

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 1977

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Mr. ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Wheat Delivery Quotas Act 1970–1974.

Orders in Council under—

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959–1974.

Meat Industry Act 1965–1973.

Racing and Betting Act 1954–1975.

Regulations under—

Agricultural Standards Act 1952–1972.

Local Government Act 1936–1976.

Statutes under the University of Queensland Act 1965–1973.

GREENVALE AGREEMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. W. E. KNOX (Nundah—Deputy Premier and Treasurer) by leave, without notice: I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to authorise the making of agreements between the State of Queensland and others to provide for the expenditure of moneys by the State in relation to the restructuring of debts incurred in connexion with the project referred to in the agreement set out in the Schedule to the Greenvale Agreement Act 1970–1975 and in connexion with the carrying on of that project.”

Motion agreed to.

VALUATION OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) by leave, without notice: I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Valuation of Land Act 1944–1975 in certain particulars and for another purpose.”

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. TENDERS FOR ABORIGINAL HOUSING, EIDSVOLD

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

(1) Is he aware that on 28 February Commonwealth finance was granted for

three houses to be built at Eidsvold for the Aboriginal Housing and Community Development Association and that tenderers were told that tenders would close on 1 March and that the first of these houses had to be ready for occupancy by 4 March?

(2) Is he aware that this unrealistically short period of 24 hours to tender and four days to erect the houses excluded local firms such as Eidsvold Sawmills, which would have used 80 per cent local workers and 100 per cent local materials, from tendering?

(3) Was the tender let to a modular-home firm?

(4) When was shire council approval given for erection of the dwellings?

(5) Can he ascertain from the Commonwealth and State departments concerned why such a short period as four days was set to prepare, place, call and finalise tenders, and erect houses ready for occupancy?

(6) If State departments are not consulted on these matters, will he point out forcefully to Commonwealth authorities the wasteful, inefficient methods employed in this case?

(7) Will he ask that local firms be given preference?

Answer:—

(1 to 7) The grant of money for the construction of the three houses in Eidsvold referred to by the Leader of the Opposition was entirely a matter for the relevant Commonwealth authority. No State Minister or department is involved.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I want to say, in addition to the prepared answer, that the Minister for Water Resources was also very deeply concerned about this matter. He raised it with me about a fortnight ago and pointed out that Mr. Morris had evidently let a contract or did something that we feel was not appropriate, in that the local sawmillers, who employ a lot of Aboriginal people, did not get the contract—as the Leader of the Opposition says. I will indeed take this matter up with the Commonwealth department concerned and point out these aspects to it.

2. ENGINEERING BUILDING, QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Burns, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) In completing the engineering building at the Queensland Institute of Technology, by how much in time and cost did the State Works Department exceed its own estimate, that of the next tenderer and the average of tenders originally received?

(2) Was this estimate agreed to by the Queensland Institute of Technology after the private enterprise contractor Welsh Bros. went into liquidation?

(3) Has the Queensland Institute of Technology agreed to meet this excess out of its budget and, if not, where did this large amount of extra money come from?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The engineering building at the Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane, was constructed by A. V. Jennings Pty. Ltd. This builder was the original successful tenderer for an amount of \$1,513,000.00 for its construction, accepted on 19 December 1972 for completion on 14 February 1974. Actual completion date with extensions of time was 19 February 1975, the total payment to contractor from suspense account funds being \$1,869,539.79, re-imbursed by the institute to my department. A final accounting reconciliation, including fees, furnishings and other contingencies, is in train with the institute.

3. USE OF NEW SOUTH WALES TIMBER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND HOUSES

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

(1) In an effort to protect the viability of North Queensland sawmillers, who have had to retrench staff because of competition from low-cost imported timbers, I requested the Minister for Works and Housing in 1976 to direct that all houses built for any Government department should be erected with Queensland timbers only. Although the Minister for Works and Housing was not prepared to agree to my proposal at that time, is he aware that a Brisbane-based building contractor, Peter Kurts, can erect a timber frame for a house in Townsville \$600 cheaper by using imported New South Wales timber as against northern and southern Queensland hardwoods?

(2) Will he investigate how this anomaly comes about and take some steps to protect the Queensland timber industry generally before all northern builders are forced to buy New South Wales hardwood in order to compete with southern builders?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) These questions have been redirected to me from my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing.

I am not aware of the cost levels for house construction in Townsville, and association price lists for sawn timber are not now allowable under the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act.

Present Cabinet policy requires the use of Australian-grown and produced timber in State Government financed or fund-guaranteed projects, but does not exclude the use of timbers imported from overseas in cases where there is a special requirement. My Department of Forestry has supported this policy and suggested that it not be varied.

The questioner seems to include New South Wales timber in the imported category but this is considered an impractical approach, as South Queensland and Northern New South Wales represent a common timber-marketing zone, with Brisbane for example very largely dependent on northern New South Wales for supply requirements.

The matter of housing specification is not one for me to handle, but clearly the amount of timber used in a house is dependent on piece sizes and espacement, and these may be varied dependent on building practice.

I am not aware that any significant volume of New South Wales hardwood is being used in North Queensland, and it would seem surprising if this heavy wood could undercut local species after being transported 1,000 miles or so. Although I do not see this as my particular province I would be prepared to discuss this apparent problem further with my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing. My own view is that local timber should be able to compete at least on an equal footing with timber from elsewhere.

4. PROMOTION OF SOCIALISM AND/OR COMMUNISM IN CLASS-ROOM

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

What is the recommended course of action for parents of high-school students who complain to their parents about teachers who actively promote socialism and/or Communism in the class-room?

Answer:—

The honourable member is in fact asking an open-ended question. He is asking what action may be taken by a student exposed, in the class-room situation, to the teaching of philosophies offensive to him or contrary to the precepts of his upbringing.

I can assure him that if any student or parent is able to supply me with documented evidence of a teacher abusing the privilege and trust of his position to undermine the Christian, moral or ideological values generally accepted by our Australian society, I will have the matter fully investigated.

However, any parent advised by his student son or daughter that a teacher actively promotes Communism, in the class-room situation, is strongly advised to, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the principal of that school. If still not satisfied, the parent should take the matter to the regional director.

5. PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE AT ALBERT STATE SCHOOL, MARYBOROUGH

Mr. Alison, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) What action is being taken to provide the Albert State School, Maryborough, with a pre-school centre?

(2) What is the age and condition of the principal's residence?

(3) What action is planned to demolish or remove this residence and erect a new residence on another site in order to provide more playground area for this school?

Answers:—

(1) A site is being acquired.

(2) This residence is about 94 years old and is in a habitable condition. A full tenancy rebate of rental is applicable because of the age of the building.

(3) No immediate action is contemplated. However, the proposal will receive consideration from time to time in relation to available finance.

6. TRAIL-BIKES

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

(1) Will he state the position of trail-bike riders under 17 years of age who push these unregistered motor-bikes along a footpath or road to get to an area where they may use them?

(2) Are such trail-bike riders infringing the law by so using a footpath or road?

(3) Must trail-bikes or any other type of motor-bike used solely for pleasure off the roads and in private paddocks be registered?

Answers:—

(1 and 2) The wheeling or pushing of trail-bikes or any other motor-cycle on a road including any footpath is a matter coming within the scope of the Traffic Act, which is administered by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Transport.

(3) The matter of the registration of motor vehicles comes within the scope of the Main Roads Act, which is administered by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

I suggest that the honourable member direct appropriate questions to them.

7. HELICOPTER SQUADRON FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

Further to his answers to my questions on 12 March and 22 October 1970 concerning the stationing of helicopters in North Queensland during emergencies and in view of the difficulties recently experienced during the cyclonic disturbances in Far North Queensland, will overtures be renewed to the Commonwealth Department of Defence to have helicopters stationed at Cairns for the duration of the wet season?

Answer:—

Service helicopters have for some time been stationed at Townsville and have always been made available in emergent circumstances. This was particularly evident during the recent severe flooding in North Queensland.

8. BAYVIEW HEIGHTS STATE SCHOOL, CAIRNS

Mr. Marginson for **Mr. Jones**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

In view of the high priority granted to the provision of a new primary school to be situated at Bayview Heights, Cairns, when will tenders be called and construction commence?

Answer:—

No dates have been determined.

9. PUBLICATION OF NAMES OF CONVICTED PERSONS

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

With reference to an article in the "Telegraph" of 22 March regarding fines imposed on approximately 20 men caught in a recent gambling raid at South Brisbane, why were the names of the persons withheld from publication when other persons who commit crimes of less importance have to face the prospect of a degrading Press report?

Answer:—

My attention has been drawn to the particular article and also to a further article in "The Courier-Mail" of 23 March 1977 which contains a list of the names of the 22 persons who were convicted. It is apparent therefore from a perusal of the latter article that the names have not been withheld.

10. UNIVERSAL PRODUCT CODE FOR SUPERMARKETS

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

(1) In view of the very disturbing implications for consumers posed by the mooted

introduction of the universal product code system into Australian supermarkets, what situation will prevail in Queensland?

(2) Will he take all steps necessary to maintain maximum consumer knowledge of comparative product prices and to curb any moves by large supermarket operators towards reduction of competition via cartel pricing?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I shall request the Consumer Affairs Council to consider the ramifications of the universal product code system, and any recommendations which the council may wish to make on the subject will receive careful consideration.

11. PETROL SERVICE STATION TRADING

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

(1) Is he aware of a noticeable trend amongst some metropolitan service stations rostered for week-end trading to close during normal operating hours, causing severe inconvenience to motorists reliant on this system?

(2) Is he aware of a high occurrence of malfunction of automatic coin-operated petrol pumps?

(3) Will he act to ensure the adequacy of these services, which are essential to a continuance of the present pattern of reduced trading hours enjoyed by service station operators in Brisbane?

Answers:—

(1) No complaints have been received in recent years by my department concerning service stations which are rostered for week-end trading closing their doors during normal operating hours. No legislation exists which compels service station proprietors to remain open for business at any time.

(2) My department is not aware of a high occurrence of automatic coin-operated petrol pump malfunction and no complaints have been received in this regard. I would be pleased to arrange for the investigation of any complaints in relation to such matters.

(3) The trading hours order is fixed by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in its role as a trading hours tribunal and the convenience of the motoring public is a primary consideration with the commission when determining the conditions of such trading hours order. It is considered that the roster system provided for in the order made by the commission provides an adequate service for the convenience of the motorist and ensures a fair system of trading for service station proprietors.

12. WORKERS' COMPENSATION PREMIUMS

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

In view of the significant corrections of anomalies in workers' compensation recently undertaken and currently under consideration, will he provide a summary of action taken and associated benefits received by relevant sectors of industry?

Answer:—

Last September I initiated a review of workers' compensation premiums applied to small retail outlets, the result of which was that the premiums on hundreds of small business undertakings were reduced significantly.

Premiums paid by chemists, newsagents, clothing shops, jewellers, barbers, shoe retailers and florists were reduced from \$1.60 per cent to 38c per cent. Premiums paid by cafes, milk bars, restaurants, delicatessens, booksellers, grocers, general stores and furniture retailers were reduced from \$1.60 per cent to \$1.05 per cent. These reductions eased the burden of workers' compensation premiums in the small retailing sector. Currently the rate applied to the retail butchering field is receiving close examination, but I am not in possession of the results of the examination at this stage.

Apart from the rates for the particular classes of business I have already mentioned, the honourable member will appreciate that premium rates for workers' compensation were reduced by 10 per cent as from 1 January last and merit bonuses were increased by an average of 10 per cent so that, for example, an employer with a claims ratio of less than 5 per cent gets a refund of 60 per cent of premiums paid, instead of 50 per cent as previously was the case. About 40 per cent of all employers are in this category. Furthermore, a general bonus of 5 per cent, which applied to all employers and which will return over \$4,000,000 to employers in Queensland, was announced at that time.

I might say that workers' compensation premium rates in Queensland compare more than favourably with those in other States.

13. TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AT CAIRNS WATCH-HOUSE

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

With reference to allegations in "The Courier-Mail" of 23 March that prisoners at the Cairns Watch-house were ordered to strip and take cold showers one night in July last year, what were the ranks of the police officers concerned, what were the circumstances surrounding the medical examination and who was present at the examination?

Answer:—

I have no knowledge of this matter and, in the absence of specific information such as names, etc., I am unable to answer this question at short notice. However, I am having inquiries made in this matter and when further information is available such information will be supplied.

14. AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

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

As average weekly earnings are approximately \$180 per week in seasonally adjusted terms, a tradesman's wage is mainly less than \$170 per week and in most cases very little overtime is worked, what is the percentage of Queensland workers who are considered to be receiving less than average weekly earnings?

Answer:—

These figures are not available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

15. TENNIS COURT AT DAYBORO STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Frawley, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) Is he aware that since March 1976 the Dayboro State Primary School Parents and Citizens' Association has been endeavouring to obtain satisfaction regarding the construction of a new tennis court at the school?

(2) As the court was constructed by Messrs. Waller and Whitby of Sandgate at a cost of \$3,616.50, of which 50 per cent is subsidised by this Government, as nut grass grew through the court surface before the court was used and as the association cannot obtain satisfaction from the consulting engineers (John Wilson and Partners) or the builders, who have left the association with a faulty court, will he make a further investigation into this unsatisfactory state of affairs as the report from the consulting engineers is not considered to be satisfactory and the builders have not accepted their responsibility?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) My departmental officers have been inquiring into the case and these enquiries are still in train.

16. PUBLICATION "FORUM"

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

(1) Is he aware that a filthy, pornographic magazine known as "Forum" is being distributed in this State by Gordon & Gotch, who apparently will do anything for money?

(2) As the editorial board is comprised of many well-known academics, including Dr. Paul Wilson of the University of Queensland, does this influence the Board of Literature Review?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware that a magazine known as "Forum" is distributed in Queensland and I am advised that copies of this publication are constantly under review by the Literature Board of Review.

17. SAND-MINING IN STATE FOREST, COOLOOLA

Mr. Ahern for **Mr. Lane**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

Is consideration being given to allowing mining on any of the mining lease applications 323, 324, 325, 327, 328, 329 and 331, which are either wholly or partly within the State forest at Cooloola and in which the companies involved are Queensland Titanium Mines and Consolidated Rutile and Zircon Pty. Ltd. No. 2?

Answer:—

No; none of these particular mining lease applications are current. The companies involved were Queensland Titanium Mines Pty. Ltd. and Cudgen Rutile (No. 2) Pty. Ltd.

18. SHARKS IN MORETON BAY

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

In view of the recent tragic deaths by shark attack in Moreton Bay, what is the extent of shark eradication which is carried out in the bay and does this activity indicate an increase or a decrease in the number of large sharks in the bay?

Answer:—

No shark-eradication programme is carried out in Moreton Bay, nor have Government officers become aware of any enduring significant change in the shark population. On occasions sharks follow schools of migrating fish and this can cause a temporary increase in the local shark population.

Regrettably, it is inevitable that there will be a continuing shark population in Moreton Bay. Therefore I cannot emphasize too strongly the need for extreme caution and the utmost care by any persons who have a need to be on the bay.

19. RAIL FARE CONCESSIONS

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

For the last 12 months for which figures are readily available, what was the State Government's total expenditure on

the provision of free and partly free railway and other passes to pensioners and other people, and how many persons benefited?

Answer:—

During the financial year 1975-76, the face value of rail tickets obtained upon free rail requisitions issued through my department was \$612,216. Requisitions were issued to 17,909 persons. Figures are not available regarding the half-fare rail travel concession, which is administered by the Department of Railways.

20. OFFICIAL HOSPITAL VISITS BY MINISTER FOR HEALTH

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

On his official visits to hospitals, will he consider going alone, without the usual retinue of local people associated with the hospital or hospital matters, so that nurses, sisters and other staff members can approach him and frankly discuss what they consider to be important matters without embarrassment or fear of repercussions?

Answer:—

The honourable member would appreciate that on an official visit to a hospital it would be unethical for me, whilst moving within the precincts of such hospital, not to be accompanied by the personnel responsible for its administration.

Should, however, a request for a personal interview be made by members of hospital staff during my visits to hospitals, I would grant such interview if at all possible. I would advise the honourable member that in the past I have granted many such interviews during my visits to a large number of hospitals throughout the State.

21. UNIVERSITY SABBATICAL LEAVE

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

(1) For the last 12 months for which figures are readily available, what was the total cost of sabbatical leave, plus associated perks such as fares and expenses of all sorts, at (a) Queensland University and (b) James Cook University?

(2) Are representations being made to have this lucrative concession extended to all employees of universities and, if so, what groups of employees will be excluded from the concession and what will be the total cost in the first full year?

