take any action about representation on the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust, related only to the next week or so and certainly not the duration of this session because, as I said, I believe the present situation is completely unfair.

As I indicated earlier, the other day we found that one of the reasons the meeting was postponed was that maintenance had not been done on the track. I know the club wants to do many things, but for some reason or other the trust is not getting round to doing it. This situation should not apply to any club, let alone a club that is virtually going to have a monopoly on Brisbane night coursing. So I appeal to the Treasurer to do something. This is not directly concerned with the Act, but the Act plays a major part. We do not want to cancel meetings, but this is what will happen.

Just over a week ago we found that right in the middle of the rainy season heavy trucks had been running over the track and left it in such a bogged condition that it was impossible to repair in the time available. Without labouring the point, I suggest to the Treasurer that he reconstitute the trust and have equal representation from the Queensland Cricket Association and the Gabba Greyhound Racing Club. Naturally he will want his own nominees. I have no quarrel with that, because the Government is financially involved in the organisation; but so far, unfortunately, although we have made representations to members of the trust, the club has not been able to get what they want done. But in the meantime we will continue to try.

I noticed recently that the Albion Park Trotting Club had trouble with the track. As soon as the committee had the experts in and were told what was wrong, they had the track banked and filled. They just went ahead and did the work. I think this is good for the sport and good for the owners, the trainers and the drivers. Some time ago when the grass racing track at another metropolitan club was affected by water the committee members were allowed to transfer the meeting to Albion Park and they went ahead and did their job. The committee at the Albion Park galloping track also faced problems with the jockeys complaining about the state of the track. I believe the committee there went as far as sifting all the sand and making sure all foreign bodies were removed. But this could only happen because of the great co-operation between the committee and the jockeys and a desire to get the work done.

Mr. Chinchen: What is the status of the greyhound club on that ground? Is it a lessee?

Mr. HOUSTON: They are lessees and they have to pay for certain amenities such as the stands, the kennels and that type of thing. But for some peculiar reason the track is maintained under the control of the Cricket Ground Trust. I believe they did that so they could use it as part of the grandstand amphitheatre when it came to cricket tests.

Mr. Chinchen: Does the cricket trust own all the land?

Mr. HOUSTON: It controls the land. The trust members are appointed by the Government, so that is why I say it is a different situation——

Mr. Chinchen: The Government and the Q.C.A.?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Treasurer can correct me if I am wrong, but I think the Government controls the appointments to the trust. Certainly the Act lays down the provisions for representation. All I am asking is that the major tenant (now the major income earner) be given the right to control the track. At the moment we cannot control our own track as I believe we should. Even in cricket, the Q.C.A. does not control its own wicket.

Mr. Chinchen: They have four members on the trust, I think.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, but they still do not control the wicket. The greyhound club has no representation on the trust and it has to go cap in hand and say "please" all the time. If work is not done, the only people who suffer are those associated with the greyhound industry. I think I know something about the operation of the club and its hopes. It desires to provide an attractive course that is really competitive which will end up as the best track in Australia. We are not satisfied with saying it is the best track in Queensland; we want it to be the best track in Australia—and we can only do that if we have, if not full control, at least a say on the trust which would enable us to have a say about the money that is spent. Having answered the honourable member's questions, I shall not labour the point.

I turn now to the section of the Bill that deals with bookmakers' turnover tax. To be quite honest, Mr. Speaker, I have not had any representations from bookmakers relative to the increase in turnover tax, so at this stage I cannot say that bookmakers are objecting to the tax. The Treasurer will know whether or not they objected and finally accepted it. However, I think it is necessary to consider the bookmakers' turnover tax and the system from which it evolved.

As honourable members are aware, the tax was introduced in an amendment to the Act in 1961—not so many years ago—when a tax of 1½ per cent on turnover was levied on bookmakers with the idea of making them contribute something to the coffers of the State Government and also to the race clubs and to the racing industry generally in the State. Honourable members may also recall that the T.A.B. was instituted at about the same time. It was thought that because a punter who bet through the T.A.B. contributed something to the State Government and to the racing industry, bookmakers should also contribute. Perhaps for simplicity—I do not know the real reason—it was decided to impose a tax of 1½ per cent on the turnover of bookmakers.

In 1971 the Act was amended to provide that bookmakers operating on Ipswich tracks and the Brisbane metropolitan tracks should pay a tax of 2 per cent and bookmakers on all other tracks in Queensland 1½ per cent. We find, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment now before the House provides for an increase from 2 per cent to 2½ per cent in Ipswich and the Brisbane metropolitan area and from 1½ to 2 per cent in country areas.

I mention that to show that, once a tax is introduced by a Government, it is not very many years before the tax begins to increase and become quite substantial. I know it can be argued that inflation has occurred; but it should not be forgotten that in times of inflation, people who used to make bets of 10s. or $1 make bets of $2, $3, or $5. As they receive more money, they tend to increase their minimum bet.

Mr. Lane: They will miss you over at the 'Gabba tonight.

Mr. HOUSTON: No they won't. They are a very efficient committee.

Mr. Tenni: He has never been on a racecourse.

Mr. HOUSTON: I can speak on these matters with more authority that the honourable member. Not only have I been on a racecourse; I have had the privilege of being welcomed to a racecourse.

Mr. Lane: You have probably been thrown off a racecourse, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: No, I have not. I have not been barred, but I was pleased to make representations on behalf of the honourable member for Merthyr to allow him back onto a racecourse.

Consideration must be given in future—and and it must be in-depth consideration—to whether or not the Government can continue taxing bookmakers on their turnover. When one speaks of turnover, I think it is true to say that in the ordinary run of business, if a business is conducted efficiently, the greater its turnover, the greater the profit it will make. However, one finds that in some instances turnover has no relation to the profit or loss that a bookmaker makes on his operations. A bookmaker may have a very large hold, but it may be a hold in which the money is on winning horses or for winning tickets. Therefore, although the bookmaker has had a big turnover, the result of his operations for the day or the night would be a loss. On the other hand, a bookmaker might have a high turnover but not have to pay out very much at all. That would mean he would make a substantial profit. That is not in conformity with the normal idea of the relationship between turnover and profitability.

A Government Member: Have you got a brief for a bookmaker?

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not carrying a brief for any bookmaker. I like to consider legislation before I agree to it. As I said, I am not opposing the increase and, indeed, I will say a few good things about it. In a few years we have gone up from 1½ per cent to 2½ per cent. The next increase will be to 3½ per cent and perhaps 4 per cent or more under successive Governments. The point is that we should look at the principle. On turnover is this the correct way to handle it?

I know the clubs are very happy about the extra turnover tax that will go to them. The indications I have from various people associated with the clubs is that most of the money, if not all, will go into extra prize-money. In recent months one of the criticisms has been that, with the increased costs of owners and trainers, the prize-money offering is not sufficient to cover the average person. I am not talking about the owner of a champion. Even if prize-money is only small, a champion will win enough races to make it worth while for the owner. The owner of the average animal needs reasonable prize-money to make ends meet. The owner of an animal that can't win races is behind taws from the start. Perhaps he puts it all down to experience. Any person who has an average type of animal should be able to show some profit after paying training and other expenses. That is why I am quite happy to think that the clubs will get the extra money. To my knowledge the clubs will use the money either to increase prize-money or to improve amenities directly associated with the sport.

I made the point about a trainer not having two dogs in one race. I am pleased that the Treasurer said that he would have a look at that matter without prejudice. The board had before it the situation where two dogs were entered for the best eight. One dog was entered by one trainer for one owner and the other dog was entered by another trainer for another owner, but as the two trainers lived in the one house it was declared that the dogs were virtually trained by the one person. I could not see the logic in that. That brought to light many other factors. Although two trainers were involved on that occasion, sometimes two or three owners might have dogs trained by the one trainer. It is no use increasing prize-money if dogs that would otherwise be eligible for the event cannot run because they happen to be under the one trainer.

The Treasurer mentioned that the T.A.B. would probably operate on night coursing at Southport and Redcliffe. That would be welcome. Owners and punters generally like to be able to follow their fancy at one meeting and at a subsequent meeting or meetings. This could be done if the T.A.B. were to operate on these meetings.

One of the problems that arise with T.A.B. operations is that the T.A.B. and course tote are coupled together. In some States this is not so. I wonder whether the Treasurer has, through his officers, looked at the difference it would make at various meetings if the two were separated. Quite often—this applies to horses as well as to dogs—just before the money from outside the course is added, the indicator board shows particular horses or dogs at certain odds, and all of a sudden when the outside money comes in——

Mr. Jensen: The country money comes in.

Mr. HOUSTON: Sometimes this happens; at other times one horse comes in and others go out. It cuts both ways.

Later I will refer to the attempt to eliminate S.P. betting. It is obvious that, if there is a reaction and a lack of desire to bet on the T.A.B. away from the course because punters feel they could be affected by the big money coming onto the course, the T.A.B. should look at the situation to see whether it would not be in the interests of the public, or certainly the punters, to separate the T.A.B. operation from the on-course operation. This could be done quite easily with the use of computers. It would get away from the problem of late scratchings and so on, because people on the course would know and those off the course would be covered by the whole field, not taking into account late scratchings.

The Treasurer referred to Lawnton. I would suggest that he refer to a speech I made during the Matters of Public Interest

debate, appearing in "Hansard", Vol. 266 at page 1391. In that speech I went to some trouble to refer to the return at Lawnton and also to particular days when the T.A.B. operated on other galloping meetings.

Mr. Lane: That would have been a thrilling speech.

Mr. HOUSTON: As a matter of fact, the honourable member commended me on it and told me that he learned a lot from it.

Mr. LANE: I rise to a point of order. I find the honourable member's remarks that I complimented him on his speech offensive. I ask him to withdraw them and apologise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. HOUSTON: I refer now to the proposed penalties for S.P. betting offences, and before I deal with them in detail I draw the attention of honourable members to penalties imposed for other offences. I consider one of the most obnoxious crimes to be assault occasioning bodily harm. It certainly should be stamped out. Yet the penalty for that offence, as provided by section 8 of the Criminal Code and the Justices Act Amendment Act 1975 and set out in new section 343A. of the Criminal Code is as follows—

> "Any person who unlawfully assaults another and thereby does him bodily harm is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand dollars inclusive of costs and in default of payment thereof to imprisonment with hard labour for six months, or to imprisonment with hard labour for six months in the first instance."

This year we said that the maximum penalty for assault occasioning bodily harm shall be $1,000 including costs, or, in default of payment, six months' imprisonment.

Mr. Alison: That is under the Criminal Code.

Mr. HOUSTON: It is, but the point is that that is the maximum sentence for a person who bashes another.

I could spend all of my available time referring to other crimes and the penalties for them, but I chose this one believing that the bashing of an innocent person by another is a hideous crime that deserves a fairly severe penalty. The amendment I referred to was passed this year. It is current and relates to today's values as we saw them only a few months ago.

I agree that anyone who takes S.P. bets, or accepts bets off a racecourse, is breaking the law. I do not suggest that it is anything other than that. However, there is a difference between that breach of the law and a crime in which one person does something to another—causes physical harm, steals property, causes worry or anguish, or something else that is detrimental. To me, those acts are real crimes. In taking a bet, an S.P. bookmaker is breaking the law. In doing that, however, a bookmaker requires an accomplice. He must have a person who wants to punt. The punter has to approach him before he takes the bet.

Dr. Scott-Young: The punter goes looking for him.

Mr. HOUSTON: He is the one who gets bashed up?

Dr. Scott-Young: It is equivalent to being bashed up.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right. Under normal conditions a bookmaker does not get bashed up if he pays. I do not know what happens if he doesn't.

The point is that before a bookmaker can operate he must have a punter. He can tell all his friends and acquaintances that he is prepared to take bets and run the risk of breaking the law, but unless a punter makes a bet with him he has nothing to write in his book. If he is arrested, he is a cleanskin; there is nothing on him.

I agree that there should be no need for S.P. bookmakers, but the Government has failed to provide a service which some people desire. I would like to see all betting done on the racecourse. But by establishing the T.A.B. we have already recognised that that is impossible. According to people who spoke when the T.A.B. legislation was introduced, the T.A.B. was set up to let people have a legal bet away from a racecourse.

People are betting S.P. Time has shown that some people do not want to bet on the T.A.B.; they want to bet with a bookmaker. Whether the punters are betting starting prices or are given odds is a different matter. As I see the problem, the more money that you put on a horse through the tote, the more you reduce the odds.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am glad that you are interested, Mr. Speaker. It is very nice to see it.

The punter who bets with an S.P. bookmaker may either accept the odds that someone else has set—and there may not be much difference between them and the T.A.B. dividend—or take a definite price, which according to what I have been told, an S.P. operator will give. In other words, he will offer a certain price. I know that the Treasurer will agree that, on the track, the starting price odds are quite often not the odds that punters take during the betting. Sometimes there is a shortening in the price and sometimes there is a lengthening and some punters are lucky if they bet on the lengthener that wins rather than the shortener that loses.

Mr. Aikens: More often than not the tote odds are better than the bookmakers' odds.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member cannot argue that. He could argue whether or not the tote odds are better than S.P., and I think he could argue that the tote odds and the best odds available at the racetrack are not comparable. I have seen prices drop substantially once the big money is put on. I am sure that the Treasurer has seen that, too. Anybody who wants to examine the extent of betting will get an idea next Tuesday. It is no good running away from the fact of life that the Australian likes to gamble.

Mr. Moore: So do the Chinese.

Mr. HOUSTON: I don't know about that.

Mr. Moore: The Eskimos aren't bad either.

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member is more conversant with them than I am.

The Australian likes to gamble. Anyone who doubts that should look at the number of people who go to Melbourne Cup parties and the number of people who take tickets in sweeps. Rightly so too, because Melbourne Cup sweeps were legalised not long ago.

Mr. Jensen: It took a long time.

Mr. HOUSTON: It took a long time but finally they were legalised.

The next step is to legislate to have licensed off-course bookmakers whose services can be used by the punter who does not want to go to the course. Such a bookmaker would use legal betting tickets and the State would receive revenue. I would not have argued in this way in 1961 or 1962. I hoped then that the introduction of the T.A.B. would eliminate illegal off-course betting. As the Treasurer said, millions of dollars are invested with S.P. bookmakers. If that is the case, it shows the demand for this service so something should be done about it. I do not think that the T.A.B. will suffer much. The small bettor will still go to the T.A.B. But if a registered off-course bookmaker used proper betting tickets and paid his licence fee and any other tax payable to the State, the Government would get its revenue.

Mr. Jensen: If the Treasurer rang me up half an hour before a race and said that a shortener was going, I could not bet with the T.A.B., so I would have to go to an S.P. bookmaker.

An Honourable Member: You could ring Marty up.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not know about the individual, but I accept the principle involved.

Too often it has been said that if this service is provided away from the track, people will not go to the track. This could be the case in country areas. But it is because no amenities are provided that people do not go to the track. Many country tracks have not improved their amenities over many years and today people will not go to places where no amenities are provided. Surely we are not going to term the tracks as licensed betting places in the sense that a person who wants to bet can go to the track and do so legally but, if he lives in a town where there is no race meeting, he must go to the T.A.B. To stamp out S.P. betting, we should consider the registration of bookmakers who can keep proper accounts, issue betting tickets and everything else to give people this service. Applicants for registration would fill out application forms and would have to be people of high repute to receive registration.

When the Bill was brought down in 1954—I admit by a Labor Government, but with other parties also represented—it provided for a first offence a penalty of not less than £50 or more than £200. That was the equivalent of $100 and $400 for a first offence. For a second offence, whether against the some provision or another provision, the penalty was a fine of not less than £150 or more than £500, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or both fine and imprisonment. For a third or subsequent offence, whether against the same provision or another provision, the penalty was a fine of not less than £175 or more than £750, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both a fine and imprisonment. From a reading of speeches made at the time, it is clear that it was considered that penalties of that order would stop S.P. betting; but, as we know, they did not.

Other amendments were made to the Act at various times. When the Act was consolidated in 1966, the penalties were expressed in terms of dollars. For a first offence it was then provided that the penalty would be a fine of not less than $300 or more than $400. I mention again that this was in 1966, under the present Government, which continued the principle laid down by a Labor Government. For a second offence, whether against the same provision or another provision, the penalty was a fine of not less than $500 or more than $1,000, and imprisonment for a term of not less than 14 days or longer than three months. That was the first time that imprisonment was made mandatory. For the third and subsequent offences, whether against the same provision or another, the penalty was a fine of not less than $1,000 or more than $1,500, and imprisonment for a term of not less than 28 days or longer than six months. That was the provision brought in by the present Government. That does not mean to say that I like it or agree with it. It was argued at that time that there were other Acts that contained mandatory gaol sentences. The point that I make is that the 1966 amendments did not prove to be successful. They failed.

Mr. Aikens: They were never applied.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is up to the courts. Of course, before any penalties can be applied, someone has to be arrested and charged.

It is interesting to note that on Tuesday, 21 October 1975, the honourable member for Nudgee asked the Minister for Police—

> "(1) How many S.P. betting convictions were recorded in each of the last three years for which figures are available?"

The answer was—

> "Records of this kind have not been kept at a central recording section within the Police Department over the years mentioned. However, statistics of this kind are now being kept and figures for the year 1974-1975 are as follows:—"

The point I make is that since 1954 penalties have been prescribed for a first, second and third offence, but no records were available as to who had been arrested and convicted, and how many times. The Minister continued in his answer—

> "Acting as a bookmaker elsewhere than on a racecourse, 22; Betting in public place, 3; Keep common betting house, 6; and Possession of instruments of betting, 13."

In answer to the question—

> "(2) In each year, how may were first, second, third or multiple offenders?"

the Minister replied—

> "This information is not readily available and it is not proposed to direct that inquiries be undertaken to obtain such information."

I do not think that the Police Department knew whether or not their campaign against S.P. betting had been successful.

Is it right, then, that this latest amendment should provide for a first offence a penalty not exceding $3,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than two months?

> Clause 13 (a) of the Bill reads—
> "for a first offence, to a penalty not exceeding $3,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than two months;".

The point is that the Government is doing away with the minimum fine and I think that is to be commended. Clause 13 (b) reads—

> "for a second offence, whether against the same or another provision of the said sections, to a penalty not exceeding $6,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months;".

Again we are doing away with the minimum fine. We come now to clause 13 (c), the only one in which the minimum penalty has been retained. It reads—

> "for a third or subsequent offence, whether against the same or another provision of the said sections, to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years."

No provision is made for a fine. The magistrate has always fined the offender a certain amount or imposed a certain term of imprisonment for the first offence. For the second offence there is provision for a fine or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months, but for the third offence the magistrate has to put the offender in gaol. It is obvious that, whatever the magistrate has fined the offender the first time, it will be a heavier penalty the second time. We are virtually saying, "What is the compensation? Is $6,000 the equivalent of six months on the second occasion?" Is that the relationship? $3,000 for two months or $6,000 for six months. The Government is saying a heavier penalty must be imposed. I am completely opposed to the idea of making it mandatory——

Mr. Alison: He could be gaoled for only a day.