(3) What type or grade of employees at a university are at present granted this concession, and what members of the employee's family, legal or otherwise, are covered by the various allowances?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) It has not been possible in the time available to collect and collate the information. If the honourable member would repeat his question for Tuesday next, I will furnish a reply then.

Mr. Aikens: I do so accordingly.

22. QUEEN ELIZABETH JUBILEE FOUNTAIN

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) In drawing his attention to the situation relating to the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Fountain—as the public applauds this beautification of Brisbane, why must all they view at the moment be a hunk of metal floating in the river?

(2) When will the fountain be fully operational and what running costs are involved?

(3) Will it be allowed to operate for the greater part of the day and night in order to give pleasure to the public and be a source of pride for Brisbane citizens and an avenue for tourist attraction?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The fountain operates at times as made known to the public by my Press release on 19 March 1977, and these times are:—

Weekdays—7.30 to 9.00 a.m.; 12.30 to 1.30 p.m.; 5.00 to 8.00 p.m.

Saturdays—11.00 a.m. to 12 noon; 7.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

Sundays—12 noon to 8.00 p.m.

The fountain is illuminated after 6 p.m.

The above arrangements will continue until 30 March, 1977.

The high jet of the fountain, which will be operating when suitable wind conditions exist, is still under testing and is not operational at the present time.

No doubt honourable members will appreciate the amount of energy, about 420 h.p., involved in pumping the water through the jets, so the extent to which it will operate after 30 March is presently subject to a review, having in mind its attractions, but with due regard being taken of the recurrent costs involved. The estimated running costs of the fountain are \$21 per hour or \$25 per hour when illuminated.

23. EXPENDITURE ON MAINTENANCE OF HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES IN BELMONT ELECTORATE

Mr. Byrne, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

Since December 1974, how much has the Works Department expended for painting and maintenance on (a) Housing Commission houses in the Holland Park, Mt.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the following tabulation on the table:—

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D39/77	7-3-77	Meat Export (Mechanical) Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and Bricklayers of Australasia, Union of Employees, Queensland Branch, and Thomas Borthwick & Sons Aust. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over Trades Assistant at Bowen Works
D37/77	2-3-77	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and Tolsons, care of Myers Site, Chermerside. <i>Re:</i> Stoppage by 8 Employees. <i>Re:</i> Wage Claim
D31/77	16-2-77	Electrical Trade—Mirror Newspapers Limited—Newspaper—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and Mirror Newspapers Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over Special Electrician Allowance
D26/77	14-2-77	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board <i>Re:</i> Handling of Chemicals
D21/77	11-2-77	Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Trades—Brisbane Wharves and Wool Dumping Pty. Ltd.—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland and the Brisbane Wharves and Wool Dumping Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Dismissal of Apprentice Electrician
D19/77	8-2-77	Gladstone Power Station Construction Employees Award	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Australian Building Construction and Builders' Labourers' Federation (Queensland Branch), Union of Employees; the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and Bricklayers of Australasia, Union of Employees, Queensland Branch; the Transport Workers' Union of Australia, Union of Employees, (Queensland Branch); The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; and the Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees, <i>Re:</i> Certificate relative to union membership issued to T. Managrove by Industrial Magistrate
D 8/77	10-1-77	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and Kennedy & Middleton <i>Re:</i> Payment of Building Construction and Multi-storey allowances at Princess Alexandra Hospital
D 7/77	10-1-77	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Brisbane City Council <i>Re:</i> Payment of Allowance in error
D205/76	22-12-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Penalty Rates for working in rain for employees at Coolangatta Depot
D204/76	15-12-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State Mechanical Engineering Award—State Engine Drivers' Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees, and the Northern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Overtime ban at Collinsville Power Station
D183/76	9-11-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and Kennedy & Middleton <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over wages at Gladstone

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH—continued

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D170/76	14-10-76	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Log of Claims
D169/76	13-10-76	Engineers (Shift) Etc.—The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Union of Employees, Queensland District, and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Ban on overtime at Swanbank
D157/76	27-9-76	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees' Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Payment of Wages
D153/76	21-9-76	Meat Export (Mechanical) Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and Queensland Meat Export Co. Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Classification of 3 Electricians
D146/76	6-9-76	Mechanical Engineering Award—State; Electrical Engineering Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees and Associated Minerals Consolidated Ltd., <i>Re:</i> New Annual Over Award Agreement for Stradbroke Island Employees
D140/76	2-9-76	Engineers (Shift) Etc.—The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Union of Employees, Queensland District and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Ban on supply of coal to Gladstone Power Station
D137/76	26-8-76	Mechanical Engineering Award—State; Electrical Engineering Award—State; Engine Drivers' Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees, and the Northern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Claim for Collinsville Power Home allowance of \$10 a day for 5 day week (Locality Allowance)
D128/76	13-8-76	Mechanical Engineering Award—State; Electrical Engineering Award—State; Building Trades Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Provincial Traders Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Indexation of over award payments
D127/76	10-8-76	Engineers (Shift) Etc.—The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Municipal Officers' Association of Australia, (Queensland Branch), Union of Employees; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Union of Employees, Queensland District, and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re:</i> Change of roster for employees at Gladstone

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH—*continued*

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D117/76	22-7-76	Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Trades—Brisbane Wharves and Wool Dumping Pty. Ltd.—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees and Brisbane Wharves and Wool Dumping Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Dismissal of employees for absenteeism
D101/76	2-7-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and Q.U.F. Industries Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Shift Work
D100/76	1-7-76	Railway Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Australian Railways Union of Employees, Queensland Branch; the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen, Queensland, Union of Employees, and the Commissioner for Railways <i>Re:</i> Moving of diesels at diesel shed at Cloncurry
D93/76	16-6-76	Sugar Industry Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and The Australian Sugar Producers' Association Limited, Union of Employers, <i>Re:</i> Lack of Amenities at Inkerman Sugar Mill
D86/76	3-6-76	Railway Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Commissioner for Railways <i>Re:</i> Cessation of work due to illness at Ipswich Railway Workshops
D57/76	27-4-76	Mechanical Engineering Award—State; Electrical Engineering Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland and Coca-Cola <i>Re:</i> Stoppage concerning over-Award payments
D52/76	13-4-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and the South Brisbane Hospitals Board <i>Re:</i> Refusal to repair equipment outside of normal working hours
D50/76	12-4-76	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over refusal of Log of Claims
D48/76	7-4-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board, <i>Re:</i> Standing down of two employees at Gladstone Depot
D44/76	1-4-76	Mechanical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Marian Mill Co-operative Society Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over dismissal of employee at Marian Mill
D31/76	9-3-76	Employees—Queensland Bulk Sugar Terminal Organisations—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and CSR Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Classification of electrician Special Class
D29/76	5-3-76	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees' Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Strike over introduction of new shift at Greenvale

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH—*continued*

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D28/76	5-3-76	Mineral Sands Industry Award—State and Clerks and Switchboard Attendants Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Clerks' Union of Australia, (Central and Southern Queensland Branch), Union of Employees, and D.M. Minerals <i>Re: Strike over over-Award rates and conditions at Fraser Island and in Maryborough</i>
D19/76	26-2-76	Hardboards Australia Limited (Electrical Engineering)—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and Hardboards (Australia) Ltd. <i>Re: Dismissal of Electrical Trades Union Delegate at Bundamba Mill</i>
D17/76	25-2-76	Meat Export (Mechanical) Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and Bricklayers of Australasia, Union of Employees, Queensland Branch, and F. J. Walker Ltd., <i>Re: Payment for injury during overtime</i>
D13/76	18-2-76	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees' Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd., <i>Re: Payment of an availability for call-out allowance at Yabulu</i>
D11/76	17-2-76	Local Authorities (Excluding Brisbane) and Main Roads Etc. Award—State and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland and Thiess Bros. Pty. Ltd. <i>Re: Stoppage in support of Log of Claims Re: Accommodation near Cloncurry</i>
D 8/76	9-2-76	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Union of Employees, Queensland District; the Municipal Officers' Association of Australia, (Queensland Branch), Union of Employees, and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re: Non-Payment of Shift Penalty at Swanbank Power Station</i>
D 3/76	13-1-76	Meat Export (Mechanical) Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and Bricklayers of Australasia, Union of Employees, Queensland Branch, and T. A. Field Pty. Ltd., <i>Re: Stoppage in support of Log of Claims</i>
D166/75	22-12-75	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees' Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd., <i>Re: Ban imposed over requirement of Trades Assistant for electrical work</i>
D165/75	22-12-75	Hardboards Aust. Ltd. (Mechanical Engineering)—Industrial Agreement and Hardboards Aust. Ltd. (Electrical Engineering)—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Hardboards Australia Ltd., <i>Re: Stoppage at Bundamba</i>
D164/75	18-12-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Central-Western and Cairns Regional Electricity Boards <i>Re: Availability Duty Allowance</i>

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH—*continued*

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D160/75	10-12-75	Cement Manufacturing Industry Award—Southern Division	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland and Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Overtime Ban over retrenchment of employees at Rockhampton
D159/75	9-12-75	Gladstone Power Station Construction Employees' Award	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; and various Unions and the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Contractors on Site <i>Re:</i> Safety and First Aid matters generally
D147/75	20-11-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch and the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board <i>Re:</i> Dismissal of Leading Hand Electrical Mechanic at Rockhampton
D145/75	17-11-75	Nickel Mining and Treatment Plant Employees Award—Greenvale and Yabulu	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Queensland Nickel Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> increased rental and accommodation charges at Greenvale
D133/75	30-10-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Federated Clerks' Union of Australia, (Central and Southern Queensland Branch), Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Transport Workers' Union of Australia, Union of Employees, (Queensland Branch); the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and Bricklayers of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees and Associated Minerals Consolidated Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Claims for disabilities allowances on North Stradbroke Island
D131/75	27-10-75	Cement Workers Award—Darra, and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and others, and Queensland Cement and Lime Co. Ltd. and Central Queensland Cement Pty. Ltd. <i>Re:</i> Indexation by 3.5% of additional amounts ordered by Commission
D118/75	7-10-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State ..	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board <i>Re:</i> Annual Leave and Stand-by payments, and safety practices at Emerald
D113/75	25-9-75	Sugar Industry Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; <i>Re:</i> Operation of new turbo-alternator at Babinda Sugar Mill
D103/75	15-8-75	Gladstone Power Station Construction Employees' Award	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch, and the Australian Building Construction Employees and Builders' Labourers' Federation (Queensland Branch), Union of Employees <i>Re:</i> Laying P.V.C. Ducting
D98/75	8-8-75	Mechanical Engineering Award—State and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; the Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland; and North Queensland Engineers and Agents Pty. Ltd., <i>Re:</i> Stoppage over wage rates

DISPUTES INVOLVING THE ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION OF EMPLOYEES OF AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND BRANCH—*continued*

Case No.	Date of Initiation	Award	Parties and Brief Particulars
D88/75	16-7-75	Mechanical Engineering Award—State and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland and Others, and Provincial Traders Pty. Ltd., <i>Re: Log of Claims for Over-Award Payments and improved conditions</i>
D82/75	10-7-75	Engine Drivers in Bacon Factories—South-Eastern Division—Industrial Agreement and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees; and Others and the Darling Downs Co-operative Bacon Association Ltd., and Others <i>Re: Stoppage over work and conditions claims</i>
D77/75	26-6-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State and Others	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees' Queensland; and Others and the Northern Electric Authority of Queensland <i>Re: Stoppage over clothing issue</i>
D31/75	18-3-75	Electrical Engineering Award—State	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; and the Roma and Dalby Town and Paroo Shire Councils <i>Re: Service Incremental Payments</i>
D14/75	3-2-75	Hardboards Australia Limited (Electrical Engineering)—Industrial Agreement	Dispute between The Electrical Trades Union of Employees of Australia, Queensland Branch; The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland, and Hardboards Australia Limited <i>Re: Stoppage over dismissal of employee</i>

32. TRADING HOURS IN COOLUM/NOOSA/TEWANTIN AREA

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

(1) Is he aware that adherence to the restricted trading hours for most businesses in the Coolum/Noosa/Tewantin area will lead to further unemployment in the area?

(2) Will he support a move by the businesses to liberalise the trading hours in this tourist area, especially for small family businesses, to allow tourists to be catered for seven days per week and particularly at week-ends and on holidays?

Answers:—

(1) I am aware that there has been some resistance to the existing trading hours by some businesses in the area referred to.

(2) As the honourable member knows, it is Government policy to have these matters determined by the Industrial Commission. It is understood that the Sunshine Coast Tourism and Development Board is to lodge an application with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to have the hours of trading of non-exempted shops in the Coolum/Noosa/Tewantin area extended to seven days each week.

33. QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS LIMITATION OF LIABILITY FOR BURN-OFF DAMAGE

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

Is there any limitation to liability incurred by the Queensland Railways where railway burning-off damages private property?

Answer:—

Yes. I would refer the honourable member to section 124 of the Railways Act 1914-1976.

34. MINERAL PROJECTS DELAYED

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

(1) With reference to recent statements by him that the development of mineral resources in Queensland was being delayed by the high cost of labour and materials in Australia, what projects have been delayed?

(2) What are the lengths of the delays and at which projects?

Answers:—

(1) There are indeed many important projects in the mineral industry in Queensland which have been delayed through rising costs of labour and materials. Among these are the Hail Creek and Nebo projects, the Gladstone aluminium smelter and the zinc refinery at Townsville.

The honourable member should also bear in mind that these delays have cost this State and this nation many hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue and, if it had not been for the Federal Labor Government under Whitlam procrastinating, delaying and refusing to grant export licences, we would at least have seen the mining projects under way at the present time.

(2) For example, the basic sales agreements were signed for Hail Creek and Nebo in 1974 and 1975 respectively, but both were pigeon-holed by the Whitlam Government.

An option to take up power for the Gladstone aluminium smelter was exercised in 1975. Also in 1975 it was announced that the Townsville zinc plant, which would have started around 1977, was to be deferred.

35. FISH DEATHS, BREAKFAST CREEK

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

(1) With reference to newspaper reports of 11 January indicating that hundreds of fish had died in the upper reaches of Breakfast Creek, did officers of the Water Quality Council carry out investigations into this matter?

(2) What were the results of the investigations and did they establish the cause of death?

(3) Was the death attributed to any industrial pollution from a source adjoining the creek?

(4) Which factories were checked by the officers of the Water Quality Council?

(5) Were any breaches of the Clean Waters Act discovered as a result of the investigation and, if so, have proceedings been instituted against any company or person?

(6) If not, what are the reasons for withholding such proceedings?

Answer:—

(1 to 6) Officers of my department investigated the fish deaths referred to. The investigations disclosed that a number of fish had died and that part of Breakfast Creek was discoloured. The cause of death was not established for certain, but it was considered that industrial pollution could have been a contributing cause.

The factory of Campbell Brothers Limited was checked by an inspector. It was considered that the company in question may have discharged wastes contrary to the conditions of its licence under the Clean Waters Act 1971-1976. Investigations covered this aspect.

Having considered the overall position, the company's explanation of the incident, and its actions involving substantial spending on anti-pollution measures specified by

the Water Quality Council to prevent such incidents in future, I concluded that a prosecution was not warranted in the circumstances.

The company was warned, however, that notwithstanding its commitment to anti-pollution measures and its compliance with Water Quality Council conditions, at my direction legal proceedings will be instituted in respect of future incidents if a breach of the Clean Waters Act is involved. I pointed out that a breach of the legislation could not be excused on the grounds that it occurred through accidental negligent actions by a company's employee.

I think I have made it abundantly clear in this House and elsewhere that the honeymoon is over so far as offences against the State's air and water pollution legislation are concerned. The Government relies on a policy of co-operation with industry rather than confrontation in this respect, and there is clear evidence that its policy is achieving results. For example even independent media critics have acknowledged in recent articles that the Brisbane River is cleaner than it has been for many years and fish and crabs are being caught much further upstream than previously.

36. ACTIVITIES OF MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Marginson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Main Roads—

(1) To 1 March what was the actual total expenditure of the Main Roads Department compared with the budget estimate?

(2) How much of the total expenditure has been taken up by (a) general administration costs of the department, that is, salaries, wages, light, power, rent, stationery, postage, design and supervision, etc., and (b) the direct cost of works, either new or repair and maintenance works, the direct cost to exclude any costs of design and/or supervision that is not undertaken on the site of the works?

(3) To date, what are the costs and percentages of the direct cost of all works of work carried out by private enterprise principal contractors as against that carried out by the department, a local authority or statutory board, the principal contractor being one who accepts responsibility for the whole of the works and does not include a contractor who supplies only some plant, some gravel or road base, some reinforcing steel or concrete, etc.?