Mr. HOUSTON: If he is gaoled for a day, it is virtually a recommendation to, "Get your first two over quick and you will only have to go in for a day." To be quite honest, I do not think that is logical. I think the logic of it is that the magistrates will follow the legislation and impose penalties on a progressively higher scale. That is what the legislation means, surely. Surely a third offence calls for the imposition of a heavier penalty. But when we say, "He must go to gaol," I think that is a bad principle.

I thought the Government would have learned its lesson after it finally had to repeal the mandatory sentences imposed under the Traffic Act. I heard a lot being said here by Government members about how wrong it was to provide a mandatory sentence. I think it is still wrong to have a mandatory gaol sentence for a third offence even if we wish to amend the Act to modernise it. We do not know how serious the third offence will be. What worries me is that, although we have allowed for a first, second and third offence, the third offence might be a minor one. The first offence could involve a large amount of money, as the Treasurer said——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. HOUSTON: The second offence could involve a much smaller amount and on the third occasion he could be caught with just one or two bets. With all due respects to some of those who go chasing so-called criminals, sometimes they are as human as everyone else. They are liable to set up somebody and decide, "This is the time to make the arrest". This could happen and it does happen. The magistrate is not allowed to make his judgment on the evidence. I believe that if the same pattern were followed as for the first and second offence, then we might think the penalty for the third offence is still out of proportion as far

as other crimes are concerned. It would at least be consistent with what we believe is the general pattern of our law.

I must refer to the offence of assault occasioning bodily harm, for which we decided that a fine of $1,000 and six months' imprisonment was all that was required.

We of the Opposition are not very happy with this provision of the Bill, that is, clause 13, and we trust that the Treasurer will see fit to amend that provision, or at least allow those who are arrested for a third offence to be judged by the courts and not be prejudged by this Parliament.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (8 p.m.): At the introductory stage I raised a point in relation to the clause to which the honourable member for Bulimba referred just before he resumed his seat. It was my intention at that time to pursue the matter at the second-reading and committee stages and perhaps propose an amendment to clause 13 (c). However, after reading the Act and also relevant speeches in earlier debates, I have come to the conclusion that that clause is very insignificant compared to the many other injustices that exist under the Act.

As I pointed out to the honourable member for Bundaberg at the introductory stage, I now point out to the honourable member for Bulimba that clause 13 (c) refers not to a mandatory sentence but to a mandatory penalty, and there is a vast difference. Every penalty that is stipulated for every crime is a mandatory penalty. The question at issue is not whether there is a mandatory sentence but whether there is a mandatory penalty.

The major reason for my suggesting to the Treasurer at the introductory stage that perhaps I might propose an amendment was that the third subparagraph was very weak in that it did not enable the State to receive back any revenue that it may have lost through the activities of illegal S.P. bookmakers.

I point out also that if the magistrate finds himself in the position of having to stipulate a sentence of imprisonment, he may say—and one sees this in manslaughter charges, for which a certain maximum period of imprisonment is stipulated—"You are imprisoned until the court adjourns." He then adjourns the court and the period of imprisonment is over. I ask the Treasurer through you, Mr. Speaker: what is the point of having legislation providing for a penalty of such a type that it does not make provision for any monetary balance and simply leaves in the hands of the magistrate no capacity to impose any penalty upon a small S.P. bookmaker? I shall have further comments to make on that later.

In his reply at the introductory stage the Treasurer made the point that he thought we were perhaps trying to protect the small bookmakers and that these people were relatively unimportant. I refer him to the record of the debate, "Hansard" volume 210, when the original Racing and Betting Bill was introduced in 1954. At that time, one honourable member said—

> "However, I want to register my protest against this legislation. Two very important issues are at stake."

Mr. Moore: Are you quoting?

Mr. BYRNE: Yes, I am quoting. He then said—

> "Firstly, I believe that if we pass the legislation we will set up facilities for the rapid spread of what has rightly been described as a social and moral evil. Secondly, I oppose it because I believe it is our duty as the elected representatives of the people to legislate in the best interests of the people of Queensland."

He further said—

> "I do know also that in the North and in the West there are people to whom one might refer as pocket-book starting-price betting operators carried on. They were the type that one noticed round hotels. They came to the front door of an hotel wrote something down quickly and then ducked off somewhere else. When the police made raids they caught the big agents and the small operators. What happened? The big man was operating again the following week but in many cases the little fellow could not find sufficient money to pay his bail but unfortunately, as soon as one small operator was eliminated his place was taken by somebody else."

Mr. Jensen: Why don't you pull him up for reading?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will pull the honourable member for Bundaberg up if he does not refrain from making persistent interjections. I ask him to refrain.

Mr. BYRNE: He continued—

> "This legislation will legalise the position as far as the big bookmaker is concerned. I do not believe the small man will be in the race in getting a licence"—

this is related to the situation under the 1954 Act—

> "but as I said before, he will still operate. You will not stamp it out completely. We are creating two sets of circumstances by legalising S.P. betting because we promote the growth of gambling in every place where a betting shop is set up, and we will still have the small fellow working 'underground'."

Elsewhere in that speech reference was made to a visit to Port Pirie. He said—

> "While there, I saw how licensed betting shops operated. I visited two of them. They were close to one another. Inside these shops there were a number of stools. There was an elevated desk at which the cashier sat. The public were separated from the desk and part of the

room by a rail. A number of clerks were working behind a rail. All that it was necessary to do to make a bet was to step forward, nominate the horse on which one wished to bet, pay in the money, get a ticket and wait. The whole point about it was that after having made the bet, the average person wandered out to one of the nearby hotels and came back later to see how his horse fared . . .

"In my view, not one of the people there, whether he be a member of the the betting public or one of the clerks, was gainfully employed . . .

"I said before that I believe that we could not completely stamp out the small illegal man. He will probably pop up somewhere."

That is one of the more crucial points in my proposition at this stage of the Bill. He continued—

"We have been told that severe penalties will be imposed but that will only drive the small man underground and create circumstances even worse than those that exist now."

He described the situation in Toowoomba at that time. The local newspapers had various reports on S.P. bookie charges. He continued—

"Never once, however, has the main operator of the premises come before the court. On every occasion the man who was caught was the dummy, and whether we have heavier penalties or not we shall still have people who, because of circumstances, are prepared to take the rap. Consequently, it is no use imposing heavier penalties unless they are efficiently policed and carried out."

The question being asked at that time was: Who wants this legislation? The answer given by the honourable member was—

"Apparently there is some nigger in the woodpile but I fail to see who he is."

He concluded his speech by saying—

"There must be some reason for this legislation. The only reason I can see is that the Government regard it as an opportunity for getting extra revenue. That is their right, but I cannot see any moral, social, or economic justification for it and hence I oppose its introduction."

The honourable member who was speaking at that time is here in the House tonight. He is the Honourable the Treasurer. I point out that I concur with the sentiments he expressed at that time. In concurring with those sentiments, I point out that in relation to the penalty here and other elements of that Bill, which I shall mention further, the imposition of heavier penalties, without the sensible provision of a monetary penalty as well, creates the situation where the magistrate dealing with the small man who gets caught on the third occasion has no course of action open to him other than to impose imprisonment. That is a foolish situation.

In the same debate in 1954 the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nicklin) moved an amendment to delete clause 138 (2). For the benefit of honourable members, I shall quote that clause. It stated—

"If on the hearing of any complaint against any person for an alleged offence against any of the provisions of section one hundred and six, or of subsection one of section one hundred and eight, of this Act, the evidence for the prosecution is such as to raise in the mind of the justices hearing the complaint a reasonable suspicion that the person is guilty of the offence charged against him in the complaint, that evidence shall be deemed prima facie evidence that that person is guilty of that offence."

That subsection, with very small and subtle machinery changes, still exists in the legislation. I consider that subclause to have been unjust and opposed to principles of British justice as, indeed, did the then Leader of the Opposition. He said—

"The ordinary principle of British law is that an accused person cannot be convicted unless his guilt is proved by the prosecutor beyond a reasonable doubt. An accused person is not required to go into the witness box. If the prosecutor fails to convince the magistrate, jury or judge beyond a reasonable doubt, there is no case for him to answer."

In many cases a judge has withdrawn a case from the jury on that ground. Mr. Nicklin went on to say that alternatively there has to be aroused in the mind of the magistrate a reasonable suspicion. So I say that clause 13 (c) provides a mandatory penalty that is foolish in the sense that it will not achieve what this Parliament desires, and, as well, other clauses in the Bill are detrimental, and indeed opposed, to principles that this Parliament enunciated earlier in this session and also in preceding sessions.

Mr. Nicklin continued—

"Under this clause an accused person is called upon to combat not proof beyond a reasonable doubt but an intangible, indefinite and elusive thing which is peculiarly within the knowledge of the Court. It is quite beyond the knowledge of the accused person. How can the defendant know the nature and extent of a suspicion that he may be guilty . . . It is something of which he cannot possibly have any knowledge. It must not be forgotten that the charges under this Bill are criminal charges. The defendant may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment, or a heavy fine may be imposed. The accused person is called on to rebut a thought in the mind of the judge."

The reason I see no point in moving an amendment to clause 13 (c) of the Bill is that in the Act there are certain provisions that in themselves call for amendment in these modern times of interpretation of justice.

Section 138 of the Act, in setting out the evidentiary provisions, states—

"Where—

(a) Any member of the Police Force, officer, or other person who is authorised——"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that at the second-reading stage of the Bill he is not permitted to discuss the clauses.

Mr. BYRNE: I am not discussing the clauses of the Bill, Mr. Speaker; I am discussing the Bill generally and quoting from section 138 of the Act in relation to the onus of proof. It is relevant for us to comprehend that the penalties that are being increased by the Bill are the subject of the evidentiary provisions of the Act, as set out in section 138. I submit it is relevant to continue along this line.

Section 138 sets out clearly that the onus of proof is on the person who is alleged to have committed the offence. In fact, paragraph (x) of section 138 provides—

"On proof that any place is opened, kept, or used for any purpose specified in subsection one of section one hundred and eight of this Act, that place shall be deemed to be so opened, kept, or used with the permission of the occupier thereof, unless the contrary is proved."

Paragraph (xi) provides as follows—

"If it is proved that in or on any place alleged to be opened, kept, or used as a common betting house there is installed a telephone instrument the number of which does not appear in the telephone directory current at the time of the alleged offence, such place shall be deemed to be opened, kept, or used as a common betting house, until the contrary is proved."

Finally, paragraph (xii) provides—

"In any proceedings in respect of the unlawful use of a totalisator, the onus of proving that it was used under the authority, and in accordance with the terms and conditions, of a totalisator license shall be on the defendant."

The principle of onus of proof resting on the defendant was contained in other Bills that were brought forward earlier in this session. However, those provisions were removed and the particular Bills amended to ensure that the defendant did not have that onus cast upon him. For example, in certain motor vehicle legislation the particular provision was altered to place the onus not on the driver but on the user of the vehicle.

Whilst the Bill could be described as a revenue measure, clause 13 (c) will be ineffectual in that by not providing for a pecuniary penalty we are giving a magistrate or a court the right to sentence a person charged under that section to imprisonment until the rising of that court. This provision will be totally ineffectual in its application to a small bookmaker.

It is important to realise that S.P. bookies will not be stamped out, and that, in many instances, small operators or dummies will be brought before the court. On the first occasion a man is brought before the court he will be dealt with by the magistrate in a suitable, fair and equitable way according to the degree of guilt. The same can be said of the second penalty. However, a rather naive situation arises with the third penalty in that there is no provision for a pecuniary penalty. If the Treasurer believes that the third penalty is designed for the large operators, in that case the State is entitled to some return of revenue, which the large operator has been depriving the State of, and it can get this revenue in the form of a large fine. There is no better way to get back that revenue. If it were possible to incorporate in the clause a provision for a maximum fine of $20,000 and/or a prison sentence of two years, the State could receive a pecuniary return from the big S.P. bookies, and the court would also be able to impose a term of imprisonment of up to two years.

It is beyond me why the Treasurer, in this instance, persists in saying that it is not possible, it is not feasible, it is not advisable, it is not sensible, and it is not desirable to have a pecuniary penalty and/or imprisonment penalty. On what the Treasurer said in 1954, and on what I have said in line with his feelings at that time, I point out that the inclusion of both penalties would be suitable. I might add that the situation has improved vastly since 1954 when the Act was introduced. At that time mandatory pecuniary penalties and sentences were provided. This Government has seen fit to withdraw the concept of the mandatory sentence completely from this legislation. But it has not gone quite far enough. I find it difficult to understand why it will not do so.

I hope that there will be a total review of this Act and that it will encompass section 138 to ensure that the concept of the onus of proof is altered, to see that the rights of the individual are respected and to see that proper and fair justice is accorded to people who find themselves accused.

I support the Treasurer on all aspects of this Bill bar the last provision in the last clause. I would support him on that also, provided a pecuniary fine is added. Without that provision, it is difficult for justices to hand down fair and equitable punishment for the small or large operator. Until it is incorporated we will be in a foolish situation whereby a person can go before a court and, because he is a small operator and because his degree of guilt is low, even if it is his third offence, a magistrate may say, "If I could I would impose a fine, but I can't. However, I don't think that your case warrants imprisonment of any great moment. I therefore imprison you until the adjournment of the court." He then adjourns the court. That person

could then go home without paying any penalty—not even a fine. Indeed, that would overcome the very purpose of the Bill and the very reason for it.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (8.20 p.m.): I have read some of the speeches delivered at the introductory stage of this Bill and I have listened to two speeches today, and I am afraid that many honourable members cannot see the wood for the trees. When the S.P. racket was operating, it was one of the most putrid things that afflicted this State. Let there be no mistake about that. I have never had an S.P. bet in my life but I believe that I know more about the S.P. game than any other honourable member. All my friends and relatives were in the racing game. Because they could trust me with any information that I happened to come by, I picked up the story from both sides.

I shall now relate to the House the story of how close my association was with the S.P. game in Townsville. It was flourishing there in all its putridity. For many years we had a very fine gentleman in this Parliament. He was the Chairman of Committees, Major H. B. Taylor, D.S.O. On one occasion he wanted to come to see me in Townsville on a matter that was very personal to him. He wired me. I wired back and said that I would meet him in the vestibule of the Town Hall and he agreed to meet me there. I also had the late Arthur Coburn come up from Ayr so that he could be with me when I spoke to Major H. B. Taylor on this matter that was agitating his mind. It was a matter relating to this Parliament.

When he came up, he met me in the vestibule. I said, "We won't talk here. We'll go up the road to my office." In those days I had an office alongside a barber's shop in a basement. We went into the basement and, instead of turning right into the barber's shop, we turned left into a very palatial place in the basement. We sat there for the best part of an hour and a half and discussed Major Taylor's problem.

I went across the passageway and made a cup of tea for the three of us and got some biscuits. After we had finished talking, Major Taylor sat back and said, "You amaze me, Tom. You are a rank-and-file member of Parliament. I know that you are a man without any private means, yet you can have an electorate office like this. Look at the armchair I am sitting in and the wonderful table I am sitting at. It has five telephones on it and more telephones over there." I said, "Yes, and there are some more on that counter at the front of the basement." He said, "Are they for the people who come in to see you?" I said, "No. This is not my own office, Harold. This is an S.P. joint." He said, "Oh God, let me get out of here!" He got out as quickly as he could.

I had gone to the man who operated that S.P. place—there were about 20 operating at full blast in Townsville at that time and it was the biggest—and I said to him, "Will you be operating tomorrow, Paddy?" He said, "No, tomorrow is Thursday. It's a dead day." I said, "Will you lend me the key to your office?" He said, "Yes." He gave me the key. So I was in his office and I could have examined any document there that I wanted to. That indicates how close and friendly I was with the men who ran the S.P. racket.

I have been on only about four racecourses in my life. Not long ago, when the Treasurer came to Townsville to open the Abel Smith stand, I went to the track. Why the hell it was named the Abel Smith stand I will never know. I do not know that he ever did anything for racing in Townsville. I could have named 450 men in North Queensland who had done more than Abel Smith for racing in North Quensland but I suppose that snobbery had come into it, so it was named the Abel Smith stand.

We had a very luscious luncheon and were given programmes for the day. After the luncheon I said, "I have another function to attend, so I will go." The mayor said, "Stop and see the Townsville Cup run." That was the first race I had seen at Cluden and I have lived in Townsville for 40 years. I said, "All right, I'll stop. I'll have a bet on the race." I looked at the programme and gave the mayor of Townsville £5 to put on a horse for me. It started at 8/1. I saw the horse win. I jumped into a car and went to the other function. Later I was asked, "How the heck did you pick the winner?" I said, "It was dead easy. The horse's name was Invictus." I did not know one horse from another but I won a bass solo competition singing "Invictus". So I had £5 on the horse at 8/1. A couple of weeks later, the mayor came and gave me my £45—the £5 I had given him to put on the horse and the £40 I had won. People in the racing game in Townsville know these things.

I shall give the House another example of how I have been honest in these matters. I was on the Charters Towers racecourse one day. It was a Boxing Day meeting, and I was walking around like a typhoid carrier; nobody wanted to talk to me because they knew that I knew nothing about racing. There were two horses in one race, and the trainer of one of them, who was a Townsville man, came up to me and said, "Tom, here's 50 quid. Go and put it on the other horse." Fifty quid was a lot of money in those days. I said, "No, Danny, I won't put 50 quid on a horse. Nearly all these bookmakers come from Townsville. They all know me. They know that I don't bet, and if I went into the betting ring and put 50 quid on a horse, what would they think? They would know that this horse was either alive or dead." So I said, "Go and get someone else to put it on." And he did. There were two horses in that race, and I knew that one of them was dead. Is there anyone here who could have resisted the opportunity to put a few bob on the

other one that was alive? It was a case of virtue being its own reward. It was only a 4-furlong race from the top of the hill at Charters Towers, and the dead horse got a break whereas the live horse got a bad start. The jockey on the dead horse did everything to stop it except fall off. That shows just how seamy the racing game is. The horses came up the straight, and all the people were laughing their heads off. The jockey on the dead horse was sitting back on the horse's rump, with the reins taut. The horse's neck was up in the air, and the jockey's feet and boots were rigid and almost in the horse's ears. And still the dead horse came home by about half a length.

Mr. Jensen: Where were the stewards? Didn't they have them in those days?

Mr. AIKENS: The stewards? That gives some idea of the naivety of the honourable member for Bundaberg. Where indeed are the stewards when this sort of thing goes on! For goodness' sake, let the honourable member for Bundaberg grow up!

The Gair Government, if I remember rightly, had much the same pressure applied to it as this Government and others have had to crush the S.P. game. S.P. betting was in fact a monstrous state of affairs. On Wednesdays and Saturdays one could scarcely walk along the streets in Townsville. I was in Cairns one Saturday and I had to walk in the middle of Abbott Street to get along. I could not walk along the footpath for the crowds outside S.P. shops. There were men, women and children of all ages, and the bookmakers were going full belt and raking in the money as fast as they could. The big betting boards were up; they were calling the odds, and police were walking along deaf, dumb and blind. I know men in many places in North Queensland who made small fortunes from the S.P. game. They had all sorts of runners, spongers and hangers-on, and they made money for them, too. Some of them bet on the racecourse at Cluden, too, but they made their real money S.P. betting.

It was a shocking state of affairs, and the whole moral tone of the people was corrupted by the S.P. game. Nobody can deny that. It was shocking to see men, women and children crowding round counters and pushing their way in to make bets. The police were usually somewhere else. If they happened to be in the street, they were deaf, dumb and blind. I do not know how many police inspectors have been removed from Townsville with my assistance since I became a member of Parliament. I adopted what I thought was a pretty decent, fair and honest attitude. I used to say to them, "I am not an inspector of police and I don't want to tell you what to do. But if you are going to do anything about S.P. betting, be consistent. Either open the lot or close the lot." There were at times inspectors who would close some S.P. betting shops and allow others to remain open. When I went down the street, I would be blamed for this situation. I would be asked, "Are you getting a graft from so-and-so, because he's open while the others are closed?" I would go then to the inspector of police and say, "Either you close the lot or open the lot or I'll get you moved." On one occasion an inspector came to me in Townsville and said, "I want my senior sergeant of detectives transferred. He's grafting with the bookmakers." I said, "So are you. I'm going to get him shifted because he's picking and choosing, and I'll get you shifted, too." The two of them were shifted.

That shows how rotten and putrid the S.P. game was, and I hope this Government will not allow it to develop to anything like that extent again in Queensland. It was perhaps the blackest period in our history.

I know that the Government are quite honest in their ideas but, as I say, they are babes in arms when it comes to the S.P. and racing games. There is only one thing that actuates a man who goes to the racecourse. Do not think it is the love of good horseflesh; do not think it is to see the nice little sheilas who are parading round in their loveliest clothes; one thing and one thing alone actuates a person to go to the racecourse and that is cupidity, and it is an amazing thing.

As a matter of fact one of the reasons I do not go to the races is that I am perhaps a little bit vainer than the average man; I am a little bit, shall we say, fastidious about the people I talk to. Yet we see people on the racecourse, men and women—decent, well-clothed respectable women who will allow some dirty, grubby, stinking oaf to come up to them and say, "If you want a tip, I'll give you something in the second." And they listen to this fellow. I said to one woman, "God almighty, you wouldn't talk to him in the middle of a creek. Why do you talk to him here? Is it just because you think he's giving you the oil?" They are actuated, as I say, by cupidity, and it is a very soul-destroying attitude, believe you me. The Gair Government was pressured into acting. When we consider the S.P. game as it was then—blooming like a green bay tree, wide open, with millions of dollars being made out of the suckers' pockets—who was getting the millions of dollars? Not only the S.P. bookmaker—they were living the sybaritic life, a life of luxury and indolence, and all their hangers-on were, too—but also the rotten, crooked police and the rotten, crooked A.L.P. politicians. They were raking it in by the thousands, too. Not every policeman was crooked, but most of them were. Not every A.L.P. politician was crooked, but most of them were, and the party itself was crooked because I know that the bookmakers organisations in various towns in Queensland regularly sent very substantial donations down to the A.L.P. Government of the day.

The honourable member for Port Curtis is laughing. We have the case of an inspector in Townsville who raked in so much graft from the S.P. operators and planted it that, when he was transferred away from Townsville, he forgot all about it. Four or five years later when the old inspector's building in North Ward was being pulled down to make way for a head-master's building in the new Central School, one of the carpenters was ripping up the veranda floor boards and underneath them he found 800 quid in tenners that the inspector had forgotten all about. I remember asking questions in the House about it. I said, "Is the carpenter who found it going to get it?" Honourable members will find the answer in "Hansard". As I recall it, the Minister of the day replied that the carpenter was going to get about one-quarter of it and he had to share that with his mates, and the other £600 went into Consolidated Revenue. So do not tell me about the rottenness and the crookedness and the corruption associated with the S.P. game.

I repeat that only one or two policemen would not be in it and only one or two members of Parliament would not be in it; but the great majority made hay while the sun shone, believe you me. So they had a royal commission into the S.P. game. I think it was set up by the Gair Government. I know that the late Jim Riordan was the chairman and they had a few other fellows on it. They had an impossible creature named Meynick, I think, on it. He was a fellow like our new young members of Parliament who think they know everything whereas they know nothing. I was the only member of Parliament in Queensland who had the simple little bit of guts to go along and give evidence before that commission. Every other parliamentarian just found out his aunty was dying over in Kalgoolie or his mother was having another child up in Cape York. Away they went, and it was hard to find a politician in the State while that commission was taking evidence. But I went along to the courthouse in Townsville, and, despite the fact that this and that was going to happen to me, I gave evidence. It is all on record. I told them, "If you want to stop S.P. betting, I will tell you how to stop it." I knew very well what was going on in the S.P. game. I knew who was getting the rake-off and the peel-off from it. I said, "There is only one way to stop S.P. betting—gaol the bookmaker and gaol the punter. Gaol them both and that will stop them."

That is my attitude today. I would not like to see the S.P. game bloom and blossom into what it was in those frightful days when there was open slather in Queensland. Gaol the punter and gaol the bookmaker. Even if you send them to gaol for a month, that will do; but let them know you are fair dinkum.

Before you can gaol the bookmaker and before you can gaol the punter, you still have to clean out of the Police Force the small, rotten, grafting element that is there. It is not there in North Queensland—I do not know of any policeman in North Queensland who closes his eyes to S.P. betting—but I do know from evidence given to me—evidence that I would be prepared to believe in any circumstances—that some of it is going on down on the Gold Coast and a lot of it is going on in Brisbane and in one or two other places. So I say to the Government, "Go after the crooked police who are still taking graft from S.P. bookmakers." I do not know of any member of the Government parties in this Parliament who is taking graft from S.P. bookmakers, as 99 per cent of A.L.P. politicians did when A.L.P. Governments were in office. But in order to get S.P. bookmakers before the court, you have first to clean out the people who do not want to bring them before the court. When they are brought there, there must be a mandatory penalty.

The idea of fixing a monetary penalty is a lot of moonshine. I can remember when the penalties were fairly high in the S.P. game, and every month or so the S.P. operators would be tipped off whose turn it was to be "knocked off", as they called it, this week. They would get ready, and down would come the police to one of the well-known S.P. operators in Townsville—in Flinders Street, over on the south side, out at Hermit Park, or out at West End. Someone would say, "What's on?" The S.P. bookmaker would say, "Keep away. It's my turn to go off today." The punters would stay away; the police would come in and make the arrest and take the bookmaker up to the watch-house. He would be released on bail, and the next day he would appear before the magistrate. He would be fined £50, and away he would go, laughing his head off. S.P. bookmakers regarded that purely and simply as a licence fee to continue operating. That is what S.P. bookmakers will do today if only a monetary penalty is imposed when they are brought before the court.

We are told, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill makes provision for a maximum penalty of $3,000 for the first offence. Do not let us kid ourselves. I feel sure that the Bill will go through, despite the efforts of a small section in the Liberal Party. I remember when there was a section in the Liberal Party that I called the ginger group. There were eight, 10, or 12 in the ginger group, but they have since been blown to the four winds. The Treasurer knows how to break up such groups. He breaks them up very early. One of them is now a Minister of the Crown, another is Chairman of Committees and another was appointed chairman of this or chairman of something else. There are only one or two

of them left. They are a little vociferous now and again. But the ginger group as such have disappeared.

Now there is a more dangerous group. At least the ginger group used to stand up in this Chamber and speak in favour of things that they thought were worth while and might be in the interests of the community at large. I will say that for them, even though, as I told them time and time again, they were traitors to their own party and if they wanted to speak and vote as independents, they should not stay in the Liberal Party; they should come over and sit alongside me and do it. My objection to them, of course, was that they remained in the Liberal Party, with all the lurks and perks associated with membership of the Liberal Party, and then wanted to speak and vote as independents. It was on that point that I disagreed with them.

As I said, the ginger group is now a thing of the past—it is with Nineveh and Tyre. Now there is another group, most of whom came in at the last election. I might refer to it as the C.P.G.—the criminals protection group. We saw them in full flight on the Bill to amend the Traffic Act; we have seen them in full flight on this Bill—anything at all to protect the criminal. And do not make any mistake about it, Mr. Speaker; the S.P. operator is a criminal. As I said, all these people are concerned about is protecting the criminal. Don't they think it is about time they started protecting the decent, honest, law-abiding citizens? Don't these people count with them at all? Are they not of any moment to those in the C.P.G.? When all is said and done, it is all very well to stand up in this Chamber and weep great, big crocodile tears in the interests of criminals. What about some pity, mercy and compassion for the victim of the criminal? If any honourable member had seen what I saw particularly in the provincial cities, when S.P. betting was wide open and rampant—no doubt the honourable member for Port Curtis saw it—he would not want to see it again. Apparently the C.P.G. boys do because they have a tender spot in their heart for the S.P. bookmaker. They tell the silly old story that it is not the S.P. bookmaker that gets caught but the poor little runner—the poor old fellow who has got a little notebook and a stub of a pencil because he can't afford to buy a long one. He takes a bet of 20c off this fellow and a bet of 10c off that fellow. The poor old fellow always has a wife and nine children, or sometimes nine orphans, to keep. What a lot of—I almost said it. What a lot of bulldust and nonsense that is! If any policeman wanted to catch the main man, he could catch him 10 times a day. All that malarkey about the poor little fellow—"Don't pinch the poor little bloke. Give him a chance. He's got a living to earn and he's got a lot of poor half-starved kids to keep." If honourable members want S.P. betting to burgeon and bloom as it did, if they want it to become the social typhoid-fever epidemic that it was, let them vote against the Bill, or better still, vote for the C.P.G. boys and break down the clauses of the Bill.

They talk about a $3,000 maximum. What does that mean? It means that even if the operator is brought before a magistrate, and the magistrate runs to form, he will fine him $300. Has the legal vulture in the Chamber ever known a magistrate in any circumstances at all to impose the maximum penalty for a first offence? Never! Has he ever known a magistrate to impose half the maximum penalty for a first offence? Never! We talk about a $3,000 maximum. We will be flat out getting a big S.P. operator fined $500 for a first offence. Let us be honest about it. There is only one way to stop them. Send them to gaol first up, the same as a drunk-driver should be sent to gaol first up.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: We can hear the C.P.G. boys shaking in their shoes now. "The very idea of a drunken killer or a big wealthy S.P. operator being sent to gaol! Oh my goodness, that's not done." But it has to be done. If they are dinkum and want to close the S.P. shops and stop S.P. betting becoming the curse it was a few years ago, they've just got to do it, and that's all there is to it. Those are my sentiments. Anyone can quote me. If the honourable member for Belmont wants to, he can look up "Hansard" way back to 1944. I commend to him the first speech I ever delivered in this House. I refer to my speech in the Address-in-Reply debate in 1944 that was so frank that, when I order 5,000 copies of it, the Labor Government of the day ordered the Government Printer not to print one single copy of it. That is what the Labor Government thought of it. Even the legal eagle in the Chamber will agree that that speech was not actionable. The Labor Government would not allow it to be printed because in it I told the truth about the A.L.P. at the time, just as I am telling the truth about S.P. operators today and all the sleazy crowd associated with them.

I was telling the truth then just as I tell the truth now about the crooked and corrupt policemen and crooked and corrupt politicians. There are still crooked and corrupt policemen. There must be for even one S.P. operator to operate. If I went out and found one of the old bush policemen, one of the old mounted men from right out near the Northern Territory border, brought him into the city, and said to him, "I am the Minister in charge of police. Never mind about the commissioner or anybody else. Go out and pinch the S.P. operator," I'll guarantee that after a couple of weeks to feel his way around he would have the big boys in without any nonsense.

Most of the money made in S.P. operations comes not from the small punter at the counter but from the really big men—and they can be easily caught—who operate in offices and with switchboards that would make the one in this building look like a kids' toy. They sit in their offices on Saturday afternoon with the front doors shut and barred, and all they do is pick up bets from all over Australia. They are what are known as lay-off bets. S.P. bookmakers in all parts of Australia lay certain horses for too much and want to lay off the bets. They do so with these people who work from their offices.

In Townsville there was a man who made the best part of a quarter of a million pounds —that's not peanuts even today; it certainly wasn't then—merely by sitting in his office on Saturday afternoon with his four switchboard operators taking lay-off bets from all over Australia. He could have been picked up at any time the police cared to come to his door.

S.P. betting is a putrid and soul-destroying curse. Let us be honest about this. I have often tried to get politicians to speak honestly. Let them do so now. How many cases do honourable members know of families that have been absolutely broken because of the betting urge, the compulsion to bet, on the part of the husband or, to a much lesser extent, the wife? Worse than that, however, are the cases of young men, and sometimes young women, in good jobs handling a fair amount of the boss's money who do it all with an S.P. operator. They do $10 this week, think they will get square the following week, lose again, and so it goes on.

Mr. Hanson: The S.P. operators in Townsville have contributed to your campaign.

Mr. AIKENS: Anything the S.P. operators contributed to my campaign would not be more than one-tenth of what they contributed to the A.L.P.'s campaign. That is the truth. I remember one occasion when an A.L.P. collector, a big man in the A.L.P. in Townsville, went to one of the city's biggest S.P. operators saying, "I'll get a donation from you for our campaign fund." I shall not mention names; although the men are dead, their families might still be alive. This S.P. operator said, "Yes, I'll give you a spot." In racing parlance a "spot" is £100. The collector said, "Thanks very much. Where will I collect it?" The S.P. bookmaker replied, "Collect it off so-and-so; he owes me £200." The collector was told to get £200 from an A.L.P. politician who owed the bookmaker £200, and was told he could take £100 of it.

If the honourable member for Port Curtis wants to pick up $10 easily I will give him the name of an A.L.P. politician who was defeated at the last election and who bet me $20 that Fabian Sweeney would beat Duke Bonnett. He took the knock on me; he has not paid me yet. If the honourable member for Port Curtis wants his name, I shall give it to him so that he can collect my $20 and keep half of it for himself.

As I was saying, a boy was working in my office and he started to spend money on girls by taking them out in his motorcar. The honourable member for Port Curtis, who is a man of the world, will confirm that the best way to find out whether someone is crooked is to learn how much he is earning and also how much he is spending. If he is spending more than he is earning, he is getting his money from somewhere else. I said to this young fellow, "Your father is a friend of mine, and I don't want to see you get into trouble. Where are you getting the money from?" He got in a bit of a huff and started a little bit of bluff, bluster and bravado. I said, "That doesn't wash with me." He said, "I'll tell you where I'm getting it, Mr. Aikens."

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I was in Cloncurry.

He said, "I took £10 out of the till one week and put it on with Peter Dawes." Peter Dawes was a great old fellow; he did not know where the young fellow got the money. The lad then said, "It came home but I have not been able to pick a winner since." I said, "How much are you in for?" When he said, "I am in for 80 quid," I went to a mate of his, got the £80, and put it back and said to him, "There will be no more." He said, "There will be no more, and thank you very much." I was able to stop that boy, who would have gone on and on until he was sent to gaol. He thought it was easy money. Young people are sold the idea that all they have to do is place a bet. When they pick up the newspapers, they read about the woman in black, Khemlani, Jim Cairns, the great punter at Eagle Farm or some other place who goes home every Saturday with a great roll of dough, and they think, "Why can't I emulate him and pick up easy money?" Believe me, there is no easy money on the racecourse. It is an even tougher and grubbier game than politics.

Some of my best friends in the western country were big racehorse owners who once owned a racehorse named King K. Anybody who knows anything about the racing game knows that he was a champion. He was nominated in the Cloncurry Cup. Everybody thought he was home and dried but the young fellows who owned him said, "We will pull King K." In case the young members in the Liberal Party do not know what that means, it simply means that the horse will not win—even if the jockey has to fall off him to stop him from winning. The price drifted a little, but nobody bothered. The stewards didn't bother very much—more often than not, they are in it, but that does not matter.

The father of these boys, who was an old man, knew more about the game than they would ever learn. They forgot about him and said, "Nobody bothers about poor old dad." When the father was legging the jockey up, he said to him, "Go for the doctor." The jockey said, "But wait on, Mr. So-and-So; the boys tell me I have to pull him up." He said, "I know that, but they have told me you have to go for the doctor." The jockey said, "O.K." and he went for the doctor and home came King K. by a street. The owners weren't on him, but the old man was. The old man won a packet, and that was the last time they let him leg a jockey up. That's the way the racing game is run.

A relative of mine leased one of the finest little stallions——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: I am speaking to the principles of the Bill, Mr. Speaker. In dealing with the putridity of the racing game, I am emphasising the putridity of the S.P. game and all associated with it.

I shall just tell this story and finish. This lovely little chestnut stallion won a lot of races. I had £1 on him once and he came home at 3 to 1. When those who had him passed him back to the station owner, he was a lovely little horse. But two months after they passed him back, his mane and tail fell out. They had ripped so much dope into him that the poor thing could hardly walk. Let nobody kid himself that the racing game is a game for kings. It is a game for mugs and thugs. If a man who is in it knows what he is doing, and is quite prepared to be a mug or a thug, it is O.K. I have no quarrel with that, but let no-one kid himself, as the C.P.G.—the criminal protection group—over here kids itself. Where is the leader of it? Where is the honourable member for South Brisbane?

Mr. LAMONT: Point of order!

Mr. AIKENS: There he is; there is our old friend; there's the leader. It is nice to see him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: As a matter of fact he looks like a jockey in mufti.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. I find the honourable member for Townsville South offensive, but I find his remarks even more offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr. AIKENS: What the hell have I got to withdraw, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. AIKENS: What have I to withdraw? He is the leader of the C.P.G.—the criminal protection group, those who protect anybody, from drunken drivers to S.P. operators.

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. It is quite clear that the honourable member for Townsville South is misrepresenting totally the remarks of the honourable member for Belmont. Although I have not spoken to this Bill, he somehow seems to be associating me with those remarks. On behalf of other honourable members who have spoken, I resent any reference to the Liberal Party having members who protect criminals.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to accept the denial.

Mr. AIKENS: I will finish with that subject.

I now want to finish my speech on a note of absolute sincerity, seriousness and calmness. I appeal to honourable members once again to make up their minds on which side they stand. Do they stand on the side of those who fleece the public—the S.P. operators, the runners, the crooked police and anybody else who is crookedly associated with them—or do they stand on the side of the decent, law-abiding citizens who should be protected against those who fleece them?

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (8.56 p.m.): The honourable member for Townsville South talked about speaking honestly, and I rise to speak very honestly.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: I am not going to take any interjections.

It can be proved by the Clerk of the Parliament that in the seven years that I have been a member of this Parliament there would not be two members—there might not even be one—with a better record of attendance than mine. I have been in the Chamber for every night sitting during that time. I would say that the honourable member for Townsville South, who wants honesty, has not been in this House, or has not spoken in the House three times in seven years. I should not say he has not been here; I mean he has not spoken in the House at night three times in seven years. When he has spoken he has protected the Government. The previous time he spoke, he protected the Premier. Tonight he spoke for one purpose—for the Treasurer.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. I did not speak for the Treasurer or anybody else in this Chamber. I spoke for the decent, law-abiding citizens of Queensland.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. AIKENS: I spoke for the people of whom the honourable member for Bundaberg knows absolutely nothing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to accept the denial.

Mr. JENSEN: If he says he didn't, I withdraw it.