Answers:—

(1) Expenditure from the Main Roads Fund for the period 1 July 1976 to 28 February 1977 was \$107,353,067. Expenditure from the Commonwealth Aid Local Authority Roads Fund for the same period was \$4,903,921. The corresponding Budget Estimates were \$98,980,653 and \$4,421,000 respectively. The apparent excess of expenditure over Budget results from loan allocations made after the budgeted figures were calculated.

(2) (a) The general administration expenditure for the same period including survey and design costs etc. amounted to \$21,752,043. (b) Expenditure on works excluding design and supervision costs amounted to \$83,478,869.

(3) The information sought by the honourable member in this part of the question is not readily dissectable, and I regret I cannot provide it now, but will provide it in writing at the end of the financial year.

37. GUIDE DOG EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC HOSPITAL

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Does a major public hospital in Brisbane prohibit guide dogs from entering the hospital?

(2) Which hospital is guilty of this serious discrimination against the blind and partially sighted and what are the reasons?

Answers:—

(1) By Order in Council issued in accordance with the provisions of the Guide Dogs Act 1972, access to various areas of hospitals by guide dogs, including ward areas, is restricted.

(2) I am advised, however, that should a person with a guide dog desire to enter a hospital ward, and provided the hospital authorities are advised, arrangements will be made for the care of the dog while the owner is escorted to and from the hospital ward.

38. WOODRIDGE POLICE STATION

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

(1) As of today, how many staff are stationed at the Woodridge Police Station, and have three men been transferred?

(2) Why has the new office accommodation not been used?

(3) What is the population served by the Woodridge station and why has Beenleigh station been upgraded when the population of Beenleigh is so many thousands fewer than that of the Woodridge area?

Answers:—

(1) The staff establishment of Woodridge is 10. In addition, it is the practice to allocate trainees, when available, to selected stations, and trainees have been detailed for training purposes at Woodridge for varying periods. Three such trainees have been transferred to other stations to fill vacancies which have occurred in their established strength. Two of these have been instructed not to move until further advised. It is proposed to allocate three other trainees to Woodridge in early April

and the transferees will then move on transfer. Two civilians are employed at this station on clerical duties.

(2) The new accommodation is not yet completed.

(3) I am informed that the population is approximately 65,000.

Beenleigh is the headquarters of the Beenleigh Police District. Additional personnel are placed at headquarters stations to carry out functions associated with the whole of the Police district, including relieving duties. The population of Beenleigh is therefore not related to staffing assessment at that centre.

39. ELECTION SIGNS ON TELEGRAPH POLES

Mrs. Kyburz, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) Is he aware of sweetheart agreements between the Brisbane City Council and the Labor Party candidates for the next State election to allow them to place election signs on telegraph poles without a permit?

(2) Apart from pulling the signs down, what other avenues are available to have illegal signs removed?

Answers:—

(1) The honourable member referred to a so-called sweetheart agreement between the Brisbane City Council and Labor Party candidates for the next State election, suggesting that they are to be allowed to place signs on telegraph poles without a permit.

Obviously I have no knowledge of agreements of the nature referred to by the honourable member but I am advised that it is a requirement of the ordinances of the Brisbane City Council that an advertising sign must not be put up on or near to a road unless a licence is first obtained from the Council.

(2) The council has power under its ordinances to take action for the removal of any sign erected contrary to its lawful requirements. The right of a private individual to take action for the removal of any sign that he considers to be illegal involves a legal interpretation and is a matter on which he should consult his own legal adviser.

40. COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY CYCLONE "TED"

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

As I am gravely concerned about the welfare of the people of Morningson Island, Burketown and surrounding districts and the devastation to those communities caused by cyclone "Ted", when will he be

in a position to advise when moneys will be forthcoming for the rebuilding of urgently needed houses and other facilities?

Answer:—

I can assure the honourable member that I share his concern about delays in the restoration of the great number of Aboriginal dwellings of various standards that were destroyed or damaged at Mornington Island and Burketown.

I can also assure him that all that can conceivably be done to reinstate the position is being done by this Government. However, the State Government does not have the financial capacity to go it alone and must depend on a favourable response from the Commonwealth to its request for financial assistance.

The Commonwealth Government does not normally agree to inclusion of the cost of restoring dwellings (be they privately owned or owned by the State Government or local government) in the expenditures eligible for reimbursement under the natural disaster relief arrangements.

The Queensland Government in January submitted a very strong case to the Commonwealth Government for special assistance in this particular instance. The submission outlined the particular and peculiar circumstances attaching to this case and provided an estimate of the funds that would be needed to restore and replace these dwellings to a standard commensurate with the needs of the Aboriginal people and the expectations of the community generally. The figure is to the order of \$6,000,000.

Only last week, some six weeks after the submission was made, a response was received from the Commonwealth requesting certain further information and advice as a prerequisite to its final decision. This is receiving priority treatment and the information sought will be transmitted to the Commonwealth as soon as it has been assembled.

I think it is pertinent to mention that there was no delay in implementing relief measures in connection with cyclone "Ted" that were of a normal type and not subject to contention.

Personal hardship and distress relief was provided immediately, as were schemes for restoration of essential services and public assets by State Government, local government and semi-governmental authorities.

Also implemented in a very short time after the disaster were schemes of special low-interest loan assistance to primary producers for carry-on purposes, restocking, etc. and freight rebates.

These schemes are as honourable members would be aware, of a type previously used in connection with other disasters

and funded jointly by the Commonwealth and State Governments under agreed arrangements.

41 and ACQUISITION OF "TURN-OFF
42. LAGOONS" BY MR. MAIA

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

(1) Was the property known as "Turn-off Lagoons", which was recently acquired by the Brazilian Mr. Sebastiao Maia, intended by the Department of Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service to be used as a national park?

(2) What assurance can he give this House that Mr. Maia will definitely build the meatworks with which he is tempting the Lands Department while it allows him to acquire larger tracts of prime North Queensland grazing country?

Answers:—

(1) "Turn-off Lagoons" pastoral holding is an expired lease and is presently held as a year-to-year licence. Mr. Maia does not hold any substantial or secure lease over the area. It was at one stage proposed to promulgate a national park over "Turn-off Lagoons" expired holding; but, owing to the existence of certain mineral explorations which at some later date might become important in the national interests, there was a valid objection to the declaration of "Turn-off Lagoons" as a national park.

There is a need to create a special type of protective reservation for cases such as this. They might be called regional parks or State recreational areas or something of that nature. I am presently in the process of preparing a consolidated Land Act, and this question will be included in the various new provisions which will come forward at that time. Once I am in a position to declare "Turn-off Lagoons" expired holding under a suitable reservation for an appropriate public purpose, there would then be no objection to controlled agistment or grazing rights being granted to Mr. Maia in conjunction with his operations on the adjoining "Lawn Hill" holding.

(2) When Mr. Maia acquired "Lawn Hill" pastoral lease, there was no specific intention of building a meatworks in Queensland. Mr. Maia intended to enter into the cattle business at a time when there was every need of support from experienced cattle people with substantial resources, particularly in areas as remote as "Lawn Hill". Subsequently, Mr. Maia sought to acquire some of the better quality downs country near Julia Creek.

He was not permitted to purchase the substantial-type leases involved and I mention that those leases contain statutory rights to freehold tenure. Mr. Maia was

informed that the best tenure available to him for his purposes was special lease tenure and that this involved the surrender of the more secure tenures he desired to purchase. In effect he was told that the Government wished to supervise and control his land-holdings, and to manage this it was necessary to bring him under special lease tenure. At the same time he was informed that in the event that a substantial and effective meatworks was established in the Julia Creek region, he would in fact require adequate fattening and holding paddocks and the position would be reviewed in the event of his going ahead with that very desirable project. My information is that he is presently undertaking a feasibility study with a view to coming forward with a proposition.

In effect, then, Mr. Maia only holds pastoral rights over "Lawn Hill", and the lease in question is subject to a \$1,000,000 minimum developmental condition. Mr. Maia has assured me that he will expend more than the lease condition required. Mr. Maia was not permitted to purchase the more secure and substantial grazing selection tenures near Julia Creek. He is being permitted to acquire special lease tenure in order that the Government can watch developments in that regard. If he goes ahead with a substantial meatworks, I am, in view of the substantial benefits which will flow from such an investment, prepared to review the land entitlement situation.

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

(1) Why did the Mines Department object to the establishment of a national park on part or all of the property "Turn-off Lagoons"?

(2) What applications does the Mines Department have for the granting of any mining leases on the property?

Answers:—

(1) Objection was made because at least the western two-thirds of the holding is occupied by rocks which are significantly mineralised. In the north, widespread uranium mineralisation is potentially of great importance, while southwards silver-lead, zinc, copper, tin and wolfram mineralisation occurs in scattered areas.

(2) There are no mining lease applications held at the department over the property, but there is a substantial number of granted leases and authorities to prospect over parts of the area.

43. NEW "EVENTIDE", SANDGATE

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

Has approval been granted to build a new "Eventide" home at Sandgate and, if so, what is the estimated cost of the building and when will a commencement be made on the construction?

Answer:—

"Eventide", Sandgate, is to be re-developed on a progressive basis and ultimately the total capacity of the home will be reduced to approximately 500. This will be in conjunction with the development of the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit at Wynnum, which will have a bed capacity of 250 beds.

Documentation of the first stage, comprising nursing home, kitchen block and clinical and administration sections at an estimated cost of \$5,300,000 was approved by Executive Council in December 1976. Planning is proceeding and I am advised that it is expected, at this time, that documentation should be completed to allow for the calling of tenders early in 1978. The commencement of construction will be dependent upon the availability of finance.

44. FRASER ISLAND LANDS

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

(1) How much of the parish of Wathumba, Fraser Island, is comprised of (a) vacant Crown land, (b) national park, (c) privately owned or leased land and (d) land of other title?

(2) What are the tenures and who are the registered owners of all portions?

(3) Have there been any moves on behalf of the Government to exchange portion 2 of Wathumba for some vacant Crown land adjacent to the Orchid Beach resort and, if so, what are the reasons?

(4) What are the conditions attached to the subdivision of portion 2, parish of Wathumba, and what conditions would determine subdivision of any land exchanged for portion 2, parish of Wathumba?

(5) In the event of the closure of the Orchid Beach airstrip for air safety reasons, what alternative public access would be provided to landholders in the Orchid Beach/Waddy Point area?

(6) Is it usual for freehold land to be exchanged for vacant Crown land and what rights do the public have to express any objection or concern to any proposed land swap?

Answers:—

(1) The parish of Wathumba comprises (a) about 3 450 hectares of vacant Crown land; (b) about 17 000 hectares of national park; (c) about 107.54 hectares of freehold and leasehold land; and (d) about 770 hectares of State forest. I understand there are also some mining leases along the eastern part of the island.

(2) Particulars of the privately owned and leased lands in the parish of Wathumba are: Special Lease No. 30836, portion 12, area 35.208 hectares, held by

Island Air Pty. Ltd.; Special Lease No. 30999, portion 13, area 11 square metres, held by Orchid Beach (Fraser Island) Pty. Ltd.; Special Lease No. 32644, portion 16, area 608 square metres, held by P. J. and K. L. Wieden; Special Lease No. 42645, portion 17, area 608 square metres, held by K. L. and E. S. Wieden; Special Lease No. 39121, portion 18, area about 2 hectares, held by Murphoyes Incorporated Pty. Ltd.; Non-Competitive Perpetual Country Lease No. 2435, portion 11, area 5.454 hectares, held by Orchid Beach (Fraser Island) Pty. Ltd. and subleased to Island Air Pty. Ltd.; Freehold portion 2, area 64.75 hectares, held by Island Air Pty. Ltd.; Freehold portion 9, area 607 square metres, held by Gary Wolfe Properties Pty. Ltd.

(3) Mr. C. J. Richards, on behalf of Island Air Pty. Ltd. (the registered proprietor of freehold portion 2, parish of Wathumba) submitted a proposition last year for the exchange of that portion for a similar area of vacant land adjoining Orchid Beach resort, which, together with the adjoining airstrip, is operated by that company. Portion 2, Wathumba, is within the boundaries of National Park No. 16 and was the subject at the time of purchase by Mr. Richards of a provisional approval in May 1974 by the local authority (then the Burrum Shire Council) for subdivision into about 350 allotments. The exchange proposition was examined closely by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which was of the opinion that portion 2, Wathumba, was ideally situated for the future establishment of its administrative headquarters for the Fraser Island National Park. The site is elevated and has advantages of barge and small-boat landing access and also excellent freshwater supplies. It was considered it would be an ideal addition to the national park. In all, the exchange is seen as being advantageous to the Crown and the proposal has recently been approved for submission in due course to the Governor in Council.

(4) The provisional approval of subdivision of portion 2, parish of Wathumba, by the Burrum Shire Council (as mentioned in my reply to the honourable member's previous question) was subject to various conditions relating to roads, water and other council requirements and particularly required the approval of the relevant authority for access across the national park. Any future subdivision of the area proposed to be granted in exchange would be entirely a matter for approval of the local authority (now Hervey Bay Shire Council) and to such conditions and constraints as the council may impose.

Mr. Aikens: You don't think that "The North Queensland Star" would publish all of that?

Mr. TOMKINS: We will see.

Answers (contd):—

(5) There is an access track across the island from Wathumba Creek (on the western side) to the existing resort mainly through the national park and I would expect that if the airstrip be closed at any time, the National Parks and Wildlife Service would be prepared to allow the few landholders involved reasonable access along that track.

(6) The exchange of freehold land for Crown land is dealt with in terms of section 371 of the Land Act and can be implemented for a variety of reasons. It is quite a normal procedure in terms of land administration and while the law makes no particular provision for public involvement, the honourable member may be assured that in each case where executive authority for an exchange is sought, all relevant factors will have been thoroughly examined.

45. BUILDING FIRM, GOLDEN HOMES

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

(1) Is a building firm known as Golden Homes a registered company in Queensland and, if so, who are its directors?

(2) Who is the manager and who is the secretary of the company?

(3) Who are the shareholders?

(4) What is its paid-up capital and what shares, and of what value, have been issued by this company?

(5) For how long has the company been registered in Queensland?

(6) Has it ever been subject to investigation by the Corporate Affairs Office or the Companies Office and, if so, what are the results of the investigations?

(7) Is Golden Homes owned or controlled by another proprietary limited company and, if so, who are the directors of this company?

Answer:—

(1 to 7) From a search of the records held at the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, it would appear that "Golden Homes" is neither registered as a company nor as a firm. There have been no investigations conducted by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs into a business under that name.

46. LOGGING ACTIVITIES ON FRASER ISLAND

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

(1) Has his attention been drawn to recent statements condemning logging activities on Fraser Island?

(2) Will he assure the House once and for all that his Department of Forestry will continue its wise stewardship of the valuable timber resources in my electorate?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am aware of some uninformed comment on logging activity on Fraser Island and would refer the honourable member to the following extracts from the report of the Commonwealth Government's Fraser Island Environmental Enquiry Commission:—

(a) "The Commission was impressed by the responsible attitude to Fraser Island which has been adopted over the years by the Queensland Department of Forestry."

(b) "After inspecting the island, the Commission has come to the view that, in general, the visual integrity of Fraser Island has not been adversely affected by the carefully controlled logging operations. It seems likely that most visitors to the island, apart from experienced botanists, ecologists and foresters, would be unaware that its timber resources have in fact been exploited for over a hundred years."

(c) "Selective felling has virtually no visual impact except briefly at the actual site of operations (which is, of course, constantly shifting). The logs are trucked along unformed roads, made and maintained by the Department of Forestry, to barging routes on the west coast; these sites are simple and relatively unobtrusive since the vessels carry their own loading gear."

I can assure the honourable member that there is no intention whatsoever to reduce the level of logging on Fraser Island or to abandon the standard of control and activity by my Department of Forestry that is commented on so favourably.

47. BUNDABERG Q.A.T.B. PURCHASE OF AERIAL AMBULANCE

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

(1) Has he studied the editorials of the "Bundaberg News-Mail" of 16 March and "The Chronicle" of 18 March wherein the writers cast serious doubt on the advice being received by him from the State Council of the Q.A.T.B.?

(2) Why does the State Council consider the Bundaberg Q.A.T.B. proposal premature when there are already aerial ambulances operating from Cairns and Rockhampton and the latter is often called to Bundaberg for assistance?

(3) Is State Council's apprehension based upon the aircraft proposed by Bundaberg or the Bundaberg branch's capacity to finance the scheme?

(4) Does he share my concern that people are being used in what appears to be a struggle by a country branch to offer a superior service to that which the State body seems to believe is necessary?

(5) Will he acknowledge the initiative shown by the Bundaberg branch of the

Q.A.T.B. in raising such a vast sum of money for such an ambitious project?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2 to 5) I can only repeat the answers I gave the honourable member on 16 March 1977 when he raised a series of similar questions regarding the Bundaberg Ambulance Committee—

I quote—

"Yes. I am surprised at the statement of this doctor that the local ambulance officers had raised more than \$200,000 to pay for an air ambulance. The fact is that the Bundaberg Ambulance Staff Fund Raising Committee has never at any time received the approval required under the Ambulance Services Act to raise money for an air ambulance. A permit was issued to this committee to raise moneys for the expansion of ambulance services in the Bundaberg area for twelve months from 2 October 1975 (and for this purpose only), and a further permit for twelve months from 2 October 1976 for the same purpose. I have been advised by the secretary of the State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade that a member of the Bundaberg Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade who is a zonal representative on the State Council had assured the council that the fund raising had been solely for the purpose given in the permit and not for an aerial ambulance service, although there was thinking that the expansion of the ambulance services could include an aerial ambulance service.

"The honourable member will appreciate that the collection of moneys for ambulance transport purposes except in accordance with the conditions laid down in a permit issued under the Ambulance Services Act is a breach of that Act.

"The matter of a State-wide aerial ambulance service was discussed at the State conference of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade on 7 October 1975, which resolved:—

"That the conference commends the conception of there being a State-wide aerial ambulance service and recommends that the State Council examine the feasibility of such a scheme including—

(i) respective areas of operation.

(ii) degree of public participation.

(iii) all aspects of financial considerations including the extent of Government interest and aid."

"The report of a sub-committee set up by the State Council to investigate this matter was forwarded to my department in December last. The recommendations as to a State-wide aerial ambulance service are actively under consideration, and

the formation of a special departmental committee consisting of senior departmental officers, and including representation of the State Council, has been approved. The honourable member will appreciate that any decision reached as to a State-wide aerial ambulance service will affect not only Bundaberg but also areas with established aerial ambulances, such as Cairns and Rockhampton, and remote areas without the financial capability to set up an aerial ambulance service. I consider that the advice given by the special sub-committee of State Council that the proposal of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade Bundaberg Committee to establish an aerial ambulance service is premature in view of the contemplated State-wide rural health considerations, is, under the circumstances, fully justified. The Government is committed, as the honourable member is aware, under its rural health policy to provide better health and medical care service to the outback areas of the State."

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

STATEMENT BY MR. ACTING SPEAKER

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, my attention has been drawn to the difficulty of departmental officers and table officers in reading some handwritten questions. It would be of considerable assistance if questions could be typed before they are submitted. The co-operation of all honourable members in this regard would be appreciated.

RURAL FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gunn, Somerset, in the chair)

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (12.6 p.m.): I move—

"That a Bill be introduced to amend the Rural Fires Act 1946-1975 in certain particulars."

The Bill deals mainly with increases in the maximum penalties provided in the legislation. Where a state of fire emergency has been declared within a particular area and an emergency declaration suitably published in the Gazette and local newspapers, or broadcast, there is provision in s. 28 of the Act for a penalty to apply to any person who contravenes or fails to comply with the directions as to the lighting of fires in the open air issued under the emergency declaration. It is proposed to increase this maximum penalty from \$800 to \$1,600.

General offences in respect of the lighting of fires, such as the lighting of a fire which may cause damage to other land or property, presently attract a penalty up

to \$400 under s. 48 of the Act, and when the offence is committed in a fire emergency area up to \$800. These maximum penalties are being increased to \$800 and \$1,600 respectively.

Deliberate burning for the purpose of causing a rural fire without lawful authority and with intent to do harm is covered by s. 49 of the Act. The maximum penalty in this section is being increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

In pursuance of s. 50 of the Act there is a penalty imposed on a person guilty of an offence against the Act, where no specific penalty is otherwise provided for the offence, not exceeding \$400 and \$800 when the offence is committed in a fire emergency area. These present penalties are being increased to \$800 and \$1,600 respectively.

Finally, the maximum penalty imposed for breaches of the Rural Fires Regulations as provided for in s. 58 of the Act is being increased from \$200 to \$400.

It is not proposed to increase the terms of imprisonment provided for in any of the aforementioned sections of the Act.

I have accepted advice that the wording of ss. 20 and 54A be redrafted so as to strengthen the legal procedures required by these sections. Section 20 of the Act relates to the authority to issue permits for the sale, use or possession of wax matches or phosphorous baits and the use of fireworks. The wording of this section has been changed to establish the existing procedures on a sound legal basis, and the amendment has that objective without interfering with the intent of the section.

That part of the Act relating to the service of any notice, order, document or writing required by the Act has disclosed a weakness in respect of the liability for an offence where a corporate body is the owner or occupier of the land or place under consideration. This weakness became apparent following a Full Court comment in relation to similar wording in another statute, hence, s. 54A has been redrafted in the light of the Full Court judgment and comment.

I would like to mention in conclusion that during the fire season of 1976, fires of considerable magnitude were experienced, particularly in North-western Queensland. Additionally, during Cabinet meetings outside Brisbane and notably in Cairns where the ravages of fire in the hillsides behind the city were apparent, deputations were concerned over the fire situation and strong representations were made to have more realistic penalties imposed for breaches of the Act.

Some 2,000 fire wardens throughout the State are organised to control the lighting of fires. Their office is an honorary one. More than 1,300 bush fire brigades with a total manpower resource of nearly 25,000 men and women are freely giving their services to deal with actual fires.

These officers and other volunteers deserve every support that the legislation can offer and it is frustrating for them to find, on occasions, that their good work is nullified by the deliberate act of some individual and then have that action result in a nominal fine. It is felt that the dedicated work of the fire wardens, plus the fire-fighting ability of brigade members, has saved this State from tremendous material loss and possibly even the loss of human life.

The provisions of the Act are simple to follow and impose no hardship on those wishing to properly use fire. It is considered that the magnitude of the danger from uncontrolled fire justifies the imposition of penalties of sufficient weight to act as a deterrent.

I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. CASEY (Mackay) (12.12 p.m.): The provisions outlined by the Minister seem fairly wise. At times it becomes necessary to update penalties to increase them to a satisfactory level. It is tragic that this has to be done to bring people into line, but fires can cause very serious problems and great loss in Queensland's rural areas.

It is all very well for us to provide for declarations under the Rural Fires Act to be published in the Government Gazette and publicised on local radio and in the local Press, but a tremendous number of interstate and intrastate tourists use the Bruce Highway, the Landsborough Highway, the Warrego Highway and other major roads throughout the State. Quite often they do not realise that they have entered areas with a high fire risk. I suggest that consideration be given to providing hoardings or major signs at places along main roads (similar to those to be found in forestry areas) to inform people of the fire danger. Tourists often light fires other than in fireplaces, which is contrary to the Rural Fires Act, and start a fire that could well have been avoided if they had been aware of the provisions in the Act. People travel vast distances in Queensland, and fireplaces are provided adjacent to many of our highways, especially where people may camp, but camping areas are few and far between on some highways. In fact, they are to be found in numbers only on the Bruce Highway. Very few scenic camping areas or recreation areas are provided in Western Queensland, where fires can be so disastrous. When penalties are being increased we must look to the provision of more fireplaces.

Deliberate burning without authority is a serious problem. I sincerely hope that the increased penalties will encourage people to abide by the law. The Minister told us that there are about 2,000 fire wardens throughout the State; it is not as though they were few and far between. No-one in any area can be very far away from a fire warden, and it is only a matter of contacting a warden by telephone. Most wardens are practical men who have lived in an area for most of their

lives. If a person wants to burn off, to cover himself he has only to contact a fire warden, who can quickly notify him of any features he may be unaware of. Yet we still find, particularly in our western areas, that so many people just go ahead and deliberately burn off without first contacting the fire warden for the district.

Mr. Burns: Did you see that case in Victoria where electricity lines caused outbreaks of fire?

Mr. CASEY: Yes. That is very true. The State Government has to be very careful about its own instrumentalities. I will deal further with that aspect a little later.

I agree with the Minister when he said that 1976 was a very bad season for rural fires in Queensland, and one that has highlighted the need for increased penalties. The areas the Minister mentioned are classic examples. He mentioned being in the Cairns area at the time of the Cabinet meeting earlier in the year. Many fires there were started by cane burn-offs, and that brings us to a specific problem.

I know that the Act specifically exempts cane fires. Although I am speaking as one who comes from a sugar area, I think that the sugar industry has to take a further hard look at this matter. Although the industry is exempt under the Act, it has responsibilities that it must face up to. If it does not, it will have to be included within the provisions of the Act. That could create difficulties in sugar areas.

The sugar industry is coming under increasing pressure these days to get right away from the burning of cane altogether and to engage in green-stick harvesting. I do not think that that time is very far away. A lot of economic advantages flow from it. In my own district the Creber brothers, who have rather large holdings in the North Eton area, have for 20 years or more harvested all of their cane completely green. Recently I was in the Mulgrave area in Far North Queensland and inspected one of the big new European-designed green-stick cane harvesters. It performed satisfactorily during last season. It did quite well and proved the economic benefits accruing from harvesting by the green-stick method.

The stage will be reached where the sugar industry will have to look more and more at departing from the burning of cane. That will help to overcome some problems mentioned by the Minister. In the Far North, where land is restricted and farmers, in order to use as much land as they possibly can, have had to grow cane on or close to hilly or mountainous areas, cane fires certainly do get away from them and burn into the hills. They continue to burn for weeks and weeks. It is very difficult for rural fire brigades to fight fires effectively in those areas.

The big fires in the North West last year were tragic and unfortunate. After the heavy rains in the 1974 season there was a prolific growth of grass in the area. Then suddenly last year there were big fires. I think the Minister is aware of the allegation by some people in the area that some of the fires started on Crown land or vacant leasehold land. That is a problem to be faced by the Government. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the fire in Victoria started by a spark from electricity. In this instance it is not really an instrumentality of the Government but the Government itself. The allegation related to land owned by the Government. Where land has become vacant for some reason or other—Crown land, whether it is scenic reserve or forestry reserve—

Mr. Yewdale: There are lots of fires in Queensland started by Sparkes.

Mr. Burns: A bit of heat.

Mr. CASEY: Sparkes, yes. Mr. Sparkes started off a pretty good fire quite recently, as I understand it—but that is a different type of spark altogether.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! It has nothing to do with the Bill, either.

Mr. CASEY: Returning to the serious side of it—the Crown has a very grave responsibility. I refer specifically to railway reserves. We no longer have steam trains. When we did, railway fettlers and gangers used to get out at times and burn off the grass alongside railway lines to make sure that steam engines did not cause fires that could spread into adjoining properties. Now, because steam engines have been replaced by diesel engines, the railway fettlers no longer undertake that work, so railway reserves in rural areas are more vulnerable to fire. And the Crown is not affected by the increase in penalties.

The Act provides that people who own land adjoining Crown land should establish fire-breaks. In many cases this is an unreasonable imposition on some property owners, particularly those who have broken country in which fires burn uncontrolled and from there move out into the more open land and cause all the damage.

Many problems exist with vacant Crown land close to urban areas. The Lands Department is slowly reclaiming a large area of land in the Slade Point area of Mackay. The landholders there are affected adversely because that area is becoming a fire hazard. Because it is not in a rural area, it is not covered by this legislation. I emphasise the point that the Crown must start looking into the problems that it creates in these areas.

I join with the Minister in paying tribute to volunteer fire workers. Members who have gone among them and have seen them working know of their dedication and the work that they do. There are 2,000 wardens

who, completely gratis, work in their own areas. They look after applications and help the applicants to obtain permission to light fires. Then we have 25,000 men and women who leave their properties, their work and their livelihood for days at a time to fight fires. The women go with the men to cook for them or possibly to go back to their homes and return with meals. In many cases the women actually fight fires and work as hard as the men. I join with the Minister in paying tribute to those people for the wonderful job that they do.

Mr. SIMPSON (Cooroora) (12.22 p.m.): I support the Minister on the introduction of the Bill to amend the Rural Fires Act 1946-1975. The major proposal is to increase the fines for certain infringements of the Act. It is evident that there is an increase in the incidence of fires. One thing that can be done by Parliament is to increase the penalties for breaches.

It is important that the Minister consider the education of the public to make them more aware of the existing regulations and the new ones. The erection of signs along highways through vulnerable areas both in my area and the area in the North mentioned by the Minister would be very helpful. Really we need to go further than that because that information is not always absorbed by the travelling public. We must try to educate the next generation to look after our forests, parks and beauty spots, which all belong to the people. We should educate them to take a pride in those areas, to become the guardians of them and to protect them. Each of us should try to make others in the community aware of our heritage. They must realise that those areas must be looked after and not burnt, littered or vandalised.

The volunteer fire fighters who give their time and risk their lives to control fires are the ones who suffer if the incidence of fire cannot be lessened. The risk they take in performing this wonderful fire-fighting service has our support.

Some amendments are in line with the changes in commodities. One refers to wax matches, which are not readily available now and were a very dangerous product. A permit has to be obtained for their future use. Phosphorus baits could be a fire hazard, but they are now hard to buy. I do not think they are still on the market, although there might be a few left from old stocks. I have no personal knowledge of phosphorus baits causing fires but if it has been proved that they have, control over their sale is all to the good. Such a provision is, however, not really relevant because it deals with a product that is not commonly in use.

The sale of fireworks is now controlled. I think that is only reasonable because they are so attractive to young people, who are not always supervised in their use. It is very true that fire is a good servant but a bad master and education of the public in the

dangers of fire is the most important way to combat it. I welcome the amendment which will, I hope, help to overcome the problem presented by an increase in the number of fires throughout the State.

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (12.27 p.m.): I support the introduction of the Bill. Grass fires are a great hazard in rural areas. They usually follow good seasons and, naturally, they are associated with high temperatures, strong winds and dry spells. Whilst I support the Bill, I do not think that the Minister has gone far enough with it. Along the highway in the Callide Valley only last year a motorist started six fires in a few miles. For any person so irresponsible as to do that, I advocate a minimum of two years' imprisonment.

Mr. Frawley: How did he do that?

Mr. HARTWIG: He threw matches out of a car.

Mr. Frawley: Did they get him?

Mr. HARTWIG: No.

Mr. Houston: Was he a member of the National Party?

Mr. HARTWIG: Trust the honourable member for Bulimba to make a remark such as that.

As the result of such a thoughtless action a person could, in dry times, lose all his pastures and have fencing and stock destroyed, as happened recently in Victoria and South Australia.

Mr. Burns: Round Julia Creek, too.

Mr. HARTWIG: Yes. In the North West hundreds of thousands of dollars were lost through rural fires. Yet we are talking of imposing fines ranging from only \$400 to \$4,000. You are a landowner, Mr. Gunn, and you fully appreciate the damage that can be done by a fire fanned by a hot northerly wind at a time of high temperature. In such weather conditions it is absolutely murderous to drop a match. But there are still people who go around causing tremendous destruction just for the heck of it.

Those who cause fires are hard to catch and, in my opinion, the fines prescribed are not sufficient to act as a deterrent to this sort of behaviour. After a man who has thrown something out of a moving car has travelled a few miles, it is hard to pin it on him unless somebody actually caught him in the act. If a fellow who threw a match out of a car looked behind him he could well see flames 20, 30 or 40 feet high racing towards homesteads and threatening lives. People could die—and we are talking about fines of a few hundred dollars!

In advocating gaol for people who cause such fires, I do not believe that I am being too harsh. I have seen the consequences of illegal fires. Rain may not follow for many months and if a landowner has stock left after a fire he has to pay, at today's prices, thousands of dollars to buy feed for them. It could mean destruction for him.

Mr. Frawley: If you put them in gaol, they are a liability on the State. Wouldn't it be better to flog them?

Mr. HARTWIG: The honourable member for Murrumba wants us to flog them. Although I would not go as far as that, I feel there has to be a deterrent. I think all of us are fully aware of the seriousness of fires and all I can do is request the Minister at some time in the future to have a look at increasing these fines even further, because the consequences of fire are too serious to treat lightly.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.30 p.m.): In rising to speak to this amendment to the Rural Fires Act I should like to refer to an incident which occurred recently in my area when some railway workers were burning off along the railway line, as they often do, and allowed the fire to get away. This resulted in the burning of a large number of trees that the Jondaryan Shire Council had cared for over many years to ensure their continued growth. Because the Crown will not accept responsibility on occasions such as that, the council now faces a serious and costly problem in replacing them. The council is entitled to some sort of redress.

I did not see the incident and I do not know whether the workers concerned took the necessary precautions before setting the fire, but whether or not negligence was involved is not the point. The point is that the council put a tremendous amount of work into growing the trees, in a very inhospitable environment, and it seems probable that a large percentage of the trees will not recover.