He has attacked the Police Force in Queensland, not only tonight, but for the past 20 years. He said that every punter was a mug or a thug. The Treasurer admits that he is a punter, so he is either a mug or a thug. The honourable member for Townsville South spoke for one purpose tonight—on behalf of the Treasurer and against certain members of the Liberal Party who stood up for their rights in the caucus room. If he did not do that, why is he here? I have been here for seven years and I have the best attendance record.

Mr. Frawley: Tell the truth; you haven't.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not want interjections that are lies. The Clerk of the Parliament can prove what I am saying. I do not want the honourable member to start his lying.

Mr. Frawley: I have been here at night more than you have.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Murrumba will refrain from making persistent interjections.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not know how he is a member of the National Party. He is a liar and a rat-bag in most of the things he says.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to that remark and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg will withdraw that remark because it is unparliamentary.

Mr. JENSEN: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I will say that he tells untruths and he has no chance of ever being a member of the Labor Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw the word "rat-bag" and apologise to the honourable member for Murrumba.

Mr. JENSEN: I thought I had.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to obey the instruction of the Chair.

Mr. JENSEN: I withdraw the words "rat-bag" and "liar". He tells untruths, and I will not mention anything further.

It was suggested that we speak honestly in this debate. I want to speak honestly. I have always stated what I think and I have spoken strongly about some things. Nobody in this House can deny that.

Mr. Lester: You interject when I am speaking.

Mr. JENSEN: I do not mind interjections if they are sensible, and I will take any interjection. Nobody can say that I refuse to take interjections in this House. I will try to take them from anybody. But I do not like rat-bags interjecting. That is all I said. I did not call anybody a rat-bag.

Mr. Lester: You do take my interjections, so I presume you think I am not a rat-bag.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, that is right.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: I spoke very briefly at the introductory stage of the Bill because of the late hour and because our good Chairman of Committees said, "You have only five minutes." When I rose to speak, the Treasurer walked out of the House, and he returned 17 minutes after I sat down. In my five minutes I spoke about the increased bookmakers' fees, and said how good the increase would be for the racing clubs. I also spoke on the introduction of coursing for Bundaberg, and the T.A.B. closing time of 40 minutes before the starting time of a race. I also referred to mandatory gaol sentences. I did all of that in five minutes, and I thought that the Treasurer might have listened to my speech on the P.A. system outside the Chamber. But he didn't, and what did he say? Referring to me, he said, "I have a blank sheet in front of me"—of course he did, because he was outside when I spoke—"and I think that is a fair indication of the points that he raised." What a nice thing to say!

Sir Gordon Chalk: I have another blank sheet at the moment, too.

Mr. JENSEN: The Treasurer will not have a blank sheet in a moment. Mr. Whitlam called the Premier a "Bible-bashing bastard". Mr. Hawke called an interjector in Rockhampton the other day a "bright bastard", and another one a "silly bastard". I am well known in Bundaberg—everybody there appreciates me—and I am often asked, "What do you think about the Premier?" I say, "He's a very shrewd man." I am then asked, "What about the Treasurer?"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. JENSEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just want to tell the House what I say about the Treasurer. I say, "Throughout my seven years he has been a smart-arsed bastard." He proved that the other night.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Neither the honourable member nor any other member will use unparliamentary language; otherwise I shall have to deal with him.

Mr. JENSEN: Those words were used in this House today. That is what I have been saying for seven years in Bundaberg. I was asked to speak honestly, and I have done so by calling the Treasurer a smart-arsed bastard.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member, and all other members, that I will not tolerate unparliamentary language. The next member who uses such language will be dealt with under Standing Order 123A.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I rise to a point of order. I do not object to the honourable member's making his statement once, but he has repeated it. It is objectionable to me, and I ask that he withdraw it and apologise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg will withdraw and apologise.

Mr. JENSEN: I withdraw and apologise for saying in this House what I said in Bundaberg.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without reservation.

Mr. JENSEN: I will withdraw. He knows what I think. I have said my piece.

Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (9.4 p.m.): I had intended making a fairly long speech on this subject tonight. However, the principles of the Bill have been fairly well canvassed by the honourable member for Bulimba (with whose sentiments for the most part I agree) and also the honourable member for Belmont (with whose sentiments I likewise agree). But I could not remain seated after the leader of my party had referred to me as a representative of S.P. bookies. In fact that has never been the stand that I have taken. The subject that I have been debating has nothing to do with S.P. bookies or anyone else. It is simply that of mandatory penalties—taking away from a magistrate the right to judge each case on its merits. That is what I have been talking about. If the Treasurer does not understand that, what is wrong with him? I get a gut-full when people adopt that attitude and then ask for loyalty. The Treasurer has had loyalty from me—nothing but loyalty. If the Press ask me about my leader, I do not go running to them. They do not get any information out of me. Things that happen in our party room remain in the party room, and that is what I intend to continue to do. I have done it in the past and I will do it in the future. Because I have made these remarks no pressman need bother coming to me and asking me, "What? Are you having a barney with Chalk?", for I will say, "He is the greatest old mate of all time." I would just like the Treasurer to know that I did not appreciate the remark.

Mr. Houston: You will still be loyal, no matter what.

Mr. MOORE: I have said what I am going to say about that. That is all there is to it.

Returning to the subject of S.P. bookmakers, even blind Freddy knows that, with the law as it is, S.P. bookmakers operate in various hotels around Queensland. I do not frequent hotels very much; so, if I know they are there, others do. The police would have no problem picking them up if they so desired.

The first thing to do if we want to clean something up is to apprehend the offenders, and that has just not been happening. Heavier penalties provided by legislation of this type have never ever brought about the desired effect. When picking pockets was a capital offence in Great Britain, it was at public hangings that pockets were picked the most. It did not do one iota of good then, and penalties of this sort will not do any good now.

That is what I am talking about. I am not talking about defending criminals or anybody else. I know the honourable member for Townsville South has his little joke. I know the things he said were said in jest and, because he is an old friend of mine, I do not take offence at them. But I do say to the Treasurer that the penalties of $3,000 and $6,000 are too high. Would he not agree that, if we are to have a $3,000 fine for the first offence and a $6,000 fine for the second offence, we should impose a fine of up to $10,000 or a gaol sentence for the third offence? Surely we must give the magistrate an alternative so that he may exercise his discretion. I do not want to see a mandatory gaol sentence imposed for some poor, insignificant fellow who, before this legislation receives Royal assent, has already been convicted twice, or perhaps four times. For all we know, the past convictions might have been minor, at a time when it was not considered to be a serious offence. There is no starting point——

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Well, I might be making a mistake there. I thought that was the position. Irrespective of whether it starts tomorrow, I think we have to consider the ramifications. In a country area where there is no television, no picture theatre, no racecourse—there are towns around Queensland which have no facilities like that at all but they have a radio—the only little bit of pleasure they have is the S.P. bookie. That is the only bit of Saturday pleasure they have, and I do not see a hell of a lot wrong with it. If we were smart, we would be introducing legislation to legalise S.P. bookmaking instead of attempting, by threats of gaol, to flog people to the racecourse.

Mr. Hanson: Have you ever been in an S.P. joint?

Mr. MOORE: No, I never have. Actually, that would not be quite right, because in days gone by if one went into a barber shop

one virtually went into a bookie's shop. That applied generally. I might have, but I do not think I have ever bet S.P. As a matter of fact, I do not frequent the races. I would not have been to the races in Brisbane in the last 20 years. So, even if the Treasurer thinks I am protecting anyone, I am not spitting lucerne chaff and so on round the Chamber, as other honourable members have done. I have far better things to do.

In effect, what we have been saying is that the magistrates in Queensland have not been giving the right judgments and imposing the correct penalties. They give judgments as they see fit, and, generally speaking, they give them in the light of public acceptance.

Mr. Byrne: The Crown has the right to appeal against them.

Mr. MOORE: As the honourable member for Belmont says, the Crown has the right to appeal against them.

We are passing all sorts of Acts in this Chamber, and the public at large are losing their capacity for surprise—the ability to be shocked. One can do anything with them. They will lie down and take things because they expect to be given a kick in the stomach every so often. They accept that, and that is one of the things against which I am rebelling. As Algernon Sidney said 300 years ago—

> "... the strength of a nation is not in the Magistrate, but the strength of the Magistrate is in the nation".

That is the problem. We deserve the magistrates we get, because it is society that creates the situation. I am not talking about protecting S.P. bookies or anyone else. The law loses all its significance as a social contract when it is based solely upon authority and not on justice. It is justice, not authority, about which I am speaking.

There is some instinct amongst members on this side of the Chamber, I am sorry to say, to take the attitude, "Oh, well, what is comfortable? The comfortable thing is to run along with it." They leave all the difficult situations to someone else. They say, "Let someone else do it." They do not want to accept their responsibility. I am not doing that, and that is why I take part in this debate tonight. All I wish to say is that magistrates have the right to judge each case on its merits.

Mr. AKERS (Pine Rivers) (9.12 p.m.): I support the Bill introduced by the Treasurer to amend the Racing and Betting Act. I must say first that I have had very little experience of racing. I have never been on a racetrack in my life. I have bet about half a dozen times. I have never been in an S.P. bookmaker's shop, of which other honourable members seem to have vast experience. Therefore, I make no comment on the general provisions of the Racing and Betting Act. However, as the penalties to be imposed under the Bill are a matter of some controversy, I make it clear that I do not in any way condone S.P. bookmakers, principally because of the crime associated with them and the criminals who become involved.

My main reason for taking part in the debate is to support the application of the Metropolitan Coursing Club for night coursing at Lawnton. I have two reasons for doing so. Firstly, the club at Lawnton has stood on its own feet for almost the full 50 years of its existence without any assistance from the T.A.B. It has conducted coursing at Lawnton since 1957 and has shown its ability in administration. Lawnton was the first track in Queensland to have photo-finish equipment—even before Albion Park, I understand—and was one of the first clubs to be equipped with an electronic timer. The average punter at a Lawnton meeting would bet somewhere between $130 and $140 on normal days, which is amongst the highest figures for any coursing or trotting meeting in Queensland. The course has covered betting facilities, modern catering and adequate services for night coursing.

The second reason why I support the club at Lawnton is to help the local show society to continue in existence. Without coursing all the year round, the Lawnton showground would degenerate and deteriorate, and the Pine Rivers show would fade out of existence. Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do the importance of local shows. The show society in any place in the State where a showground is used only two or three days a year deteriorates very quickly. Without night coursing the Lawnton Show Society will deteriorate in that manner. If it could continue with day coursing, it would still be O.K.; but, if night coursing is permitted anywhere else in the northern suburbs of Brisbane, coursing at Lawnton would cease and the Lawnton Show Society would collapse.

I strongly support the Bill, and I hope that the Treasurer will take notice of my contribution tonight.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (9.16 p.m.): The Treasurer has introduced a very important Bill. Before getting on to the main part of my speech, I sincerely congratulate the honourable member for Windsor. He is not presently in the Chamber. He is a man I have always admired. I have had an association with him since we were at college together. I do not necessarily support what he said tonight, but I congratulate him for having the courage to stand up and speak as he feels. There is an obligation on every member of Parliament to speak at some time or other exactly as he feels. At least the honourable member for Windsor has the courage of his convictions. He is a good, strong supporter of the Government, but when necessary he can stand up in the Chamber and say what he feels has to be said.

The honourable member for Bundaberg attempted to discredit the honourable member for Townsville South, who made a brilliant

contribution, as he always does. It is obvious that the honourable member for Bundaberg just could not stand the truth. That is something that has been lacking in A.L.P. politicians for many years. Their greatest attribute is an ability to handle the truth carelessly. Throughout my term here I have been appalled at the low standard of debate of some A.L.P. members, especially some that were elected in 1972. What I have said on numerous occasions is true. Labor scraped the bottom of the political barrel in 1972 to get candidates, and it scraped the scrapings in 1974 to get candidates for that election. Anyone who thinks that the A.L.P. has not degenerated from the once great political party that it was into a mob of louts——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

Mr. FRAWLEY: We have to protect the racing game in this State. I do not profess to be an expert on racing. Many of my relatives were involved in racing. My uncle, the late Neive Frawley, was chairman of the stewards.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: He certainly wasn't a crook. He did a lot to clean up racing. I can remember my late uncle telling me many times that one of the biggest touts and urgers on the racecourse was the honourable member for Bulimba. He said that he thought many a time of getting him warned off the track.

Mr. HOUSTON: I rise to a point of order. I just want to put the record straight. I do not think such references should be made to anyone who has passed on. When the honourable member's uncle held that position and spoke to him, I was not the member for Bulimba. I do want to protect those who went before me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to accept that.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I withdraw that. I must apologise. He didn't say "the member for Bulimba" at all; he said, "Mr. Jack Houston."

I have always been interested in racing because my grandfather had racehorses, but I never bet on horses because I don't believe half the information a person gets on a racecourse. But I do go to the Redcliffe trots. I am a member of the Redcliffe Trotting Club, and I know that you, Mr. Speaker, are a life member. I go to the Redcliffe trots not to bet but to have a social evening. All forms of racing must be protected against the S.P. bookmaker. He contributes absolutely nothing to the sport. I do not necessarily agree with all the penalties, but I am not going to argue one way or the other about them. S.P. betting must be stamped out, if only to protect the clubs that are giving some sport to the public.

Think of all the people who are supported by racing. In the electorate of Murrumba over 500 trotters are in training. That provides a great deal of employment. Many say that racing and trotting are the sports of urgers and bludgers. That is not true. I know many good people in the racing and trotting game. I know nothing about dog racing. I have never been to a greyhound meeting in my life, but I do not say that there is anything wrong with dog racing. I am interested in the Redcliffe Trotting Club and my main purpose in rising tonight is to stress that trotting must be protected from S.P. bookmakers.

We have to remember all the employment that is provided at the racecourses and trotting tracks. There are waitresses, ticket collectors, people on the gate, tote ticket sellers and a host of other people. For some of them this work is their only source of income. A certain number of the employees may be married women who are working to earn extra money for their families. Generally speaking, the people in the Redcliffe Trotting Club are a pretty decent bunch. They are there to provide a service to the public. I go to the trots not to bet but to meet and talk to people. I would not know one trotter from another. The names of the various horses don't interest me in the least. I go to enjoy myself.

There is a move afoot in Redcliffe to introduce night coursing. I am not going to oppose the honourable member for Pine Rivers and claim that Lawnton should not be protected. It must be protected. If night coursing is introduced in Redcliffe as proposed, I certainly hope that Lawnton is protected as a day track. I would not like to see all the work done there go down the drain.

I think it was the honourable member for Bulimba who suggested that novelty events could be included in the programme at the trots and the races. As has been said, many young people go to these events for enjoyment. I will give the honourable member credit for having made a sensible suggestion. Novelty events could attract people to trotting and race meetings and even coursing events. But there must be something wrong with the business if it needs novelty events to attract a crowd. What is suggested—elephant races, or a match race between the member for Port Curtis and the member for Archerfield? Why would novelty events need to be included in the programme, anyway? If the dogs, trotters or gallopers are not able to provide sufficient entertainment, there must be something wrong with the whole business. But, as I say, I am not opposed to the inclusion of novelty events.

Mr. Houston: We might get you and Mr. Lester to walk backwards.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I have no hesitation in saying that the member for Belyando and I will take on any two members of the A.L.P. over any distance they care to nominate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come back to the principles of the Bill. It does not refer to walking backwards.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I challenge anyone in the A.L.P. to compete against me. I am 51 years of age, and I will race any one of them over 100 metres anytime he likes, at a trotting track or anywhere else.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I got carried away when I was distracted.

I support the Treasurer on his introduction of this Bill, but I hope that some mercy is shown by magistrates when imposing penalties on punters.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.24 p.m.), in reply: I have listened attentively to the remarks made by honourable members. In my second-reading speech I tried to cover the issues that had been raised at the introductory stage and to indicate the reasons why I believe the amendments are essential to the well-being of the racing industry and also of the community in general.

The honourable member for Bulimba touched on one or two matters that I might not have covered fully. He expressed concern about the control of the Gabba coursing track. I know that this matter has exercised the minds of those persons who are responsible for the administration of the Gabba coursing club, and all I can say is that I go along with the thought that eventually someone from the coursing club must take part in what I would term the control of the area. It is not easy to move as quickly as some people would like us to move. However, I am not unmindful of the contribution made by the Gabba coursing club. I hate to think what the condition of the cricket ground and the facilities would be today if it had not been for the advent of night coursing.

Mr. Houston: It would not have a test match by now.

Sir GORDON CHALK: I am quite honest about this. When the matter of the site for coursing was being considered, the representations that came from the cricket interests seeking it showed that they realised that, unless there was something to give this area a shot in the arm, Queensland would not have a test cricket ground. This is a matter that I will move on fairly quickly but, at the moment, there are some things to be overcome and, until they are overcome, I think it is better to leave the situation as is.

I was a little surprised that the honourable member for Bulimba should advocate the establishment of S.P. shops. They would not be the answer to the problems facing the racing industry and racing administration today. We started the T.A.B. on the basis of our belief that money would find its way back to the racing industry. I believe that is what has happened.

The honourable member for Townsville South voiced some exaggerations. On the other hand, he showed a certain amount of logic in his remarks. Many of the circumstances he outlined occurred in North Queensland over some years. I spent seven years in North Quenesland and know something of the problems that faced racing administration in those days. On the other hand, I have a very high regard for the manner in which racing is conducted in the whole of the North at the present time. I am sure that some of the things that the honourable member for Townsville South spoke of exist no longer.

The honourable members for Pine Rivers and Murrumba spoke on matters within their electorates. The Lawnton Coursing Club in the Pine Rivers area is very keen on having night coursing. The honourable member for Murrumba referred to the Redcliffe area. Redcliffe is also very keen on night coursing. I say quite plainly that we could not establish a night-coursing track in both areas. This matter will have to be decided by the Coursing Control Board at the appropriate time. The honourable member for Murrumba also said that he could not quite understand the need for novelty events. I can only say that the Redcliffe club has been one of the principal clubs seeking novelty events. It put on two or three events that were a little close to the borderline and it was necessary to have some discussions with it. With those remarks, I think I have replied to all comments that were appropriate to the Bill.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—Amendment of s. 109; Penalty for offences against ss. 106 and 108—

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (9.30 p.m.): I do not want to rehash what I said before, but there are a couple of matters I should raise at this point of time. This clause seems to be the crux of the Bill and the clause on which there could be difference of opinion. I do not think there is any difference of opinion about the hope of stamping out S.P. betting. I make that quite clear. The Opposition is not in favour of S.P. betting and wants to be realistic about the situation.

I said that the Government should consider the registration of off-course bookmakers. This would be another method of trying to do away with S.P. betting. Prior to 1961 there was no T.A.B. Many honourable members argued about its establishment. The honourable member for Belmont referred to the speech of the Treasurer, who said that there was no doubt that they were his views, and he has not denied it. If honourable members care to read other speeches made at that time, they would find the Premier's speech quite interesting and I commend it to them.

The point is that the same people who strenuously opposed the Bill in 1954 were the architects of the T.A.B. in this State. They said it was introduced—and I accept their word—in the hope of stamping out S.P. betting. As I said at that time, I did not think it would. I believed that there were certain weaknesses in the legislation and my principal objection was to the statement of some of the Government spokesmen that it was not being introduced to earn revenue for the State; that it was purely a moral issue. Time has shown that to be wrong.

I am asking the Treasurer to look at the other alternative. The T.A.B. will still be in existence. It would not be a case of bookmakers opening up everywhere. The number of licences would be limited and everyone would know who the licensed off-course bookmakers were. They would have to be people of integrity.

Originally, the penalty for the first offence was from $100 to $400. In 1966 it was increased to a maximum of $400 or two months' imprisonment. Under this Bill it is $3,000. I suppose it could be argued that a magistrate does not have to impose a fine of $3,000 or a term of imprisonment for two months. I take it that the decision will be in the hands of the magistrate.

The same applies to the second offence. It has changed from a maximum of $1,000 or three months' imprisonment to $6,000 or six months' imprisonment. Again there is an alternative.

For the life of me I cannot see, in regard to the third offence, why the Treasurer has not specified a fine so that the magistrate could decide whether to impose a fine or imprisonment. The Treasurer could have included the words "and/or".

The difficulty is that the magistrate has no discretion to exercise if the person convicted is frail in health. As legislators, we do not know the state of health of the person convicted. A person could be convicted first when he was young, convicted the second time when he is older, and could be quite old before he is convicted for the third, fourth or fifth time. After all, the penalty goes on for ever. The person convicted could be an aged male or female. They could be suffering from, say, sugar diabetes.

We have instances of a person being convicted of a real crime and the magistrate has decided that for certain reasons that person should not go to gaol. Under this Bill the magistrate has no alternative for a third offence to sentencing the convicted person to the rising of the court. What a great licence that is for the person concerned.

If a monetary fine was provided also, the State would receive something. I agree with the honourable member who said that in that way the convicted person would be paying some form of belated tax. That is not a bad principle. As it is, the person convicted will go to gaol and the State will have to keep him and, if he has a family, his family as well. I ask the Treasurer to either reconsider the third offence now or give it consideration in the near future, because I feel that here is a weakness which could interfere with the dispensation of justice. I think this legislation should be brought into line with the general precedent that we believe in allowing the courts themselves to determine penalties in accordance with the severity of the offence.

Mr. BYRNE (Belmont) (9.36 p.m.): I direct my remarks to subclause (c), and ask the Treasurer why he considers it inadvisable, unnecessary or undesirable to have a pecuniary penalty incorporated in this subclause. I requested a similar explanation from the Treasurer in my second-reading speech, but he chose not to give it.

I am not opposed to the essence of the clause. It does impose a mandatory penalty, but, because no minimum is prescribed, it virtually negates its own capacity. Because of that weakness, I think that it is a clause that has not been carefully worded in that it does not give a magistrate sufficient power to give reflection in his sentences to the various degrees of guilt and the various degrees of crime. I therefore ask the Treasurer now—and hope that he will reply seeing that he chose not to during the second reading—why it is unnecessary, inadvisable, undesirable, not worth while or of any value to have a pecuniary fine incorporated in this subclause. Perhaps a maximum of $10,000 or $20,000 could be provided. I simply desire to know why he considers that inadvisable. If it is worthless or inadvisable, I see the point. But whilst it stands as it does, the magistrate is left with only one penalty to impose, that being imprisonment. Such a penalty can, of course, be simply until the adjournment of the court, or it can be for a certain period of time. Even if a magistrate does not think it right to impose imprisonment, he has no power to impose a fine or any other penalty that may be suitable.

I therefore ask the Treasurer why there should not be a monetary penalty for the third offence, when such a penalty may be imposed for first and second offences. Monetary fines against big punters for third

and subsequent offences could be a source of revenue in lieu, in an indirect way, of revenue previously lost.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (9.39 p.m.): All I wish to say on this matter is that it was given every consideration before the amendments were drafted. I discussed it with certain legal advisers. There seems to be some confusion about monetary penalties. The position is that there is no minimum monetary penalty; it is entirely up to the discretion of the magistrate. The real issue is that, after the second offence, a person knows that it is not a question of dollars but of gaol. There are many Acts in which this type of penalty is prescribed. For rape, for argument's sake, it is laid down——

Mr. Burns: You couldn't compare it with that. Don't you think a big S.P. operator will pay a dummy to go back as a first offence?

Sir GORDON CHALK: That is quite all right. I realise the amount of money that is involved in this type of operation, and I also know that there are others who will be found to carry on in some places. But the legal advice tendered to me—I have also taken the advice of those associated very closely with racing—is along the lines on which the amendments to the Act have been written, and I emphasise that it was also examined by the joint parties. Consequently, I carry out the responsibility that is mine and I allow the matter to stand as is.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, by leave, read a third time.

LIQUOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (9.42 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (9.43 p.m.): Is the Minister not going to say anything?

Mr. Knox: No.

Mr. BURNS: Looking at the Bill, I think one of the major problems that have arisen resulted from the Government's action in 1973 when it altered the Liquor Act. We are now caught in a situation where many rather decent small 2 gallon licence holders in the North and various other parts of the State are being treated like some of the shysters who have entered into the game in the South. It is clear that, when we changed from 2 gallon licences to carton licences or 9 litre licences or retail spirit merchant licences, we left some loop-holes in the Liquor Act which have provided an opportunity for the people who do not want to be in pubs because they do not want to be involved in the investment required to maintain accommodation, staff and facilities and be placed in a situation where the Licensing Commission can impose conditions on them from time to time. They would rather sell beer in dozen lots on a retail basis.

If we look at the Treasurer's speech on the introductory debate we get a very clear indication of the number of people involved in the original wholesale spirit licences. We heard about a fee of $400, a sale of not less than 2 gallons and a requirement to sell to the wholesale trade. We generally find now that many are in the retail trade and some of them sold no liquor wholesale at all last year. In other words, many southern bulk bottle shops have gone completely out of wholesale bottle sales into bulk bottled beer drive-ins. If we are going to go into bottle shops, and allow an open go, the publicans in my area all tell me they will leave the hotel game tomorrow. The publican of the Colmslie Hotel, Dick Maguire, who is, I think, chairman of the Queensland Hotels Association, has always said to me that over half of the money made in an hotel—and his has a very big public bar and is a very popular hotel—is made in the bottle department. In fact, I think it is over 60 per cent. I cannot remember the exact figure——

Mr. Chinchen: Over 60 per cent.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, over 60 per cent. What the Government is doing here is endorsing its Budget proposals, and we accept that it has a right to make decisions in relation to the Budget.

It could be said that by supporting different scales for different people, we are endorsing the fact that we have asked publicans over the years to provide accommodation and additional facilities and update their hotels to make them more comfortable for patrons and that, in so doing, they have incurred overheads that do not apply to bottle shops. Because of that, I accept the proposal of the Treasurer that the tax should be increased—but only on the new major southern operators, not the small man from the North.

However, I think we ought to have a good look at bottle shops. I do not think the Treasurer's threat in his introductory speech —"if they don't co-operate, I already have an amendment drafted that will do something about them"—is quite a fair or reasonable way to operate. I think we must do better than that. We must make up our minds, Mr. Speaker, whether we are going to amend the Liquor Act to provide for bottle shops, bistros and places that are not required to provide accommodation or any facilities

other than bulk bottled liquor, or whether we want 2 gallon licences, 1 gallon licences or single-bottle licences.

I suppose honourable members have all received from time to time copies of the requests of the Retailers' Association seeking single-bottle licences. I think the last one was a rather glossy document issued in about 1973, when the Liquor Act was being amended to provide for retail spirit merchants' licences. However, it is a fact, as the Treasurer said—it may have been the Minister himself—that bottle shops are not providing any service other than a reduced price. They have no refrigeration, and the unions have told the Opposition that they have had a great deal of trouble trying to make the many licensees employ staff at the correct wages and in the correct numbers. In fact, the Liquor Trades Union and others are strongly opposed to the activities of some of the bottle shop operators. I suggest that many people in the State are not satisfied with the operations of some of the people who now hold retail spirit merchants' licences.

As I said, the Opposition supports the idea of a different scale of tax and accepts that the Treasurer has to make his own decisions on that. We on this side of the Chamber do not endorse the increases in taxes, but we do support the idea of saying to people in hotels, "You are providing additional services by way of accommodation, and you are required to meet different requirements under the licensing laws. We believe that the charges that you pay should be different from those paid by people in other sections of the industry."

I remember some bottle shop owners who, when I was an organiser in North Queensland, provided an excellent service for their clients in places such as Halifax. They kept many fancy wines and liqueurs that were not readily available because the hotels did not want to stock them. I would not like to think that people such as those will now be at a great disadvantage. If it is shown that they are at a disadvantage and that the amendment will make their operations uneconomic, I suggest that consideration should very quickly be given to bringing down a further amendment that will cover only the people the Minister is after. We know who he's after; he knows who he's after. The small northern fellows, who I believe have complied as closely as possible with the Liquor Act over the years, should not be affected adversely. I cannot remember the name of the Italian people I met in Halifax, but I was impressed by the type of operation they ran.

Mr. Jones: They were catering for a particular area.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, they were catering for their own community and providing the type of liquor that the ordinary publican would not carry. I should not like to think that they would be put out of business. In fact, I think it would be very wrong to do that.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (9.49 p.m.): I was very pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition voice his concern about the small people, because they are the people about whom I wish to speak.

There may be aspects of the liquor trade that are hidden from many of us, but certain figures are very clear. It intrigues me as to what the Bill is really about. Is it about the crushing of the small man or the crushing of people who are avoiding tax, or it is just a matter of raising the tax? Reading the speeches made previously, I cannot ascertain exactly how much revenue the Treasurer expects to get from the increase now proposed. I am wondering whether the Government intends to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. What is going to happen to the revenue it hopes to receive if it has forced into insolvency and disposed of the small wine and spirit merchants now operating in North Queensland? Without doubt the wine and spirit merchants in the North have become an essential, integral part of our life up there. Certain people like trading with them, and financially wine and spirit merchants up there are viable at the moment. If the additional tax is imposed on them I cannot see how they can survive.

In his introductory speech the Minister said that the sales from wine and spirit merchants to licensed persons were over $200,000,000, and the sales to unlicensed persons—in other words the persons who come in and buy half a dozen beer or a bottle of wine—were about $23,000,000. The honourable member for Rockhampton said in his speech that private sales of wine and spirit merchants increased by $23,000,000. He could not have listened to what the Minister was saying. That could be an error on his part or just plain mischievous talk.

The Minister said that the increase in sales up to $223,000,000 was caused by the increase in population, the change of population and competition in prices. It is very interesting to make a comparison of prices. In the North, wine and spirit merchants keep their prices very competitive. I will quote some prices from "The Townsville Daily Bulletin". The Mansfield Hotel offers Fourex stubbies at $8 a carton and a carton of Fourex large bottles at $7.40.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Who owns the Mansfield Hotel?

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: The Treasurer could possibly tell me that. If not, I will tell him afterwards.

Carlton draught stubbies are offered at $8; Carlton draught cans, $8.80; VB cans, $8.80; Carlton Pilsener stubbies, $8; and North Queensland lager stubbies, $8. There is a whole list of various wines and spirits. The Crown Hotel in Townsville offers large

Fourex at $6.50 a dozen; Fourex stubbies, $8.10 a carton; VB tins, $8.50 a carton; Carlton draught tins (Melbourne), $8.50 a carton; and Carlton draught stubbies $8.10 a carton. It also lists a whole lot of wines and so on. Those figures are quite competitive, and they result in very big sales. Recently there has been a considerable reduction in prices in Cairns. Competitive prices speak for themselves.

In Townsville and in the North generally there is a certain reluctance to go into hotels. Since the Federal Government has been handing out with largesse great sums of money to the Aboriginal sections of the community, it is not worth a person's time to go into a hotel to have a beer. On every side there is violence, bloodshed, brawls and filthy, foul language. It is so bad that many businessmen will not go near their usual hotels. Instead they have their supplies delivered to their home by wine and spirit merchants. They get it at a good price and receive courteous treatment. They can sit at home and drink with their families instead of getting abused and having to listen to filthy language in hotel bars. These days they cannot talk business in hotel bars.

I do not consider that the Licensing Commission has been very efficient in the North. Its attempts to have Townsville hotels repaired following the damage caused by cyclone "Althea" have raised a suspicion in the minds of Townsville citizens as to its competence. I refer specifically to three hotels. At one hotel on Magnetic Island people used to drink in a broken-down bar. I also refer to the Mansfield Hotel (which, as the Treasurer knows, has changed ownership) and the Royal Hotel at West End. I brought this matter to the attention of the council, and it tried to do something about it. Somewhere along the line the Licensing Commission got blocked. It is only now that those hotels are being improved.

A number of honourable members have the wrong impression about wine and spirit merchants in North Queensland. Their speeches give the impression that their business is illegal. Wine and spirit merchants have the right to trade. They have the right to exist and prosper under an Act of this Parliament. They should be given a chance to expand and prosper under the private-enterprise system that this coalition Government claims to engender and foster. Sometimes I wonder where private enterprise begins and ends. Recently we have seen the introduction of a large number of Bills that tend to suggest that the Government does not know where socialisation begins and ends. I have gained the impression that behind this Bill is a motive for imposing this sudden, crushing tax of 15 per cent.

Some members have claimed that wine and spirit merchants operate in tin sheds and sell hot beer. Such claims might make an impact on some people, but to refute them I quote from the Liquor Act Amendment Act of 1973, as follows—

"(4A) The Licensing Court before granting any spirit merchant's license shall hear and determine all objections thereto made personally or by petition to the Licensing Court by—

"(a) the local authority of the city, town or shire in which the premises to which the application relates are or are to be situated;

"(b) any elector of the district in which the premises to which the application relates are or are to be situated;

"(c) the owner of the premises to which the application relates;

"(d) the owner or licensee of licensed victualler's premises in the locality of the site whereon the premises to which the application relates are or are to be situated.

"(4B) An objection to which subsection (4A) relates may be upon any one or more of the following grounds—

"(a) that the premises, or proposed premises, in respect of which the license is applied for are not suitable (regard being had to site, size, nature, necessary conveniences and any other prescribed matters and things) for licensing in accordance with the applications;

"(b) in the case of an objection by the owner or licensee of licensed victualler's premises that, having regard to the requirements of the locality where in the premises in respect of which the license is applied for are, or are to be, situated, the granting of the license will adversely affect the economy of the business as such of the licensed victualler in the licensed victualler's premises in the said locality to an undue extent;

"(c) any other ground deemed by the Licensing Court to be sufficient."

Those provisions show quite clearly that the premises in which these so-called hot-beer merchants operate are anything but tin sheds. The facilities are subject to inspection and, if found not to comply with the requirements, must be altered.

There appears to be confusion between North Queensland and South Queensland. I was amazed at the comments of the honourable member for Maryborough, who said that wholesale merchants in North Queensland, just like their brothers in Brisbane, are able to buy the same article at not less than 10 per cent below the price paid by the hoteliers. That is rather interesting. I may be simple, but to me that does not sound right. The honourable member does not seem to differentiate between the North Queensland and South Queensland wine and spirit merchants. He claimed that a carton of stubbies was being sold for $9.50, or 50c less than the price charged by the hotelier.

Today I walked around the city and saw beer advertised in hotels at the bargain price of $7.45 a carton.

I remind honourable members of the Townsville prices I quoted earlier. I cannot see that any man would sell beer at $9.50 a carton in Townsville. He would not have any takers. We like our beer to be cheap—and we like it to be cold, too!

The Cairns situation was rather interesting. There all the Cairns beer is bought from a firm named P. J. Doyle, which is a fully owned subsidiary of the local brewery. They impose a 7½ per cent surcharge, or invoice charge, on everything. Anyone who buys beer in Cairns has to buy through this subsidiary of the brewery.

The set-up in Townsville is also interesting. Samuel Allens and Sons Ltd. and Burns Philp are agents for Carlton and United Breweries. Two firms—Cummins and Campbell Ltd. and Joseph Pease (Cairns) Pty. Ltd.—are wholly owned subsidiary companies of Carlton and United Breweries. Cummins and Campbell and Joseph Pease trade as wine and spirit merchants and Samuel Allens and B.P. as brewery agents. I heard that Samuel Allens get a preferential discount of 10 per cent ex brewery. That is what I was told by the trade. Dalgetys, another merchant, is the sole agent for Castlemaine Perkins. They are brewery agents. It is interesting to note that Cummins and Campbell, B.P., Samuel Allens and Dalgetys are not in the liquor business wholly and solely. They are wholesale/general merchants selling building material, crockery, clothing and so on. The sale of liquor is a side-line.

So far as I can gather Ponti and North Queensland Trading (Townsville) Pty. Ltd. are the two wine and spirit merchants—wholly and solely—although North Queensland Trading may have other lines. Townsville has 11 or 12 privately owned hotels, one of which I have mentioned. In the Burdekin district there are five wine and spirit merchants. In all, there are 30 of these small businesses like Ponti's in North Queensland.

Many years ago a friend of mine asked me to go with him to see about buying a hotel in Townsville. The facts and figures discussed were enlightening. In those days the house was quite a big thing in any hotel. He and his business contacts estimated that 50 per cent was made on the house and 30 to 33⅓ per cent on the bar. Anyone with a good house in northern areas had a very good business—it was much more reliable that the bar. Today, great inroads have been made on the hotels by the motels, which are palatially adorned and furnished.

In Townsville a hotel-keeper buys Carlton draught stubbies at $6.94 a carton. He pays 7 per cent tax. Giving him 10 per cent profit, he should be able to sell quite easily at $8.16. Most hotels sell at a standard price of from $8 to $8.25. At the Mansfield Hotel, and other places, beer is sold for about $8 a carton, while some brands are sold at $7.40. That gives them about 10 per cent profit. The wine and spirit merchants pay $6.94 a carton. Giving them a 10 per cent profit and allowing for the 15 per cent tax proposed in this Bill, the selling price will be $8.77 a carton, compared with the current price of $8.25. They cannot possibly compete. They will not sell any. They will have to drop their price to the current $8.25. That does not give them a very good mark-up.

In Cairns, the situation is somewhat similar. The selling price of wine and spirit merchants is $8.40 as against the Townsville price of $8.25. The fee will be 15 per cent for a wine and spirit merchant and 7 per cent for a hotelier. That means that the wine and spirit merchant will have to pay $1.26 and the hotelier 49c. The cost price of $7.02 is the same to both. The profit to the wine and spirit merchant is 12c and to the hotelier 89c, which is a mark-up percentage of 1.7 against 12.67.

I consider that this imposition of an increase to 15 per cent, particularly with the conditions attaching to it—that they have to find the money within six weeks of the Bill becoming law—has placed an iniquitous imposition on the small wine and spirit merchant in North Queensland. I speak only for those in North Queensland. I hope that this is purely a revenue-producing Bill and not a socialistic move foisted on this House without due deliberation on its effects and ramifications.