Suppose half of them are lost. Who is going to replace them? It is going to be very difficult to encourage people to donate new trees. Many of the trees that were destroyed were donated by Brookvale Park and other nurseries and were planted by organisations such as Lions and Jaycees. It is not good enough for the Crown to sit back and say, "We won't hold ourselves responsible for this type of action." We should look at the situation more closely. The amendments providing for an increase in penalties will at least go some way towards making people realise the seriousness of fire. In the Australian climate fire is one of our greatest enemies. I was involved in an incident near my home when some careless person threw a match or a cigarette butt out of a car thereby starting a fire which ran right along the corner of our property. This was at harvest-time and everybody was right down at the other end of the property. It was only sheer good luck that someone saw the fire and we were able to get back in time with a tractor to stop it from burning many of our buildings. That type of thing happens every day in Australia during summer.

I believe the Bill will help to ensure that people think a little more seriously about the consequences of their actions. The other

night, while driving down to Brisbane I saw people on at least three occasions throw lighted cigarettes out of the windows of their cars.

The problem is one calling for education as much as anything else. We have to get through to the children at schools and to people at every level.

Mr. Casey interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I realise that there is quite a bit of work being done; but we have to do more, especially in the field of education. I wholeheartedly support the Minister's action in increasing the fines, because I believe increased penalties would also help combat the problem.

Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (12.35 p.m.): In supporting the proposed amendments, I should like to deal first with fines, which I believe will give the Act more teeth.

As you are aware, Mr. Gunn, the recent fire in Victoria swept through huge areas of countryside and caused damage amounting to many millions of dollars. It not only destroyed or damaged the homes of many members of the rural community and the townships on which they depend; it also wiped out millions of acres of forest. If care is not taken it is equally likely that millions of acres of forest will be destroyed in Queensland.

I visited the Pechey area recently, and I am sure the Minister knows that the situation there at present is explosive. If someone causes a fire by throwing down a lighted match, I do not think that the staff there will be adequate to control it. That is likely to happen because people from Toowoomba and surrounding areas are picnicking there. It needs only one lighted match to be thrown down and the whole forest will go. As the honourable member for Cunningham said, action must be taken to stress to the public how disastrous rural fires can be. The Press, radio, television and other means must be used to get the message across.

Another problem is how to prevent electrical installations causing fires. Inquiries have proved beyond doubt that electrical installations caused fires in Victoria that resulted in a considerable amount of damage. I am not sure how adequate penalties can be imposed on the companies that are responsible for such incidents. However, it seems to me to be unfair to increase penalties for individuals without at the same time increasing penalties for the S.E.A. and similar organisations.

In my opinion, the Minister is doing the right thing in increasing fines as provided in the Bill. I also believe that further amendments will have to be made later, especially one to ensure that the public is made aware of the enormous damage that can be caused by throwing down even one lighted match.

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (12.37 p.m.): I shall be brief, Mr. Gunn. I support the amendments proposed by the Minister. It seems to me to be a shame that it is necessary to introduce a Bill dealing mainly with increased penalties. Regrettably it is a fact of life today that the only way of deterring would-be offenders is to increase penalties. I have received complaints from many people in my electorate that penalties for not only the illegal lighting of fires but also for many other offences are not sufficiently severe to deter would-be offenders.

For some time I have been concerned about section 12 of the Rural Fires Act, and I hoped that it would be altered. One part of section 12 states that if somebody wishes to light a rural fire he should include in his application to the rural fire warden a statement of the names of each and every neighbour and whether the consent of all of them has been obtained. Recently I received a complaint from a woman in my electorate who lives in a small area in which the subdivisions are 16 hectares. She claimed that her next-door neighbour had been given a permit to light a fire and was lighting it on a Friday night. She said that her husband was away and she was by herself, and she complained bitterly to me that the fire warden had given her neighbour permission to light a fire even though she had objected on more than one occasion. The neighbour's point of view should be taken into consideration by a fire warden or a fire brigade chief before any permit is given to light fires in a rural area.

The Minister has praised the fire-fighting ability of fire brigades, particularly volunteer fire brigades, and I agree that they are to be commended for some of the work they have done. The Federal Government does not realise their value, because it taxes the firemen on the money they earn as part-time members of volunteer fire brigades. In my electorate, the Deception Bay Volunteer Fire Brigade is frequently out fighting rural fires. This is a fine group of people, but many of them have threatened to resign over the ridiculous charges on their earnings made by the Taxation Department whenever they perform their duties.

I also commend the fire-fighting unit of Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd. Not only do its members turn out for fires in rural pine forests; they are always willing to send a truck out to assist other brigades, as they did recently when the Redcliffe Fire Brigade was having difficulty in fighting a fire on a farm at Deception Bay.

I commend the Minister on the introduction of the Bill. I sincerely hope that at some future date an amendment can be made to section 12 to provide some added protection to those people who do not give their consent to fires being lit by their next-door neighbours.

Hon. K. B. TOMKINS (Roma—Minister for Lands, Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife Service) (12.40 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate. It is very pleasing to me that the new provisions have been so well received. I am very interested in some of the comments made.

The honourable member for Cairns is not here today. I might say that one of the reasons the Bill was brought down was the tremendous damage done to the Cairns hinterland by fire over the past 12 months. Some areas at the back of Cairns were completely burnt out. Even with a reforestation programme, I think it will be years before those areas again look anything like they were. It seems incredible to me that much of that damage was probably caused by motorists driving along the Bruce Highway who indiscriminately threw out lighted matches and cigarettes. While I was in the Cairns region it occurred to me that there has never been a fire in the history of the lovely rain forest that is not close to the Bruce Highway. There is a moral in that. When forests border a road, there is always a risk of fire.

Much has been said today about fines. There is no doubt in my mind that many of the people we are talking about are not worried about fires. They just hope they are not caught. How the matter should be handled is the big problem.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. TOMKINS: It has to be proved. A person has to be caught in the act. When framing the amendments we thought we would first try out an increase in fines rather than imprisonment. I know that does not appeal to some speakers today, but that is the way we thought we would go about it.

The honourable member for Mackay referred to fires in Victoria. When I was down there recently I saw the damage that had occurred. It was just incredible. People there say that without doubt the fires were caused by electric power lines that were blown down. I was told that the winds at the time were blowing at from 40 to 60 miles per hour, and that it was absolutely impossible to stop a fire once it started. While one area was aflame the head of the fire would be half a mile away. No amount of equipment could have stopped it. Nothing but an enormous amount of foam spread over a vast area would have done any good. Whole towns were burnt out by fires started by the power lines. All that is left of a lovely old church in Streatham are its concrete walls. Everything inside was completely burnt out. Strangely enough, in some places where the houses are completely burnt out, the trees remain.

Mr. Yewdale: Don't you think that houses are often built too close to crops?

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes. All that comes into it. My own personal view is that at times people should get permits to burn long before they do. In a good season the grass grows up but people do not worry about it. The weather turns hot and the grass dries out, but they are away from home. I would encourage people to take steps to burn whenever they possibly can.

Mr. Hartwig: Wouldn't you agree that understaffing of many country stations adds to the problem?

Mr. TOMKINS: Yes. All those things come into it, but people must help themselves.

The other point raised by the honourable member for Mackay in which I was interested was education. Whether we do it through schools or by some other means, we have to educate people more about the damage that can result from fires. Anybody who saw the Victorian fires would realise what can happen. Education along these lines is very desirable. I propose to discuss the matter with the Rural Fires Board, and perhaps with the State Fire Services Council, to see if in some way we can educate people a little bit more in this field. Once a fire starts there is very little that can be done about it. In the recent Julia Creek fires high areas were burnt out. Signs must be provided in strategic areas, outlining in detail not only penalties but what can happen when fires break out. If that is done we may get somewhere.

All honourable members paid tribute to the voluntary fire fighters. I certainly agree that persons who take charge of small brigades out in the bush, and recruit people to give them a hand, do a fantastic job, and they do it virtually without reward. Many of them go outside their areas to help others. The spirit displayed by those fighting the recent Julia Creek fires was outstanding. People came from near and far to assist.

The honourable member for Coorooara said that more education about the danger of fires was required, while the honourable member for Callide said that we are not going far enough with penalties. He believes that we should provide terms of imprisonment. That may be so, but it is not altogether the answer. Somehow we must make people aware of the problem and discourage them from taking risky action.

The honourable member for Cunningham referred to the Railway Department and other Government departments being absolved from responsibility for fires. If this provision is abused, it is wrong. Like anybody else, Government departments should be responsible for what they do. When damage is caused they should be made to compensate people. It is terrible if trees are destroyed in park areas.

Our Rural Fires Board has a very limited budget. Funds are made available by subsidy to fire-fighting units. Naturally I wish we could get more money for this job but, to the present time, that has been impossible.

I thank honourable members for supporting the Bill and will leave further comment until the second-reading stage.

Motion (Mr. Tomkins) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (12.48 p.m.): I move—

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

As this House is well aware, the Fire Brigades Act is amended whenever circumstances require it. We will continue to act to ensure the efficient operation of what I believe to be among the best fire services in Australia. As an employer we, of course, fully appreciate the need for good staff relations.

There is, as honourable members know, an Act which provides that fire brigades boards support the superannuation scheme approved by the Governor in Council.

Certain administrative problems have arisen—for example, the need for obtaining and the time required to obtain—the consent of each board participating in the scheme.

This Bill relieves the situation by increasing the number of trustees to five, namely, the chairmen of the State Fire Services Council and of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, a representative of the Queensland Country Fire Brigades Boards Union of Employers and one from each of the two industrial unions covering fire brigade employees, nominated by the Minister. The new trustees will hold office for three years.

An important point I should also like to make is that this superannuation scheme covers all employees of fire brigade boards—permanent officers and men, clerks, motor mechanics and so on. It is a good scheme. It confers security on workers and their families and I am sure it is widely welcomed. The amendment provides therefore for more democratic representation in the constitution of the trustees who control the scheme.

The second main purpose in amending the Act is to adjust representation at industrial proceedings. Under this amendment, the role of the Fire Services Council is changed to one of intervention in industrial proceedings which affect or are likely to affect a fire brigade board, and the council will then be deemed to be a party to the proceedings. The

Government thus acknowledges representations by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and the Queensland Country Fire Brigades Union of Employers in relation to their exclusion from proceedings.

Finally, I should like to draw the attention of honourable members to a provision of the Bill fixing by regulation charges to be made not only for attendances at fires on uninsured property but also for brigade attendance at any property in response to calls arising from activation of fire alarm systems where a fire has not occurred. If the premises are insured, of course, it is likely that in most instances the insurer will meet the cost of these charges. I feel that that is another point which honourable members may consider publicising in their electorates for the benefit of their constituents.

I commend the measure to the House.

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (12.53 p.m.): As was indicated at the introductory stage, the Opposition certainly has no objection to an improvement in the fund applying to employees in the fire services in Queensland. However, I would like to make a couple of comments on what the Minister has said.

He spoke about representation on the board of trustees and enumerated those who will be members. It seems to me that the representation could be considered as unbalanced. I have taken out some figures which reveal that in Queensland there are approximately 360 country fire officers and about 140 metropolitan officers. In spite of that disparity in numbers, however, there is an equal representation on the board. On the other hand, turning to union membership, approximately 840 firemen in Queensland belong to the United Fire Fighters' Union whereas only about 120 are members of the Australian Workers' Union, but again there is equal representation, with one representative from each. Be that as it may; at least the contributors are being represented, and there is value in having those employee representatives on the board.

The updating, if I may use that word, of current procedures has probably been brought about as a result of pressure from the contributors. I believe that one group of contributors to the fund has met and spoken about anomalies and problems in the superannuation scheme, which has been in operation for about 12 years. Recently some movements have been made in connection with the age of retirement. Whereas at one time firemen were expected to retire at the age of 65 years, it is now possible for them to retire at 60, with a percentage reduction in benefits for every year before 65 that they retire.

The contribution rates are set. Contributors pay 5 per cent and the Government or the board pays 7½ per cent. I consider that the latter contribution could be higher, but 7½ per cent is provided in the legislation.

On the question of the intervention in industrial proceedings, I said at the introductory stage that I was a little concerned about the personnel on the council. I was not attacking them on a personal basis, but I felt that the board should comprise people who have had recent experience in the fire-fighting industry in Queensland. I hope that any intervention in Industrial Commission proceedings is unbiased.

I do not wish to comment on the last point raised by the Minister beyond saying that the provision is necessary to keep things functioning in an orderly way. I do not think anybody objects to it.

Generally the Opposition welcomes the measures.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (12.56 p.m.): I should like to make a few comments on the Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Act. I commend the Minister and the Government on making the adjustments to the superannuation payments to fire officers. It is important in career jobs, where we expect and get a lifetime of dedication from officers, that they be protected and that their future is assured in a real, positive and permanent way. That is what the Bill sets out to do. I am sure that it will be appreciated by all fire officers throughout the State.

I pay a tribute to the State Fire Services Council officers and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board for the service I have received from them. An honourable member who represents a densely populated electorate, as I do, experiences conflicts between owners of derelict homes, owners of vacant land that is overgrown with long grass and weeds or is covered with debris and people living in residences close up against such properties. Whenever I have made requests of the State Fire Services Council officers and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, ready action has been taken to prevent future fires. These officers have a real and professional understanding of what is required of them in carrying out their task of fire-fighting, and instituting preventive measures in the community and insisting that the community fulfils its role.

Under the Act which is being amended, power is given to the fire brigade boards throughout the State—certainly those in Brisbane—to serve notices on people to clear land and so remove a potential fire danger. The officers who work with this Bill during their entire lifetime have always been ready to assist me in my electorate in this regard. I commend them on their service and I thank the Minister for introducing the Bill.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (12.59 p.m.): in reply: I thank honourable members for their response to this measure and for the responsible manner in which they have addressed themselves to it.

I shall refer to some of the points raised because they were quite important. The first point raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton North to which I want to reply relates to representation on the superannuation boards and the possible imbalance of that representation. I think he will be generous enough to acknowledge that the Bill expands the representation from the rather narrow and restrictive representation in the original trust deed. For the first time, representation is being extended to country boards. Whereas previously the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board acted more or less as a delegate for all the other boards in Queensland, there will now be State-wide representation on the superannuation board.

While the metropolitan representative has, I believe, always discharged his duties with a sense of responsibility, there will now be wider representation and I am sure the country fire brigades boards will find it satisfying that they will now be able to elect one of their number to speak for them on the board.

[Sitting suspended from 1.1 to 2.15 p.m.]

Mr. CAMPBELL: Before the luncheon recess, I was commenting on what the honourable member for Rockhampton North referred to as imbalance in representation on the superannuation board. I do not want to be drawn into the question of per capita representation. However, I do want to repeat that country boards will now have representation, which they did not have before, and that the two unions associated with the fire-fighting services will similarly have representation that they did not have before.

The only other matter raised by the honourable member was an elaboration of what he said at the introductory stage concerning the power of intervention by the State Fire Services Council in proceedings before the Industrial Commission. He again raised the composition of the council and expressed the hope that it would be unbiased. I say without hesitation that council officers have always acted in a responsible manner and they can be expected to act responsibly in their representations before the Industrial Commission.

The only other point to which I wish to refer was raised by the honourable member for Merthyr. He mentioned the tinder-box conditions that occur from time to time on unoccupied and vacant land. From the number of representations that have been made by the honourable member on this subject, it would seem that such conditions are more prevalent in Merthyr than in any other electorate. The honourable member is constantly drawing my attention to the fact that there are in Merthyr allotments that need tidying up. He went on to acknowledge the efficient service that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade gives in attending to this matter.

This is a most difficult problem because at times it is hard to find the owners of unoccupied land. There is a responsibility on the owners of vacant land in the metropolitan

area, particularly in dry periods following rainy spells when there is heavy growth of grass, to see that these tinder-box conditions are reduced to a minimum. They should do this as an act of citizenship.

Motion (Mr. Campbell) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Kaus, Mansfield, in the chair)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—New ss. 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12E—

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (2.19 p.m.): The point that I am about to raise is one that has been raised here on many other occasions, but I feel it is necessary to raise it again. The proposed new section 12A (2) (d) reads—

“two representatives of contributors to the superannuation scheme nominated by the Minister from a panel consisting of the names of contributors submitted to him, one by each industrial union of employees representing employees of Fire Brigade Boards throughout the State.”

For the life of me, I cannot see why the Government should persist in its method of making appointments. As the Government has decided on the composition of the board of trustees to be set up—and we have already spoken about that—surely it is not unreasonable to suggest that the contributors to each of the unions concerned would be responsible enough to nominate their own representative on the board. This is on all fours with the arguments in this Chamber last year about the appointment to the Senate of either Albert Field or Mal Colston, and the community at large has resolved those arguments as can be seen in the current State representation in the Senate.