At the Committee stage I intend to move that, if this is to be a revenue-raising procedure, the figure be made realistic and be reduced from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, and that the revenue lost in this way be sought elsewhere in a recurrent tax embodied in every Budget.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (10.7 p.m.): I oppose very strongly the proposal to raise the wine and spirit merchant licensing fee from 6 per cent to 15 per cent. I object to it because I know, as the Treasurer and the Minister for Justice do, that it will put the people of the Far North out of business. I have no qualms in saying that. No Minister or honourable member can convince me—and the Treasurer can show me all of his papers, because I do not believe them——

Sir Gordon Chalk: I have the case submitted by your own——

Mr. TENNI: The Treasurer can please himself. I am not interested in his cases. I have had four qualified accountants go through the accounts of three wine and spirit merchants and there is no way in the world that the Treasurer or the Minister for Justice can convince me that anybody can operate a business on 1.7 per cent gross profit.

As I said in my speech at the introductory stage, the publican has a cost problem in meeting wages and other increased costs in his business. I

believe in equality. As a Government member I do not believe in breaking one side of a business enterprise to lift the other side. That is what this Bill does. The Minister for Justice can shake his head, but I know that this will happen. If this Bill goes through as it is, I will be able to prove that in six months' time. There is no way in the world that I can support the increase to 15 per cent. Let us be reasonable and sensible. Let us look after business people as a whole—both the small fellow and the big fellow.

I was a little disgusted to read in the paper the other day that the Minister for Justice said that I was carrying a brief for certain interests. What brief is he carrying? For what interests is he carrying a brief? There is no way in the world that I am carrying a brief for anyone. I want equality and I want a living for all concerned.

The Bill will wipe out the small wine and spirit merchants north of Rockhampton. As I said in my introductory speech, they have not the same buying rights as the merchants from Rockhampton south, who buy at least 7½ per cent better than the people in the North. The people south of Rockhampton can perhaps operate on 9.2 per cent gross profit, but the people north of Rockhampton cannot operate on 1.7 per cent.

The publicans in the North are laughing all the way to the bank. If I were in their shoes, I would be laughing, too. I have had numerous publicans come to me and say, "We don't want this to happen. We don't want to wipe these fellows out. We want to bring them down a peg or two." I agree with this, and I agree with what the Treasurer has done in the Budget for those from Rockampton south. That is a good thing. But the position from Rockhampton north is different, and he knows it.

If he has some way of overcoming this situation, I will go along with it. But under the present circumstances I will not on any account vote for the Bill as it presently stands. We as a Government are saying that we should put 15 per cent on the retail price. That means that we are putting 15 per cent on freight, packaging, handling and the lot. That is the same as a retailer basing his mark-up on freight and tax. We know how wrong that is. I am prepared to accept the basis of 10 per cent on retail, although I think morally it is wrong to put it on freight. However, I am prepared to go along with it because I know that the small wine and spirit merchant has an opportunity of surviving, but only just surviving, on that basis. On the present set-up, he will not survive; he will die.

There are 30 of those people in the far northern part of Queensland, and if I did not stand up for them, just as I would stand up for a publican if he were to be in the same trouble tomorrow, I would not be a fit and proper person to be in this House. That is the way I feel about this proposal.

"The Cairns Post" of last Tuesday, 28 October, had an article under the headline, "Licence fees could force out small liquor traders." Some members could well read these things. The article begins—

> "New liquor licence fees proposed in the recent State Budget could put up to 30 small wine and spirit merchants out of business in Queensland.
>
> "Mr. Con Zappala, president of the North Queensland Liquor Traders Association, said this in Cairns yesterday."

I agree with him.

Yesterday's "Cairns Post" (29 October) had an article under the headline, "Publican pressured over price-cutting" and part of the article reads—

> "Mr. Jackson said he felt the company was taking the action because he was offering liquor at lower prices, and not buying from their wholesale outlets.
>
> " 'I buy from other smaller agents, and sell to the public cheaper. The agents are happy and the public is happy, but this other company is not,' he said."

Under the proposed legislation, the companies from which he buys will not exist to sell to him at the present prices, so he will not be able to sell at the prices that he has been charging. Those stories in "The Cairns Post" are worth reading.

Mr. Burns: Which company was he purchasing from?

Mr. TENNI: That is not stated, but I will certainly find out when I get back to Cairns tomorrow.

Mr. Houston: Send us a letter.

Mr. TENNI: I do not collaborate with Labor members. The honourable member should know that. I keep well away from the socialists.

Honourable members have to ask themselves if it is possible to operate a business on a gross profit of 1.7 per cent.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Is that all he sells?

Mr. TENNI: That is what the Treasurer is asking the people of my area to do.

Sir Gordon Chalk: Is that all he sells?

Mr. TENNI: It is absolutely impossible.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You don't want to hear me?

Mr. TENNI: I am not interested in what the Treasurer has to say. He has told me all his stories, and he has backed down on the lot. He is not prepared to listen to the fellows from the North. I want a fair go for all. We have to assist these people rather than break them, which is what this Bill will do.

I agree with the proposal to alter the percentage from 15 to 10. That would at least give these merchants the chance to survive,

which is what we should be doing for them. Let us not pass legislation that will break them. When the question is put, I ask Government members to consider whether they want to break the little fellow in the North or whether they want him to survive.

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (10.15 p.m.): I wish to speak for just a few moments at this stage. Firstly, I thank the Treasurer very sincerely for the explanation he gave me last Friday during the introductory debate. As usual, his contribution was factual and very interesting. I wonder if perhaps we should not be looking a little more closely at the future of this problem raised by speakers who have been upset about some provisions of the Bill. During the introductory debate I spoke about wholesalers in my electorate who will be affected by the Bill. One in particular I would like to mention is the Bundaberg and District Co-operative Society, which does not sell any liquor at all to the hotel trade. It sells specifically to the housewife and other individuals in the town who wish to buy their liquor at a place other than a hotel.

In the introductory debate I said that I believed there should be some margin for the hotelier and that he should receive an advantage because of his extra costs, but I think we should look pretty carefully at establishments such as the Bundaberg and District Co-operative which are not selling to the hotel trade.

I would like to quote some figures to support my argument. A carton of beer is purchased in Brisbane for $5.65. The freight to Bundaberg is 24c a carton. After tomorrow it will be 35c. The freight from the railhead to the shop is 9c. The cost into the store is then $5.98. After tomorrow it will be $6.09. The store sells it at $7.30 in order to be competitive with hotel bottle departments. The total profit used to be $1.42, but that will drop after tomorrow by 11c to $1.31. The licence fee that was charged, that is, 6 per cent of $7.40, is 34c, which gave a gross profit of 98c. If this measure goes through, and I have no doubt that it will, the licence fee charged on the $7.40 will rise to $1.10, which will reduce the gross profit from 98c to 32c, which is 5.3 per cent on cost. Anybody who has operated in the retail trade, be it groceries or whatever, knows very well that one cannot live on a profit on cost of 5.3 per cent.

I am wondering if in the future—I know it cannot be done immediately—we cannot do something about introducing another licence to cover these shops such as the Bundaberg and District Co-operative Society which is a completely different business from the ones that were mentioned here previously. This organisation is not selling alcoholic liquor to be drunk on its premises, but rather is operating as a normal retail bottle outlet. I suppose everybody would be aware that in other States this is the norm rather than the exception, and I believe that it is desirable to allow people, if they so desire, to buy their alcoholic liquor from a store rather than have to go to a hotel or one of those other wholesale firms where a certain quantity has to be bought. The way our society is moving, I think that we should be looking at organisations such as the one I have mentioned, where there is no compulsion upon the person to buy and where the surroundings are very comfortable and suitable. The organisation is trying to give the customer a different form of service from that given in hotels. I know that at present hotels give a good service; I know also that the people are paying for it. However, I suggest that an organisation of the type I have mentioned should be considered in any future legislation that is brought before the House.

Mr. ROW (Hinchinbrook) (10.20 p.m.): I made my main contribution to the debate on this Bill at the introductory stage. I think I pointed out fairly clearly then that I was not carrying a brief into this Chamber on behalf of any section of the community or any commercial interests. I also made it fairly clear that I recognised that there were problems within a major section of the liquor industry, and I conceded that hotels had to meet certain costs, imposed upon them under various regulations, that spirit merchants would not have to meet.

However, I reiterate that there is a minority section in the liquor trade that started operations with the permission of the Government. It has been allowed to exist for a very long time, but now, without much compunction, the Government is prepared to see it fall by the wayside. In my opinion, that is not a reasonable approach to the problem.

At the introductory stage, figures were quoted that were later contested. Tonight the honourable member for Townsville made a factual contribution to the debate based on figures, and I merely say to the House that I have in my hand dockets, which I have allowed the Treasurer to peruse, confirming the figures presented to the Chamber earlier by the honourable member for Townsville.

I think it has been demonstrated quite clearly that the small 2-gallon licence holder is not in fact able to compete on the market if he has to pay the proposed fee of 15 per cent on his sales of liquor. It cannot be denied that the Minister for Justice intends to eliminate this section of the liquor trade, and I do not think the action he is taking is just and democratic. In saying that, I am only reiterating what has been said by other members. In my opinion, some provision could have been made to differentiate between the various elements in the liquor trade, because they cannot all be bundled into one category.

I stick to the point I have made, and I can only say that I am surprised by the silence of the Opposition in the debate on

the second reading. At the introductory stage, a prominent member of the Opposition indicated that he also was sympathetic to the section of the industry to which I am referring. However, it appears that the Opposition is now adhering to the platform of the A.L.P., which states that, when in Government, it is its intention to take over the whole of the distribution and marketing of liquor. Apparently honourable members opposite are silent now because the elimination of one section of the industry will mean that they will not have to deal with it if ever they come to power.

I state that I intend to support the intentions expressed by the honourable member for Townsville. I think this is a serious matter—in fact, too serious a matter to be treated in any other way.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.24 p.m.), in reply: I shall answer briefly the comments made by honourable members.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the problems facing the hotel industry at the moment and some of the opportunities of which hotels have taken advantage in the sale of bottles. I might add that several times the Government has considered the introduction of bottle shops, but as a matter of policy that has been rejected. Although the bottle shops in New South Wales have on display a very impressive range of wines and spirits, their bread and butter line—if I could use that mixed metaphor—is in fact beer, which they do not stock in any large quantity. The beer is delivered direct to the customers in plain vans. That is what gives the bottle shops in New South Wales their goodwill.

Mr. Burns: They are not as strong as they used to be, either.

Mr. KNOX: No. The goodwill of some of them has changed hands. The goodwill of bottle shops with a frontage not as wide as the table in front of me has changed hands for $600,000 and $750,000. One could shoot a gun inside some of the shops at any time of the day without hitting anyone. Although an impressive range of hundreds of bottles, mostly with dust on them, are on display, there are usually very few customers in the bottle shops. People do go in to browse through the lines on display. These shops derive their income by ringing up breweries, placing substantial orders for beer, and having it delivered. It does not even go through the storeroom of the bottle shop. I have been in bottle shop storerooms in New South Wales——

Mr. Tenni: That's not North Queensland, though.

Mr. KNOX: I am just discussing the operations of bottle shops and stating why the Queensland Government has rejected them. The storeroom space I have seen is about two arms' length in all directions, and just a token range of beer is displayed. Because that beer would have been sitting on the shelves for ages, nobody would drink it. The shops have a little sign out front, "We sell beer". That is what accounts for the goodwill of those shops.

Mr. Burns: Have you had a look at some of our retail licensed people in Brisbane? They're not carrying much stock, either.

Mr. KNOX: That is right. It is the same principle. Let us name bottle shops, as it is envisaged they would be if they were allowed to have an open slather in this State, for what they are. They are merely retailers of beer who rely on beer for the goodwill of their premises. Most of the people who operate bottle shops do not own them. They are either leased or rented and the operators maintain an impressive range of other types of liquor. For as long as the hotels are prepared to provide a service in bottled liquor in this State, I do not believe the Government will change its policy on bottle shops.

The honourable member for Townsville suggested that in opening the debate the other day I gave the impression that wine and spirit merchants were illegal. I made it quite clear that they are not illegal. They perform a very essential service in the community.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: I rise to a point of order. I did not make any such accusation at all. I said the way they are being treated, one would think that those shops were illegal. I said that they were not illegal but were licensed under an Act of this Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to accept the explanation of the honourable member.

Mr. KNOX: I must have misunderstood the honourable member. I accept his explanation.

I thought I heard the honourable member say that within six weeks of the Bill becoming law there would be implementation of the new fee, which they would have difficulty in paying. In my opening remarks I pointed out that many of the extra fees would not be levied until the next financial year—not this financial year. The category of people the honourable member had in mind will not be levied these extra fees until the next financial year.

As to the conditions under which wine and spirit merchants are granted their licence —I think I should remind honourable members of what they are. The Act provides that the Licensing Court shall not grant a licence in this category unless it is satisfied—

> "(A) that the business proposed to be carried on under the license if granted will consist wholly or principally of the sale of liquor to persons licensed to sell liquor by retail;".

Sir Gordon Chalk: That is why they get the cheap licence.

Mr. KNOX: That is why they pay $400 for their licence, and that is all they are asked to pay for the right to provide that service.

Mr. Tenni: We know this.

Mr. KNOX: I think the honourable member overlooked that. With the greatest of respect to him, I think he has been misled deliberately by some people in relation to this matter.

Mr. Tenni: You can't hoodwink me that way.

Mr. KNOX: I am not trying to hoodwink the honourable member. I am only reading from the Act.

Mr. Tenni: You might be fooling someone else, but not me.

Mr. KNOX: I think it is my duty to explain this, because having listened carefully to the comments of honourable members, I think they have a misunderstanding about the conditions under which these licences are granted.

I have read the first condition. The second is—

> "(B) that there is a demand in the locality in which it is proposed that the business be carried on under the license if granted for liquor in quantities of 9 litres and upwards and that demand is of such magnitude that having regard to existing facilities both wholesale and retail for the supply of liquor in the locality the granting of the application is warranted."

At present, spirit merchants are required to pay a fee of $400 plus 6 per cent of the gross amount paid to them for all liquor sold to unlicensed persons. I have quoted the conditions on which the licence is to be granted, that is, principally or wholly supplying the retail trade. For a fee of $400 they ask for a licence to supply the retail trade, not other people; they could not obtain a licence if they were going to supply other people. If their applications for the licences are truthfully made, it is inevitable that they are going to sell to individuals, and this 6 per cent is levied on the gross sales to unlicensed persons. But that is not their business; that is not the purpose of their application for a licence. The conditions are that they principally and wholly supply the retail trade.

As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer pointed out at the introductory stage, it is quite obvious that the situation has changed enormously. Whilst I am not doubting the integrity of these people, I suggest that if they were to apply for licences tomorrow, under the conditions of the Act and in view of the information now in the hands of the Licensing Commission as to their trading figures, they would not get their licences. They would not meet the conditions of the licence.

Mr. Burns: In the 1973 amendment there is a clause that could allow us to ask for the forfeiture of the licence. Have any charges been laid?

Mr. KNOX: I am not aware of them, but I could inquire.

I think honourable members should be made aware of the circumstances. We are not proposing to increase the fee of $400 for this type of licence. However, for the sales made outside the conditions of the licence, the fee is being increased substantially.

Mr. Tenni: You can say that again!

Mr. KNOX: Nobody misunderstands that situation. I hope I have made it quite clear what sort of licences we are talking about. I am quite sure a number of members were not aware of the facts. There is no endeavour on the part of the Government to put people out of business in this area. Indeed, they will continue to trade—most of them without any trouble—although some will have to make adjustments. We are certainly not interested in putting out of business people who are gathering taxes for the Government. If we did that, we would defeat the purpose of levying the tax.

The honourable member for Isis raised an important point about the Bundaberg Co-operative Society. I have been through the operations of this very worthy body in Bundaberg. Having seen the way in which it operates, I know that it is very well managed. It is a fine undertaking. It supplies liquor wholly to unlicensed persons. By the way, that was the condition on which it got the licence. It does not supply anything to the retail trade. What the honourable member for Isis said about the Bundaberg Co-operative Society is quite correct.

Mr. Jensen: Aren't you going to protect it?

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member for Bundaberg must have heard me mention Bundaberg—wherever he came from.

Mr. Jensen: I have been down here.

Mr. KNOX: While the honourable member has been wherever he has been—I understood him to say tonight that he has never missed a sitting of the House at night.

Mr. Jensen: That is correct. You try to prove otherwise.

Mr. KNOX: I assure the honourable member that dozens of members of this House—both past and present—can vouch for it. What the honourable member did not say is that he has never been in the Chamber at night.

Mr. JENSEN: I rise to a point of order. If I am in the library or out in the lobby, I am still in Parliament House. I have never left the House at any time in the term of this Parliament. That can be vouched for by the Clerk of Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to accept the denial of the honourable member for Bundaberg.

Mr. KNOX: I accept the honourable member's denial. I had forgotten which Chamber the honourable member was talking about.

Mr. Jensen: He is smart, too; I will not call him the other thing.

Mr. KNOX: The honourable member knows that I have a very high regard for him.

Mr. JENSEN: I rise to a point of order. I do not mind the Minister being smart with me. I like people who are smart, but I do not like the Minister being too smart.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I will be smart if the honourable member does not behave himself.

Mr. KNOX: I accept the honourable member's further explanation.

While the honourable member for Bundaberg was out of the Chamber——

Mr. Jensen: I was here.

Mr. KNOX: While the honourable member was in the precincts of the House, it was necessary for the honourable member for Isis to come to the defence of the Bundaberg Co-operative Society. I am fully aware of its special case. I know that it is operated very efficiently. The point is that the liquor sales of the Bundaberg Co-operative Society are part of a total grocery business. It is one of the best businesses in Bundaberg and has a very substantial turnover. Liquor sales are only part of its business. It does not depend solely on the sale of liquor to keep its doors open. I have not the slightest doubt that the Bundaberg Co-operative Society will be adversely affected in its liquor sales, but its trading operations over all will not be as adversely affected as its liquor sales.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of s. 18; Annual fees—

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (10.39 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 2, line 9, omit the figure—
'15'

and insert in lieu thereof the figure—
'10'."

I do this because I consider that this tax is excessively high.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.40 p.m.): I think I should indicate quite clearly that it it is not possible for the Government to accept the amendment. The Bill forms part of the Budget proposals which have been approved by Parliament. To accept such an amendment would be tantamount to moving an amendment to the Budget to reduce the salary of the Aide-de-Camp by $1. If the amendment were carried, the Budget would have to be recast. It is not possible for this to be done following the approval of the Budget by Parliament. I have to reject the amendment.

Mr. CHINCHEN (Mt. Gravatt) (10.41 p.m.): I wonder if the Minister could tell us the quantum involved in changing from 15 per cent to 10 per cent; what is the amount involved? We are dealing only with those sales that are not going to the retail trade. The Minister said the Budget would have to be recast. We are not aware of the amount involved and I would be very pleased to have that advice.

What is the reason for this? Is it a form of profit control? With a Government of our colour, I do not think it could be that. Is it just a tax? In that case this tax must come from this area and no other area. Or is it an endeavour to make things competitive within this trade? I have not yet had a satisfactory answer on the purpose for the distinction in this area. If this could be explained to me and if the amount of money involved could be disclosed, the situation might be clarified from my point of view.