I reiterate that responsible people in the unions are quite capable of carrying out a democratic procedure within their own ranks and making a nomination. I suggest that the Government should allow this to be done rather than persist in itself nominating who shall be appointed to the board.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

FIRE BRIGADE CHARGES REFUND BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (2.23 p.m.): I move—

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

In introducing the second reading of this timely and practical measure, I should like to restate its fundamental purpose: to provide for refunds of fire brigade levies to insurance policy-holders living outside fire brigade districts.

It is, as I said in my introductory remarks, a stopgap measure pending operation from 1 July 1978 of the Fire Brigades Act Amendment Bill to which this House gave its assent last year. It advances to 1 July this year—or by 12 months—the removal of a penalty on people living outside fire brigade districts yet paying a levy on their insurance policies for a fire service they could not receive.

As the Opposition spokesman on these matters, the honourable member for Rockhampton North, indicated during the introductory debate the Opposition's pleasure and lack of objection, I am confident there will be ready acceptance of the second reading by the House as a whole. Consequently, I shall be very brief. Indeed, I want to make only a few points.

The first is to add to my introductory statement that applications for refunds are to be made to the State Fire Services Council on a form to be prescribed by registration. As a service to people concerned, these forms will also become available through clerks of the court throughout the State. It is my hope that this fact—and full details of the Bill—will receive wide circulation through media published in rural areas. The second point I would make is to urge policy-holders in doubt as to their eligibility to check their location against boundary maps held by their nearest fire brigade, and the third point is to urge honourable members representing rural areas to disseminate details for the benefit of constituents.

I would suggest that they ensure that people have not been misled by a grossly inaccurate newspaper statement on Monday of this week, to which I referred at the introductory stage, that “full refunds” will be made retrospective to when policies were taken out.

This Bill clearly states that policy-holders with insured risks outside fire brigade districts will be entitled to a refund of a portion of fire insurance premiums falling due in 1977-78. Neither it nor the Fire Brigade Act which will take its place from 1 July 1978 confers any retrospectivity. I believe that the Government, by formulating legislation which will speed redress 12 months earlier than would otherwise have been administratively possible, is demonstrating awareness and acceptance of responsibility. This, of course, will always remain a basic plank of policy.

I commend the measure to the House.

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (2.26 p.m.): As the Minister said, the Opposition certainly is not opposed to the Bill, although at the introductory stage honourable members on this side of the Chamber did comment on fire-fighting services and facilities throughout the State.

I think there could be some underlying political reasons for the introduction of this measure—in fact, I believe that there are—because we were told last year that such a

provision could not come into effect till 1 July 1978. Now we find a stopgap measure, if I may use that term, being introduced to cover what is technically a 12-month waiting period.

Last year the Minister said—

“Representations by country organisations for removal of the levy are well based, despite the fact that insurance companies make a \$50,000 contribution to bush fire brigades.”

The Opposition accepts that statement. He then said—

“The amended procedure will apply to returns by insurance companies for the calendar year 1977 and come into force from 1 January 1978. Amendments to statistical arrangements cannot be made earlier. I mention that, in respect of present contributions, companies submit details of premiums received during the preceding calendar year as the basis of calculation.”

The situation has changed, and probably it is in the interests of the contributors and the people in the outlying areas outside fire brigade districts. However, I still believe that, with an election likely to be held this year or very early next year, the underlying motive behind the Government's action now is a political one.

As to the principles of the Bill—the first comment is that if insufficient funds are available for a call upon refunds by the contributors, costs will be met from Consolidated Revenue. I note also—and this is in the existing Act—that anyone wishing to vary his contributions would be allowed two instalments. It is not spelt out clearly in this particular measure, so I ask the Minister in his reply to clarify the situation.

The Bill provides penalties for the making of false statements and for offences generally. I believe that that is necessary in all instances in which the Government collects funds or requires payments to be made when notices are given.

I again stress the point about two instalments. It might be considered to be slightly contradictory, but I will be guided by the Minister's explanation.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (2.29 p.m.), in reply: The first point raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton North was that the Government was yielding to underlying political reasons in introducing the Bill. I do not know how far one can go in attributing certain actions to political reasons. I thought I gave a fairly reasonable explanation at the introductory stage. After people in these specific areas have been required for many years to make a payment for non-existent services, the Government has recognised their plight and taken steps to redress the anomaly. Under the proposal that was the subject of the Bill introduced

last year, which is a permanent measure, it was impossible, bearing in mind the lead time required in preparing budgets, to provide relief before 1 July 1978.

Far from acting for political reasons, the Government responded to the requests of countless property owners in the areas to which the relief was to be applied, even if it was a delayed application. We had a fresh look to see if it was possible to devise a scheme whereby relief could be given 12 months earlier. The Bill is a result of that review. It is a rather unusual but nevertheless practical method of meeting the problem. I do not think the Opposition will want to pursue that matter any further. At least we have responded to the entreaties of various property owners and policyholders in the areas outside fire brigade districts.

I did not quite get the trend of the honourable member's other query, and I would ask him to raise it in the Committee stage.

Motion (Mr. Campbell) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Kaus, Mansfield, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Unpaid moneys to form part of contribution—

Mr. YEWDAL (Rockhampton North) (2.32 p.m.): I rise in response to what the Minister just said. I referred to the principal Act wherein provision was made for two instalments covering moneys owing to the council. I think that clause 9 might be the appropriate clause that covers that situation. It says—

“Moneys due and owing to the Council under section 8 and remaining unpaid shall be included by the Council in and form part of the contribution to be paid by a contributory company or owner of property during the year commencing on 1 July 1978 or such subsequent year as the Council determines.”

I do not see any further reference to two instalments rather than the money being required in one payment.

Hon. F. A. CAMPBELL (Aspley—Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs) (2.33 p.m.): The honourable member is quite correct. The 10 per cent which is being levied on insurance companies in the next financial year to create the refund pool which will be drawn upon by policy-holders outside a fire brigade district is based on an estimate of the total amount which will be required. The final result will not be known until all claims have been met. It is more or less a put-and-take operation.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

be all right. However, with modern equipment, a photograph could be taken of the inside of a room and not of the building. As in the Coroners Act, there have to be some reservations regarding permission.

The amendment is not to prohibit photographs being taken. In many cases permission is granted. If a private person or a person from the media wanted to photograph court-houses, courtrooms and so on, as has happened in many cases, permission would be granted. It would be granted in much the same way as Mr. Speaker allows photographs to be taken in this place. There is no prohibition; Mr. Speaker's permission has to be obtained. I think that is quite adequate. There should be no problem with any person who legitimately wants to take a photograph without interfering with the course of justice. All honourable members will recognise the great dangers involved in taking photographic material, which is not part of the court records, and, by juxtaposition of people or by attaching captions to photographs, being able to influence the course of justice in some way.

It should be recognised that courts, unlike concourses and market-places, are not public places. Courts are the responsibility of someone and justices have the responsibility to see that the court is held in high regard and should have some control over who comes and goes and what is done in the precincts of the court.

In the United States, the photographs that might have been taken are not permitted to be reproduced. Drawings are made of what it is presumed happened in the court. Even that leads to misunderstandings as to what might have happened especially when the expression on the face of an accused person can be changed to make him look more like a criminal than he does. Photographs or drawings may make him look more innocent than he is. There are lots of ways in which this can be handled. I believe the provision in the Bill is satisfactory and will not inhibit the normal legitimate interests of private citizens and media representatives who wish to take photographs at appropriate times.

Motion (Mr. Knox) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 19, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

VALUATION OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) (2.52 p.m.): I move—

“That a Bill be introduced to amend the Valuation of Land Act 1944–1975 in certain particulars and for another purpose.”

The preamble of the Valuation of Land Act 1944–1975 reads:—

“An Act to make better provision for determining the valuation of land for rating and taxing purposes, and for matters incidental thereto or consequent thereon.”

It has been found necessary to introduce a Bill to make certain machinery amendments to the Act and to clarify a section of the Act which, as presently enacted, could be interpreted differently from what is the intention.

In introducing the Bill, it is mentioned that the Valuer-General performs all the rating valuations for the 131 local authorities in Queensland at periodical intervals of usually from five to eight years. However, there is provision to shorten the period or extend it in special circumstances. In all, there are about 800,000 rateable properties to be valued and, of course, valuation of each local authority area must be continuously revised to make allowances for subdivisions, sales and the like.

It would be obvious to honourable members that the Valuer-General cannot perform all these functions personally and, although I am aware that he gives to his office the greatest amount of care and attention possible, he must delegate certain of his responsibilities to his senior officers.

One of the proposals contained in the amending Bill is to amend section 9 (1) to provide more flexible powers of delegation. In section 9 (1) as it presently exists, certain officers to whom the Valuer-General may delegate authority are named by their public service title. If these are changed or additional positions are created, the delegation to an officer not named would be null and void.

The proposed amendment as contained in the Bill will provide that the Valuer-General can delegate his powers, duties and responsibilities to his valuers with my approval, even though their titles are not specifically named in the Act.

The matter has been brought to a head by a reorganisation of the department which occurred in 1975. The reorganisation mentioned created new senior positions and abolished some.

The position has been met to date by passing a regulation, but advice is to the effect that the matter should be regularised by amending the Act and also putting beyond doubt the validity of delegations made in the past by the Valuer-General with the approval of the Minister. However, it is emphasised that it is the policy of the Valuer-General to delegate his authority only to senior and experienced officers of the department. Furthermore, in respect of conferring with owners regarding objections and giving decisions thereon, the Valuer-General, in normal circumstances, only delegates his authority to an officer who had no direct

part in the area valuation. This refers to valuations of a whole area, that is, a general revaluation of a local authority. It is also emphasised that all delegations must be approved by the Minister.

Another matter which it is proposed to deal with by way of an amendment is to make it quite clear that, in considering the potentiality of land for higher use under the provisions of section 11 (1) (vii) of the Valuation of Land Act 1944-1975, the Valuer-General must regard land which is already surveyed into more than one lot as one lot only. Formerly, the Valuer-General, when considering this section, took the view that a parcel of land containing more than one surveyed allotment and upon which a single dwelling-house was erected was not eligible for the concessional valuation under the section. His reasoning was that the potential had already been realised and it was only recently that a court decision found contrary to the Valuer-General's practice. This made the position somewhat confusing and the proposed amendment contained in the Bill will ensure that the recent court decision will be followed. This, then, will mean that a single dwelling-house situated on a larger than normal site, whether such site be surveyed into more than one allotment or not, will only be valued for rating and land tax purposes as one above-average-sized site and not as several sites less an allowance for bulk.

The remaining proposal in the Bill amends section 20, which deals with the time within which the Valuer-General must give a decision upon an objection. As presently enacted, it is provided that the Valuer-General must give a decision upon all objections not later than 12 months after the date shown in the notice of valuation as the date on and after which the valuation shall have force and effect, but this provision could prove impossible to comply with in the case of interim or split valuations which normally take effect from the date of possession of land by a new owner. The Valuer-General often does not receive notification of changes of ownership until some months after a transfer has occurred. This, coupled with delays in issue of the split and an allowance of 60 days for an objection period, could mean that the objection period closes a very short period before or even after the date of possession previously referred to.

It is proposed to amend the Act in respect of decisions upon objections to interim valuations. The amendment will provide that the Valuer-General will have six months after the date of issue of an interim valuation within which to issue a decision upon an objection.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (2.59 p.m.): Opposition members welcome this Bill to a certain extent, although we did not know a great deal about it this morning. We think that this amendment provides a long overdue solution to a problem in the

valuation industry. Nevertheless, what concerns me today is that the Opposition received so little notice that the Bill was going to be introduced. I do not think it is good enough for the Minister to stand up here at 11 o'clock and give notice of a Bill he is going to introduce that day. It is rather an important amendment to the Act and the Opposition feels that the Minister should give more notice in future when he is going to introduce a Bill. I realise that his portfolio is a very junior one in the Cabinet, but the Minister has as much responsibility to this Assembly as any other Minister. I suggest that in future he should not push legislation through the Assembly in such a hasty manner.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As a matter of fact, there are too many other Ministers away. It is quite obvious that the Government is running out of legislation.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not know about that, but it is quite obvious that the Government is running out of legislation. There are a number of Bills on the Business Paper. Apparently the Government is hiding one Bill, which every day is moved further and further down the Business Paper.

Land valuations and rates are among the most pressing problems confronting the average householder in Queensland. Since becoming the Opposition spokesman on Survey and Valuation, I have been flooded with complaints from all over Queensland. Clearly, the valuations in Queensland have become a frightening worry for thousands of Queenslanders, and we cannot tolerate a situation in which people are virtually dispossessed of their homes through soaring valuations and rates.

Mr. Frawley: Oh, rubbish!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is not rubbish. As a matter of fact, Mr. Miller, I had not made up my mind before beginning my speech whether or not I would take some of the inane interjections from the honourable member for Murrumba. Nevertheless, I thought he would be disappointed if I did not do so, even though I realise that you do not expect me to take interjections.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I think I should leaven my speech by taking the interjection from the member for Murrumba.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If I may use a Latin phrase, Mr. Miller, the honourable member for Murrumba is known as non compos mentis, and I think it fits him very aptly.

Mr. Frawley: You couldn't even spell it.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member does not even understand what it means.

A situation in which wealthy week-enders in holiday areas can push up valuations and force permanent residents from the region is very undesirable. There is a case on the Gold Coast where the valuation of a property rose from \$420 in 1959 to \$1,120 in 1964, \$3,620 in 1949 and \$14,900 this year. There is a further example on the Sunshine Coast where the valuation has gone up by almost 1,700 per cent—from \$300 to \$5,000—and the rise on a neighbouring property in the same area was 2,500 per cent.

I have received a letter from a T.P.I. pensioner who bought a 29-perch block of land at Maroochydore in 1966 for \$1,540. It was revalued in 1972 at \$14,600, and blocks in the vicinity are now selling for as high as \$20,000. Honourable members can see the difficulties that rises such as these pose for poor aged pensioners or persons on a fixed income. When they buy into these areas usually there are few people there and, consequently, the rates are fairly low. What happens when a greedy land developer gets into the area and takes advantage of the people?

When the honourable member for Ipswich West was a real estate agent, he used to buy land up around Brassall and Leichhardt, where there were many aged pensioners. When he put it on the market, of course, he gave it a fancy name such as Silverdale or Whispering Pines. He then would get a young couple out there buying their first home and they were fruit for the sideboard to a wily old operator like the honourable member. Consequently, he took advantage of them, they built their home there, the rates escalated overnight, and the poor old pensioners in the area had to try to keep pace with the high rates paid by people who in some instances were two-income families.

Mr. Houston: He is a very wealthy man.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: A very wealthy man, indeed. As a matter of fact, he has made it known that he wants to be only a temporary member of this Assembly, and he is on record as saying that he can earn far more money as a real estate developer than he can as a member of Parliament.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the motion before the Committee.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: As I was saying, Mr. Miller, inside 10 years the rates of the man at Maroochydore have risen from \$50 a year to \$297 a year, and the thought of a further revaluation terrifies him. A shop and office property in the same area has been revalued from \$12,000 to \$29,500,

and land holdings of between 5 and 20 acres have increased by anything from 10 to 14 times the original value.

I could detail dozens of other similar agonising examples. The problem is common to most parts of Queensland; it is not restricted only to the Brisbane metropolitan area. The people to whom I have referred are in effect being charged a development tax without receiving any additional amenities or benefits, and it is the height of bureaucratic cruelty when people are priced from their homes because development over which they have no control takes place up the road. I have referred to instances in the Brassall and Leichhardt areas. There are numerous cases in tourist areas, in particular, in which elderly couples have saved for a lifetime towards their retirement only to find their land revalued beyond the poverty point. Ratepayers in Queensland, particularly in the Port Douglas area in North Queensland, have been given a very raw deal by this Tory Government.

Mr. Tenni: Get out of my area.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member is not looking after it. As a matter of fact he is almost totally unknown in his electorate. The only thing he is known as is a bad employer in Mareeba, where he has had to be prosecuted on numerous occasions.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I again ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I was side-tracked. I am talking about property at Port Douglas.

Mr. TENNI: I rise to a point of order. I have just realised that the honourable member said that I was prosecuted on numerous occasions as an employer. I would like him to withdraw those remarks, because to the best of my knowledge I have never been prosecuted for anything.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to accept the denial of the honourable member for Barron River.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: He said to the best of his knowledge. Whilst I realise that his knowledge is very limited, I will accept it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will withdraw without equivocation.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Yes, I do.

In one case brought to my notice the unimproved value of a property at Port Douglas has risen from \$1,130 to \$24,500. Another resident has had his valuation increased from \$300 to \$9,500. I would point out that many people living in Port Douglas have retired to that area on meagre pensions or on very low fixed incomes. During these terrifying days of inflation caused and escalated by the bungling policies of the Tory Government in Canberra—

Mr. Houston: Hear, hear!

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Of course it's "Hear, hear!" It is true. As I was saying, during these terrifying days of inflation, people who were able to afford this land when they bought it—it was considered by most people to be of very little value; most of it is just black sand and much of it is adjacent to mangrove swamps and heavily infested with sandflies—are now having to cope with high valuations.

I might also point out that the Douglas Shire Council does pathetically little for the area. The water supply is a constant disappointment and almost a complete disaster, and at present is very harshly restricted.

Valuations in the most heavily populated part of the shire, Mossman, have increased by up to 300 per cent, for example, from \$1,700 to \$5,200. I have been informed by several businesses in the shire that in Port Douglas the total revaluations are three times the total of the town of Mossman, yet the population of Port Douglas is less than one-third that of Mossman. If these figures are correct—let the Minister deny them if he can—the ordinary working and retired residents of Port Douglas are deliberately and cruelly priced out of their homes.

I refer now to the Gold Coast. I am sorry that another real estate member of this Government—the honourable member for Surfers Paradise—is not in the Chamber. He has made three speeches in the five years he has been here. On the Gold Coast, increases in valuation have been as high as 1,300 per cent. The same applies to the Redland Shire, which also is represented by a land developer and real estate agent, and parts of Brisbane.

There must be a thorough review of the entire system of valuations in this State, with a streamlining of procedures to ensure humane consideration of capacity to pay. Residents are reaching the point where they are becoming fearful of land development in their area because of the almost certain financial aftermath they will experience from revaluations and rate increases.

Over the past two years the State Opposition has invited correspondence from residents throughout Queensland on this question, and it has had replies from people in all parts of the State. Many of them have a genuine fear that through unreal valuations and subsequent rate adjustments they will be priced out of their homes. In many instances these are elderly Queenslanders who have saved for their retirement and have no means of supplementing their very modest income. Many of them are reliant on pensions or modest fixed incomes which they are unable to supplement to meet mounting household costs. I cite the case of young couples repaying heavy loans on their first home. Not only are they plagued with higher rate notices through revaluations, but also they must contend with higher repayments through interest increases. They are told by Governments to accept wage restraint. That is a

constant plea of the Tory Government. There has always got to be restraint on wages, but apparently there must never be any restraint on that sacred word "profits". As I was saying, they are told by Governments to accept wage restraint when decisions of the same Government on increases in valuations and consequent increases in rates are emptying their pay packets.

Higher valuations may appeal to speculators but they are a frightening prospect to the average Queenslander, who demands nothing more than his own home and a reasonable living standard. I believe he is entitled to this.

The A.L.P. believes that rates and valuations should occupy a far higher priority in State Government economic planning. I am only sorry that this portfolio was not given to a more senior Minister. If the present Minister were tackling his portfolio properly he would be trying to find an answer to the regularly increasing stress on Queensland householders.

Another anomaly in the Act is that a person living on a corner block, because his corner block is valued higher than that of his neighbour, pays more in rates than his neighbour. Why should this be so when he uses the same footpath and the same sewerage and electricity services? Why should he pay more in rates simply because of the higher valuation of his land?

The purchase of a home is usually the major decision in the lifetime of most couples, particularly working-class couples. But too often the joys and advantages of home-ownership are marred by costs that soar far beyond the owners' earning capacity. Housewives are forced back to work for no reason other than to keep the home fires burning. Keeping this in mind, during the next election campaign the A.L.P. will present policies aimed at reducing the concern felt by so many Queenslanders on this issue. We intend to establish a valuation commission to work and study in co-operation with local government on the matter of rates and valuations in Queensland.

I am sure most honourable members, whichever side they sit on, agree that it is certainly time the State Government and local authorities came to grips in considering solutions to these problems. It is time a round-table conference was held on rates and valuations. The present vicious circle is making home-ownership a penalty. This must end. The Opposition will examine the Bill in detail and will have more to say at a later stage.

Mr. TENNI (Barron River) (3.12 p.m.): I support the provisions outlined by the Minister. However, I have quite a few comments to make on valuations generally. I listened very carefully to the remarks of the honourable member for Archerfield. I did not know until now that he was the Opposition spokesman on valuation. I now understand

why he littered Blunder Road deliberately about 18 months ago. That episode was written up in the "Sunday Sun". He tried to devalue property on that road by deliberately dropping paper in the area. There was a photograph in the paper . . .

Government Members interjected.

Mr. TENNI: That is right. He is the type of member we have on the A.L.P. benches. I shall ignore his comments. The people saw what he did when it was depicted in the "Sunday Sun".

I congratulate the Minister on the amendments he has introduced, particularly that referring to the six months to deal with objections. In the past all of us (except the honourable member for Archerfield) have been aware of the problems confronting councils in trying to get valuations of properties that have changed hands. Many councils throughout Queensland have lost thousands and thousands of dollars because of the inability of the Valuer-General's Department to get valuations of these lands back to them quickly. I am very pleased that the Minister is introducing this, but I believe that six months is too long. I sincerely hope that the Valuer-General and his officers will get them out in three months. If the department is incapable of making a valuation within three months, something is wrong. I hope that the Minister's officers will get on the ball and help the councils much better than they have done in the past. In doing so they will help out the rest of the ratepayers because land that councils have not been able to properly rate in view of the slow valuation process will be rated.

I appreciate the Minister's comments concerning blocks of land that contain more than one subdivision. His remarks would be relevant to an old town like Mungana, which is outside Chillagoe, in the Cook electorate. That is a place that died many years ago, but it has numerous subdivided small blocks of a quarter of an acre. Where graziers have a right over that land they have to pay rates on individual blocks.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. TENNI: I see the honourable member for Bulimba making some comments, but he wouldn't even know about these areas I am speaking of. He sticks to the town. He couldn't care less about the people in country areas. He is one of those centralists.

With the size of some blocks of land, a person has to buy two blocks these days to cater for the different designs of home. The small blocks of land are not large enough, so people buy two blocks and build across them. I sincerely hope that in a case such as that the area built on would be treated as one block of land and that provision for it is included in the amendments.

I am very concerned about the valuations in the Douglas Shire. The member for Archerfield mentioned only Port Douglas. This shows how unfamiliar he is with the area. Port Douglas is one tiny part of the Douglas Shire, which not long ago was revalued. The valuations have gone up alarmingly. Just to keep the member for Archerfield aware of what is going on in Queensland—Port Douglas is a very small section of the Douglas Shire. I will welcome him up there at any time. I will show him round the Douglas Shire. It is one of the nicest parts of Queensland. Apparently he knows one little socialist who lives at Port Douglas and who has sent him a letter. He would be about the only socialist in the whole of the Douglas Shire. The rest of the people are National Party supporters.

I am alarmed at the unequal valuations in the Douglas Shire. They leave me somewhat bewildered. I have discussed the matter with the Minister, who has agreed to talk to the people at a public meeting up there, which we will arrange in the very near future. I thank the Minister for that.

Mr. Houston: Didn't you object to the valuations?

Mr. TENNI: Of course I did. I have objected very, very strongly—even on the floor of the Parliament. That shows that the honourable member must sleep when he is here. He does not even know what is going on.

Mr. Frawley: It must have been on a Thursday night when he was at the dogs. He gets in on the grouser.

Mr. TENNI: That is what it would be, yes.

In the beach areas of the Douglas Shire the valuation of one block has gone from \$800 to \$6,000. Others have gone from \$1,000 to \$10,000 or \$12,000. I have spoken to pensioners up there who some years ago bought homes at the beach—not necessarily on the beach front, but one or two streets back—who wanted to retire there and see out the end of their days in that area. What have we done? We have rated them out of the area that they hoped to spend the rest of their lives in. We have rated them out—not because of the valuation put on the block but because of the unequal valuations throughout the shire. As a result, the Douglas Shire Council—a darned good, solid council—has been put in the embarrassing position of having to strike such a rate in the dollar that people in the town will be paying a certain amount while people at beach resorts out of the town will be rated out of the area—all because of their high valuations.

I have asked the Minister to order a revaluation, but with no success. I sincerely hope that, when the objections come in and he realises that his departmental officers have created work for themselves—for what reason I do not know—he will look at this again. No-one can tell me that a valuer would put unrealistic figures on blocks and then have

to go through all the appeals and other court attendances, creating work for everyone, for nothing. There is some reason behind it, and I will never understand it. When a valuer values a shire, it is essential that he do it on an equal basis to allow the shire to strike a rate in the dollar that will give equal rating to the shire over all. This has not happened in the Douglas Shire.

The Valuer-General's Department does a reasonably good job in valuing primary industry land. A large number of fishermen live at Rocky Point in the Douglas Shire. The honourable member for Archerfield would not know where it is. They cut their blocks out of the hillside at their own expense and built their dwellings in an area that is suitable to them. They had to cut their own road up the hill and bituminise it. Even so, it is difficult to get up to the dwellings. However, this suits them because, from their homes, they can see the sea and whether the water is rough or calm, and they are close to where they take their boats and nets out of the water. They have an ideal position for fishermen.

The valuer would not have driven up that road. To do so a person would have to be an experienced driver, such as I am. Probably the first thing the valuer did was to look at the beautiful view and say, "Boy, they will pay for this." That is exactly what has happened in the Rocky Point area of the Douglas Shire. They are really paying through the nose.

In some cases valuations of blocks of land in the Rocky Point area have been increased from \$1,200 to \$15,000. Figures like that are just unreal. I will never understand why we as a Government allow that to happen. Why can't we treat professional fishermen as we do anybody on the land? The only difference is that one reaps his crop from the sea and the other from the land. The man who reaps his crop from the sea must have a house in which to live and a place to put his nets, his refrigeration and his boat. It is difficult enough to make a living from fishing, but it is a necessary industry in that area because a large proportion of the people there eat fish. They should not be rated off their blocks of land, but that is what has happened.

I am shocked and surprised that this is allowed to go on. I am keen and anxious to see what happens in about three weeks' time when the results of the appeals from this area are known. I do not know what we can do about the poor old pensioners who have been rated out. Perhaps the officers in the Valuer-General's Department will subsidise their rates. Something will have to be done to help these people.

I would not like to be chairman of the Douglas Shire Council when the rate is struck for the coming financial year. His would be the most invidious and embarrassing position that any chairman could be in. He will have to make a decision and will make himself one of the most unpopular

people in the world. However, it is not his fault; it is the fault of the valuations in the Douglas Shire.

Mr. Marginson: The Minister is to blame for it.

Mr. TENNI: He is not. That shows how weak and silly the members of the Opposition are.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! Persistent interjections will not be tolerated.

Mr. TENNI: The Minister is doing all in his power to overcome the problem. That is why he has introduced this Bill. I am sure that over the next six or eight months the Minister will go further. But people like me have to stand and speak up for the rate-payers in Queensland. The members of the Opposition cannot do it, but I will do it because I am not prepared to see pensioners, fishermen and people in general being kicked in the backside and dispossessed of their land.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. TENNI: I just turn myself off when Opposition members interject, because they do not know what they are talking about. They are centralists and socialists and only look after the people in the city, the greyhounds and the racehorses.

On behalf of the people whom I represent, I am thankful of the opportunity to express my feelings about the valuations of parts of my electorate. I hope the Minister will give consideration to a different valuation system or, alternatively, give the job back to the shires, if they will have it, and let them do their own valuing to suit the people whom they represent and with whom they are coming in contact every hour of the day.

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (3.26 p.m.): As a member of the Minister's committee, I am happy to support this legislation because I know that it will produce a better system of administration and responsibility in the office of the Valuer-General. The Bill is a very simple one and, as it has been adequately explained by the Minister, I shall use the time at my disposal to make some comments on land valuations generally.

I am particularly concerned about the valuation of land in Greater Brisbane because my electorate is situated within this metropolis. On behalf of members representing metropolitan electorates I have a responsibility to oversee, from a Brisbane point of view, the Brisbane Town Plan that was on display just a few months ago and is currently before the Minister for Local Government for ratification. It contains a number of radical changes in zoning and in terms of basic ground rules, regulations, by-laws and the like it will have a great affect on the people of Brisbane and the value of their land.

and land value did have some relationship to a person's wealth, but that no longer applies. Yet we are still using that out-of-date method to finance local authorities. There has to be a better way of doing it. Whatever formula the Valuer-General's Department uses, some people are going to believe that they are on the wrong end of that formula.

Basically, I believe that the proposed amendments to the Act should be helpful. I suggest that the next time the Act is amended the Minister should look to see whether a better basis than unimproved value can be adopted. Unimproved value does not really mean anything at all. It all depends on who the valuer is. I accept the fact that the Valuer-General passes on authority to individual valuers. I have spoken to quite a few of them, and they are decent, honest public servants with a job to do. The inconsistency is brought about by their lack of knowledge of what the unimproved state was.

Take elderly people into an area and they will say, "I can remember when there was a creek running through here. I can remember when this was just a bare, barren hill." Today land developers can change the whole complexion of a vast area of land. A local authority can build a dam somewhere which alters the flow of creeks and rivers, and electricity, sewerage and playing fields can be provided by a local authority to enhance an area.

How far back should valuers go to get an unimproved value? Should they go back to the days when the first settlers arrived? We cannot expect any valuer to do that. When we talk about unimproved value, what are we really talking about? I know that certain standards are set, but I agree with the honourable member for Port Curtis that too much error creeps in.

The citizens would be much happier with a realistic valuation of properties. A person who builds concrete paths and has a beautiful lawn and garden should not be penalised compared to the person next door who allows his yard to be untidy and effects no improvements. Surely we should not have to delve into the distant past and heed whether land was steeply sloping or suffered some other disability. The only people who are responsible for the added value of a property are the householders or developers who effect improvements. As the honourable member for Archerfield said, when subdividers break up land they do not do as they did years ago, that is, put a line on a plan and say, "The road will go there." Under the law they must provide roads, guttering, sewerage and so on. They improve the land. Can the unimproved value of the land be fixed at that stage? That is what the purchaser of new land buys. A person buying developed land for household purposes purchased all that.

Mr. Frawley: Those are not improvements; they are services.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not know if the honourable member regards tree-planting, levelling of undulations and filling of small gutters improvements, but surely they are improvements. I have seen early photographs of land that is now a residential area. It is hard to realise that it is the same land.

Mr. Frawley: Do you think we should hand back valuation to the local authorities?

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not think that would make any difference.

If we could have a co-ordinated system of valuation throughout the State, that would be excellent. If we hand back to local authorities the right to determine what they do with the total valuation given to them, they will have to accept responsibility. At times I have argued with local authority people who say that the Government—and I am not defending this Government—forced the valuations onto them. As I said at the outset, the total valuation will be used by a local authority to set the rate in the dollar for rating purposes.

Mr. Frawley: They try to convince some of their people that they do.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know that they do, and some of the worst offenders are the National Party-held local authorities. In one country area a local authority man who wanted to be a National Party candidate—he did not become a candidate; he was just making the run—was saying how Whitlam had forced them to have high rates. I asked him, "How do you make that out?" He said, "Look at the value he has placed on our properties." If he had said, "We require more money to service the area," he might have had a bit of an argument, but the problem certainly was not caused by Whitlam.

I believe the Minister could do something in his own department about the practice of using comparable sales to strike the valuation for an area.

Mr. Elliott: Did you get your brief from Frawley?

Mr. HOUSTON: No. As a matter of fact, I gave Frawley mine. He'll speak very well at your caucus meeting on what I have told him, I'm sure.

I wish to refer to the old established areas where there are some small two-bedroom homes of the old square type on 40 perches of land. We know that some developers will pay fantastic prices for those allotments because they suit them for building units. In some of our old suburbs this type of subdivision is scattered throughout. However, I believe it is completely wrong for sale prices of such blocks to be reflected in the valuations of ordinary household land. Those blocks are being bought for a particular purpose—for an entirely different type of land use. The only common factor is that it is residential.

Mr. Prest: That type of sale should not be taken into account.

Mr. HOUSTON: I agree entirely.

In some areas there are isolated blocks that were bought in the original subdivision—whether for speculation or for some other reason—that have not been built on. Homes have been built all round them. If such a block is sold, it would bring a vastly higher amount than if the whole of the area was undeveloped and plenty of blocks were available. It is invariably found that the last block sold in isolation will bring a higher price.

Mr. Prest: How can they justify increases of 100 per cent in rural areas where the cost of production is up and returns are down?