Mr. JENSEN (Bundaberg) (10.43 p.m.): I think that many honourable members do not understand the difference between retailers and those who trade retail and wholesale. It is no good claiming that we are supporting the small retailers. If they are supplying hotels, they will pay no tax at all.

This matter must be looked at in the correct perspective. Under the Bill, the only person who will be hit is the person the honourable member for Isis spoke about. If the Minister is to provide some difference in the regulations or is to give some consideration outside the provisions of the Bill, it might be different.

I will not support a reduction to 10 per cent when some people in Bundaberg are killing the hoteliers. They can sell cheaper to clubs. I will not support them at any time. They are selling to clubs in competition with the hoteliers and the other trade. The little man who supplies two hotels will not be affected by the Bill. The only person who will be affected is the person who supplies the housewife or the retailer. The housewife orders her groceries and, instead of going to the pub for her beer, adds two dozen bottles to the household list. Her

supplier is the only person who will be affected. I have discussed this matter with the hoteliers and the other suppliers.

Mr. Chinchen: You are after free drinks.

Mr. JENSEN: No, I don't bludge on anybody. I pay my way. I don't take bribes. I'm not like the Liberal Party capitalists.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Clause 3!

Mr. JENSEN: All right, Mr. Hewitt, I want to be honest in this and there are certain things that must be done to be fair. If the Minister can protect the housewife who wants to buy a couple of dozen bottles of beer through the co-operative store, that is all to the good. But I do not want to protect people who sell wholesale. There is a wholesaler in Bundaberg who has sales of $1,000,000 a year, and half of them are to clubs and hotels. He says that he will be cut down. He has cut hotels in Bundaberg by $1,000,000 since he started there, and I do not think that is right.

Mr. Alison: He is doing nothing for the industry.

Mr. JENSEN: That is right. He walked in and took over an old garage, and he now has sales of $1,000,000 a year.

Mr. Chinchen: He must give service.

Mr. JENSEN: He gives service to those who drive in in their cars, but half his sales are to clubs and hotels. I do not believe that we should disadvantage the housewife if she wants to buy a couple of dozen bottles of beer and put them on her grocery bill at the co-operative store. If she wants to do that, I do not see why she should not be allowed to pay a little less for it. We are supposed to be here to protect people such as housewives. If a housewife wants to put a couple of dozen on the bill, I think she should be able to get them at the right price. She should not have to drive up to a hotel and buy at the bar. We have to be fair in this.

Mr. Moore: When are you going to start your speech?

Mr. JENSEN: I just want to make things plain, as I have always done in this Chamber. If you want me——

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JENSEN: If he wants me to tell him in plainer language, Mr. Hewitt, I can do so, as you know quite well.

I believe that the Minister should have some provision in the regulations for granting exemptions. A few months ago, the Minister altered a regulation for a certain purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is now moving away from clause 3. I ask him to return to it.

Mr. JENSEN: I realise that I am moving away from it, but the Minister knows what I am talking about. He is one of the fairest Ministers for Justice that we have ever had in this Assembly. He has done the right thing——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For the last time I ask the honourable member to deal with clause 3.

Mr. JENSEN: I am asking the Minister, Mr. Hewitt, if there will be anything in the regulations that will allow him to protect somebody who is doing the right thing. If a person went outside the law, I would not protect him. That has been my attitude all along. But can the Minister do something under the regulations to protect a person who is doing the right thing? I refer to people like myself who do not drink in hotels and want to buy two dozen beer at the co-operative store.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (10.48 p.m.): I fully support the amendment. I believe that the Treasurer will have problems with his Budget, and it will be better to get 10 per cent of something than 15 per cent of nothing. If the Government persists with 15 per cent, 30 merchants will be put out of business and nothing will be obtained from them. The Budget will therefore be short in any case. So I support the 10 per cent which the Treasurer will get. He will not get 15 per cent as he will put out of business those who would have to pay it.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (10.49 p.m.): I should like to thank the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt for bringing to the notice of the Committee something that I most probably did not emphasise. The amount to be gained from this tax, so far as I can gather, would be about $3,000,000. I would be pleased if the Minister could verify that figure.

As I said previously, this business is not illegal. Merchants' licences were created by Act of Parliament because there was a necessity for them. If there was no such necessity, Parliament was in error and whoever presented the Bill under which spirit merchants went into business misled the House and this State. These are the facts that have to be kept in mind. These people are not acting illegally. If the Government wishes to get rid of them, the relevant provisions should be removed from the Act.

A Government Member: Cancel their licence.

Dr. SCOTT-YOUNG: That is so. That is easy to do. If we have enough courage and guts, that is what we could do. They are not, as has been suggested, abusing their licences. If they have abused their licences, why has something not been done by the Licensing Commission rather than by a budgetary provision in this place?

Now, when is a House of Parliament not able to alter its Budget? What is happening in the Senate at the moment? These are questions the Minister has to answer. He just says that we have no right and no power to alter the Budget. What has come over the House of Parliament? I heard honourable members opposite praising the huge companies. Their Federal brothers are running them down, saying they are the cause of trouble, and yet honourable members opposite are praising them against the small man, the man who gives a service to the community. What an extraordinary about-face! Honourable members opposite make the game even more amusing when I look at their side, but my side is starting to laugh now, too. I cannot follow any of them. Perhaps it is my surgical brain; I just do not follow anything that is not reasonable.

While the Minister is giving the honourable member for Mt. Gravatt some figures in his reply, I want to know what fees are paid by wine and spirit merchants in other States—the Licensing Commission should have those—so that we can make a comparison, and if we are doing an injustice we will know it. I feel this figure could be increased to 10 per cent and if we find that the merchants do not go broke and can survive, then we can think about pushing the fee up to 15 per cent. They might make some other adjustments in the meantime, but I think it is reasonable not to eat the apple all in one bite. I think the Government should give this matter a lot more thought and give the Committee more details about what it is doing and why it is doing it.

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (10.52 p.m.): I rise to oppose the amendment before the Committee. I cannot follow the reasoning behind it. If a fee of 15 per cent is wrong, then a figure of 9 per cent or 7 per cent is wrong.

Mr. Chinchen: Prove 15 per cent is right.

Mr. MILLER: If we are going to reduce the wholesaler's fee from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, then we are saying that the wholesaler selling many thousands of dozen bottles of beer should pay only 1 per cent more than a tavern which has to supply bar and eating facilities. Nobody has suggested that the tavern licence fee is too high; only that the wholesaler's fee is too high. We are saying that 7 per cent is a reasonable licence fee for a hotel because of the amount of accommodation and the amount of public, private and club-bar facilities they provide. A tavern provides less than an hotel, and there has been no quarrel with a licence fee of 9 per cent. If the tavern licence fee is 9 per cent, how can we possibly say that a wholesaler should be operating on a licence fee of 10 per cent?

I refer to one particular wholesaler—I mentioned this in the introductory debate—in Montague Road, South Brisbane. For the benefit of the Committee I will mention the name. It is Wynns. Their turnover last year was $2,000,000. On a wholesale trade of $1,000,000 they paid a licence fee of $400. This is a shed with four walls and a roof——

An Honourable Member: But they were selling to pubs. That wasn't retail.

Mr. MILLER: That's right, and on the other hand they are now expected to pay a fee of 15 per cent on retail sales. For the privilege of paying 15 per cent on $1,000,000 of retail sales, all they have to do is supply enough staff to carry the beer to the front counter. That is the amount of service they are expected to give to the public—enough staff to carry those bottles to the front counter. But what does a tavern have to supply with its fee of 9 per cent? It has to serve the public not only with liquor but also with food; yet I hear no complaints about its licence fee of 9 per cent. Some honourable members believe that there should be a difference of only 1 per cent between a tavern licence fee and a wholesaler's licence fee. I support the Bill as it stands because I think the figures presented by the Minister are fair to all concerned.

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.56 p.m.): I do not wish to involve myself in a detailed argument. Honourable members have stated their case fairly forcefully. It is simply a question of what the difference is, and I cannot state exactly what it is. I know it is a substantial figure. From my own knowledge, I would guess that at this stage it would be well in excess of $500,000—probably much more than that. The point I make is that it is sufficiently substantial that, if the levies are not accepted as they now stand, the Treasurer will have to recast the Budget.

Amendment (Dr. Scott-Young) negatived.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

THIRD READING

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

MOTOR VEHICLES INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (10.59 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act 1936–1975 in certain particulars."

This is a relatively simple Bill but quite an important one. Its purpose is to amend existing provisions which relate, firstly, to the membership of the Nominal Defendant (Queensland) and, secondly, to interstate vehicles in Queensland. The two matters are not related, so I shall deal with each matter separately.

Firstly, as to the need to review and amend the basis of the insurance industry representation on the Corporation of the Nominal Defendant (Queensland)—The Act as it now stands provides that the corporation shall include three insurance industry representatives and that they shall be—

(i) A representative of licensed insurers;

(ii) A representative of the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association of Queensland; and

(iii) A representative of the Non-tariff Insurance Association.

With the specified associations disbanding, the requirement that the Nominal Defendant Corporation comprise representatives from these associations is no longer relevant.

We now have the situation where many insurers have withdrawn from the third-party business and have ceased to be licensed insurers under the Act. The field of licensed insurers has thus become fairly narrow and may decrease even further. The Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association of Queensland, which is to supply a representative, has been disbanded and the Non-tariff Insurance Association, which also is required to be represented, is in the process of disbanding.

Mr. Houston: What is the reason for that?

Sir GORDON CHALK: A change in the breakdown of the basis on which insurance premiums are levied.

Mr. Houston: They are re-forming.

Sir GORDON CHALK: They are re-forming. They are not all in the association. Some are tariff companies and some are non-tariff companies.

Provision must now be made for an alternative basis of appointment of insurance representatives to the Corporation of the Nominal Defendant, and this is being provided for in the Bill.

The Bill provides that the present insurance representatives shall remain in office for the balance of their current term of appointment and in future, instead of representatives from three specified sections of the insurance industry, that there be "three representatives of the insurers carrying on general insurance business in Queensland elected as prescribed".

There will be no difficulty about election procedures as the newly formed Insurance Council of Australia will be able to arrange this, subject to an appropriate amendment to the regulations under the Act.

The other matter with which this Bill deals concerns interstate vehicles in Queensland in so far as the liability of the Nominal Defendant is involved. As the Act stands at present, an uninsured motor vehicle does not include one which is registered and insured in any other State or Territory and which is temporarily in Queensland. At one time the compulsory third-party insurance requirements of all other States did not measure up to the Queensland standard. This is no longer the case, and the Act which was drawn up to make special provision for visiting interstate vehicles can now be simplified as there is no need for special conditions. In effect, the amendment will simply delete the reference to "temporarily in Queensland" so far as interstate vehicles are concerned.

The amendment will save some unnecessary administrative problems for the Nominal Defendant as the words "temporarily in Queensland" are not and cannot be defined with precision. At present the corporation receives many precautionary claims which are subsequently withdrawn, and this results in wasted time and effort and therefore unnecessary costs. The amendment will in no way affect the right of any person to recover damages from either the owner of an interstate vehicle or the Nominal Defendant.

No doubt the Opposition will want to look at those two amendments when the Bill is printed. I can assure the Committee that they are simple but important amendments that are necessary because of the changes that have taken place in the insurance industry. In addition, I want to ensure that vehicles that come into Queensland from other States have the protection applicable to all vehicles under the Nominal Defendant.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (11.5 p.m.): As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer has indicated, this is basically a machinery measure with wide coverage throughout the insurance industry.

It is to be regretted that some insurance companies have seen fit to withdraw from third-party insurance, which is, after all, a very important segment of the insurance industry and one affecting the welfare of all people who use the road. Third-party insurance cover is compulsory. If an insurance company does the right thing by a motorist and covers him against third-party claims, I think it could reasonably expect to receive his comprehensive motor vehicle insurance business as well. Perhaps the Deputy Premier and Treasurer could tell us at the second-reading stage whether or not the insurance companies that are retiring from third-party insurance are continuing to offer comprehensive cover. I suggest that the two types of insurance are linked. Perhaps the problem is that insurance companies are paying out much higher sums to meet third-party claims than they are to cover comprehensive claims.

Usually the sum paid out by an insurance company under a third-party claim is assessed by a court of law. The quantum of damages is assessed on the nature of the injuries suffered as well as on other matters. By comparison, the amount involved in a comprehensive claim is determined by the motor vehicle industry and not by a legal procedure. I would be interested to hear from the Treasurer whether there is any tie-up between the two types of insurance cover.

If companies are dropping out from a field of insurance covered by the Nominal Defendant they have no right to be represented, so I would indicate that we do not oppose the provisions relating to that matter.

As to the elimination of the provision relating to interstate vehicles, I take it the insurance cover of interstate vehicles would still hold good.

Sir Gordon Chalk: They can take action against the Nominal Defendant, which previously they could not do unless it could be proved they were temporarily in Queensland. That is now removed.

Mr. HOUSTON: If they are insured interstate, I take it the Nominal Defendant in Queensland would be able to claim against the company in the particular State. The Nominal Defendant would be only the first step in a claim to another company.

Sir Gordon Chalk: We have looked at a basis of reciprocal arrangements.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the point I was about to deal with. Perhaps the Treasurer could give us a clearer indication of this aspect at the second-reading stage. In the meantime, we will study the Bill in detail.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (11.9 p.m.): I realise that the Bill is only a machinery measure, one covering claims made against interstate vehicles that are in Queensland for a short time only. Whereas previously they were not covered by third-party insurance, they are now to be covered by the Nominal Defendant. With the ease of travel interstate and the large number of vehicles on the roads, a great number of interstate vehicles will be in Queensland at any given time. This could cause problems. The member for Bulimba has referred to comprehensive insurance. At this stage of the Bill it is fair comment that in the light of higher premiums for motor vehicle insurance the risk is great that a vehicle—whether it be local or from interstate and here for a short time—will not be insured. I suppose other honourable members have been confronted with the problem of having to chase interstate insurance claims on behalf of constituents—even as far as Western Australia and South Australia—to trace a vehicle only to find, almost invariably, that the vehicle is uninsured, which means that the claimant loses. It may not be very long before we extend this provision to comprehensive insurance. I believe that this Assembly will have to consider that matter in a very short time.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

QUEENSLAND PHOSPHATE LIMITED GUARANTEE BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.14 p.m.): I move—

> "That a Bill be introduced to authorize the Treasurer to guarantee on behalf of the State the repayment of certain moneys borrowed by Queensland Phosphate Limited in connexion with the mining of phosphate rock deposits in North Queensland and for matters incidental thereto."

The purpose of the Bill is to provide for a State Government guarantee in respect of portion of the borrowings of Queensland Phosphate Limited towards the establishment of a mine, mining town and port facilities for the mining of phosphate rock near Duchess and the lodging of a security deposit with the Commissioner for Railways covering the capital cost of the spur line, improvements to the Mt. Isa-Townsville line and the acquisition of locomotives and rolling-stock to rail phosphate rock at the rate of 1,000,000 tonnes per annum for the company.

The need for the Bill arose out of the unfortunate policies adopted by the Federal Government in relation to the export of mineral products, at least prior to the recent review in which some of the changes were made. We had, looking to export from Queensland in very substantial quantities, a company which had very large deposits of phosphate rock at its disposal, and yet the Commonwealth Government saw fit to limit any such export proposals to contracts for one year only.

To get a project of this nature going, it was necessary to spend very large amounts, primarily owing to the fact that the deposits were so far from the coast, resulting in very heavy outlays in respect of rail transport. Obviously, projects of this nature are got under way largely on borrowed funds, and lenders naturally need to examine the financial capabilities of the developing company before they can be induced to make funds available. Any lender examining such a project would normally want to see the availability of long-term contracts for a significant portion of the output before it

would have the necessary level of confidence to make funds available at normal commercial interest rates.

When the Commonwealth Government refused to authorise sales contracts for more than one year, the company representatives came and discussed the problem with me with a view to obtaining a State Government guarantee to provide the lenders with the security which the available export contracts failed to do. I examined the company's earning potential and, bearing in mind the value which developments of this nature have for the State, I agreed, with Cabinet's concurrence and subject to legislative authority, to provide a Government guarantee in respect of a portion of the company's proposed borrowings, with a maximum State liability of $20,000,000. It is to be one of the terms of the State guarantee that, when the company has obtained satisfactory long-term contracts for the sale of its output at the rate of 1,000,000 tonnes per annum, the State Government guarantee will lapse.

It should be possible for the company to obtain such contracts now that the Commonwealth Government has changed its attitude, but the State guarantee is still required owing to the necessity to draw the borrowed funds to cover the developmental works which are proceeding before the long-term contracts have been negotiated and entered into.

Mr. Houston: Whom are they borrowing the money from?

Sir GORDON CHALK: From certain banks and insurance companies.

Mr. Houston: Overseas banks?

Sir GORDON CHALK: No. We hope that most of it will come from here.

As is normal for developments of this nature, the company will be required, under its agreement with the Commissioner for Railways, to lodge with him a security deposit equal to the commissioner's expenditure on the construction of the spur line to the company's mine, upgrading works on the Mt. Isa-Townsville line necessary to cater for the additional traffic and the locomotives and rolling-stock necessary to handle the company's initial output of 1,000,000 tonnes per annum. The assets which the commissioner acquires with this deposit will be usable for traffic other than the phosphate rock to the extent that the funds are spent on the upgrading of the Mt. Isa-Townsville line and the locomotives and rolling-stock.

Admittedly, in the unlikely event that the phosphate rock mining company failed, the assets so provided may not be immediately useful to their full value. but the availability of these assets nevertheless provides the State with a considerable security in respect of the guarantee which it is providing. It will be written into the agreement between the company and the Commissioner for Railways that, should the State guarantee be called upon, no further refund of security deposit or interest thereon will be made, irrespective of whether phosphate rock continues to be railed by the company or its successor.

As I previously mentioned, the guarantee will be limited to $20,000,000 but there will be a further limitation in that the amount of the guarantee is not at any time to exceed the part of the balance of the security deposit proportionate to the part of the initial security deposit invested in the assets which would be usable other than for the phosphate rock. The borrowings will also be supported by a guarantee from the parent company of Queensland Phosphate Limited, namely, B.H. South Limited, which will be called upon in full before any liability arises in respect of the State guarantee.

The Bill provides an exemption for the proposed guarantee document and the associated guarantees and indemnities from B.H. South Limited on the basis that such stamp duty liability would not have arisen but for the attitude taken by the Federal Government and that it is the desire of the State Government not to capitalise on the unfortunate situation which it was now endeavouring to assist the company to overcome.

The company will be initially developing the mine and providing the security deposit for railway assets sufficient to handle the output of 1,000,000 tonnes per annum. However, it is confidently expected that the project will be quickly expanded to increase its rate of production as additional export orders are obtained.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (11.22 p.m.): The Opposition does not in principle object to Governments assisting companies to become established. In this case, if I have understood the Treasurer correctly, the assistance is to be in the form of a guarantee rather than actual money.

I think it is unfortunate that the Treasurer tried to blame the Federal Government for the situation that has now arisen. After all, guarantees were given to other companies at various times when there was a Federal Government of a different political colour, and on those occasions the Treasurer of the day was never heard to say that one of the reasons the guarantees were necessary was the attitude of the then Federal Government.