Mr. HOUSTON: The honourable member has put his finger on one of the things that are wrong with our system of valuation. Until now I have stuck basically to residential areas. As the honourable member for Port Curtis has said, in rural areas where land is used for production purposes, a different yardstick altogether must be used. The yardstick surely must be the use of the land and the return it is capable of yielding. Land that is capable of returning a high yield crop at a high sale price should be valued at a higher figure than land that yields a lower return.

Still on the subject of unimproved values of land used for rural purposes—because a person decides to invest in improved pastures, using fertilisers and irrigation, is he to be penalised as compared with the fellow next door to him who is not prepared to do that? Unfortunately that is happening. I am not saying that the person who improves his pastures will be penalised, but certainly someone else who buys it—and he would be interested in it because of its improvements and its productive capacity—will be penalised by a higher valuation.

Briefly, what I am saying is that, although this Bill will perhaps make it a bit easier—and I have no argument at all that it will not do what the Minister hopes it will do—I feel that the time has gone when we can allow things to keep wandering on and every so often introduce amending legislation that gives members of the Government parties and the Opposition an opportunity to complain about valuations in their own areas.

Although I have only a minute left of my speech time, before I sit down I do thank the Minister for his action on the matter that I referred to him. That was the case of, from memory, a 40-perch allotment, with a big wandering, modern-type home erected on it. Because it happened to have two front doors—

Mr. Moore: How much money did you make out of it?

Mr. HOUSTON: I know that the honourable member tries to be a joker whenever he is in the Chamber, so I will not take that as a personal insult. I can assure

him that neither the Minister nor I made any money out of it. What we did was to make an elderly lady very happy.

Mr. Moore: I was only joking.

Mr. HOUSTON: I knew the honourable member was, so I accepted his interjection.

That case showed how careful valuers have to be.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) (3.56 p.m.): I support the Bill. Before speaking specifically on its principles I commend the Minister on the reformist attitude that he has adopted since taking over this portfolio. Judging by the assistance that he has given me with objections and other matters, I cannot see that there can be any questioning that he is doing everything he can to adopt a realistic attitude towards this vexed subject, which calls for an enormous amount of reform.

The honourable member for Bulimba referred to the trend among Government members to criticise this function of government. It is one of the hallmarks of any Government, particularly this Government, when Government members can make their contributions or say their piece in this place on a subject such as this where reform is obviously necessary and where the Minister is trying his best to institute a programme of reform. Such an approach displays honesty and straightforward thinking. I see nothing untoward or inconsistent in Government members taking this line in this debate.

Mr. Frawley: It confuses the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. DOUMANY: It does confuse some members of the Opposition. They find it extremely difficult to offer criticism of their own party line. They always find it surprising when we on this side of the Chamber offer criticism.

Turning now to the general subject of valuation and where it stands today—the concept of unimproved value reminds me very much of the concept of crude protein in animal nutrition. The total content of nitrogen in feed is multiplied by 6.25 to arrive at the measure of crude protein. It has been said that nothing is cruder than crude protein. I believe that there is nothing more unimproved than unimproved value. The good intentions of those who originally conceived this basis of assessment must be acknowledged but in practice, with the dynamics of time and progress and with the enormous spread of human settlement—

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Mr. Doumany—

Mr. DOUMANY: The honourable member can interrupt me later.

There is no doubt that in today's world, unimproved value, as we are handling it, is an inadequate basis for the task of valuation. The whole concept of working

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (4.18 p.m.): I should like to refer to the clarification of the potentiality of land for subdivision, particularly as it relates to the subdivision of agricultural land. This has become a very serious problem in areas around cities such as Toowoomba, on the Darling Downs and in some of the smaller centres. People have been forced off the land because high valuations placed on neighbouring properties have been reflected in the revaluation of their holdings. They cannot afford to continue as primary producers.

One of the great tragedies of the urban sprawl in Australia today is that so many people are subdividing what could be highly productive agricultural land. When I drove back from Sydney about 10 months ago I was staggered by the development I saw compared with when I had travelled along that road about eight years ago. I saw many farmlets and subdivisions of land which previously had been productive dairy farms, grain-growing areas or beef-producing properties. In a world that is short of food, in a world with a Malthusian gloom type of syndrome, with everyone predicting that we will not be able to produce the commodities that will be needed for the starving masses, it seems to be sheer stupidity that a nation should continue to subdivide its agricultural land.

I commend the new Minister. He is doing an excellent job. He has not been at it very long but I am sure that he will prove to be extremely successful in it. He is adopting an intelligent approach to it.

The former owner of a parcel of land may have excised a small area from it and the present owner may want to continue primary production on the larger portion. New valuation, however, may force him to give the idea away. That would be a tragedy.

Mr. LOWES (Brisbane) (4.21 p.m.): It is always a privilege to support a Minister on the presentation of a Bill, but it is a greater privilege to support a Minister on the presentation of his first Bill. The Minister for Survey and Valuation has an unenviable portfolio in that it is divided into those two different areas. Survey is based on a precise science, that is, the using of exact and accurate means of calculation, whilst the Mr. Hyde part of the partnership, that is, valuation, is quite the opposite. In many instances the valuation of land is based on nothing more than an educated opinion. By no means is it an exact science. The method of arriving at the educated opinion is embodied to a great extent in the legislation we are now examining.

Valuation opinions are often based on sales of nearby property, but the value of nearby property is often reached by the same means. All in all the original valuations may have been based on a false premise because, for some particular reason, the comparable sales used may in the first instance have been

given false values. Many reasons could be advanced why an initial sale was based on a false value.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke of the unimproved value of land, and it is on the unimproved value of land that the Valuer-General operates. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the difficulty in arriving at the unimproved value of land—that is, the value of land in its natural state. How in these days can we possibly assess the value of a block of land in its natural state when that land, and surrounding land for many miles around, may have been developed for a long time? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that we could go back to the commencement of settlement here, but that would put impossibilities in the way of any person attempting to effect a valuation.

Mr. Houston: Even now a new subdivision can be virgin land until it is subdivided.

Mr. LOWES: That may be possible, but it is in this area that errors generally occur.

In filling out the schedule of the V.G.1 form relating to the change of ownership of land, which covers unimproved value, various improvements and the total, very frequently the vendor (who could be a developer) allocates the purchase price of, say, \$10,000, for a vacant block to unimproved value only. This is very annoying. Surely that is not correct—yet that is what is being done. I would venture to suggest that the V.G.1 for 90 per cent of vacant parcels of land—that is, land coming out of subdivisions—would show the unimproved value as the total purchase price, without any distinction being drawn between the value of the raw land and the improvements that have been put into it. It might be asked, "What improvements?" It is true that there may not be a house on the land; it is true that there may be no buildings whatsoever. But the land is surely not unimproved.

This is where we come to what might be a formula for the assessment and definition of the unimproved value of land. It seems to be impossible for us to start from the beginning—that being the land in its natural state—and work to the final figure, that is, the land and its improvements that make up the total purchase price.

When a person looking for a house to buy finally selects a home and pays, say, \$40,000 does he say to himself, "The land in its unimproved state was worth \$5,000 or \$500.?" Does he say, "The land in its natural state was worth \$500 and now it has a certain value attaching to it because it has privileges such as multi-unit development.?" Does he add something on for services, such as power, light, sewerage and water? Does he add on something because the land is close to transport? If he does, does he put those down separately as improvements, or does he put them down in the unimproved value of the land?

When a residential property is sold for, say, \$40,000, the only time that figure is dissected is when a valuer looks at the property for the purpose of finance. If that does not happen, the first time a dissection occurs is when the conveyancer splits up the figure for the Commissioner of Stamp Duties and for the Valuer-General. Quite often, he uses only a rough rule of thumb, putting in a figure which is acceptable to the purchaser and, so often, acceptable to the Valuer-General. That figure, however it may have been reached—whether by calculation or misadventure—is very often used by the Valuer-General in a revaluation of the area. Consequently, it finds its way into the rating of the area.

I wonder whether a means of assessing the unimproved value of land might not be to start at the end, with the purchase—even though it may be a vacant lot of land. Assume we see that the purchase price is \$10,000. From that we deduct the costs incurred by the subdivider—to clear and level the land; to put down roads, kerbing and channelling; and to reticulate water, power and sewerage. Those costs would have to be worked out over the whole of the subdivision. That is the sort of exercise that I am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had in mind when he asked me about the assessment of the unimproved value of land in a subdivision. We look at the total cost incurred in the development of the land and deduct that from the overall sale price. That may well be as good a way of finding out the unimproved value of land as there is.

Mr. Yewdale: Couldn't the developer supply that information?

Mr. LOWES: The developers certainly supply it. It is available in all their tax returns.

Mr. Yewdale: I was only trying to help you.

Mr. LOWES: The information would certainly be available to the Minister.

I can think of one subdivision of land at The Gap. The proposed purchase price was \$100,000 and the estimated cost of development was \$200,000, which would cover levelling, clearing, reticulation of water and the other matters I mentioned. The total cost would then be \$300,000. Surely two-thirds of the cost, or \$200,000, which went on actual improvements should not be included in the unimproved value of the land, which relates to land in its natural state. Those expenses are not properly attributable to the value of the land in its natural state.

I suggest that in sales of land and properties which are more complicated, before coming back to the remainder, matters such as the enhanced value attributable to a property because of its zoning should be considered. This is only a further compli-

cation introduced by town-planning. Possibly residential A land is rezoned as residential B with the right to develop it for multi-unit purposes. The value of the land would increase. Is that a value which can be attributed to unimproved value? I do not think so. I think that, like a house, the zoning is something attached to the land.

The items to be taken into consideration in the minuses from the market price would be the value of the zoning and certainly the fixed improvements such as a house or a building, clearing, levelling and all of the other matters I mentioned. They might well come under the collective term of "estate development". Those amounts might well be taken away from the sale price or market price to arrive at the unimproved value of the land.

There is an exception. The market price must be reasonable and not one brought about by extraordinary circumstances. I can well remember arguing the value of a parcel of land on the front at Broadbeach. It was situated between the Broadbeach Hotel and Northcliffe where there are very few undeveloped or vacant lots of land. The lots that are developed are developed almost entirely as single residences or units. I think at this time there might be only two undeveloped lots of land in that area, which has a very fine stretch of beach. In many cases there is direct access from the lots to the beach. In other cases there is only a roadway between the land and the beach. Surely the blocks of land remaining attracted an unreal value. The value attached to those blocks was unique because of the shortage of supply and the old rule of supply and demand applied. Under my formula, the ready availability or unavailability of land would have to be taken into consideration in arriving at the market price.

Mr. Houston: That should not reflect on all the other land nearby.

Mr. LOWES: It shouldn't. If a person is prepared to pay any price at all, and in fact he pays \$40,000 for a 24-perch block of land on the front at Broadbeach and puts in a V.G.1 showing \$40,000, believing that vacant land is unimproved land, that figure should not be a value looked at by valuers in valuing the area. That is an extreme case but it is what happened, to a lesser degree, in the case to which I was referring.

The same applies in the Minister's department. Regard is had to comparative sales without at times sufficient regard being had to how unimproved values were reached. In my opinion, "unimproved value" is not a correct expression; it is too vague. We in Queensland work on unimproved value. In New South Wales valuation is based on improved value. I think it was the honourable member for Kurilpa who spoke about the use of improved valuations. That could well be the solution to the problem.

If the valuation of improvements is included, we could well finish up with what would be virtually a Domesday Book. We would finish up with a land data bank. I do not know whether the Minister imagines that he should control such a tome. To my mind, that would be Big Brother at his worst and I hope the Minister does not have that in mind. The present method of valuing on unimproved value must be looked at regularly and I am pleased that with this legislation the Minister is doing just that. For that reason, I support the Bill.

Hon. J. W. GREENWOOD (Ashgrove—Minister for Survey and Valuation) (4.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for the constructive suggestions that they have made in the course of the debate and also for their many kind and generous remarks. I shall not mention all contributions in my reply but I have noted each point and none will go unheeded. The Committee can be quite confident of that because many of the suggestions came from members of my committee who are working constantly with me on these problems and who certainly will not allow me to forget any of them.

I will, however, say a few words about some of the points raised which I feel are of great importance and on which the people of Brisbane deserve to know immediately where I stand. One of the most important points was that raised by the honourable member for Merthyr on the effect of the new Brisbane Town Plan on the value of many properties. There is no doubt that if the plan becomes law in its present form, it will literally decimate the value of many properties. It would be grossly unfair if people were forced to continue to pay rates on levels of property values that no longer exist. The honourable member has asked for a revaluation of Greater Brisbane if the new town plan becomes law.

I give the Committee, including the honourable member for Merthyr, my assurance that I shall give this matter most serious consideration. I assure him that there is provision in the Act at present to allow this to be done and I will put the matter before Cabinet at the appropriate time.

The second problem mentioned in some detail was raised by the honourable member for Barron River. He has on this occasion, as he has on every occasion available to him, brought to my attention the serious problems confronting ratepayers in the Douglas Shire. It is a serious problem because many of these people built their beach houses at a time when the land was not particularly valuable. They worked hard to do so and many of them are not people who are very wealthy; in fact, many of them are people who are not wealthy at all. Their great misfortune is that people all over the world have suddenly discovered that the far north

coast of Queensland is one of the most beautiful and valuable places in the world, and consequently, under a system where the Valuer-General is obliged to use the market value of land as a test for its unimproved value, these people are finding that the market values are escalating to incredible levels and that their rate obligation is going up with it.

Mr. Houston: That applies not only there; it applies right throughout the State.

Mr. GREENWOOD: It applies right throughout the State to a certain extent but on our far northern beaches the effect is so marked that the problems it is causing are even more serious than they are in other places.

Mr. Houston: I am not denying that, but I think you will also agree that the local authority in some places should not want such a total rate from the ratepayers, and if that were accepted the whole lot could be reduced. But if you take it off one, you have to pass it on to someone else.

Mr. GREENWOOD: I will come on to that point, which the honourable member raised in his speech, in a moment, if I may.

The honourable member for Brisbane made the same point when he said that in many cases the market prices paid for land represent a false value—perhaps not a false value in the technical sense but a false value in the realistic sense, a false value in that the people who are living there are not interested in selling their land but are simply content to live and enjoy the house that they worked so hard for without suffering penal and oppressive levels of rating, and this, too, is another aspect of exactly the same problem.

In picking out just a few points from the speakers in this debate I certainly should not neglect my shadow, whether the points he raised were important or unimportant.

Mr. Houston: He is even bigger than you.

Mr. GREENWOOD: That might well be so. In fact, I am proud it is so and I am working hard to make sure it remains so. But my very substantial shadow on the Opposition benches did make a few points about the difficulties that he experiences through the lack of notice and I will say truly, Mr. Kaus, that I am sorry he found it so hard to cope on this occasion and I will undertake in future to do all in my power to give him sufficient notice to bring the task within his capacity.

Mr. Houston: Why don't you admit you forgot to give notice yesterday?

Mr. GREENWOOD: I am not going to admit anything, but perhaps at this stage I should turn to the honourable member for

Bulimba because he made two very important points. One was that he hoped that next time we come to the Assembly with amendments to this Act we can devise a concept rather better than the concept of unimproved value. He may have noticed some of the statements in the Press which said that my committee is at present investigating this very point.

We are looking, for example, at the concept of site value, which would overcome the problem of invisible improvements—a problem which he touched upon in his remarks. No doubt he is also aware that other States use concepts such as the improved value of land for rating purposes and some of them use the concept of an assessed annual value. We are looking at all of these, and I assure him that when we next come here with amendments, there will be a great deal of debate on the merits and demerits of these alternative methods.

The other point raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was the much more fundamental one of finding another way, in this last quarter of the 20th Century, of financing local authorities. Of course, like all other honourable members, he is aware that there have been many inquiries in Australia this century the purpose of which has been to do just that.

The honourable member for Kurilpa made a telling point, I thought, when he said that no-one yet has come up with an alternative to the present rating system that sounds feasible, workable and preferable. Of course, the last word is the vital one. Some sound feasible and practicable and workable, but ultimately it has to be determined whether they are preferable.

As I said, there have been many inquiries, and those inquiries have tended to confirm the present system as being the best of a bad lot. I assure the Committee that my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads and I are at present undertaking the sort of fundamental review of this problem that has been mentioned in the debate today. We hope to have something to go to Cabinet by the end of the year. It will involve discussions with local authorities. We cannot promise that we are going to succeed; we cannot promise that we are going to give this Assembly something which, in the words of the honourable member for Kurilpa, will sound preferable; but we do undertake to have a very good try.

In conclusion, I again commend the motion to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Greenwood) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.