It is true that the Federal Government has certain policies, but I believe that it will be bad for the nation if there is constant antagonism and fighting between the various State Governments and the Federal Government. If constant fighting between the State and Federal Governments is to become a political way of life in Australia, ours will be a very politically unstable nation. Such a situation would not augur well for the

development of Australia. The Treasurer said these things, although perhaps he said them in low key. I have at times heard him say them in very high key—in a loud and strong voice. He did not do that this evening.

Sir Gordon Chalk: If the guarantees had not been undertaken at the time of the change of Federal Government policy, we would not have been in this position. It was unfortunate, but it was started before they changed their attitude.

Mr. HOUSTON: I think the Treasurer will agree that what the Federal Government did, and had every right to do——

Sir Gordon Chalk: That is their right.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is so. What the Treasurer has done, he has done in the belief that, now that the Federal Government has allowed exports to proceed——

Sir Gordon Chalk: I have to honour my obligations.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is right.

Sir Gordon Chalk: I do not believe it will be very long.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not think it will be, either. I think they will go ahead. In fact, I hope they do. The point is that it is not principally the Treasurer's statement that concerns me; it is the fact that others pick it up and enlarge on it. That is why I say that I do not accept that the situation has developed solely as a result of the Federal Government's attitude and that this has had to be done as compensation for that attitude. Naturally, it is the type of Bill about which in the introductory debate one cannot go into in detail because it is a machinery measure and, when it is printed, the Bill will no doubt contain a lot of clauses.

As I say, we do not object to the principle of assisting companies. I think the day will come, particularly with companies mining our natural wealth, when State Governments that are required to assist such companies will have to look to receiving in return a material interest in the company. Years ago a previous Government assisted Mount Isa Mines and, but for that assistance, Mount Isa Mines would really never have got off the ground. Yet today we find it is able to make substantial profits. Because of the operation of the company, some of its control fell into the hands of people overseas. As companies can change hands, particularly those with international connections, we should be looking at having a share in that company and having some material interest in the profits—and, for that matter, the losses. This is especially so when companies of this magnitude require State assistance or guarantees to work for them. After all, they are concerned with the development of the State and our natural resources. I cannot forsee any loss, because, even if the company fails, the assets are there. As the Treasurer said, if the company fails the railways may not be used immediately but he has great hopes for the future——

Sir Gordon Chalk: The rolling-stock can be used.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, but it will not be a dead loss. Let us face facts. With this type of enterprise, at the stage a company would go broke, the natural resources—the basis of the company's existence—are still in the ground waiting to be extracted. When we talk about imposing restrictions, honourable members can imagine that if years ago our forefathers had had a willy-nilly approach to the development of our natural resources, then we who followed would have found nothing left to exploit. I do not say that we should leave everything in the ground but I do say that planned development can be a very wise policy indeed.

I hope that in this agreement the Treasurer has overcome some of the weaknesses that were shown up in the Greenvale nickel project agreement, where at one stage, if he was reported correctly, he was very worried about where the money would come from if he had to honour the guarantee given in the agreement. I trust that we cannot get ourselves into that position with this agreement. I hope also that this will not be the start of a series of increased guarantees. After all, with modern computers and all the information available to us, we should now have a pretty accurate idea of what projects will cost in the foreseeable future.

With those remarks the Opposition accepts the introduction of the Bill. Because it is an agreement, we will naturally look at the details during the second-reading and Committee stages. I hope that the Treasurer does not do what another Minister did when introducing a Bill to ratify an agreement some time ago. That Minister said, "You cannot amend it; it has already been signed." In other words—"All you are doing is rubber stamping it."

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (11.29 p.m.): I wish to mention a few matters about this very important measure that the Treasurer has introduced this evening. I am very hopeful, as I am sure most honourable members are, that the newly found phosphate rock deposits in the north-western part of our State will greatly strengthen Australia's future prospects for grain production and pasture improvement.

The deposits that are being developed by Broken Hill South Limited at Lady Jane, Lady Annie and Duchess are very important and will, in the long term, keep the price of superphosphate down in Australia. This will be of benefit to farmers and graziers over the length and breadth of the State.

In view of the criticism that has been offered in this Chamber over many months, it was refreshing to see that the Federal

Government, following the urgent environmental appraisal of the whole operation that it ordered a few months ago, very quickly decided to allow the export of phosphate.

The deposits, of course, are very significant and there are reputed to be around 2,000 million tonnes in the area. The Treasurer has explained the ramifications of the guarantee that is being offered by the State, and I draw attention to the fact that the Prices Justification Tribunal has ruled that the price to be charged by Broken Hill South for phosphate rock is $33 a tonne. Incidentally, that is well above the price at which phosphate rock exported from Christmas Island is landed in this country.

This project must be watched very carefully indeed because, as the honourable member for Bulimba mentioned, the Greenvale nickel project has caused a considerable amount of concern not only in commercial circles but also in political circles.

Broken Hill South, according to reports, desires to export about 1,000,000 tonnes a year. The Federal Government has given it a charter to export 2,000,000 tonnes a year in order to make the operation viable very quickly. I think it is interesting to note that about 32,000 tonnes have already been exported from the area.

To prove the bona fides of Broken Hill South, I think I should point out to the people of this State that the company has carried out extensive investigations into Pacific and Asian markets with a view to securing a long-term contract for the export of large quantities of phosphate. Only if it secures such a contract will it be possible to keep the Australian domestic price at a satisfactory level.

In my opinion, it is very pleasing indeed that the Federal Government is insisting upon an environmental study in an attempt to avoid any future confrontation with people who are conservation minded and who sometimes, unfortunately, show an almost fanatical zeal in trying to preserve certain areas, thus drawing criticism from other people in the community to whom their views seem somewhat outlandish. Before the operation begins, all the cards should be on the table. We do not want any trouble after approval and guarantees have been given. If anyone wants to speak, let him speak in the early stages so that all the facts can be aired and difficulties can be satisfactorily ironed out.

The company has sought markets in Asia. I hope it is successful. The determination of price is a very important factor. I hope Asian companies will become significant customers. The export of the phosphate rock will be very significant to the Townsville port, which is already playing a very vital role in the State's economy. The phosphate trade will increase shipping through that port, and that, no doubt, will create some worries for the Townsville Harbour Board.

It is essential that strong assurances be given about supplies of the commodity. It is in the State's interests to ensure that the company is geared to maintain continuity of supply. Here I refer particularly to railway and port facilities. At no time should its customers be disadvantaged.

The honourable member for Bulimba mentioned the Greenvale agreement. I hope that that bitter experience exercised the mind of the Treasurer. No doubt what was learned then will stand him in good stead so that on this occasion he will proceed with caution. Although previous Governments had provided assistance to various enterprises by way of guarantees, the Greenvale operation was a departure from the usual method of financing big operations in this State. When the relevant legislation was being debated I said that there would doubtless be a considerable number of amendments to it. The Treasurer has said that sometimes I am psychic. If he goes over the records, he will see that I am something of a forecaster as well.

I understand that a security deposit equivalent to the cost of the railway will be lodged. I presume that the railway line will be handed over to the Government and that the Commissioner for Railways will run it on his terms. I hope that the rail freight escalation to cover increases in running costs will be looked at in the light of increased profits by the company in proportion to the increase in the world price of the commodity. That principle was written into the nickel agreement, and it is very necessary that it be part and parcel of the agreement on this occasion.

I hope that the State will receive realistic benefits from royalty payments. For years the Opposition constantly argued about the advantages from royalties that were not coming to the State. Since the big turn-about on royalties, the position has been somewhat rectified.

No doubt the hope of substantial profits from this venture gives rise to considerable optimism among Government ranks. If long-term markets can be found, it is not likely that the Treasurer will be embarrassed by having to make repayments under his guarantee.

Together with my colleague, I wish the operation success. On the surface, it appears to be a proposition that is more sound than the Greenvale project. It has our wholehearted support, particularly if it brings about a reduction in the price of phosphate to the man on the land. The importance of this aspect is recognised by members of the Opposition, if not by Government members, who constantly pay lip-service to rural producers.

As I have said, the Prices Justification Tribunal has already indicated that the price of phosphate from this venture will be $33 a tonne. If I might use racing vernacular, this is only the opener. Anything can happen from there. I repeat that this price

is well above that of phosphate rock imported from Christmas Island, and this matter must be of some concern to the Treasurer.

I support the comments of the honourable member for Bulimba. The Opposition will study the Bill after it is printed.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (11.43 p.m.): If I may, I shall quote from the debate on the proposed railway connection from Phosphate Hill to the Great Northern Railway, as reported in "Hansard" of 30 October 1974, commencing at page 1833. The Minister for Transport is reported at page 1834 as saying—

> "This railway line and new rolling-stock are to be financed by the developing company at no risk to the State."

Tonight the Deputy Premier and Treasurer said that the State Government is being asked to guarantee up to $20,000,000 of Queensland Phosphates' borrowings to establish the mine, the mining town and port facilities and to lodge a security deposit for the purchase of locomotives and rolling-stock with the Commissioner for Railways.

In recent years the Railway Department has placed firm orders for locomotives and rolling-stock within one or two weeks of the presentation of the Budget. I am wondering whether tenders will be called by the Railway Department for the construction of new rolling-stock and locomotives. I am informed that if such tenders are not called, retrenchments in the heavy engineering sector will appear to be inevitable early in 1976. I am wondering whether this forecast was used as a lever by Broken Hill South to inveigle the Government into guaranteeing payments to the extent of $20,000,000. The distance covered by the rail connection between Bungalien and the Great Northern Railway was to be 68 km, and the remainder of the line was to be upgraded.

At that time I was moved to bring to the attention of the House the concern felt in western areas of the State about the ability of the line to carry the increased traffic. The line was already troubled with flooding and other problems. I also indicated on behalf of the Opposition that, in the light of the new phosphate traffic, the Opposition was expressing not only its own concern, but also the concern of the people who had to work over that line and who would be responsible for hauling the phosphate from Bungalien to Townsville over the existing Great Northern Railway. The problems that were apparent at that time have not been alleviated in any way.

In the Matters of Public Interest debate the other day, the honourable member for Townsville West drew attention to the situation that I pointed out on 30 October 1974, when the Bill covering the proposed railway connection was initiated.

The Treasurer said that the State Government guarantee will have to be extended because some export contracts have failed. The State is now required to guarantee a maximum liability of $20,000,000 for the company until long-term contracts are obtained.

When the Government embarks on these projects they always seem to follow the same pattern. Firstly, we are told a rosy story about the project not costing the State any money; that everything is to be given to us on a silver platter; and that if anything goes wrong we will get the rolling-stock, the line will be upgraded, and everything in the garden will be lovely. In this instance, we are being called on to give a $20,000,000 guarantee until long-term contracts are secured. It seems that we have always to come to the party. The company has to lodge a security deposit equal to the commissioner's expenditure on upgrading the line and buying locomotives and rolling-stock to cope with the work so that the company can get under way.

Mr. Houston: The Minister for Transport knew the Federal Government's policy at that time.

Mr. JONES: Yes. It was quite succinct; it was spelt out.

I am quite sure that, at 30 October 1974 we should have been able to project our planning in the light of the Federal Government's policies which, as the Government knew, were not only being actively considered at that time, but also actively implemented. If this money is to be spent on upgrading the existing line and buying locos and rolling-stock, one would have thought that the availability of assets would have been considered at 30 October 1974 and immediately prior to that, when planning was under way. That was certainly a long time after the present Federal Government first came to the Treasury benches, subsequent to its election on the second occasion. The Treasurer, in blaming the Federal Government in this instance, is leaning on a rather weak crutch. Under the agreement between B.P. South and the Commissioner for Railways, apparently the State will be called upon to guarantee the mining development for the output of this 1,000,000 tonnes of phosphate.

I agree that the sugar industry has a great need for Australian phosphate, and the development of this 2,000 million tonne deposit is wonderful for North Queensland. It is a great resource that we are fortunate to have and it should be developed. I cannot understand what is behind all the excuses now given as to why this was not done some two years ago and why this project is not well under way at this time.

I trust that the measure will enhance the viability of the operation and that it will become an asset in North Queensland. I also hope that this is not another Greenvale and that we will not have to send the

Treasurer to America or somewhere else to arrange more finance to get us over the hill so that this project can be brought to fruition for the benefit of Far North Queensland. There is a need for the development of North Queensland. The railways are playing a major part in this development and we should go along with it, but I do not see why we should be underwriting it with a different proposition every 12 months.

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.52 p.m.), in reply: I thought I had played the matter in low key. The situation regarding this guarantee was brought about because in 1974 the company had long-term contracts and it was prepared to obtain its finance and was in a position to obtain it on the basis of those long-term contracts.

The honourable member for Cairns was completely wide of the mark in his comments. It became evident, after the company had approached the Federal Government for approval of these long-term contracts, that the approval would be refused because it was the policy of the Federal Government at that time to limit the export of this rock to annual quotas. The company, having based its whole economics on long-term contracts and having obtained those contracts, came to the State Government——

Mr. Jones interjected.

Sir GORDON CHALK: The honourable member had his say. He was so wide of the mark and was so keen to knock the Greenvale project. He refers to it all the time.

The position here is quite clear. There is nothing to be evaded. The point of the matter is that the whole of the company's financing was based on the export of 1,000,000 tonnes of rock a year, rising to 2,000,000 tonnes as it progressed. When it could not get the export licence, it came to the State and said that it was having difficulty getting some of its backers to provide additional funds for the railway activity. The State had nothing to lose in regard to the railway and it had everything to gain in ensuring that the project went ahead not only for one year but for many years to come.

Mr. Jones: When did the company first approach you on this?

Sir GORDON CHALK: They approached me in about April or May of this year when the position was extremely grim from their point of view. We therefore gave this undertaking. There has been a change in the attitude of the Federal Government since then, and I believe that this guarantee will not be in operation for very long.

It was simply a desire of the State to ensure that the project went forward. Irrespective of what has been said by the honourable member for Cairns, I believe that every Queenslander, including all the other members of his party, want to see this project go ahead. All we have done is give our guarantee. It is not a question of giving money or picking up the bill of the Commissioner for Railways. The Government has given a guarantee to ensure that finance that lenders undertook to provide will be forthcoming to the company.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

INSURANCE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

Hon. Sir GORDON CHALK (Lockyer—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) (11.59 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Insurance Acts, 1960 to 1968 in a certain particular."

Briefly stated, the purpose of this Bill is to resolve a legal point about which doubt exists by removing an ambiguity in the wording of one section of the Act.

Authority for the Insurance Commissioner to set maximum rates of premium is contained in section 16 of the Insurance Acts, 1960 to 1968. This provides that the Insurance Commissioner may require every licensed insurer and Lloyds broker to submit such returns relating to any class of general insurance business in Queensland as the commissioner may require and that he shall from such returns set maximum rates of premiums for the several classes of risk.

Opinions differ about whether the Insurance Commissioner has a discretion as to whether or not he sets maximum rates. The advice from the Solicitor-General is that the Act is not clearly worded in this regard but he is of the opinion that the Insurance Commissioner has an obligation to fix maximum rates. However, there are certain types of general insurance business for which the Insurance Commissioner has never declared maximum insurance rates. Flood insurance is one example. The premium must be related to the particular risk and obviously it is quite impracticable to set a meaningful maximum rate. Contractors' all-risk insurance is another example where the premiums must relate to the individual project and the specific risks involved. The Insurance Commissioner has in fact always exercised a discretion since the Act was proclaimed.

The purpose of the Bill is to reword section 16 to make it quite clear that the Insurance Commissioner has discretion to deduce and declare maximum rates of premium for the several classes of general insurance risks or any of them. Furthermore, the Bill declares that the declared maximum rates

which were current at 25 August 1975 are not applicable from that date and no maximum premium rate shall apply unless and until new rates are declared subsequent to the passing of this amendment. 25 August has been declared the operative date for the lifting of the controls, as all insurers were advised that from that date the current maximum rates were cancelled. This advice was forwarded following a Cabinet decision to remove the controls and to amend the Insurance Acts 1960 to 1968 to provide quite clearly that it is not mandatory for the Insurance Commissioner to declare maximum rates.

All of the existing powers of the Insurance Commissioner to deduce and declare maximum insurance rates are being retained. Some minor changes are made to take account of changes in the structure of the insurance industry and of Commonwealth legislation which removes the need for insurers to be licensed under the provisions of the Queensland Act.

My principle purpose in introducing this Bill tonight is to give the Opposition a chance to examine the Bill after it has been printed. I have given an outline of what is involved. As we are about to go into recess, I thought it would be desirable to have the Bill printed so that it might be examined by the Opposition.

[Friday, 31 October 1975]

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (12.2 a.m.): Although we cannot instruct Mr. Speaker how to conduct the Parliament, I take it from the Treasurer's remarks that although the Bill amends the Act in a certain particular, during the debate on the second reading we will be able to discuss the broader aspects of the Act as distinct from the principles of the Bill, which is normal in a second-reading debate. As the Treasurer has said nothing to the contrary, we will accept that that is the situation, especially as we are now into the early hours of Friday, I know it was planned to sit on this day and discuss Government business, but Mr. Fraser and Mr. Anthony have decided that the Queensland Parliament should not sit so that all the National Party, Country Party and Liberal politicians and their friends and supporters can go to Festival Hall and hear the words of wisdom from these people.

Sir Gordon Chalk: You're joking!

Mr. HOUSTON: I am dead serious. It is a strange coincidence that only four or five days after the Leader of the House circulated an amended list (and I appreciate that) showing that we were going to sit today, we then heard through the grapevine that the great white fathers in Canberra——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable gentleman is obviously out of order. I suggest that he return to the Insurance Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. HOUSTON: This is the Insurance Act Amendment Bill and, as the Treasurer said, he is introducing it so that we can have a look at it over the recess. The recess starts tomorrow, and I would like to tell the Committee what I will be doing tomorrow.

An Honourable Member: It is already tomorrow; what are you talking about?

Mr. HOUSTON: It is; fair enough. I will use today, a day on which we were suppose to sit, to study this Bill. I certainly will not be talking about it, but I will be studying it in very great detail. I can tell the Committee, Mr. Hewitt, that I will not be attending Mr. Fraser and Mr. Anthony's meeting, nor will I be going to hear the Treasurer speak. I only hope that the State Government will not be required to pay for the rental of the hall or for all the propaganda that is being disseminated, as it has been for many other things that have been done on behalf of the National Party in this State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: As to the Bill—the Opposition was very concerned about the actions and activities of some insurance companies during the Brisbane flood and the way in which forms were presented to people who had insurance policies. Many people who had storm and tempest cover believed that they would be covered for flood damage. Unfortunately, they found out too late that some insurance companies decided that they were not covered.

Opposition members are very interested in the Bill and will agree to the Treasurer's suggestion that we allow it to be printed. We want to see not only what powers the Insurance Commissioner will retain but also whether he will have control over the terminology used by insurance companies in various clauses of their policies.

I will not delay the Committee any further. I simply indicate that the Opposition will allow the Bill to be printed.

Motion (Sir Gordon Chalk) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Sir Gordon Chalk, read a first time.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. HODGES (Gympie—Leader of the House): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 11 November 1975."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.9 a.m. (Friday).